



Southwest Area Incident Management Team

For Immediate Release

**July 3, 2004
9:15 AM**

Significant Increase in Fire Activity Reported on the Nuttall Complex

As reported yesterday, ten firefighters deployed their fire shelters. No injuries occurred and all fire personnel involved with the deployment are safe. Fire personnel will be investigating the events leading up to the deployment. A separate news release regarding the details of the deployment will be forthcoming.

In other developments, fire officials reported a significant increase in fire activity on both the Nuttall and Gibson Fires, which comprise the Nuttall Fire Complex. The Nuttall Fire is now an estimated 3,105 acres in size while the Gibson Fire is 112 acres in size. Five percent containment is reported for the complex.

On the Nuttall Fire yesterday, dry weather conditions, increased winds, and lower humidity levels caused the fire to burn beyond the southeastern perimeter containment line that firefighters had constructed earlier in the week. Today, crews plan to construct an indirect line ahead of the fire perimeter on the southeast flank. They will then try to reconnect it with the main containment line on the northeast side of the fire, which is holding. On the west side of the fire, crews will continue to monitor and strengthen the line and watch for additional fires that may ignite from blowing embers.

Drier conditions and increased temperatures caused the Gibson Fire to become more active yesterday. Today, fire personnel will assess the fire to determine the most appropriate suppression actions, given the steep and rocky terrain. Structural protection measures are in place at Mount Graham International Observatory, which was evacuated per the Graham County Sheriff's Office late yesterday. The Gibson Fire is located approximately 1 ½ miles southeast of the Observatory.

Resources on the Nuttall Fire Complex include ten Type 1 "Hotshot" crews, four Type 2 crews, ten helicopters, twelve engines, one dozer, four water tenders, and numerous support personnel. Ten additional Type I "Hotshot" crews, and one retardant base have been ordered along with two Military Modular Airborne Firefighting System airtankers. A total of 581 people are currently assigned to the Complex.

A precautionary evacuation is still in effect from West Peak to Old Columbine. 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 road will be reopened as soon as conditions improve and fire activity no longer presents a public safety hazard.

For more information about the Nuttall Fire Complex, please visit <http://www.fireteam-sw.com/oltrogge/incidents/nuttall/>, or call (928) 348-9425 or (928) 348-0261 for more information.

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