

The Silver Fire

As We Lived It

Published on the Second Anniversary of the Silver Fire.

What we saw and felt...

The blog entries on the Free Range and Silver Fire Blogs captured our thoughts as we lived through the Silver Fire. This reprint of those blog entries and never before published images by Véronique De Jaegher and Catherine Wanek are a vivid reminder of what the communities of the Black Range went through during the summer of '13. Although reformatted to fit this publication, the blog entries otherwise remain unchanged. Read the blogs carefully and you will see that our understanding of what was happening; changed over time, was not always clear, and was full of dread and hope.

At the end there are photographs of the fire and Range which were not published in the Black Range Rag.

This document is available as one document, or because of its size, as

several. See the Black Range Rag for details.

The Silver Fire Blog

During the summer of 2013, the Silver Fire burned much of the Black Range, or at least that is what we thought at the time. We worried, we helped however we could, but mostly we turned our faces to the Black Range and watched.

It was especially traumatic for the people of Kingston, the fire was at their doorsteps, they were evacuated, they worried more, their gaze was not always at the crest of the Black Range. Their gaze was often toward Kingston.

During that time, the Black Range Rag carried a special blog: "The Silver Fire Blog" - some how a title that was less precise did not feel good in the stomach, it was not a time for catchy titles. The blog was one of several sources which the people of the Black Range were able to use to keep informed about the status of the fire.

The Initial Post

On June 14, 2013 The Black Range Rag first noted the fire in a post by Harley Shaw on a different topic. At first it was not clear that the fire was going to be anything out of the ordinary. A lightning strike, a fire, quickly suppressed was certainly the scenario of the first couple of days. By the 14th things had changed.



This post was submitted prior to the start of the Silver Fire. The photographs of that fire are from June 9 and 10. As of this posting the fire has consumed 19,000 acres of forest.



This post covers the period from the start of the fire to the first day Highway 152 was closed west of Kingston.

More tomorrow.



smoke over town has a psychological effect. (editor: see image at top of second column)

By Sunday morning the plume was much bigger. (editor: see image at top of this column)

Emergency vehicles started showing up, there was a sense of readiness all around the fire station (across the street from the bank).

The Initial Post (con't)

The image and caption on the preceding page and the two images above constituted the first notice of the fire on The Black Range Rag. The following day, we started "The Silver Fire Blog" and a series by Susan Roebuck on "The Free Range" Blog.

The Susan D. Roebuck posts...

On June 15, we published two posts by Susan D. Roebuck - the first in a series entitled "The Silver Fire - As It Happened" - were published on The Free Range blog. Susan was living in Kingston and brought a wonderful perspective to how we viewed the fire.

The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 1

A post and photographs by Susan D. Roebuck of Kingston, evacuated to Hillsboro.

On Friday 6/7 it rained.

Friday evening I took a walk with Joey. I smelled smoke. I heard a plane flying over the range.



The alarm went off after dark sometime. I heard the trucks leave and could see their lights heading up 152.

On my way to work at the bank Saturday morning, I saw this light wisp. It was far away, but I thought it was closer because seeing a plume of



Around noon three fire trucks head up into the forest.





The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 1 (Con't)

They return and there is a consultation. (editor: photos above and immediately below are blog photos - photos at top center and top right by Bob Barnes)

“Dear Annie,

I would not be at all surprised if we have to evacuate. And only a little less surprised if Kingston burns. A gray and orange roiling plume just over the ridge can make one a Nervous Nellie.”

Emory Pass. Today the plume is much larger and billowing grayly. Yesterday we were put on notice that there may be an evacuation, and I have written a list of items to bring out should we need to evacuate today. The wind conditions are not too bad right now. The fire is between seven and fourteen miles away, on a slope west of the divide, south of Sawyer's Peak. The wind direction pushes the fire toward Kingston still, I believe, or south of. All for now-- Susan”

“Hi Susan, I am thinking about you and the fire and hoping you don't have to evacuate. Perhaps you have already. Are you still planning to come to Salida tomorrow? I am sitting at Cafe Dawn drinking an iced latte.”



Dora Mae Holen
6/09/13

Are you still planning to leave to Colorado tomorrow?

“Hi Bob and Val, Tom will have told you already about the fire over the divide that is blowing this way. The day before yesterday we smelled the smoke, then yesterday morning there was a smoke plume visible south of

“At the present time I am thinking if Kingston is going to burn, I could



(Editor: Photos above of the Black Range as we knew it. - by Bob Barnes)

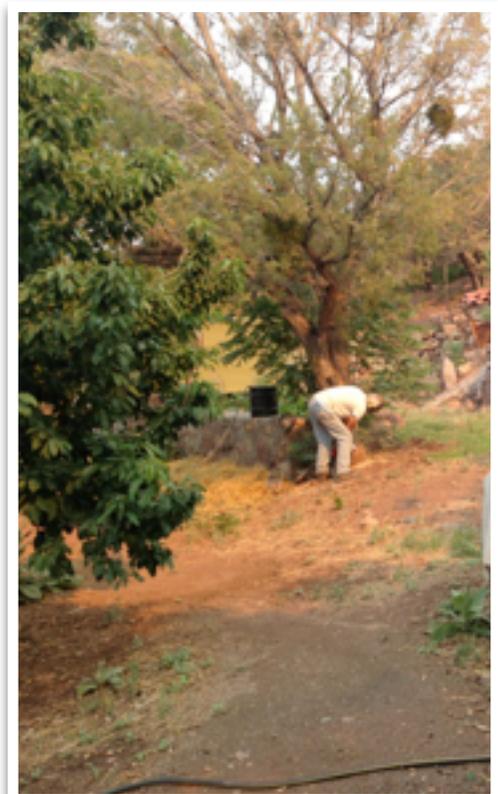
The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 1 (Con't)

stay and save all of my belongings, perhaps, by taking several trips down to Hillsboro."

4:00 p.m. The light is orange, the shadows blue. The feeling is "floating restlessness."

"I think I will stay up here for a while and not go to music. :(

I'll keep you posted. "



I decide to take a walk. I head west.

I see Alan cutting down a tree at the lodge.



I go to the bank and put the art in the vault.



At the highway. 152 is closed from Kingston on.



(Editor: Photos above of the Black Range as we came to know it. - by Bob Barnes)

The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 1 (Con't)



We look back up the road before heading home.



We walk again, this time East.



Joey and I return home.

June 15, 2013

The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 2



A post and photographs by Susan D. Roebuck of Kingston, evacuated to Hillsboro.

This post covers the period from the start of the evacuation until just after the first community meeting.

More tomorrow.





(Editor: Photos above: While the fire burned on the mountain, flowers were blooming in Hillsboro and the garden harvest was underway - by Bob Barnes)

The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 2 (Con't)

"I am going to stay here for this evening, possibly not go to Colorado either -- there is an evacuation notice that was a 72 hour one. So that makes me think it won't happen fast. On the other hand, you can see the flames now and it's only about five miles away. On the other hand, the wind isn't blowing much. I'm up to the minute on info here, everyone's being kept notified. Everyone's just waiting. I may leave here in an hour....or I may stay 'til morning....we'll see.

"I'm going to pack the car...and then decide what to do. Ash is falling and you can see the flames now. "

"You better have a bag packed!"

"I have a whole lot more than just a bag packed up. My car is loaded and I will postpone my trip to Colorado to move ALL my belongings down to Hillsboro tomorrow. S"



This photo is a telephoto from the deck.

A day of decisions by listening and watching. In between the activity of packing to evacuate, I waited. There was time for visiting and subtle consideration of options while listening to our volunteer firefighters and others in the same process. At home, the deck, is a cool spot from being wetted. The evening felt pleasant and still. I heard voices all over town: "It's fuel, that's all there is up there." I had heard work all day at one neighbor's house. Some-one there said, "You've gotta stop sometime, there's nothing more you can do." Dogs, cats, chickens, all voicing their nervousness, and people, too. And then you could begin to actually hear the fire.

By midnight Jim was up and we took a load down to Hillsboro. Then another, then another. In between trips the police came and said to evacuate—I had the phone in my hand at the time, it was a neighbor calling from Las Cruces. He heard the exchange with the police. Joey and I arrived in Hillsboro at 3:30 a.m. Other Kingstonites were arriving in town about the same time. Jan had the word out of where people could stay.





The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 2 (Con't)

other--since 1988 in Yellowstone. They were largely unable to fight it on the ground due to terrain. They dropped 50,000 gallons of retardant on it--that was before it crossed over the range. I haven't seen an update yet but Larry tells us with a "type 2" team arrived on the scene yesterday we will get updates via inciweb.org. Governor Suzanna Martinez flew in yesterday by helicopter, spoke to residents at the Community Center, and then they flew over to see the fire. Winds are very very calm. So lucky since it has been a windy spring."

Drove up the road to Jimmy Bason's ranch gate. (photo top left)

"The peak on the far right is Hillsboro Peak. I am about 20 miles away from Kingston here. They are doing a back burn around Kingston and are optimistic."

Then a trip to town, waiting for the community meeting at 7:00. (photo top of this column)

This is looking up Percha Creek in Hillsboro while on a walk...waiting for the community meeting and to see a map. (photo top right)

The two communities gather for the first community meeting.



Our first map. Larry (District Ranger for the Black Range District) spoke, the incident manager spoke, liaisons were introduced, and even the governor came to speak to us.

We're well-connected to information sources and there are many, many community volunteers taking on every task you can think of.



June 10.

My mother and I took a drive the next morning. "This is from the road leaving Hillsboro—about 11 to 15 miles from the edge of the fire. If you look very carefully, that is Sawyers Peak on the left and Hillsboro Peak on the right. The two peaks are about six miles apart as the crow flies. The fire looks most active over toward Sawyer's Peak. (I can see smoke billowing up there.) Kingston is emptied of residents. There are 120 personnel in Kingston making firebreaks. Larry feels confident about Kingston. One firefighter said he hasn't seen "crowning" —where the fire leaps from one tree crown to the



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 2 (Con't)

All Kingstonites have places to stay for themselves and their animals. Volunteers set to work preparing food for the other volunteers and "refugees." (photo top of this column)



Our most recent map shows the fire as it was last night at about 10:30. Kingston is on the far right of the map—you can see the "Kin-" at the edge. Now another day has passed. Today the fire burned up toward Hillsboro Peak and continued to burn south and on the Western slope of the Black Range. Our volunteer firefighters and a fire crew are up in Kingston tonight in case fire comes from the north.



We gather on and off throughout these days of wait-ing....waiting to know that Kingston is still safe, waiting to see if there is any word that we may move back.

The best thing is that people from Kingston and Hillsboro are experiencing this together.

6-14-13 update—Larry says we are still "very concerned" about fire coming into Kingston from the north. They're there if it does.

Flooding will be an issue after the fire.

"It won't look the same again in our lifetimes."

I'll keep this updated day-by-day now.



Susan R.

June 16, 2013

The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 3

A post and photographs by Susan D. Roebuck of Kingston, evacuated to Hillsboro.

This post covers the period from the start of the first community meeting to the 14th.

More later.



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 3 (Con't)

other side of the Continental Divide, south of Highway 152. Where you see the number "152" is Emory Pass. So the dark green area is 6-09-13. The light green area is the fire growth on 6-10-13. The yellow/orange is 6-11-13, the red is 6-12-13. You can see that the fire has burned very close to Kingston. There is no fire to the north of Kingston at this time. This map does not show the 13th (yesterday) or today, the 14th.

ground. It has spread quite a bit on the West slope of the Black Range, worrying the people in the Mimbres Valley.



Photograph courtesy USFS, Noonday Cabin Structure Protection.



This map shows the fire since Sunday, the day we evacuated. The dark green area is the area shown on our first map which we got at the first community meeting. The red "X" is the location of the initial lightning strike, over on the West side of the range. The fire was mainly on the

This is the map from this morning. You can see that the fire has gone north, burning up toward Hillsboro Peak. The fire is now in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness. It will not be fought in the Wilderness. Many places where it is burning are too rugged for suppression on the

To do the back-burn from helicopters on Hillsboro Peak last night, they dropped ping pong balls full of ethyl glycol. The balls are in a hopper and as it spins them out, it injects them with something that causes them to ignite when they hit the ground. They can be quite precise.

