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## Wildfire Notification #13

Good morning,

The New Mexico Forestry Division would like to update you on several wildfires that are requiring the attention of state, local and federal resources in New Mexico. Slightly lower temperatures coupled with the chance of rain throughout the day could help fire suppression efforts throughout the western portion of the state.

### State Fires

#### Sunset Fire

**Date / Time/ Situation:** A GPS acreage assessment has brought the number of burned acres down from 325 to 133.6. As of this morning, all lines are holding. Yesterday's firefighting activity included mopping up fire lines and addressing interior smokes. The Sunset fire is 50% contained. The lightning-caused fire started on Saturday, August 5, south of Highway 70 between Capitan and Roswell.

**Resources:** 50 personnel are engaged in response, including two hand crews, air attack and multiple engines from local and state resources.

**Weather:** The high temperature today is 90 degrees with a 20% chance of precipitation.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures. No structures are currently threatened.

#### West Fire

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The lightning-caused West fire received moderate rain yesterday, however limited access is impeding crews from further securing the perimeter. More precipitation forecasted for today should help to keep the fire at its approximate size of 200 acres. Containment remains at zero percent. The West fire started August 1 on the Double H Ranch west of Magdalena, NM. Fire behavior has been low to moderate backing, flanking, and interior torching.

**Resources:** 12 personnel are engaged in response, including one hand crew and three engines.

**Weather:** The high today is 86 degrees with a 60% chance of thunderstorms and precipitation. West wind 10-15mph.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures.

### Federal Fires

## **West Fork Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The West Fork fire started yesterday, August 7 at 5 p.m. The lightning-caused fire is burning in juniper, grass and bush and exhibiting moderate fire behavior associated with winds produced by passing thunderstorms. It is estimated at 45 acres and is zero percent contained.

**Resources:** Bureau of Land Management and San Juan County Fire Department are responding. Resources include five engines, one fire use module and one type-2 hand crew.

**Weather:** Mostly sunny with a high near 88. There is a 40 percent chance of scattered showers and thunderstorms are expected this afternoon. East wind 5 - 10 mph. Relative humidity is expected to be 18-20 percent.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures. However, the fire is in the vicinity of oil and gas well pads. Residences are approximately two miles south of the fire. The health and safety of firefighters and the public are always the first priority. Members of the public should avoid the West Fork Fire area.

**Smoke:** Smoke is visible from Arboles, Pagosa Springs, Colo., and Highways 64 and 550. Smoke-sensitive individuals and people with respiratory problems or heart disease are encouraged to take precautionary measures.

## **Black Feather Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The Black Feather Fire is estimated at 2,500 acres with 0% containment. The lightning-caused fire started Saturday, Aug. 5. around 1 p.m. in the San Pedro Wilderness on the Santa Fe National Forest, 12 miles northeast of Cuba, NM. It is being managed with a full suppression response.

**Resources:** The Northern New Mexico Type 3 Incident Management Team took command of this fire yesterday. A Type 1 Incident Management Team is enroute to the fire and will in brief today. Resources from multiple agencies are assisting with 156 personnel. Numerous aircraft are assigned to the incident including five large air tankers (LATs), one very large air tanker (VLAT), helicopters, air attack, and a lead plane.

**Evacuations/closures:** The team is working closely with New Mexico State Police, New Mexico Livestock Board, and US Forest Service Law Enforcement Officers to coordinate the NM Ready, Set, Go evacuation notification system for the communities immediately effected by the Black Feather fire.

The communities of Mesa Poleo and Mesa Pinabetal have been put under a SET evacuation status. The community of Wetheral has been put on READY status by the Rio Arriba County Sheriff's Office.

The incident management team and law enforcement have established coordinated trigger points to evacuate communities in a timely manner. The evaluation site is set up at the Senior Center in Coyote. The Rio Arriba Sheriff's Office and Rio Arriba Emergency Management will have a command center set up at the Coyote Ranger District. Rural Event Center off State Road 554 is established as a livestock and animal evacuation site.

