



MEMORANDUM

Date: June 11, 2020

To: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

From: John Voorhees
Assistant County Administrator

Re: Bighorn Fire Incident Command Actions

The following is a report of actions taken to date in response to the Bighorn Fire in the Santa Catalina Mountains. The incident is contained within the land of the Coronado National Forest and is being managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Pima County is supporting the Incident Manager.

A Type I incident management team (IMT) has been deployed to the region as of Monday, June 8, 2020. A Type I IMT is the most complex management team available. There are currently 6 hotshot teams, 3 hand crews, 15 engines, 7 helicopters and 10 water tenders managing the fire. A total of 391 personnel are involved in firefighting.

As of today the Bighorn Fire has burned 4769 acres from Pusch Ridge to the Finger Rocks Canyon. The fire is still about 10% contained. Low Relative Humidity and moderate winds have exacerbated the situation.

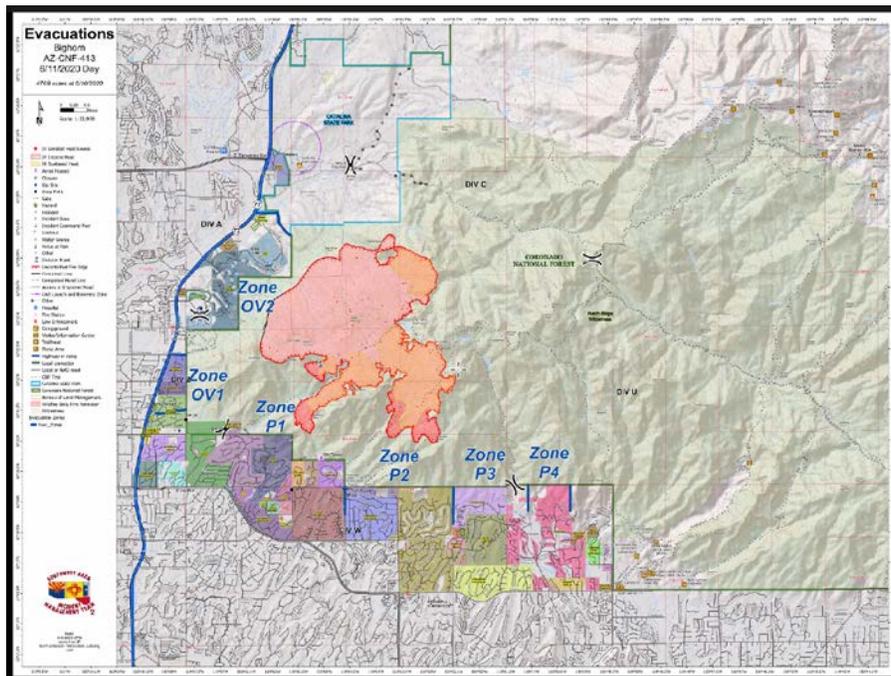


Figure 1: June 11 AM fire line

The fire is progressing northeast. Southwest movement is less than 30 feet per hour and is not considered active in the foothills area. The potential for southeast movement of the fire is significant as downslope winds pick up in the evenings. As a precaution the IMT is using the "ready-set-go" incident action plan for public evacuation notification (<https://ein.az.gov/ready-set-go>). Yesterday, the areas labeled "OV1" and "P1" south to Ina road were given a "set" notification. Today, the "set" condition will be extended to P2, P3, and P4. Currently, there is a "go" evacuation order for the northernmost portion of P1 (about 132 structures):

EVACUATION MESSAGE URGENT
Bighorn Wildfire
Announcements – 31 min. ago

!!Evacuation Message!!

This is a message from the Pima County Office of Emergency Management and the Pima County Sheriff's Department. A wildfire back burn will be conducted this morning in your area to protect homes and property.

As part of the Ready, Set, GO! process, the area on the attached map in the Northern part of the area of the Catalina Foothills between Alvernon Way and 1st Avenue, North of Ina Road is now in the "GO" state and is being evacuated.