To do a back-burn on the ground, they look for a natural feature like a rockslide or creek or road, and walk through burning everything between that feature and the fire. They do not do a burn in areas with a high volume of highly volatile fuels, grass and



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 3 (Con't)

A helicopter gets water and carries it to the fire. Water is being dipped from Bear Canyon Lake, and from "porta-tanks" which they have put up at the old highway department in Hillsboro, and which can hold up to 5,000 gallons. (See photo at column head, center, page 8)

June 16, 2013

The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 4



The forest service archeologist for the Black Range and the incident commander.

Commonly, firefighters start at the fire's heel," flank it, and pinch it off. This fire is in steep, rugged country with extreme fuel loading, and hot, dry weather. So they are picking spots all around the fire to control the fire where they can have the most chance of success and can work with reasonable safety. Mother Nature determines the rest.

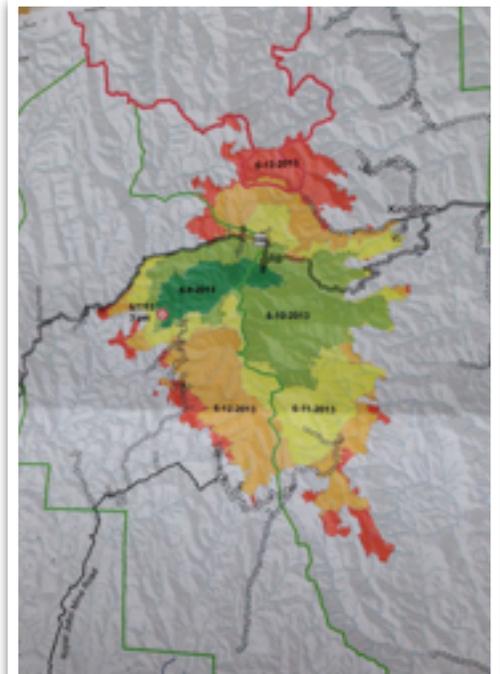
Larry said, "You are one day closer to being able to return home. Don't know when that will be, but you're one day closer.



Larry and Bob Barnes. Bob is on the Water board. They may be talking about flooding.

We were told that the firefighters were helped by the fact that Kingston residents had "defensible space" around their places—spaces that were clear of debris and brush, already boundaries, in a way. The firefighters were able to be effective much sooner than if they had had to do that work.

A post and photographs by Susan D. Roebuck of Kingston, evacuated to Hillsboro. Additional photographs by USFS personnel as indicated. This post was written the evening of June 15. -- Above: Photograph courtesy NASA, Earth Observatory, June 12. More later.





The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 4 (Con't)

This map (editor: see previous page) shows the fire progression since the beginning. (The green blob is the first map we got the day after the evacuation.) You can see the areas that were back-burned today, including Hillsboro Peak and an area Northwest of Kingston. The red outline at the top of the map is the border of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness.

The fire acreage. The last date should be 6/13. The last two days aren't on her since she took the picture yesterday morning. There are new IR maps every day but they're information is from the previous night. The fly-over for that is usually around 10:30 at night. (see image, page 8, top right)

From the INCIDENT ACTION PLAN

FIRE BEHAVIOR FORECAST: With relative humidities, winds, and cloud cover similar to Friday, fire behavior will be moderated again on Saturday. Fire will still be actively spreading in forested timber types with occasional individual and patches of group tree torching. Expect increases in rates of spread in the event of thunderstorm generated winds.

Specific Speed of Fire Spread

In ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, and dense canopy pinon/juniper:

Upslope: 11 ft/min

Flanking: 1 ft/min

Backing: . ft/min

Rates of Spread with gusts of 35 mph typical of T-storm downdrafts:

Upslope: 44 ft/min

Flanking: 1 to 1 . ft/min.

Backing: . ft/min.

SAFETY: Interior green islands and some burned areas in forested types are reburning. With outdrafts from thunderstorm winds, these interior flare ups can make pushes towards lines that are otherwise considered secure. Crews working to cold trail and hot spot the fires edge in Divisions A, Z and Tango must be especially diligent in posting lookouts who can monitor interior activity, and regularly reassess escape routes and safety zones.

Portable water tanks have been set up in Hillsboro. The helicopters dip from it with 300 gallon carriers. (see photo, page 9, top left)

I would like to keep one of the tanks for a swimming pool.

This is the fire camp on Highway 27 by Sterling Roberts's place. The fire camp is being moved to a cooler, less windy location up Forest Road 157. (see photo, page 9, top center)

Fire workers in Kingston. That is Star Peak in the distance to the east. A nice ranger gave me these photos that he took up in Kingston today. I am working at the Community Center, and as I downloaded these for the blog, there were many folks who wanted to see them. This is the first time we have seen pictures of Kingston since the evacuation. (see photo, page 9, top right)

This is a backburn they did in Kingston today This is at Tom and Satomi's house, looking north. (see photo, page 10, top left)

This is at Tom and Satomi's. The hill burning is at or very near the old Boy Scout camp to the north. The fire has burned to the south and west of Kingston, here the north is having its fuel removed....so we are feeling safer and starting to talk about returning. We don't know when that will be, though. (see photo, page 9, center top)

Another day is over. We hear that the chickens, etc., left behind are all fine, we see that Kingston still looks green, and we feel very, very fortunate. (see photo above)



June 17, 2013

A Community Reacts

A posting and photographs by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro.

Above and below: Donations begin to pour in to the Community Center.

There are some things to remember about the communities of the Black Range: We are small islands of humanity on the fringe of the Black Range; We are not incorporated, if there is a government entity in our communities it is the local water association - staffed for the most part by volunteers; We are isolated, the nearest gas and food are miles away; And, as a consequence, of these attributes we are use to doing things ourselves. Except when something really significant happens like the Silver Fire and then we partner with the Feds.

When the evacuation of Kingston was ordered, people had a place to stay. Jan Haley had been making arrangements anticipating the evacuation. Kingston refugees are staying in the homes of friends and relatives in Hillsboro and down toward Lake Valley. No one told Jan to do this, she knew to do it, it is what we do. So, in the wee hours of the night there were knocks at doors throughout our extended community

and people were taken in, provided a place to stay and fed. We still don't know for how long.



The people of zip code 88042 began to gather at the Community Center the next morning. They were bringing cooked foods and food to be cooked. They knew that there would be a need, no one told them it was necessary, they knew and they responded.

Members of the volunteer fire department (Kingston - Hillsboro - Lake Valley) were on duty from the very beginning, sometimes working 24 hour shifts. Doing what they

could to ensure the safety of their friends and neighbors. No overtime, no hazard pay - volunteers.

County governments, in the form of the Sheriff's Departments of Sierra and Grant county have manned the roadblocks. And in the case of the Sierra County Sheriff, helped with the evacuation of Kingston.

There are two grocery stores of consequence in Truth or Consequences (the local metropolis, 30 miles away), both responded with donations. The Arrey Cafe also sent food.

The Community Center quickly became the hub of activity as volunteers and refugees were fed. The US Forest Service started having daily briefings at 10:00 to assure that everyone had the latest, and the correct, information. Portable cleaning stations showed up and there is even a rumor that a portable cell tower may be erected, providing cell service in this area for the first time. (Alas, the cell tower will go away when the flames are vanquished.)

The library volunteers more than doubled the hours the library is open. The library provides free wireless, wired computer service, and long-distance telephone calls. All of



A Community Reacts (Con't)

which have been useful to displaced people.

The Forest Service personnel set up camp near Hillsboro and later moved closer to Kingston. They sometimes set up their mess at the Community Center to get out of the blowing dust and get some relief from the heat. The communities of this area tried their best to respond in kind to the kindness and thoughtfulness of the firefighters, knowing that we could not match their fortitude and willingness to step into hazardous situations but hoping we could make them as at ease as possible.

I recognize that my pride in the community's response may seem pollyannaish to some but with all of the warts I think it is accurate. I recognize that because we have a lot of experience helping ourselves (everything here is run by volunteers) that we may be better at it than many communities, I do not wish to diminish their efforts, only to celebrate ours.

And we thank, from the bottom of our hearts, the personnel of the US Forest Service and their sister Federal Agencies because they are doing what we could not.

June 20, 2013

The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 5

A post and photographs by Susan D. Roebuck of Kingston, evacuated to Hillsboro.

More later.



The "Kingstonites" were evacuated (it was a week ago last night), but a 23,000 acre fire burns within miles of all of us—everyone is impacted. Many are still unable to carry on with normal daily routines—it can be difficult to focus. Others take the opportunity to go into high gear and

lead the volunteer work. Some manage a combination of the two. Volunteers strategized food, shelter, and places to stay, or take on familiar, comforting tasks in the Community Center kitchen. People gather on and off all day in the Hillsboro Community Center. The visiting has been enjoyable for me, and I'm sure many others. This is an event we will recall with each other years from now.



From the Incident Management Team's ORGANIZATION Assignment List:

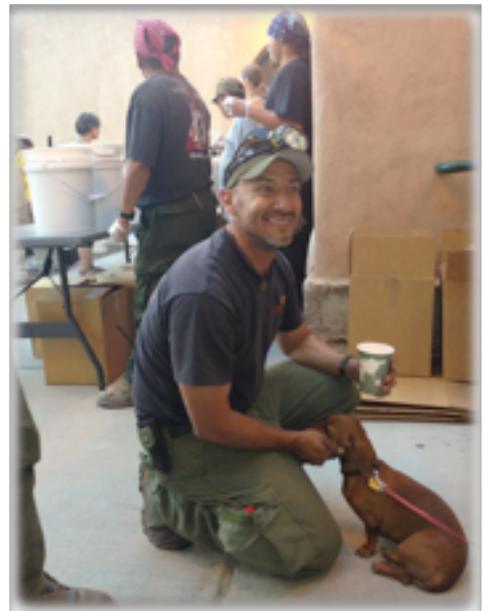
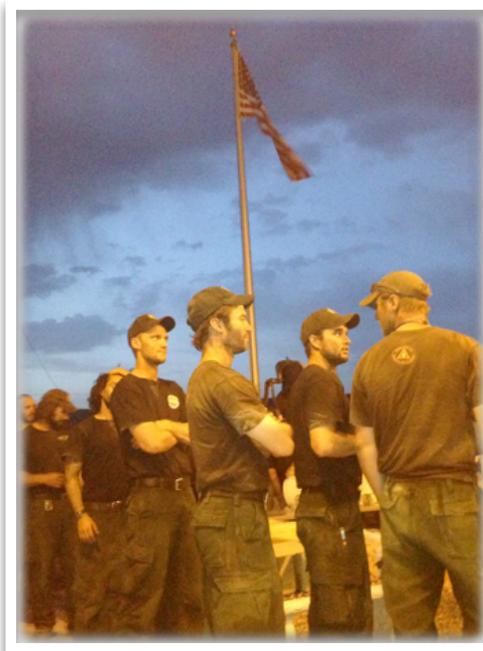
Incident Commander and staff: six people, nine Agency Representatives, 15 Planners, 14 in the Logistics Section, 12 in the Operations Section, and eight in the Finance Section. They showed up, they're trained and experienced, and they know what to do. They take into consideration long-term results and outcome from this



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 5 (Con't)

called a "BEAR" team. Burned Area Emergency Rehab.

Fire crews are from Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, and New Mexico.



The 88042 Pickers' Circle

The pickers' circle played as usual last Friday night in the auditorium—only this time the hall was full of tired firefighters having dinner. That's Bill Bussman with his mandolin. He made the mandolin, Bonita painted it. ("Bonita's an expert watermelon artist," Bill said.)



fire, and will leave a team in place



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 5 (Con't)

Spike

Spike Camp is the name for the camp where the firefighters stay. (A photo of their camp on Highway 27 is in an earlier post.) All this time I thought it was "Spy Camp." Spike Camp has moved to Forest Road 157.