**Social Media:** The Rio Arriba County Sheriff's Office is coordinating evacuations. More info is available on the Sheriff's Office Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100079688263048>

## **American Mesa Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The American Mesa fire is burning in pinyon-juniper woodlands and, as of this morning, is 756 acres with 25% containment. Despite critical fire weather conditions yesterday, crews on the ground and in the air kept growth to a minimum. Today, a Type 3 Incident Management Team will take over the fire.

**Resources:** 155 personnel are engaged in response. This includes 4 engines and 3 hand crews,

**Evacuations:** There are no evacuations.

## **Lake Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The Lake Fire is 73 acres and containment has increased to 75%. It is exhibiting low to moderate fire behavior associated with winds produced by passing thunderstorms. Fire managers are implementing a full suppression strategy. The lightning-caused fire started August 2 on the west side of Navajo Lake Dam on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Reclamation.

**Resources:** 25 personnel are engaged in response. Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, San Juan County, and City of Farmington are responding to this effort. Equipment resources include three Type 6 engines, one fire use module, and a water tender. full suppression strategy on this fire.

**Weather:** Mostly sunny with a high near 88. There is a 40 percent chance of scattered showers and thunderstorms are expected this afternoon. East wind 5 - 10 mph. Relative humidity is expected to be 18-20 percent.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures.

## **Dolan Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The Dolan fire has grown to an estimated 2,400 acres. Crews conducted firing operations ahead of the main fire to reduce the risk of adverse impacts to the El Paso Electric high-voltage transmission lines. The fire is confined within the network of Forest Roads (4052 P/M/T, FS 107, FS 521 and the Continental Divide Trail (CDT). It is 1 ½ miles west of the CDT. The Dolan fire started July 30 about 15 miles northwest of Winston.

**Resources:** 108 personnel are engaged in response. This includes three crews, one helicopter, three engines, and one water tender.

**Weather:** There is a chance for moisture over the area Tuesday, although it might not be widespread. With the storms, it is anticipated to have lightning and potentially new fire starts. Resources will be supporting initial attack efforts on the forest.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures. Although this is not a high-use time for hikers, fire managers have identified an alternative route for safety. Please use caution and be aware of personnel and activity in the fire area. Smoke may be visible from Highway 59 around the Beaverhead area.

## **Prior Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The Prior Fire, is estimated at 10,123 acres with 42 personnel assigned. Crews will continue to work on the trail system to keep the fire within a designated area of the Wilderness. The complex fire, which started on July 26, 2023, is being managed as a natural part of the ecosystem. The fire is located approximately 8.5 miles northwest of the Gila Cliff Dwellings.

**Resources:** An ad-hoc Type 3 incident management team assumed command of the Prior and Packsaddle fires Sunday with Aaron Jones as the Incident Commander. It is now the Prior Complex. A total of 22 personnel are assigned to the incident.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures. However, trail closures are in effect.

### **Divide Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The Divide fire started from a lightning strike on July 13. The fire is 26,514 acres and 94% contained. Resources continue to patrol and mop up the fire perimeter. No perimeter growth is expected. Crews will begin suppression repair work that will include removing slash with a chipper along roadways, hauling trash, and removing flagging. Crews are also assessing fence lines and other range improvement infrastructure. Minimal smoke is present.

**Resources:** 85 personnel are engaged in response. This includes 3 engines, 1 hand crews, 1 ambulance, 1 dozer, and 2 water tenders.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures.

### **Porcupine Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The Porcupine fire is now estimated to be at 3,248 acres and 25% contained. Crews will be working on holding and securing containment lines on the 705 trail to the Middle Fork. The fire started on August 3 from lightning in the Gila Wilderness approximately 18 miles west of the Beaverhead Work Station.

**Resources:** Two crews and two engines are assigned to the incident for a total of 75 personnel.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures.

### **Pasture Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The Pasture fire is approximately 8,624 acres in the North Fork of Negrito Creek. Containment increased to 54%. Crews worked to secure the southern perimeter and above South Fork Negrito Creek rim. Crews also assessed fence lines for damage. The lightning-caused fire ignited on July 23.