If you are in this area, EVACUATE NOW.

Move south away from the Catalina Mountains. Do not delay leaving the area. The Pima County Sheriff's Department will be going door to door to make contact with those affected residents who may not have received the message.

A cooling shelter is available at CDO High School, 25 W Calle Concordia, in Oro Valley.

Additional messaging will be sent as the situation changes.
Questions from residents in the area should be directed to 351-FIRE (3473)
Bighorn Fire information can be found here: <http://www.pima.gov/Bighorn>
Pima County Emergency Alert information can be found here: <https://emergencyalerts.pima.gov/>
Find out more about the Ready, Set, Go program here: <https://ein.az.gov/ready-set-go>

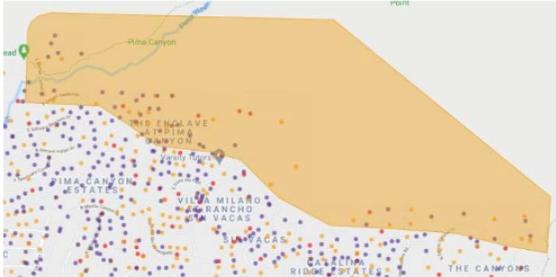


Figure 2: "Go" condition near Pima Canyon

This is to allow firefighters to execute a back burn in the southwest corner of the fire line. The IMT does not anticipate the fire to threaten the structures in the area yet. The "Go" condition is out of an abundance of caution.

The IMT is managing all aspects of the incident and is tied into all applicable local agencies:

1. Office of Emergency Management (OEM) – the senior liaison for the IMT. OEM has been sending messages on behalf of the IMT and assisting the team with local points of contact. Everbridge and the Town of Oro Valley’s Code Red are the two real-time means of communicating with affected residents.
2. Regional Flood Control – have offered assistance with GIS data, as well as buffelgrass mapping. They are prepared to evaluate burned land for flood mitigation issues as monsoon begins.
3. Communications – manages the social media messaging for the County. The IMT has its own Public Information Officer, but communications will provide local expertise. Communications rapidly developed a Bighorn Fire website presence for information sharing with the public. <http://www.pima.gov/Bighorn> . The IMT has also developed information sharing portals through INCIWEB (<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6741/>) and Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/coronadonf>). They have urged residents to sign up for Everbridge notifications through <https://emergencyalerts.pima.gov/>.
4. Pima Animal Care Center – is prepared to accept pets from evacuated residents. The IMT has also solicited assistance to secure the Rillito racetrack for large animal shelter for affect residents.
5. Sheriff’s Department – will continue to aid with traffic management and door to door evacuation notice for Pima County residents. Traffic from onlookers and drone operators had been a hindrance to operations earlier in the week. It appears those issues have been resolved.
6. Oro Valley Police Department – similarly is assisting traffic management and evacuation efforts for affected Oro Valley residents.
7. Golder Ranch and Northwest Fire Districts – have contributed assets and personnel to the firefighting effort.
8. Red Cross of Southern Arizona – has established cooling and shelter operations at Canyon Del Oro High School
9. El Conquistador Resort – is the IMT headquarters.
10. Health Department – is monitoring the situation and providing assistance with Senior Living Facilities in the area. The IMT has a health liaison team keeping track of all issues related to the firefighting effort including COVID-19 related illnesses and PPE needs.
11. Grants Management and Innovation - The IMT will pursue funding under the Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) program. GMI will be brought in to collect costs for the fire and seek federal assistance to offset costs. Incident costs to date exceed three million dollars. About 70% of that is for aerial support.