Sparky

Sparky hatched from an incubator up at the lodge on the day of the evacuation. Catherine heard peeping and saw that Sparky was crawling out of her egg. Sparky's peeping saved her from being left behind. Constant peeping is heard around Sheriff Murphy's house in Hillsboro, where Catherine and Gary are staying during the evacuation. Sparky does not peep when asleep or when cuddled against your neck under your hair. (See photo previous page, center column, top)

From the Silver Fire Incident Action Plan:

Incident Objectives:

FULL SUPPRESSION STRATEGY

1. Ensure firefighter and public safety through adherence to all safety standards and implementation of appropriate risk analysis.

2. Ensure firefighter and public safety through adherence to all safety standards and implementation of appropriate risk analysis.

3. Protect values at risk to include private land, forest service infrastructure, watershed, recreation sites, natural and cultural resources.

4. Develop and disseminate timely and accurate information to residents, permittees, cooperators, forest visitors, jurisdictional agencies, and other stakeholders.

5. Provide for public safety through effective and timely evacuation and re-entry into closed areas.

6. Effectively manage incident costs and risk exposure by planning strategies and tactics toward a high probability of success in meeting incident objectives.

(associated photo is on previous page, top left)

Joey waits for when we can hike again in the cool mountains. Many of our familiar places will look stark and ghostly. (associated photo is on previous page, top right)

June 20, 2013

The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 6 (The second posting of that day.)



A post and photographs by Susan D. Roebuck of Kingston, evacuated to Hillsboro. (Photos across the top are from this post.)

More later.

The Silver Fire is far from over. Today it looked as though the entire Black Range would burn. The weather: hot and dry with gusty winds—bad fire combo. As of this morning the fire had burnt 28,000 acres. What will the new figure be in Larry's (Larry Casper, District Ranger) report tomorrow morning? The community meets every morning at 10:00 for the latest report. Larry said this morning we could probably move back in tomorrow (Wednesday). But as of this evening, after seeing this....we do not know if we will go back tomorrow.

Helicopters:

There were four helicopters working today. There are two kinds: Three



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 6 (Con't)

dip types and one sky pumper.

On the dip type, the basket holds about 250 to 300 gallons. Sometimes they lose water out of the bucket if the wind is strong. In the wind today the helicopter rocked in the air, had a hard time keeping level, and made dozens of flights over the tank before they had a full bucket. They look like tiny bugs flying into the smoke.

The sky crane holds 2,000 gallons: 16,000 pounds of water. The suction pump is at the bottom end of the hose. Instead of sucking water up, the pump shoots it up. If you have the pump at the top of the straw, the whole pipe has to be filled with water in order to create suction. If the pump is submerged in the water, it can push the water up into the tank.

Everyone feels distracted.

This was a fun moment. The catering crew are handing off boxes of food in a bucket line. They would report the lightness or heaviness of the box. "Heavy!" "Medium!" "Light!" went the call up the line. But some of the boxes that went up the line as "heavy," being handled as if they were heavy, were actually light, and some of the "light" ones were actually heavy. It was funny.

The firefighters arriving for their meal last night.

Two of our Jims (red T-shirts) with "Bubba," one of the caterers from Mescalero. (see photos above, taken from this post)



The sunset tonight.

June 21

The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 7 (Written on June 19)



A post and photographs by Susan D. Roebuck of Kingston.

This is the map from this morning. The fire is much, much bigger now, and the map covers much more space. It becomes hard to read at this small size. The pink outline at the top left of the map is the border of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness.

The fire munches on. We did not get to go back to Kingston today. Even though it was reported that sparks fell on Kingston this afternoon, it may be safe enough to return tomorrow. If so, it will have been 10 days since we were evacuated. On Friday the Forest Service will drive tours up the closed highway toward the head of Drummund Canyon for residents to see the new world up there. The highway will be closed to all other traffic for weeks yet.



Larry (Black Range District Ranger) told us this morning that "Kingston is still a green jewel." "The fire took a big bite yesterday," he said, burning 5,000 more acres. They dropped many thousands of gallons of water



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 7 (Con't)

around the Black Colt Mine area where there is private property surrounded by national forest. The North Percha Road is closed, and so we are also concerned for our neighbors who ranch up that way. Larry says that should the fire get to North Percha Road they will be comfortable with holding it there.

“It is a whole new weather picture tomorrow,” Larry says, with cooler temperatures and maybe clouds. Today, however, was another hot and dry one, so I am guessing the fire “munched” another 5,000 acres or so.

The Hillsboro Community Center, (see photo top left) where the communities gather each morning for a briefing from the Forest Service and fire officials. The Community Center is the old high school. It houses our library, auditorium, and a kitchen. I’m here now, alone, working on this blog. It’s late evening. The fridge hums here in the kitchen, the town is quiet, the winds have subsided to soft breezes. From the back window I see two horses in a corral standing companionably, enjoying the cooling air, lazily swishing away flies.

The view this evening from the front windows of the Community Center. (photo top center)



Earlier today we talked about how this experience feels like camp. Our normal daily activities are suspended. We meet each morning for a talk from our Ranger, and we eat and visit a lot, and then go do activities. Speaking for myself, I wander off and usually end up visiting with other porch sitters on my way to wherever I go. Then, my mom and I drive up to the graveyard or the hill east of town to see how the fire looks. Then I go play my fiddle. And then at some point, I wander back to the Community Center. (photo top right)

Jim uses his ATV to wander around. This is up at the graveyard, a good place to get a view of the Black Range. (photo next page, top left)

Day is done. (photo next page, top center)

June 22, 2013

The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 8



A post and photographs by Susan D. Roebuck of Kingston.
 Yesterday, June 20th, fourteen days after the fire started. We had our last community meeting at 10:00 a.m.. We

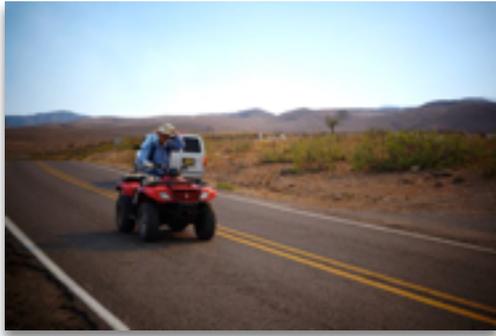


got passes to go through the road block, to Kingston. Of course, Tom has been in Kingston the whole time as one of our volunteer firefighters, but they handed him a pass anyway, to drive up with Satomi. That’s Satomi, and Gary, on the right, is a public information officer from Idaho. Ranger Gary supplied the photos I used in an earlier blog, the ones people gathered all around to see, of Kingston during the evacuation. (photo, following page, top right).

My car was still stuffed full, as it was on the night of the evacuation. (see photo top left, page 19)



Drove up to the road block....showed my pass and drove through.



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 8 (Con't)

At home I walk across the road to Steve and Nicole's, turn on the water. The birdbath and the little critter water bowl are dry. This is Steve and Nicole's water tank.



I wander around back there a bit, see they moved my woodpile (good idea), and notice in the background, black smoke.



I'm up on my deck. This is the same location as in the earlier picture, taken by Steve and Nicole's water tank. These are the lower hills you see in the water tank picture. The farther hills are behind smoke. That is Steve and Nicole's house on the right, and you can barely see the water tank behind it, up on the hill to the left of the house. This is looking north, northwest.

I bring the sprinkler up to the deck. I soon notice that the fire has "spotted," about a hundred yards from the main fire. That's the spot fire on the left. The wind later became extremely gusty from different directions, but mostly during this time I felt the wind across both ears



At home I water the red hot pokers which bloom limply by my doorstep. I fill the bird bath (wheel-barrow). I water Bonita's aloe. Finally, I sit on the back porch for a while, drinking water, facing south, the creek, birdsong.



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 8 (Con't)

as I faced into it. Steady and strong from the north, hence, the advancing fire. Of course, there were already vehicles and men here at the crossroads. I can hear some of the radio conversation.

I have not unpacked a single item out of my car, and I'm watching. My phone is at 32%. I must charge it and it's hard to leave it. I tell myself, "It's right there." It's the only possession I have to keep track of. Joey is still at my mom's. I get my keys off the counter, back up my car (it's in a waterfall from the sprinkler above it on the deck), and leave the keys in the ignition. I find paper and pencil and go up on the deck, dodging the sprinkler.

I begin to hear the fire.

Telephoto of Italian south of the crossroads. (photo top right)

I hear radio conversation:

"...about a mile and a half north, place with the gold roof."

"Gold roof, yeah, I saw that up there."

"It's getting smoky in there."

Telephoto of Italian north of the crossroads.



I have to eat something. I have to charge my phone all the way this time.



Back on the deck. Silver City Hotshots have arrived. This column is the fire in Ladrone, farther to the west.

More personnel in place.



Globe Hotshots arrive.

Helicopters and airplanes. I'm guessing seven or eight aircraft total, some spotters, some retardant droppers, some water droppers. The water dropping airplanes are quiet, sleek, and graceful. The spotter planes are monitoring all the fire activity and reporting back via radio. Most of the suppression activity from the air is not on the fire that you can see in the pictures—the near fire. This is farther north and a little to the east. So I know fire has crossed the forest road. I think it's near Pickett Springs Canyon. If there is suppression on the near fire — the



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 8 (Con't)

one I can hear—it must be with crews on the ground. But I could be wrong about that. The hotshot crews could be farther north up the road. (photo top left)

I am trusting these guys to say the word, and I'm outta here. I look over there and one of them waves. I wave back. (photo top center)

The helicopter drops water back there on what I think is Pickett Springs Canyon, and its bucket trails after it as it accelerates for Hillsboro's old



highway department where they've set up tanks.

A siphon type helicopter comes and flies so low he is hidden behind this ridge for a while.

"That do pretty good for you, Jim?"



"Yeah, that quieted it down."

A dip-type water dropper comes in:

"I'm at your 11:00 o'clock up on the ridge."

"You get around fast."

"Yeah, if you can...spot it and take a....Uh, you got fire here—you got a spot up on top here."

"Yeah I see that."

And conversation between the guys at the crossroads:

"Another water would do it, man. Just put it on there. Two of 'em."

Finally I have a thought. I had already seen that they burned along the north side of North Street and up the west

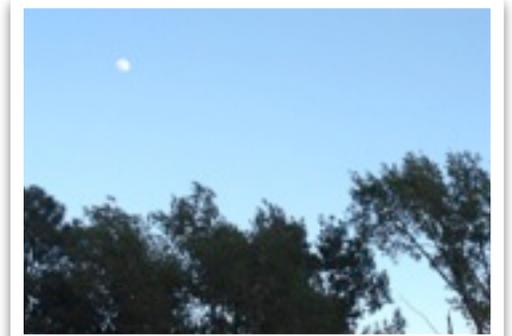


side of Italian at the crossroads which is a 30 second walk away. I try to recall the maps we got at the meetings. Did they also burn a line behind this very nearest hill, over from the old Boy Scout camp? (I had to lighten this photo so you can see



the very nearest hill better, directly behind the hotshot vehicle.) I decide they must have. I'm pretty sure that's where the hotshot crews are, too. Or at least some of them.

By the way, the plume is from the Ladrone fire a few ridges away, burning vigorously as seen by the "ice caps."



The wind blows northward now, sending the near fire back over already-burnt hillsides. Then with a shift of wind, re-ignited stumps send up writhing black dragon smokes against a background of ash-white. At some point I decide I can unpack my pillow and toothbrush.

The day before solstice was the longest day of the year—the most intense day of this whole event for me, watching it all from my deck, being pretty sure they didn't plan on this.

But toward the south, this evening scene, the creek below, and above, the buzzards have settled into their trees. You can see there is still high wind.



The Silver Fire - As It Happened - Part 8 (Con't)

At times it was what they call a williwaw, whipping around in mad circles. What a day.

