



Southwest Area Incident Management Team

For Immediate Release

June 30, 2004

Firefighters Make Progress On Nuttall Fire State Route 366 to Remain Closed for Several Days

Firefighters made good progress on the Nuttall Fire yesterday. Approximately 75% of indirect fire line construction is now complete. Crews will focus on strengthening the existing line and completing the remaining 25% today. If weather conditions permit, a burn out operation will begin.

Fire Managers developed an indirect strategy to suppress the Nuttall Fire because a direct approach, involving fire line construction immediately adjacent to the fire, posed a safety hazard to firefighters. The terrain is very steep and rocky, and most of the fire area is accessible only by air, necessitating placement of fire lines in safer and more accessible locations. A large burn out operation, to remove unburned fuel from between the fire's edge and the fire lines, will occur over the next several days. **A large amount of smoke from the burnout operation will be visible from Safford and surrounding areas.**

The Nuttall Fire, located approximately 17 miles southwest of Safford, Arizona in the Pinaleno Mountains, is currently 450 acres in size with eleven Type 1 "Hotshot" crews, four Type 2 handcrews, eight helicopters, twelve engines, four watertenders, and sixty-three support personnel assigned.

State Route 366, also known as the Swift Trail, will remain closed to public access throughout the Fourth of July weekend to ensure firefighter and public safety. The Graham County Sheriff's Office and the Coronado National Forest concurred with the Southwest Area Incident Management Team's recommendation to continue restricting travel on the narrow, windy road leading into the fire area. Deputy Incident Commander Paul Summerfelt said, "We understand that many families traditionally spend the Fourth of July in the area camping or enjoying their summer cabins. We respect those traditions and want to see them continue. However, the fire is not contained and the weather is expected to get hotter and drier making it unsafe for people to be in the area". The road will be reopened as soon as conditions improve and fire activity no longer presents a safety hazard to people who may need to leave the area quickly.

Please call Nuttall Fire Information at (928) 348-9425 with questions or concerns.

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