**Resources:** Resources assigned to the incident include three crews, one helicopter, an ambulance, and three engines for a total of 50 personnel.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures.

### **Dark Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The Dark fire is currently at 3,074 acres and is 5% contained. Rain occurred over the area Monday which moderated fire activity. The fire backed down to Dark Canyon Sunday 1 mile

south of South Fork campground. Crews and equipment continued to improve containment lines along FR141 to the west to FR 177 and south along FR177. A Hotshot crew scouted the road system east of Dark Canyon to determine the feasibility to work closer to the fire that is in Dark Canyon. Crews will work hot spots to secure the fire from moving further to the west on Rainy Mesa Divide. A dozer will be used to construct fire line up Dark Canyon to keep the fire in its current location. Lightning started several fires on the evening of July 12, 2023. The Dark Fire started July 12 southeast of Reserve.

**Resources:** The Type 3 fire has two crews, three engines, a dozer, and an ambulance for a total of 61 personnel on the incident.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures.

### **Packsaddle Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The Packsaddle fire started July 26 and remains at 120 acres. It is located near the West Fork of the Gila River north of White Creek Cabin. Smoke was visible from Mogollon Baldy lookout in the Packsaddle Canyon area.

**Resources:** The fire is unstaffed and being monitored via lookout and aircraft as possible.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures.

### **Turkey Fire**

**Date / Time/ Situation:** The Turkey fire is 9 miles northeast of Cliff, NM. It is 4,306 acres and 0% contained. It has progressed to the east toward Packsaddle Canyon, to the northeast into the Gila River and to the west fire to Canyon Hill. Resources are focusing efforts on improving Forest Road (FR) 282 for firefighter and support access as well as utilizing available crews to assess trail systems to the east for containment options. The lightning-caused fire started July 22.

**Resources:** Resources assigned include one crew and a Rapid Extraction Module Support team or REMS, a rescue team staged to provide a safe and efficient method of egress off the fire line in case of injury or illness.

**Evacuations/closures:** There are no evacuations or road closures.

**Smoke:** Smoke is very visible from surrounding communities with open flame at times of high fire behavior. Smoke will impact HWY 15 and 35 and coordination has happened with NM DOT to place large message boards at the entry of HWY 15 and 35.

## **Fire Weather Summary**

Broad overall improvement in the fire weather environment across north-central and northwest New Mexico this afternoon and evening as compared to the past several days. Scattered to numerous showers and thunderstorms are expected with a 40-60 percent chance of wetting rain for both the Black Feather and American Mesa Fires. Higher humidity & rainfall chances and less heat potentially area-wide by next weekend.

- **Northern New Mexico - FIRE WEATHER WATCH IN EFFECT FROM TUESDAY AFTERNOON THROUGH TUESDAY EVENING FOR THE NORTHWEST PLATEAU AND NORTH CENTRAL MOUNTAINS...** Showers and thunderstorms likely, mainly after noon. Partly sunny, with a high

near 79. West wind 10 to 20 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New rainfall amounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch, except higher amounts possible in thunderstorms.

- **Southwest New Mexico** - Heat decreases, but scattered storm chances remain. Typical summer monsoon thunderstorm impacts are expected including areas of heavy rain and gusty winds.

## **Smoke Conditions**

Fire activity in New Mexico and other states is leading to increased smoke conditions. A daily [Smoke Outlook for affected areas](#) is available through the U.S Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program.

Individuals sensitive to wildfire smoke should take precautions and use the New Mexico Department of Health 5-3-1 Visibility Method to determine if it's safe to be outside. Learn more at <https://nmtracking.doh.nm.gov/environment/air/FireAndSmoke.html>. An interactive smoke map at <https://fire.airnow.gov/> allows you to zoom into your area to see the latest smoke conditions.

## **Internet / Social Media**

The public can continue to follow fires in New Mexico on [InciWeb](#), [New Mexico Fire Information](#) and New Mexico Forestry Division's [X account](#) (formerly Twitter) and [Facebook](#).

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