

Northern Rockies – Southwest Area Wildland Fire Management Team



FACT SHEET

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Miller Fire Information

Gila National Forest
Wilderness Ranger District

Office: (575) 536-2250

Miller Wildland Fire Update

Tuesday, May 10, 2011

Extreme burning conditions along with high winds yesterday caused the Miller fire to spot across NM Highway 15. Firefighters were using NM Highway 15 to hold the fire away from the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument Visitors Center. The spot fire grew quickly and firefighters successfully protected all residences, the Visitor Center and Contact Center. Unfortunately, firefighters were unable to protect four surplus Forest Service trailers that were destroyed. Although no private property was lost, the fire continues to threaten homes in the area. Structure protection continues in and around Gila Hot Springs.

A Level 3 Evacuation remains in effect for residents of Gila Hot Springs. Residents who have left the area are welcome to go to the Grant Co. Business & Conference Center, 1400 Highway 180 East, Silver City, NM 88061. Once residents leave they will not be allowed to return until conditions are safe.

Fire Size: 47,200 acres. The human caused Miller Fire was detected on 4/28/2011 in the Gila Wilderness

Fire Behavior: winds are producing high rates of surface spread with frequent spotting and increased fire activity in the afternoons.

Campground Closures: The following campgrounds off New Mexico Highway 15 remain closed: Upper and Lower Scorpion, Grapevine, Woody's Corral, Forks and TJ Corral.

What is open: Lake Roberts Picnic Area, Mesa, Upper End and Mesa campgrounds, and Sapillo Group Area are open to the public.

Trail Closures: Most of the trails west of New Mexico Highway 15, are now closed. This includes: 155 Turkey Creek, 159 Miller Springs, 160 Granny Mt., 403 Brushy Mt., 814 W. Fork Corral, 162 Ring Canyon, 789 Little Creek Cutoff, 161 Little Creek, 158 Sycamore, and 177 Cienega.

Road Closures: New Mexico Highway 15, at the intersection with New Mexico Highway 35 is closed.

Smoke is still visible from Silver City, Cliff, and surrounding areas, especially as fire activity and smoke increases. The Gila River Drainage's should expect to see elevated levels of smoke in the early mornings as smoke settles into the valley. Unhealthy conditions are expected in Gila Hot Springs and at the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. Individuals with existing respiratory or heart conditions are encouraged to take appropriate precautions, as are the elderly or small children. Information about smoke and what individuals can do to protect themselves can be found at <http://nmfireinfo.wordpress.com/smoke-management/>. Smoke monitors have been placed in Cliff and at the Cliff Dwellings and the smoke levels can be found at <http://satguard.com/usfs/>, under *Real Time Data*. Southwest winds have carried smoke in to the middle Rio Grande Valley.

Stage I Fire Restrictions are in effect on the Gila National Forest: *Open fires are prohibited, except within a developed recreation site, or improved site. Petroleum-fueled stoves, are allowed. Campfires must be in a pre-constructed Forest Service fireplace or fire ring. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material*