



## Southwest Area Incident Management Team

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### ASPEN FIRE

Information Office: 520-749-6208 Date: June 20, 2003, 11 a.m.

**STARTED:** June 17, 2003      **SIZE:** Acres: 3200      **CAUSE:** Undetermined, under investigation.

**LOCATION:** The Aspen Fire is located in the Santa Catalina Mountains on the Coronado National Forest in the vicinity of the community of Summerhaven and 20 miles north of Tucson.

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

**SUMMARY:** On the afternoon of June 19, 2003 strong winds and low humidity combined to push 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. Due to continued low humidity and winds, the fire remains active, moving primarily to the north. The fire is now burning in the vicinity of Red Ridge and Oracle Ridge. Strong winds are forecast for today and the potential exists for large fire growth and extreme fire behavior.

The Aspen fire was first observed burning on the south face of Marshall Peak one mile southwest of the community of Summerhaven 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.

Firefighting efforts today are focused on protecting remaining structures in and around the community of Summerhaven and near Soldier Camp to the east of the fire. Firefighters will be backfiring in the vicinity of Sykes Knob.

**CONCERNS:** Firefighter, aviation, and public safety; protection of homes and other structures. A number of communications facilities are located on Radio Ridge east of the fire. Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species habitat: Mexican Spotted Owl, Peregrine falcon.

**RESOURCES:** Management of the Aspen Fire transitioned to Larry Humphrey's Southwest Area Incident Management Team at 6:00 pm on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Currently 10 20-person Hot Shot Crews and 2 type 2 crews are assigned to the fire. In addition, eight helicopters and 23 engines are currently assisting with suppression efforts. Four air tankers are available to support with suppression activities. In all there are approximately 640 people assigned to the fire.

**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 have 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. All camps located on Organization Ridge were evacuated on June 19<sup>th</sup>.

**INFORMATION:** There will be a public meeting at 6 pm today in the Sabino High School Auditorium, 5000 North Bowes Rd, Tucson.

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