

Fire Information: (575)258-6900

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Little Bear Fire June 11, 2012 – 9 p.m. - CORRECTED

Firefighters Take Advantage of Favorable Conditions to Make Substantial Progress

Start Time/Date	Monday, June 4, 2012
Location:	Smokey Bear Ranger District, Lincoln NF, including White Mountain Wilderness
Cause:	Lightning
Fuels:	Mixed conifer, ponderosa pine
Size:	approx. 34,651 acres
Containment:	30 %
Resources Committed:	Personnel: 979; crews: 9 Type 1, 15 Type 2; engines: 53; helicopters: 8 Type 1, 3 Type 2, 2 Type 3; dozers: 12; water tenders: 9
Today's Weather:	76 degrees, relative humidity 13%, wind SSW 12 mph gusting to 18 mph
Structures destroyed:	35 (damage assessment began today)
Road Closures:	NM 532 (Ski Run Road) at mile marker 3, east and west; NM 48 from Ruidoso to mile marker 15, north and south; NM 37 from mile marker 0 to mile marker 8, north and south.
Area Closures	The entire White Mountain Wilderness, and that portion of the Smokey Bear Ranger District south of NM 380 to the Mescalero Apache Reservation boundary, including a large area east and north of Ruidoso to the south boundary of the Fort Stanton Recreation Area.

Summary: Higher humidity and lower wind speeds, combined with the arrival of additional personnel and equipment provided an opportunity to make good progress today. Direct line was constructed around the Ski Apache Resort and Eagle Lake area.

Crews secured line on the northeast flank into Nogal Canyon. On the eastern edge, approximately 25 miles of dozer line is now in place, and crews mopped up and protected structures. On the southeastern flank, dozer line was improved and tied in with NM 532. Planned burnouts went well. A contingency line was constructed south of and parallel to NM 532.

Twenty five loads of retardant were dropped on the fire by air tankers, and helicopters dropped water all day long. The Very Large Air Tanker (VLAT), staged in Phoenix, AZ, is available if needed. The VLAT is a DC-10 with a capacity of approximately 12,000 gallons. This is equivalent to four P-3 Orion tankers. The VLAT flies at 500 mph, and has 3 tanks, allowing it to split the load for more precise placement. Cost is commensurate with conventional tankers. This aircraft is, however, just another tool available to firefighters, and not the best choice on every occasion. It is less maneuverable than conventional tankers, and requires a specially qualified lead plane to orchestrate retardant drops.

Community meetings will be conducted in the main gymnasium of Ruidoso High School, 125 Warrior Road at 4:30 p.m., and at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday. A community meeting will also be conducted at the fairgrounds in Capitan at 7:00 p.m. A community meeting will be conducted on the Mescalero Apache Reservation at 6 p.m., at the Inn of the Mountain Gods.

A press conference with Governor Martinez, state and local officials and partners, and representatives of the Incident Management Team will be conducted at 11:00 a.m. tomorrow at Fire Station No. 2, 606 White Mountain Road, Ruidoso.

Evacuations: All campgrounds west of Bonito Lake; subdivisions of Villa Madonna, Enchanted Forest, Nogal Canyon (Forest Road 400, campground and summer homes), Angus, Sierra Vista, Sonterra (1, 2 and 3), Copper Canyon, and Loma Grande; Eagle Lakes Campground, Eagle Creek summer homes, Ski Run Road (State Highway 532) at mile marker 3, State Highway 48 to Capitan, and State Highway 37 to Highway 380 and Ski Apache. This list may not be all inclusive.

Shelters: Ruidoso High School at 125 Warrior Road, and Trinity Baptist Church in Capitan. Pets and livestock may be taken to J Bar J Country Church in Ruidoso, or the fairgrounds in Capitan.

The damage assessment team began work today to determine the number and condition of structures within the burned area.

Information on wildland fire smoke and your health can be found on the New Mexico Department of Health's website at: http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/documents/Health_Effects_Smoke_06152010.pdf