June 21st:

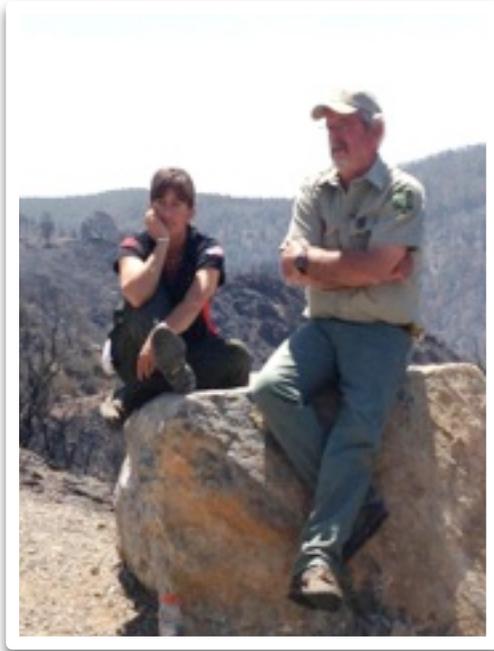
This morning the Forest Service took us up to see the area south of highway 152 up toward Emory Pass. This is looking east more or less, down Drummond. Yes, there are still green trees. Some of them will live. (photo top left)

Rain—when it comes. A gully washer here will fill South Percha with mud, water, and ash, and cause flooding downstream. A soft rain will soak in and help seeds germinate.

The forest service wildlife biologist told us about how a forest comes back. It won't look the same in our lifetime, but, it will come back. As of this morning, the fire had burned 44,600 acres. Today I'm guessing it burned another 6,000 acres or so.

These folks are knowledgeable, well-trained, and sensible.

The place is still swarming with these types. San Lorenzo, Mimbres, Winston, and Chloride will be seeing them go into action next. Or maybe it will rain.



*Above: View from Kingston 6/11
Top Right: View from Upper Gallinas Campground 6/11*

Forest Service Press Release: Evening of June 14

SAN LORENZO, NM – The Silver Fire received moisture over most of the fire today and as a result fire behavior remained moderate. Higher humidity helped crews battle the 21,400 acre fire.

Firefighters continue to focus on protection of structures and construction of containment line. Late today crews conducted two small firing operations one mile north of Kingston near the Black Colt Mine reinforcing structure protection. To date firefighters have constructed approximately 20 miles of fire line with an additional 15 miles scouted. Silver Fire resources also assisted the Gila National Forest on a new fire near Georgetown.

There are 552 firefighters working the the fire which include five helicopters, eight hotshot crews, five 20-person hand crews, 16 engines, two dozers

On June 15, 2013, The Black Range Rag started "The Silver Fire Blog" overlapping Susan's posts on "The Free Range" and continuing until the fire was fully suppressed.

June 15, 2013

Moisture, Humidity Help Silver Fire Crews

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 21,400 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Photographs courtesy USFS.



Moisture, Humidity Help Silver Fire Crews (Con't)

and 11 water tenders.

A public meeting will be held in Silver City tomorrow, Saturday, at 6 p.m. at the Grant County Administration Building located at 1400 US Highway 180 East. Additional meetings are held each morning at the Hillsboro Community Center at 10 a.m.

Gila National Forest officials want to remind the general public that the forest is open to recreation except in the restricted fire area.

Several agencies are assisting with the Silver Fire, they include the Grant and Sierra County Sheriffs, NM State Police, Las Cruces District BLM, and NM State Forestry.

To ensure public safety, the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Area has been closed east of NM State Highway 152 from the Continental Divide Trail #74 south to Reeds Peak. NM State Highway 152 from San Lorenzo to Hillsboro remains closed. The road closure is for east and westbound traffic from 35 miles east of Bayard at mile marker 16 to 10 miles west of Hillsboro at mile marker 40. Trail #79 and the Royal John Mine Road are also closed for public safety. For more information see <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM. Photo above: USFS

Photographs courtesy USFS. Directly Above: VLAT begins drop Below: View from Upper Gallinas Campground 6/11



June 15 Morning News Release

Small amounts of rain fell on the north and south side of the fire yesterday moderating fire activity. Firefighters expect the same weather patterns today which will continue to be favorable to suppression efforts. The fire is now at 21,789 acres.

The Northern Arizona Incident Management Team is hosting Congressman Steve Pearce, staff and his guests at the Silver Fire. A tour and briefing are planned at the Incident Command Post in San Lorenzo, N.M.



June 15, 2013

Silver Fire Receives Precip (2nd Post of the Day)

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 21,789 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: Silver Fire Site

There are 552 firefighters working the fire which include five helicopters, eight 20-person hotshot crews, five 20-person hand crews, 16 engines, two dozers and 11 water tenders.

A public meeting will be held in Silver City today, Saturday, at



Silver Fire Receives Precip (Con't)

6 p.m. at the Grant County Administration Building located at 1400 US Highway 180 East. Additional meetings are held each morning at the Hillsboro Community Center at 10 a.m..

Gila National Forest officials want to remind the general public that the forest is open except in the restricted fire area.

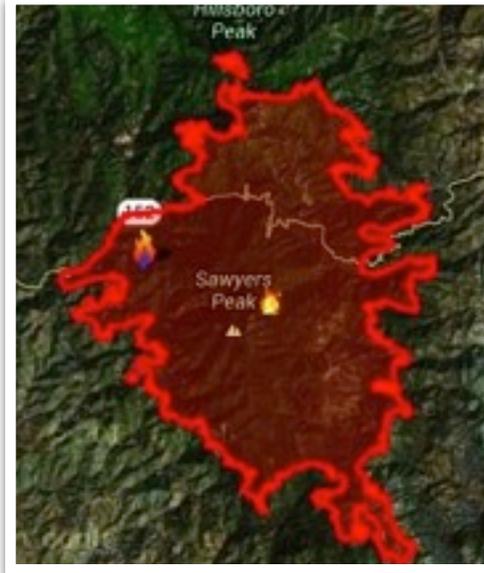
Several agencies are assisting with the Silver Fire, they include the Grant and Sierra County Sheriff's Departments, NM State Police, Las Cruces BLM District, NM State Forestry and NM Department of Transportation.

To ensure public safety, the Aldo Leopold Wilderness has been closed east of NM State Highway 152 from the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail #74 south to Reeds Peak. NM State Highway 152 from San Lorenzo to Hillsboro remains closed. The road closure is for east and westbound traffic from 35 miles east of Bayard at mile marker 16 to 10 miles west of Hillsboro at mile marker 40. Trail #79 and the Royal John Mine Road are also closed for public safety. For more information see <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or

www.nmroads.com. Photos above: USFS - Carbonate Canyon

Significant Events

Aerial ignition was done around



Hillsboro Lookout the evening of Thursday June 13 to initiate low to moderate intensity backing fire to mitigate against potential upslope, high intensity, head fire. *To date; approximately 15% of Kingston Community perimeter has been secured w/ burnout operations.

*Approximately 20 miles of indirect line constructed to date w/ additional 15+ miles of indirect line scouted.

552 Personnel are fighting the fire.

June 15, 2013

Burnout Ops Around Kingston This Afternoon (Third Post of the Day)



As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 21,789 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Photographs courtesy USFS. Above: Hillsboro Peak - June 10. Page 22, top left: Wright's Cabin Structure Protection - June 10

Fire Announcement Posted at about 4:10 p.m. Today

This afternoon firefighters will be conducting burnout operations - through ground and aerial ignitions - to secure the north and east sides of Kingston.

Swcc Smoke Outlook - June 15

Updated 1200 MDT June 15, 2013
Valid through June 16, 2013

Smoke Outlook-

With higher humidities, including the potential rain from scattered



Burnout Ops Around Kingston This Afternoon (Con't)

thunderstorms, smoke impacts from the Silver and Jaroso fires should be minimal.

Potentially unhealthy conditions (visibility of 1.5 to 2.75 miles or less) can always occur where there are wildfires. If they do, sensitive groups such as people with heart and/or lung disease, adults over age 65, young children, and pregnant women should avoid all outdoor activities until air quality improves. Everyone else should minimize outdoor activities.

Thunderstorm activity predicted in the areas near the fires today and tonight could produce impacts in communities near each fire as storm activity can produce winds that push smoke in unpredictable directions. These impacts, if they were to occur, should dissipate quickly.

For the Silver Fire, any smoke impacts will occur to the northeast this afternoon and to the east and southeast in the evening and early Sunday morning. Any smoke impacts from the Jaroso Fire will occur to the east and southeast. No significant impacts are expected in communities downwind of these fires; however,

occasionally elevated levels of smoke may occur at ground level.

Smoke forecasts are dependent on predicted fire growth and weather. If conditions change unexpectedly, greater smoke impacts could occur.

Your eyes are your best tools to determine if it's safe to be outside. Even if you smell smoke, the air quality may still be good. Remember: if visibility is 11 miles and up, the air quality is Good; six to ten miles, air quality is Moderate; three to five miles, air quality is Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups; one and a half to two and three quarter miles, air quality is Unhealthy; one to one and a quarter miles, air quality is Very Unhealthy; and one mile or less, air quality is Hazardous. When the visibility is less than 5 miles, sensitive groups should minimize outdoor activities. Everyone else should minimize prolonged or physical activity outdoors.

For information about health effect of smoke, including actions individual can take to protect themselves, and guidance on distances and visibility, based on the location of current fires, please visit, nmtracking.org/fire.

Updated information on fire activity in the Southwest can be found in the

SWCC Morning Intelligence Briefing. Additional smoke information can be found at the SWCC Smoke Impact Awareness page. Photos Above: USFS

Planned Actions

For the upcoming operation period, crews will continue point protection and structure protection in and around Kingston along with other areas; Construct line on the east side of the fire, north and south of Highway 152. Continue scouting NW of the fire area. Anticipate continuation of burnout around community of Kingston.

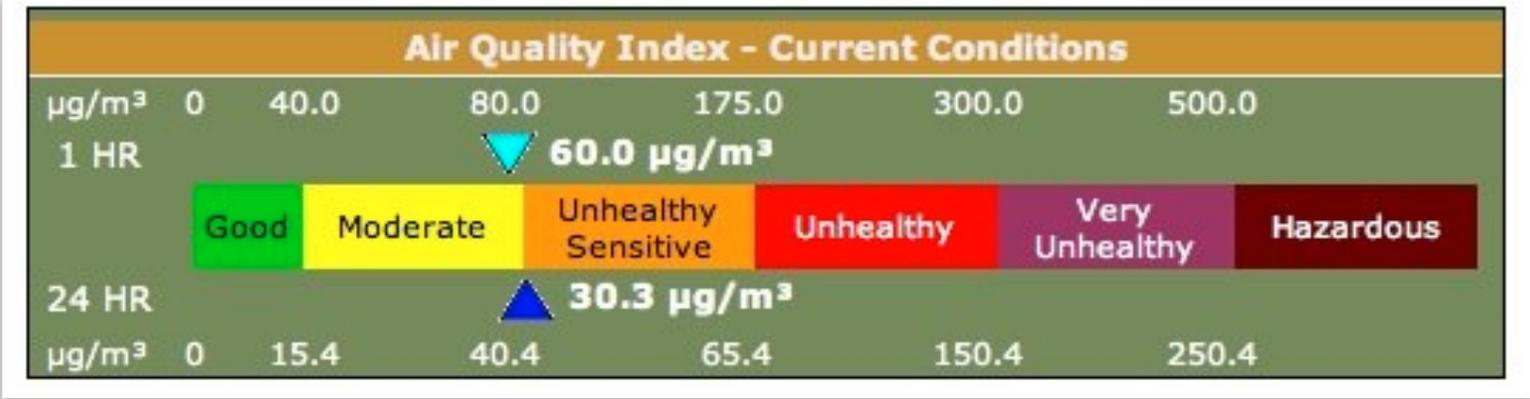
June 16 - Evening Update - Forest Service Release of June 15



As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 21,800 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Photograph courtesy USFS. Above: Across from Wright's Cabin on June 10



Evening Update - Forest Service Release of June 15 (Con't)

Relatively high humidity and cloud cover moderated fire behavior and minimized fire spread throughout the day. Crews completed additional burnout operations around the Kingston fuel break. 21,800 acres. 5% contained.

