



Southwest Area Incident Management Team

ASPEN FIRE

Information Office: 520-749-6208 Date: June 22, 2003, 8:00 a.m.

STARTED: June 17, 2003 **SIZE:** Acres: **8,800** **CAUSE:** Undetermined, under investigation.

CONTAINED: 5%

LOCATION: The Aspen Fire is located in the Santa Catalina Mountains, 20 miles north of Tucson.

NOTE: THERE IS NO IMMINANT THREAT TO THE TOWN OF ORACLE

FUELS: Aspen fire is burning in heavy brush, ponderosa pine and mixed conifer and a mixture of ponderosa pine, oak woodland and chaparral.

SUMMARY: Aerial infrared photography flown determined that the Aspen Fire has now grown to 8,800 acres. Last evening the fire made a run at Syke Knob and entered the Lower Soldier area of homes. An estimated 9 structures were lost during the run, many more were saved by the protection treatments accomplished over the last two days. The loss will be confirmed after the area is deemed safe for assessment. Two towers were heavily damaged on Radio Ridge, east of the observatory. Several towers have been protected by clearing brush and installing sprinklers. Hazard trees are being removed from the Summerhaven area so that FEMA assessments can begin. Firefighters have begun offensive actions by constructing hand lines down the east and west flanks to contain the fire south of the ridge divide. Burnout is ongoing down the ridge to the west of Spencer Canyon to strengthen lines.

FIRE HISTORY: The Aspen fire was first observed on June 17th burning on the south face of Marshall Peak at an elevation of approximately 8,000 feet. On June 18, the fire remained in the vicinity of Marshall Peak, growing to 465 acres with spread primarily to the southwest. On the afternoon of June 19, 2003 strong winds pushed the fire northeast into the community of Summerhaven, across the Mount Lemmon Highway and over the crest of the Santa Catalina Mountains. Numerous structures were destroyed as the fire moved through Summerhaven on Thursday afternoon. Friday, June 20th efforts were focused on protecting remaining structures in and around Summerhaven.

CONCERNS: Firefighter, aviation, and public safety; protection of homes and other structures. Protecting remaining communication facilities on Radio Ridge east of the fire. Continued threat to Bear Wallow area. Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species habitat: Mexican Spotted Owl, Peregrine falcon.

RESOURCES: Currently 22 20-person Hot Shot Crews and 6 type II crews are assigned to the fire. In addition, seven helicopters and 22 engines are currently assisting with suppression efforts. Two air tankers are available to support with suppression activities. In all there are approximately 891 people assigned to the fire. Additional personnel have been ordered.

RESTRICTIONS: The Mount Lemmon Highway is closed at the base of the mountain at milepost 0. The Control Road from Oracle and the San Manuel Road has been closed by Pinal County near Oracle Hill Mine. Sabino Basin Trail above stop 9 is closed to entry. For Safety, hikers are discouraged from using upper elevation trails until further notice. Camps located on Organization Ridge were evacuated on June 19th.

INCIDENT COMMAND POST LOCATION: Sabino High School, 5000 N. Bowes Road, Tucson.