



Southwest Area Incident Management Team

For Immediate Release

July 4, 2004
11 am

Firefighters Adjust Tactical Approach on the Nuttall Fire Complex

Based on terrain, excessive fuels, and extreme fire activity on the Nuttall Fire Complex, fire personnel have adjusted their suppression strategy. They are now treating the Gibson and Nuttall Fires as one fire instead of two. Efforts today will focus on preparing State Road 366, commonly known as the Swift Trail, Forest Service Road 507, and adjacent ridges as the northern and eastern containment line. Where possible, firefighters will conduct burnout operations along the roads and ridges to strengthen the containment line. Crews will continue to reinforce the west side of the control line.

According to Pruitt Small, Operations Section Chief for the Southwest Area Incident Management Team, "We are attempting to keep the fire on the north side of the Mt. Graham Mountain Range, and pushing it to the desert floor. It is the safest way we know to approach this fire."

Yesterday, the fire came within three-quarters of a mile of the Mount Graham International Observatory. Fire officials had evacuated the observatory earlier in the day, leaving just a few employees on the premises to activate the external fire protection sprinkler system. Today, firefighters will use bull dozers to construct a line around the observatory if fire conditions permit. Several crews and engines will implement structural protection measures to prepare the buildings to receive fire and embers.

With low humidities and drier conditions, both fires grew significantly yesterday. The Nuttall Fire is at 5,254 acres while the Gibson Fire is now at 4,090. The total acreage for the complex is 9,344.

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, call Nuttall Fire Complex Information at (928) 348-9425 or (928) 348-0261 between the hours of 7 AM and 9:30 PM or visit www.fireteam-sw.com/oltrogge/incidents/nuttall.

Fire Facts

Acreages:	Nuttall Fire 5,254	Gibson Fire 4,090	Nuttall Complex Total: 9,344
Containment to Date:	5%	Cost To Date: \$2.7million	Total Personnel Assigned: 812
Resources:	19 Type 1 "Hotshot" crews 5 Type 2 crews 11 helicopters		
	2 Military Modular Airborne Firefighting System airtankers		
	16 engines, 1 dozer, and 7 water tenders		

Two additional Military Modular Airborne Firefighting System airtankers and four bull dozers have been ordered.

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