Image Above: From the Interagency Real Time Smoke Monitoring Site - Information for Hillsboro - This Morning

June 16, 2013 - June 16 Morning Release and Smoke Information (2nd Post of the Day)



As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 21,800 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Photograph by Susan Roebuck - A helicopter preparing to lift off with "water bucket" from the Hillsboro NMDOT site. Favorable weather conditions yesterday made it possible for

firefighters to make headway in the fight against the Silver Fire. The fire is now five percent contained along NM State Highway 152. Total acreage stands at 21,800.

Weather forecasts for the fire area call for an increase in temperature, an increase in wind speed and a decrease in humidity. If these forecasts hold, fire activity could increase as a result of these unfavorable conditions.

There are now 621 firefighters working the fire including five helicopters, ten 20-person hotshot crews, five 20-person hand crews, sixteen engines, two dozers and eleven water tenders.

Several agencies are assisting with the Silver Fire. They include the Grant and Sierra County Sheriff's Departments, NM State Police, Las Cruces BLM District, NM State Forestry and NM Department of Transportation. The daily public meeting will be held each morning at the Hillsboro Community Center at 10 a.m.

To ensure public safety, the Aldo Leopold Wilderness has been closed east of NM State Highway 152 from the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail #74 south to Reeds Peak.

NM State Highway 152 from San Lorenzo to Hillsboro remains closed. The road closure is for east and westbound traffic from 35 miles east of Bayard at mile marker 16 to 10 miles west of Hillsboro at mile marker 40. Trail #79 and the Royal John Mine Road are also closed for public safety. For more information see <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

Gila National Forest officials want to remind the general public that the forest is open except in the restricted fire area.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

SMOKE INFORMATION

The following is a statement from the Black Range Rag and not the USFS. In the last post we included a link to the Interagency Real Time Smoke Monitoring site. This is a screen shot of one of their pages. It provides "real-time" information from the Hillsboro Site. You may need to



June 16 Morning Release and Smoke Information (Con't)

load a Java applet to make the central read-out work. It will only work with 64-bit processors. If you do not have the applet installed it will say that it is missing in the center of the graph area. If you wish to install it, click on the "missing..." message and follow instructions. We will try to post a screen shot of the page shown here periodically.

June 17 - June 17 Morning Release, Fire Map, and Smoke Info

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 23,200 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Photographs by Bob Barnes, Hillsboro

Above: Helicopter preparing to lift off with "water bucket" from the Hillsboro NMDOT site. Below: "water bucket"

June 17 AM News Release: Weather Transitions for Silver Fire (9:40 A.M.)

SAN LORENZO, NM Today the weather is transitioning from a mild moist air mass that has been over the area for several days and will be replaced with hot dry air, strong winds and low humidity today. The previous day's favorable weather conditions allowed firefighters to make progress on construction of 3 miles of containment line. The 23,200 acre fire remains at five percent contained.

A Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team is scheduled to arrive Tuesday. BAER teams are staffed by specially trained professionals and scientists who rapidly evaluate the burned area and prescribe emergency stabilization treatments.

Daily public meetings continue to be held each morning at the Hillsboro Community Center at 10 a.m.

Additional firefighters from New Mexico are replacing firefighters that are returning home for rest after battling fires in Pecos, Jemez Springs and San Lorenzo, New Mexico. There are now 586 firefighters working the fire including five helicopters, eight 20-person hotshot crews, five 20-

person hand crews, 16 engines, two dozers and 11 water tenders.





June 17 Morning Release, Fire Map, and Smoke Info (Con't)

Several agencies are assisting with the Silver Fire. Cooperators include the Grant and Sierra County Sheriff's Departments, NM State Police, Las Cruces BLM District, NM State Forestry and NM Department of Transportation.

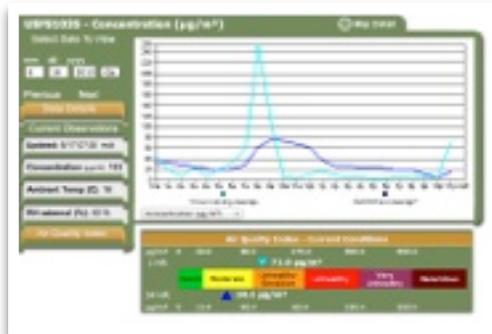
To ensure public safety, the Aldo Leopold Wilderness has been closed east of NM State Highway 152 from the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail #74 south to Reeds Peak. NM State Highway 152 from San Lorenzo to Hillsboro remains closed. The road closure is for east and westbound traffic from 35 miles east of Bayard at mile marker 16 to 10 miles west of Hillsboro at mile marker 40. Trail #79 and the Royal John Mine Road are also closed for public safety. For more information see <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

Update: 7 P.M. June 16

Despite slightly drier conditions today, fire behavior remained relatively low with minimal growth. Updated acreage and containment won't be available until tomorrow morning after the midnight infrared flyover.

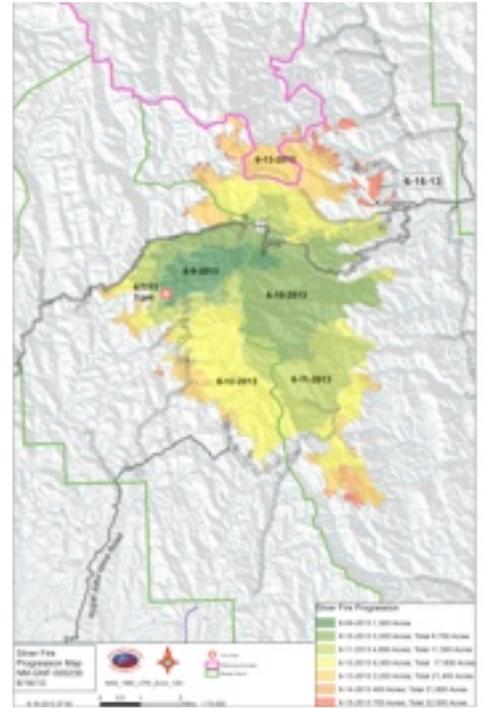
This evening crews will continue burnout operations around Kingston to reinforce the fire break around the community. Fire managers are also looking at tactics for the east side of the fire north of Hwy 152 this evening, potentially also conducting burnout operations there.



Interagency Smoke Report for Hillsboro - June 17, 7:35 a.m.

Photos at top of page - Courtesy USFS

Progression of Fire Through June 15



June 18, 2013 - June 18 AM News Release: Silver Fire Activity Increases



As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 24,800 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](http://SilverFireSite.com)



June 18 AM News Release: Silver Fire Activity Increases (Con't)

A hot and dry air mass with stronger winds and lower relative humidity has settled over the Silver Fire resulting in an increase in fire behavior. Yesterday the fire moved into Railroad Canyon on the northwest side and Carbonate and Rattlesnake Canyons on the northeast side. Fire management officials anticipated these moves and positioned personnel to take action. Hotshot crews are working on the western side of the Silver Fire north of NM Highway 152 to prepare the area for action when it is favorable to engage the fire. The 24,800 acre fire remains at five percent contained.

Incident Commander Matt Reidy said that he is pleased with the progress that firefighters have made in structure protection around key areas such as Kingston and the Royal John Mine. We have selected areas for fireline construction along roads, topography breaks and vegetative changes between pine forests and pinyon juniper woodlands that will provide us the greatest probability of success in fire containment.

More than 500 firefighters are working the fire. Resources include five helicopters, five 20-person hotshot crews, four 20-person hand

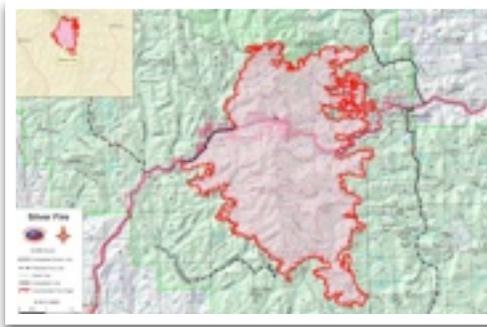
crews, 16 engines, two dozers and 11 water tenders.

Several agencies are assisting in the management of the Silver Fire. Cooperators include the Grant and Sierra County Sheriff's Departments, NM State Police, Las Cruces BLM District, NM State Forestry and NM Department of Transportation.

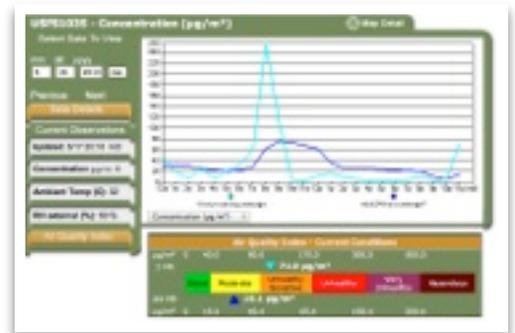
Daily public meetings continue to be held each morning at the Hillsboro Community Center at 10 a.m.

Multiple closures are in effect for the Silver Fire. For more information see <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.



June 17 Fire Map (above) and Smoke Monitor Through Last Night (Midnight) (below)



June 18 - Fire Perimeter Using Google Earth (2nd Post of the Day)



As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 24,800 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

The fire perimeter (area enclosed by red on the right) as it creeps towards the bottom of Railroad Canyon - Google Earth.

Photos at top of page are courtesy of the USFS.



Fire Perimeter Using Google Earth (Con't)

This is not an official US Forest Service Statement. Posted by The Black Range Rag.

If you have the ability to use Google Earth, click on the latest Incident Perimeters listing on the InciWeb site for the Silver Fire for the very best "picture" of what is happening with the fire. The box looks like this (see photo top right) and is located on the right hand side of the page.

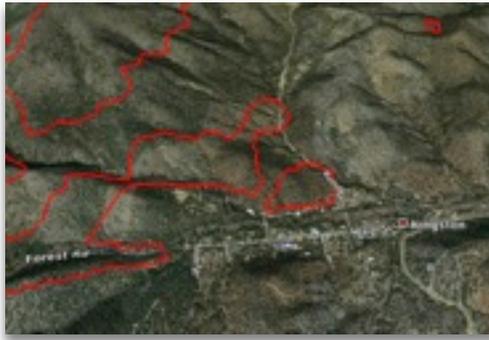
When you click on a link it will open up a fire perimeter map overlaid on Google Earth. The image below is taken from the "Fire Perimeter 06-17-2013" link, the fire perimeter is outlined in red (see photo, top center). With Google Earth you will be able to zoom in and out, look from different vantage points, etc.

June 19 - Fire Growth Prediction and June 18 PM News Release - Smoke Visible From El Paso

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 30,300 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Photos courtesy of USFS Below: Crews working on the southern end of the fire on June 17. Top Right: Carbonate Canyon June 16.



Possible Fire Spread

Modeling indicates a moderate to high probability that the fire will double in size in the absence of wetting rains within 21 days. Strategic risk assessment completed. Long-term planning continues to address identified values at risk.

The northern and northeastern portion of the fire is exhibiting active crown fire in the mixed conifer and ponderosa pine types developing a massive pyrocumulus column. Some activity was observed in the PJ type on the eastern side of the fire, with short range spotting and short duration runs. South of highway 152, minimal fire activity was observed.

Significant Events

Indirect dozer and hand line construction is progressing on schedule in the areas of East Quaking Aspen Canyon and Rabb Park.

June 18 PM Release

The Silver Fire smoke column was near 30,000 feet today and visible from over 100 miles away.

Firefighters were able to hold containment lines and protect the



community of Kingston. The fire burned actively in Railroad Canyon, Carbonate Creek and Little Bear Canyon. Fire management officials expect the fire to be highly visible tomorrow.

