

# **Knife Fire Update**

Date: May 28, 2006, 12 p.m.

**Fire Name:** Knife Fire

**Time/Date Started:** May 27, 2006; Called in by O'Leary Lookout at 2:14 p.m.

**Location:** Southeast of Walnut Canyon; about 14 miles east of downtown Flagstaff; on the Coconino National Forest

**Cause:** Human-caused; under investigation

**Fuels:** Pinyon/juniper woodlands; grasses; lots of dead material

**Size:** 275 acres (The fire is very long and narrow.)

**% Contained:** 60 %

**Estimated Containment Date:** Evening of May 29, 2006

**Resources Committed:** 5 engines, 3 water tenders, 2 Type 1 crews (Mormon Lake Hotshots from the Coconino National Forest and the Pike Hotshots from Colorado), 2 Type 2 crews, 4 dozers, and several individual firefighting personnel; Total personnel = 118. Several agencies are assisting in the suppression of the fire including the Forest Service, Summit Fire Department, Highlands Fire Department, Sedona Fire Department and Parks-Bellevue Fire Department.

**Estimated Cost to Date:** \$50,000

**Predicted Weather:** Red Flag conditions predicted for today from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Windy conditions are expected again today, mainly east of Flagstaff. Temperatures will be several degrees cooler today than yesterday. In the fire area, winds are expected to be from the southwest at about 20 mph with gusts to 30 mph and higher. A warming trend with much lighter winds is expected tomorrow.

**Structures:** No structures threatened at this time.

**Concerns:** Smoke on Interstate 40 continues to be the major concern. However, the highway remains open. The fire has moved to within a mile of the interstate. There are also powerlines in the area. The fire is about one-third of a mile from a powerline that runs parallel to the interstate. Powerlines are always a concern for firefighters because smoke and/or flames can cause lines to arc. APS personnel are on scene. For their own safety, motorists should avoid the frontage road (Road 4) on the south side of Interstate 40 between Winona and Twin Arrows. Motorists are also asked to avoid forest roads in the fire area – specifically, Forest Road 82 – due to heavy use by firefighting equipment and personnel.

**Summary:** Firefighters are continuing to build line around the fire and conduct burnout operations. By flanking the fire on both its east and west sides, firefighters are hoping to eventually pinch off the fire at its head. The east side of the fire is moving toward an area previously burned by the Lizard Fire in 2003. While some grasses have grown back, the area has less fuel for the fire to burn.

**Restrictions:** Campfire and smoking restrictions are in place for the Coconino National Forest. The Knife Fire was human-caused, although the exact cause is still under investigation. Forest visitors are urged to obey the rules regarding campfire and smoking restrictions. Violation of these prohibitions is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000, imprisonment of not more than 6 months, or both.

- Campfires, charcoal grills, and stove fires are prohibited on national forest lands, roads, and trails. An **exception** will be to continue to allow these campfires in developed **fee** recreation sites where grills and campfire rings are provided.
- Pressurized liquid or gas stoves, lanterns and heaters meeting safety specifications are allowed.
- Smoking is prohibited except within enclosed vehicles, buildings, or developed **fee** recreation sites where the area is cleared of all flammable material.

Contact Numbers: 928-635-5607, 928-606-7490