12. Local Air Traffic Control – have established numerous temporary flight restrictions (TFR) to facilitate aerial firefighting operations and refueling/retanking operations:

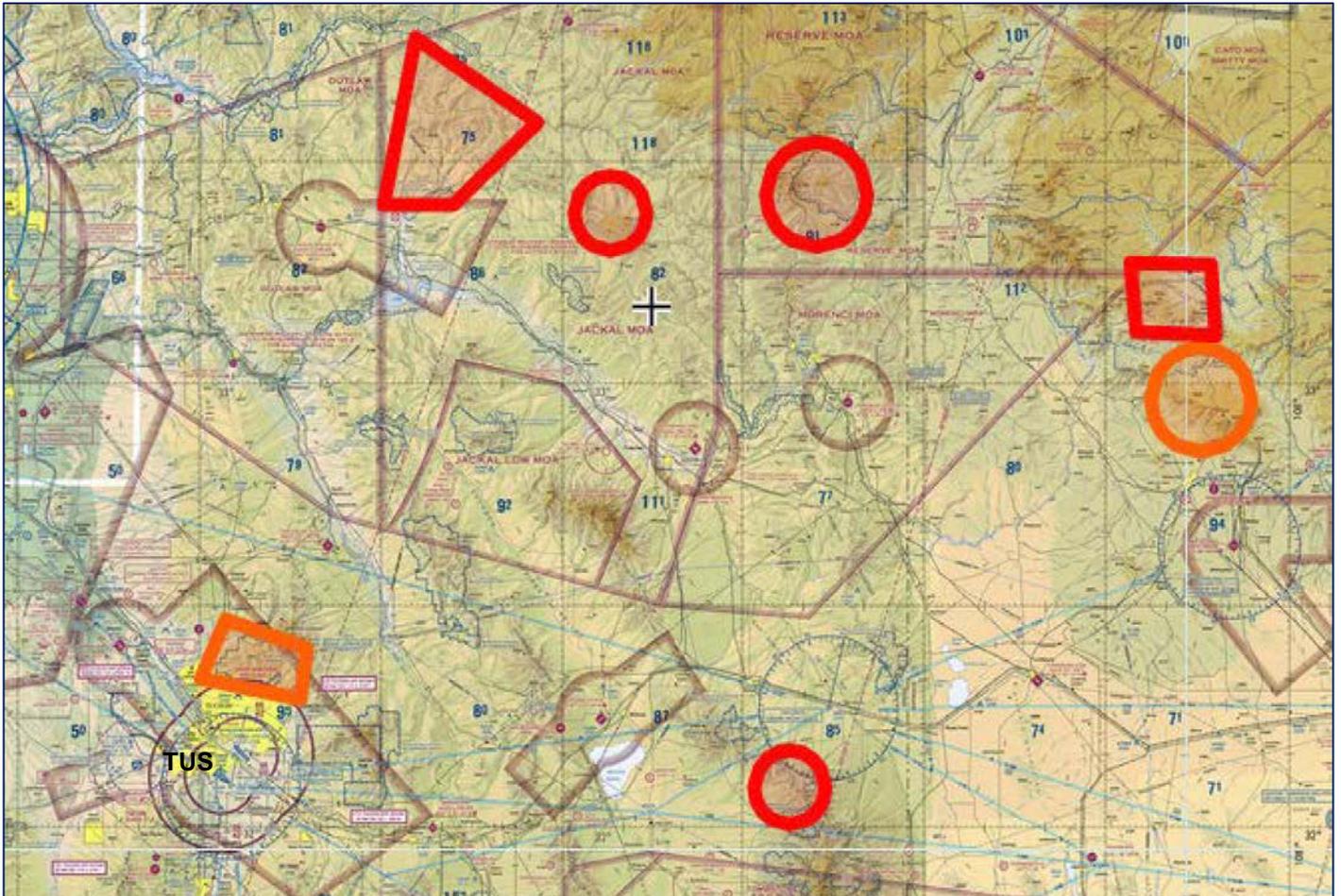
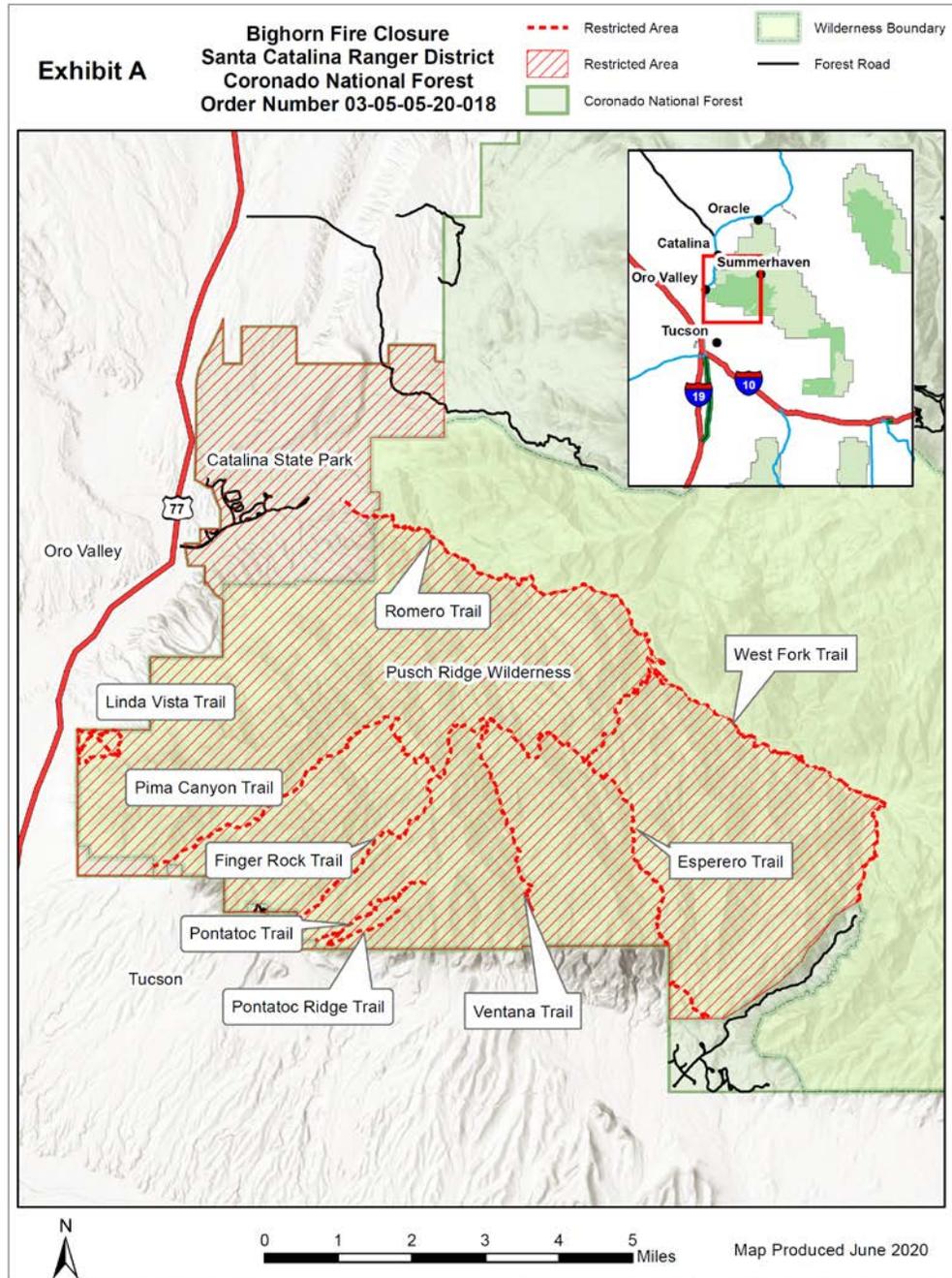


Figure 3: TFRs for aerial operations

The Santa Catalina Ranger District of Coronado National Forest has issued a closure order for the region:



There are likely additional county resources being employed to support this effort. As those resources become apparent I will provide an update of activity.

jcv