Weather conditions are expected to further deteriorate Wednesday as wind gusts of up to 35 mph and single digit humidity is expected. The temperature is predicted to be in the mid 90's. Incident Commander Matt Reidy said the fire may grow another 2,000 to 6,000 acres tomorrow and is expected to be highly visible.

Tomorrow crews will continue indirect line construction on the west flank of the fire along existing trails and mop up and patrol in the Kingston and Royal John Mine area. One minor injury occurred today during fire line construction on the west side of the fire. The 24,800 acre fire remains five percent contained. Resources include five helicopters, six 20-person hotshot crews, four 20-person hand crews, 15 engines, two dozers and 11 water tenders for a total of 538 firefighters.

Cooperators include the Grant and Sierra County Sheriff's Departments, NM State Police, Las Cruces BLM District, NM State Forestry and NM Department of Transportation.

Daily public meetings continue to be



Fire Growth Prediction and June 18 PM News Release - Smoke Visible From El Paso (Con't)

held each morning at the Hillsboro Community Center at 10. For more information on closures see <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

June 19, 2013 - June 19 Morning News Release: Silver Fire Grows to 30,300 Acres (2nd Post of the Day)



As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 30,300 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: Silver Fire Site

Photo courtesy of USFS: Above - Crews working on the southern end of the fire on June 17.

SAN LORENZO, NM

Dry conditions and wind contributed to the growth of the Silver Fire yesterday. The fire grew 5,500 acres to reach 30,300 acres. Firefighters were able to hold containment lines and protect the community of Kingston. The fire burned actively in Railroad Canyon, Carbonate Creek and Little Bear Canyon.

Predicted weather today will have west-southwest winds to 20 mph with possible gusts up to 35 mph and single digit humidity. The temperature is predicted to be in the mid 90's. Smoke from the fire today will be visible from miles away.

Crews will continue indirect line construction on the west flank of the fire along existing trails and mop up and patrol in the Kingston and Royal John Mine area. Team leadership says that the fire could grow another 2,000 to 6,000 acres today.

Cooperators include the Grant and Sierra County Sheriff's Departments, NM State Police, Las Cruces BLM District, NM State Forestry and NM Department of Transportation.

Daily public meetings continue to be held each morning at the Hillsboro Community Center at 10.

Forest closure information can be found at: <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

For additional fire information visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

Photos at top of page are courtesy of USFS.

June 20, 2013 - Silver Fire Update - Yesterday Afternoon and Current Smoke



As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 30,300 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: Silver Fire Site

Photo by Susan Roebuck, evacuated from Kingston.

Fire activity is picking up as the weather gets warmer. Fire managers are expecting the column of smoke to continue to build. A public meeting is planned for Friday night in San Lorenzo, NM at the Round Up Lodge at 6:00 p.m. The NM Secretary of



Silver Fire Update - Yesterday Afternoon and Current Smoke (Con't)

Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is visiting the Silver Fire ICP at 4:00 p.m. today.

Smoke Conditions As of 5:35 This Morning



June 20 - Kingston Residents Return Home (2nd Post of Day)

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 36,500 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Above: Photo Courtesy USFS, Crews Working the Southern Edge of the Fire on June 17

“We are pleased to announce the evacuation order for the community

of Kingston is lifted at noon today. This is lifted for residents of Kingston only,” said Incident Commander Matt Reidy. “The residents have been very understanding and their cooperation was appreciated during this trying time period. We understand residents have been away from their homes and are very anxious to return home.” Special entry permits will be issued at the Hillsboro Volunteer Fire Department to residents only. The Kingston area will remain closed to everyone except residents until further notice.

Reentry into the community has resulted through coordination between multiple agencies including: Sierra County Sheriff’s Department, NM State Police, NM Department of Transportation, Hillsboro Volunteer Fire Department, NM State Forestry, US Forest Service.

Several forest closures remain in place. For more information see <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwccg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/

[SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest](http://www.flickr.com/SilverFireNM), www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

Silver Fire Update - June 20, 2013, 8:00 A.M.

SAN LORENZO, NM – A persistent hot and dry weather pattern remains over the Silver Fire. Firefighters have continued to hold the 36,500 acre fire within containment lines.

The fire will exhibit the same smoke column as the past two days. The most active part of the fire is in the north, moving two miles yesterday.

New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez and key staff members will be briefed on firefighting efforts at the Silver Fire Incident Command Post this morning.

Firefighters will continue mop up, indirect line construction, aggressively engaging the fire where appropriate and gathering intelligence on both the east and west flanks.

Silver Fire resources include five helicopters, five 20-person hotshot



Kingston Residents Return Home (con't)

crews, four 20-person hand crews, 15 engines, one dozer and eight water tenders for 511 personnel.

Cooperators include the Grant and Sierra County Sheriff's Departments, NM State Police, Las Cruces BLM District, NM State Forestry and NM Department of Transportation.

Daily public meetings continue to be held each morning at the Hillsboro Community Center at 10 and tomorrow, Friday, June 21, 2013, at the Round Up Lodge in San Lorenzo at 6 p.m.

Forest closure information can be found at: <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

June 21, 2013 - Silver Fire Containment Reaches 20 Per Cent, Smoke Report, Map

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 36,500 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Above: Photo Courtesy USFS, Tankers were used yesterday, it is not clear if the one pictured here was involved.

Due to hard work by firefighters on the Silver Fire, containment has reached 20 per cent. For the third straight day the northern portion of the fire exhibited very active fire behavior with a smoke column reaching up to 30,000 feet. South of NM Highway 152 minimal fire activity was observed. Air tankers were called in late in the day to help firefighters hold containment lines. Tomorrow firefighters will construct indirect fire line from East Yates Canyon to McKnight Cabin in the northwest part of the fire and along the Hermosa Trail in the northeast part.

A public meeting will be held tomorrow, Friday, June 21, 2013, at the Round Up Lodge in San Lorenzo at 6 p.m.

Elated residents of Kingston, NM were allowed to return home today

after 10 days as evacuees from the Silver Fire. Many residents had been staying with neighbors or friends and are cautioned smoke will still be visible for many days near Kingston.

New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez and key staff members were briefed on firefighting efforts at the Silver Fire Incident Command Post this morning.

Silver Fire resources include five helicopters, five 20-person hotshot crews, four 20-person hand crews, 15 engines, one dozer and eight water tenders for 498 total personnel.

Cooperators include the Grant and Sierra County Sheriff's Departments, NM State Police, Las Cruces BLM District, NM State Forestry and NM Department of Transportation.

Forest and road closure information can be found at: <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM,

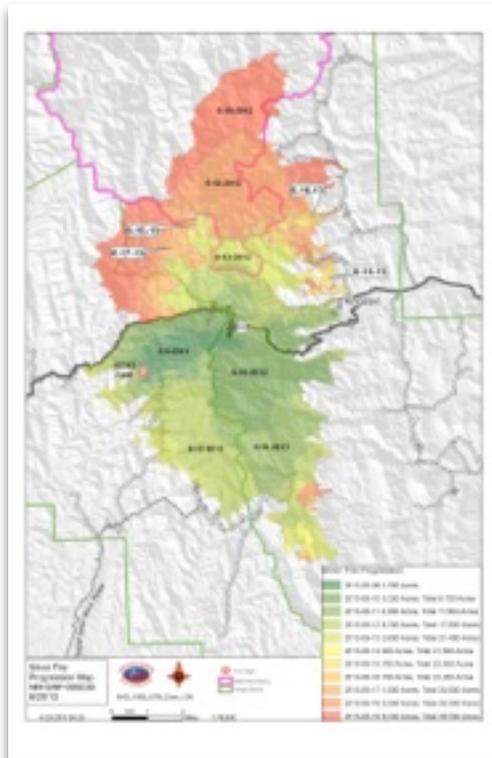


Silver Fire Containment Reaches 20 Per Cent, Smoke Report, Map (Con't)

www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

Basic Information	
Incident Type	Wildfire
Cause	Lightning
Date of Origin	Friday June 17th, 2010 approx. 03:00 PM
Location	Woods of Kingston, NM
Incident Commander	Mark Reedy
Current Situation	
Total Personnel	418
Size	35,500 acres
Percent Contained	20%
Fuels Involved	20 Timber (Duff and understory)
Fire Behavior	Highly varied fuels ranging from dry mixed conifer at the highest elevations to ponderosa pine, Piñon-juniper and mesquite chaparral dominate the lower elevations. Fuel loading is high due to lack of fire disturbance in past centuries.
Significant Events	The southern portion of the fire is exhibiting active crown fire in the mixed conifer and ponderosa pine types developing a perpendicular column towering over 30,000 ft. South of highway 112, minimal fire activity was observed.
Significant Events	The residents of Kingston were allowed to return at 02:00 today.
Outlook	
Planned Actions	Continued indirect line from East Valley Spring Canyon to McNight Cabin (Chester 2). Construct indirect line along the Hartsdale Trail (Chester 4).
Growth Potential	Extreme
Terrain Difficulty	Extreme

Basic Information about the fire (above) and Hillsboro Smoke Monitoring Site - Results from 6/21 - 7:37 a.m. (below)



Fire progression thru June 19, below:

June 21 - Flood Planning Meeting - Fire Grows to 44,600 Acres - Fire Map (2nd Post of the Day)

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 44,600 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Above: Photo Courtesy USFS, photograph taken on the southern end of the fire on June 17.

Notice From The HCC
Flood Planning Meeting
Tuesday, June 25, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.,
at the Hillsboro Community Center

Sierra County will be holding a meeting next Tuesday evening to present information on the process that they expect to follow to assess flood danger and to plan for addressing it, in the wake of the Silver Fire.

Emergency Management Officer Donna Sanchez will conduct the meeting. She is currently working with state and local experts as well as U. S. Forest Service personnel with experience on rehabilitation and remediation at the site of last summer's Whitewater Baldy Fire in the Gila National Forest.

USFS News Release

Red Flag Warning to Challenge Firefighters

A red flag warning is in effect for the Silver Fire area today and will continue to challenge firefighters. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the warnings are issued to warn fire managers about "critical weather and fuel moisture conditions that could



Flood Planning Meeting - Fire Grows to 44,600 Acres - Fire Map (Con't)

lead to rapid or dramatic increases in wildfire activity." Warnings are generated as a result of low relative humidity, strong winds, dry fuels, or a combination of these factors. A similar warning was in effect for the fire area yesterday when the fire grew to 44,600 acres. Containment remains at 20 percent.

A public meeting will be held tonight at the Round Up Lodge in San Lorenzo at 6 p.m. to provide information on the current status of the fire and to answer questions from the public.

Silver Fire resources include five helicopters, five 20-person hotshot crews, four 20-person hand crews, 15 engines, one dozer and eight water tenders for 498 total personnel.

Cooperators include the Grant and Sierra County Sheriff's Departments, NM State Police, Las Cruces BLM District, NM State Forestry and NM Department of Transportation.

Forest and road closure information can be found at: <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> and www.nmroads.com.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

June 22, 2013 - 12,000 Acre Growth on Silver Fire

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 56,000 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

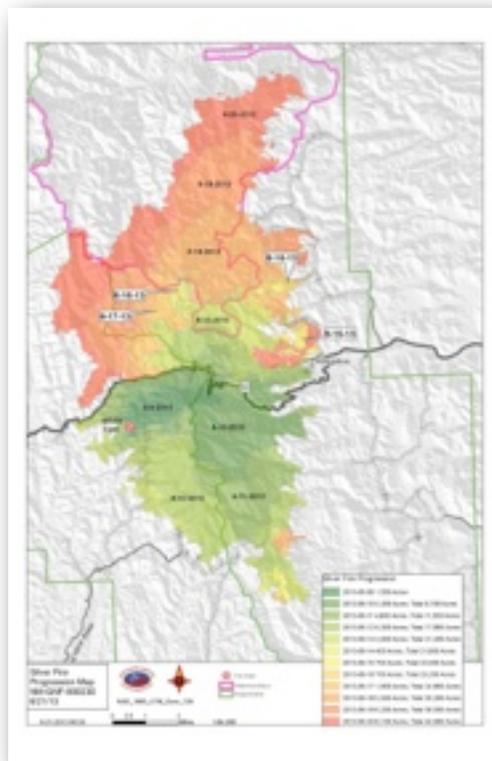
Above & Below: Photos courtesy of Mike Barnes of McMinnville, TN.

Photographs taken from Highway 152 looking into South Percha Creek Drainage on June 21.

June 22, 8:00 A.M. Update

The Silver Fire grew almost 12,000 acres yesterday from north of Noonday Canyon to Animas Canyon due to dry, windy conditions, steep slopes and low fuel moisture. The fire is more than 56,000 acres and additional growth is anticipated today as similar conditions will remain present over the area. A red flag warning is in effect from noon to 9 p.m. tonight. Crews will continue their efforts north of NM State Highway 152 in the construction of indirect fire lines, taking advantage of areas to work directly on the fire's edge.

Motorists are reminded that the 25-mile route on NM State Highway 61 from its junction with NM-152 to US Highway 180 is open. Motorists traveling along NM-61 pass through



Fire Map - Thru June 20



12,000 Acre Growth on Silver Fire (Con't)

the communities of San Juan, Sherman, and the City of Rocks State Park. Forest and road closure information can be found at: <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information, visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

June 21, 8:30 P.M. Update

North End of Silver Fire Remains Active - The north end of the Silver Fire remains active and a smoke column reaching 46,000 feet into the sky was visible today.

Firefighters on the northeast side of the fire worked on strengthening existing containment line by conducting a burnout operation. Today's operations did not affect the residents of Kingston who were allowed back into their homes yesterday. On the northwest side of the fire, firefighters spent the day scouting the steep timbered country along the continental divide looking

for old prescribed burn areas to tie into for a containment line. The fire remains at about 44,600 acres and about 20 percent contained. The southern half of the fire shows little activity and no threat is posed to the Royal John Mine.

Strong winds have posed a challenge to firefighters over the last few days. Today was no different as a combination of smoke and turbulence resulted in the helicopters working the fire to be grounded. The hot, dry and windy conditions are expected to continue through the weekend.



Approximately 70 residents attended a public meeting in San Lorenzo this evening. Fire managers and forest officials described current fire activity, planned containment strategies and touched on post-fire recovery.

Motorists are reminded that the 25-mile route on NM State Highway 61 from its junction with NM 152 to U.S. Highway 180 is open. Motorists

traveling along NM 61 pass through the communities of San Juan, Sherman, and the City of Rocks State Park. Forest and road closure information can be found at: <http://fs.usda.gov/gila> or www.nmroads.com.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information, visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

June 23 - Silver Fire Covers More than 70,000 Acres

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 70,000 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Photographs across top of page and below: Courtesy of United States Forest Service.

Infrared Flight Measures Silver Fire Growth – June 23, 2013, 8:00 AM

Evening infrared flight over the Silver fire measured Saturday's fire growth at 13,302 acres, resulting in a total of 70,002. Night aerial photography provides the team with accurate



Silver Fire Covers More than 70,000 Acres (Con't)

high-quality imagery of acreage.

The fire continued to grow north reaching Animas Canyon yesterday, triggering firefighters who were working on containment lines to move to a safe location. Crews will continue constructing indirect fire line today.

To ensure public and firefighter safety in around the fire, Incident commander Matt Reidy said “residents and the general public can expect an increase in firefighter traffic in the area as new crews move into the area over the next several days.”

Resources assigned to the fire include five 20-person hotshot crews, three 20-person crews, five helicopters, 15 engines, one dozer, eight water tenders for a total of 463 personnel.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information, visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

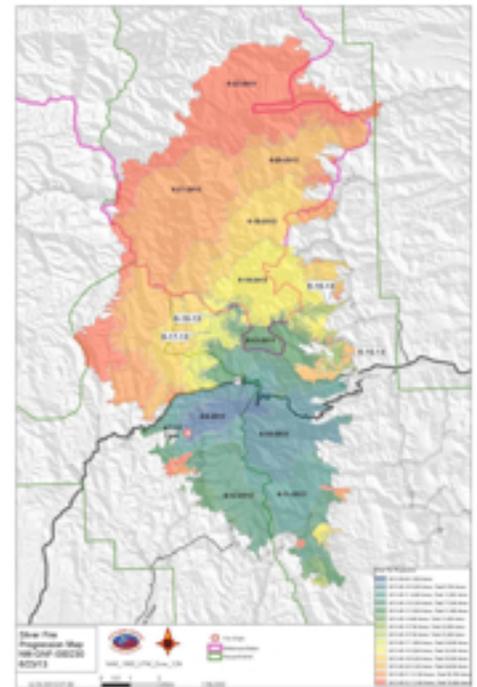
June 24, 2013 - Silver Fire Grows to 76,000+ Acres - Fire Perimeter Map - Wind Map

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 76,000 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Photos on this and the next page are courtesy of United States Forest Service.

Progress of Fire Thru June 22



Red Flag Warning for Silver Fire

The Silver Fire grew to 76,062 acres yesterday as firefighters look for locations to engage the fire. The fire was most active in the northeast. Some areas of the fire in the south are in monitor status with resources shifting to the northwest, north and northeast parts of the fire.

Today is a transition day on the Silver Fire as Matt Reidy’s Northern Arizona Incident Management Team transfers the fire this evening to



According to Silver Fire meteorologist, Carl Cerniglia, “we have experienced higher winds recently and hot and dry conditions are expected over the next 6 days.”



Silver Fire Grows to 76,000+ Acres - Fire Perimeter Map - Wind Map (Con't)

John Pierson's New Mexico Incident Management Team. Residents of the Mimbres Valley should see more fire vehicles and some additional firefighters today.

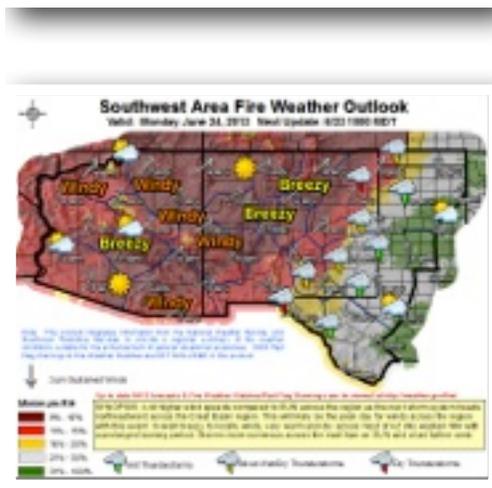
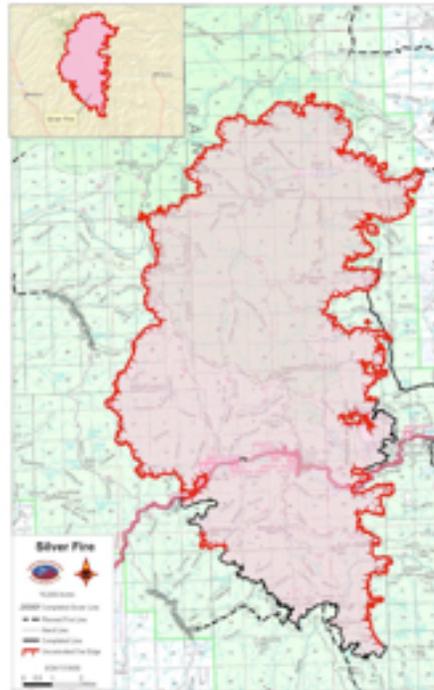
Yesterday crews continued to mop up around Kingston and Reeds Cabin was wrapped for protection. State Forestry crews worked on fire hazard mitigation thinning on private property in Cooney subdivision to protect homes from wildfire.

Crews will continue to construct indirect fire line today in the northwest part of the fire and prepare for possible firing operations along the west. A Red Flag warning is in place again today for hot, dry and windy conditions.

Resources assigned to the fire include five 20-person hotshot crews, three 20-person crews, six helicopters, 18 engines, one dozer, nine water tenders for a total of 499 personnel.

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>. For additional fire information, visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM, www.flickr.com/gilaforest, www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM.

Fire Perimeter Map - June 23



June 25, 2013 - Silver Fire Grows to 81,363 Acres - Hwy 152 Open to Kingston

As of this posting the Silver Fire has consumed 76,000 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](http://www.silverfire.com)

SILVER FIRE UPDATE

Tuesday, June 25, 2013, 8 a.m.

Fire Information: [575-536-3382](tel:575-536-3382) & [575-536-3285](tel:575-536-3285)

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>

Acres: 81,363 Cause: Lightning Start Date: June 7, 2013

Containment: 20% Location: vicinity of Kingston, NM Fuels: Timber

Total personnel: 605 Terrain: steep, rugged

PUBLIC MEETING: JUNE 26 AT 6PM IN WINSTON AT THE COMMUNITY CENTER

Management of the Silver Fire has now transitioned to the New Mexico Type 2 Incident Management Team under Incident Commander John Pierson.



Silver Fire Grows to 81,363 Acres - Hwy 152 Open to Kingston (Con't)

Today's Actions: Crews will be constructing fire line in the northwest portion of the fire and continue to conduct burnout operations on the west flank off of McKnight Road as weather conditions allow. Fire personnel will scout out for placement of indirect line on the east and west flank of the Silver Fire. The fire behavior analyst for the NM Incident Management Team said that firefighters can expect significant fire activity today as weather conditions will be hot, dry and unstable. As a result, tall smoke columns are likely to develop. The fuels in the fire area are critically dry and the potential for ignition in the afternoon is 100%.

There are currently no evacuations in effect. The fire is approximately 5 miles west of Hermosa and 19 miles southwest Winston. Firefighters are planning to do structure protection in Hermosa and Cooney.

Today's weather: The weather will transition today from a persistent southwest flow to lighter westerly winds as an upper level high pressure system builds over the southwest. As the high approaches this afternoon the winds will decrease. Relative humidity will be between 6-10%.

Smoke: The most significant smoke impacts from the Silver Fire will be

areas to the east including Kingston, Hillsboro and possibly as far as Hermosa, Winston, Chloride, and Truth Or Consequences. Information on wildland fire smoke and your health can be found on the New Mexico Department of Health's website at <https://nmtracking.org/fire>.

Closures: NM Highway 152 is closed from Kingston to San Lorenzo. For additional information go to www.nmroads.com. Forest closure information can be found at <http://fs.usda.gov/gila>

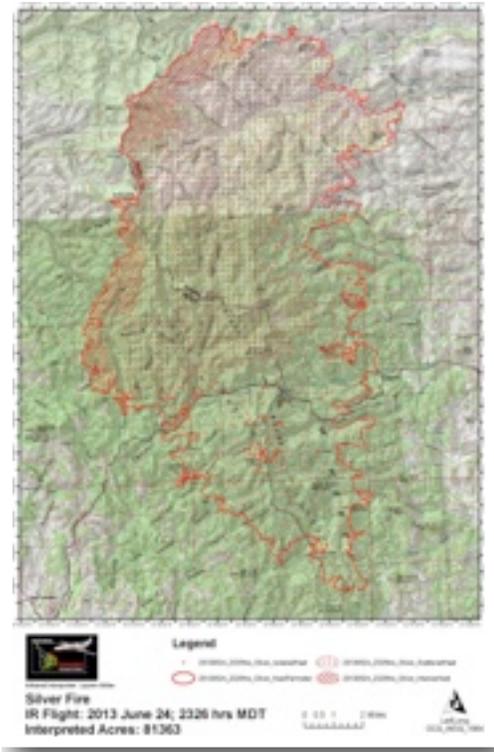
For additional fire information, visit the following websites: www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM www.flickr.com/gilaforest www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM

June 26 - Smoke Conditions - Black Range Map Showing Burned Area

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 81,363 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Above: Photo courtesy of United States Forest Service.



Map (above) from yesterday's post.



Smoke Conditions at 10:47 Today, At the Hillsboro Monitoring Station



Smoke Conditions - Black Range Map Showing Burned Area (Con't)

The Black Range is basically the area in (dark) green on this map (except for the small green area in the lower left). The burned area is outlined in red.

Public Meeting Tonight in Winston at 6PM at the Community Center

Today's Actions: Additional firefighters have arrived on the Silver Fire. Crews will focus on the west flank of the fire and conduct burnout operations south of McKnight Road along the fire perimeter, as weather conditions allow. Yesterday, helicopters were heavily utilized making 35 drops of approximately 30,000 gallons of water on active fire along the west side. Minimal fire activity is being detected on the east side of the fire as the fire is reaching lighter fuels in the lower elevation. Fire personnel are monitoring the east flank of the fire to detect any hot spots. Fire activity on the north perimeter continues to be active through the night with fire growth in the Upper Middle Seco drainage.

June 26, 2013 - June 26 Update Published at 12:40 PM MST - Public Meetings Notice

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 85,920 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Top: Photo courtesy of United States Forest Service.



Smoke Conditions at 10:39 Today at the Hanover Monitoring Station (Near Santa Rita Mine)



SILVER FIRE UPDATE

Fire Information: 575-536-3382 & 575-536-3285

Silver Fire updates can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3414>

Acres: 85,920 **Cause:** Lightning **Start Date:** June 7, 2013

Containment: 20% **Location:** vicinity of Kingston, NM **Fuels:** Timber

Total personnel: 691 **Terrain:** steep, rugged

Firefighters can expect significant fire activity today as weather conditions will be hot, dry and unstable. As a result, tall smoke columns are likely to develop. The fuels in the fire area are critically dry and the potential for fire growth is expected to continue towards the north, east of the Crest Trail (307).

There are currently no evacuations in effect and no structures have burned. The fire is approximately 5 miles



June 26 Update Published at 12:40 PM MST - Public Meetings Notice (Con't)

west of Hermosa and 19 miles southwest of Winston. Firefighters are completing structure protection in Hermosa.

Businesses along Highways 15 and 35 remain open. Most of the Gila National Forest is open for recreational opportunities with Stage One fire restrictions in effect. For more information go to firerestrictions.us. There is an emergency closure in place for the area of forest affected by the Silver Fire. For more information about the fire closure go to <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gila>.

Today's weather: Today the area will experience westerly winds, as an upper level high pressure system builds over the southwest. Temperatures will be 92 to 95 degrees. Relative humidity will be between 4-8%.

Smoke: The most significant smoke impacts from the Silver Fire will be areas to the east possibly reaching as far as Alamogordo, NM. Information on wildland fire smoke and your health can be found on the New

Mexico Department of Health's website at <https://nmtracking.org/fire>.

Road Closure: NM Highway 152 is closed from Kingston to San Lorenzo. For additional information go to www.nmroads.com.

For additional fire information, visit the following websites:

www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM
www.flickr.com/gilaforest
www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

There will be a public meeting Wednesday Night June 26th at 6pm at Winston Community Center.

There will be a public meeting Friday June 28th at the Upper Mimbres Volunteer Fire Department at 6pm.

June 27, 2013 - Flash Floods

Fear is one of the least productive emotions. Having a clear assessment of the situation and a plan to prevent or mitigate the perceived danger is a much better use of time than being consumed by fear.

Above: Photo taken in the Panamint Mountains of California on July 14, 1967 by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro who made this post.

Many people living on the fringes of the Black Range have experience with flash floods. Sometimes it is limited to seeing water rushing across dips in the road or seeing water coursing down the streets of their communities. Some people, however, have more traumatic experiences with flash floods. Sharing your personal experiences with flash floods will help your neighbors: With understanding people can develop more meaningful solutions to the dangers posed by flash floods. If you would like to share your experiences please contact Jan Haley about a posting on "Home on The Free Range".

My personal experiences with flash flooding have generally been limited to knowing when to get out of a gully or canyon or when not to drive through a low water crossing, and watching small streams rising dramatically. On a couple of occasions my experience has been a bit more dramatic. On the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee I once watched a beautiful little stream change to a raging torrent twenty feet out of its banks in a matter of



Flash Floods (Con't)

moments. It is scary. In Panama I was once "marooned" for a week (in a rather comfortable place) when a huge weather system caused the river to rise well out of its banks and stay that way. In 1967 I camped by a small pond in the Panamint Mountains, a safe camp - well above the canyon floor (photo above). That night (July 14-15) a horrendous thunder storm rolled through, soaking my tent and sleeping bag in moments. I waded up my camp and walked a hundred feet to the truck, threw the soggy mess into the back and climbed into the cab. Being young and immortal I drifted off to sleep quickly, waking only when a lightning bolt came to ground near by, and sleeping as well as one can in the cab of a truck. At dawn, the sun actually rose, the storm was gone, and so was any sign that the pond, trees, and other vegetation at my camp site had ever existed. The gravel, sand, and mud was already solid enough to walk on as I conducted a futile search for something green. It was enough for me to question whether I was really immortal.

Years of whitewater rafting in paddle rafts, in big water, have taught me that raging water is going to do just about anything that it wants to do, and there is not much you can do about it - except go with the flow. Having each of your arms and legs

pulled in a different direction by powerful eddies shakes you to the core. When you are being swept downstream by a torrent there is little rational thought.

At a public meeting earlier this week public officials did a good job of scaring some people very completely. If you live in Hillsboro, in an old stream bed, you should expect to be flooded periodically. What is different now, of course, is that the fire has burned much of the vegetation which slows the runoff and helps the soil absorb large amounts of water. In places some of the soil either vitrified or is well on the way to that state. As a result, more water will run off the mountain and be funneled down the stream beds.

The stream channels between Kingston and Hillsboro have been cleared over the last few years. As a result the water will be less impeded than in the past. More will get here, and it will get here more quickly and more forcefully. How much and how fast is something we will have to wait and see together.

No one can guarantee that there will or will not be flash floods this year. The chances that there will be one, in say Hillsboro, are increased by the fire - but it is far from certain that one will occur.

There are some things to remember about water and flash flooding:

- Generally, when it happens you have time to get out of the way and not much else;
- As little as 2 feet of rushing water can carry away a full size SUV;
- During the 30 years prior to 2005, more people died annually (on average) from flash floods than from lightning, tornadoes, or hurricanes. But still that average is only 127 people a year. (If you are one of the 127 that figure is significant, but statistically those are great odds);
- Most deaths from flash floods are vehicle related. Don't drive into flooded areas (the road may not even be there any more), and if your vehicle is swept away your best chance is to get out of it (but a best chance may not be that great);
- There are sometimes big events, killing many people;
- The National Weather Service is quite good about notifying people when there is a chance of flash flooding - web sites, interruptions of TV and radio service, and sometimes more local warning systems are employed. It issues both Flash Flood Watches when conditions indicate a flash flood is possible and Flash Flood Warnings when flash flooding is occurring or appears imminent.



Flash Floods (Con't)

Unfortunately we have a dam masquerading as a bridge to the west (upstream) of town. It is doubtful that the State of New Mexico will do anything about this bridge. (Taking out the bridge and making it a low-water crossing is probably the most effective thing which could be done to prevent, or mitigate, flooding in Hillsboro.) The bridge to the east of the State Road 27 junction presents a similar problem.

Given that we have a dam upstream and that the likelihood of flooding is increased, hardening the physical perimeter of the property you wish to protect is the next most effective thing that can be done to prevent damage. You should also have sand bags on hand, but remember you will not have much time. When it happens, hope the work you have done to protect your property will be sufficient and get out - protect yourself.

Good luck and don't do anything which will make things worse. (Be aware of profiteers, they love situations like this.)

June 27, 2013 - Silver Fire Incident Overview as of 5 PM - Fire Now at 92,000 Acres

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 92,000 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Photos above courtesy of United States Forest Service.

Full suppression efforts will continue today. Significant fire activity is expected today; as weather conditions will be hot, dry and unstable. The fuels in the fire area are critically dry and the fire is expected to keep moving toward the north, east of the Forest Trail No. 307 (Crest Trail).

Crews remain focused on the west flank of the fire. Burnout operations will be conducted south of McKnight Road, and east of the Crest Trail, south of Spud Patch Trail to minimize fire effects to the upper North Seco Watershed. Helicopter water drops continue on the west perimeter, utilizing all possible hours of allotted flight time. Minimal fire activity today is expected on the east side, as the fire is reaching lighter fuels in the lower elevation. Fire personnel continue to monitor the east flank of the fire to detect any hot spots. The area around Kingston and State Highway 152 remains secure. The north perimeter of the fire as of 10:00 p.m. last night was in North Seco Canyon, south of Marshall Spring.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO EVACUATIONS AND NO

STRUCTURES HAVE BURNED. The fire is approximately 3 miles southwest of Hermosa and 16 miles southwest of Winston. Firefighters completed structure protection in Hermosa, and have moved their efforts to the Cooney and Bloodgood area. Firefighters have completed structure protection at the McKnight Cabin.

Access to Silver City is open. Businesses along New Mexico State Highways 15 and 35 remain open, all the way to the Gila Cliff Dwellings. The majority of the Gila National Forest is open for recreational opportunities with Stage One fire restrictions in effect.

For more information on restrictions, go to firerestrictions.us. There is an emergency closure in place for the fire area. For more information about the fire closure go to <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gila>.

June 27, 2013 - June 27 Briefing - Friday Public Info Meeting Location Changed

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 92,000 acres.

Visit the official fire site for the latest and best information: [Silver Fire Site](#)

Map courtesy of United States Forest



June 27 Briefing - Friday Public Info Meeting Location Changed (Con't)

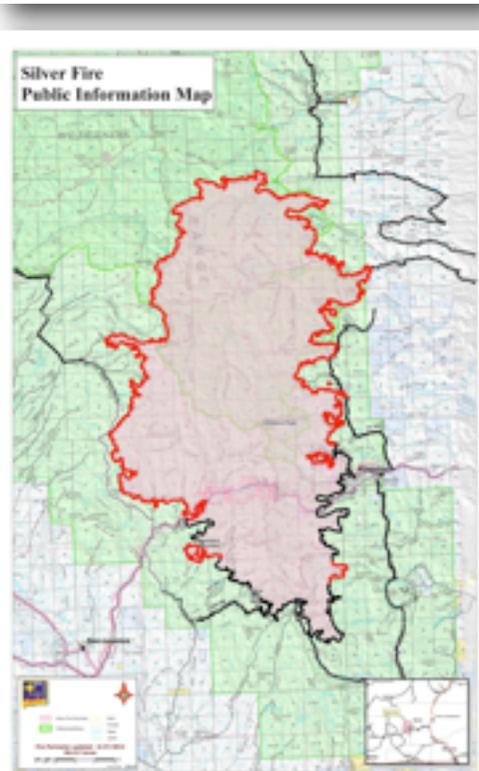
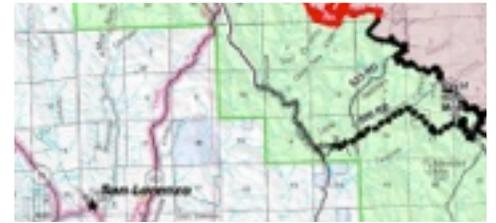
Service. Map shows proximity of fire perimeter to San Lorenzo.

Public Information Meeting on Silver Fire for Friday June 28th at 6pm location changed to Roundup Lodge.

The Forest Service posted the following on its site at 7:45 PM today.

Extremely hot and dry weather and southeasterly winds have caused the Silver Fire to be very active today. The fire has progressed significantly to the northwest over the Crest Trail and is approaching Reed's Peak. The fire has also made a few advances to the west where it has partially crossed over the Rabb Trail. Helicopters and crews are actively suppressing the area where the fire has gone over the Rabb Trail. Due to the fire's intensity and heavy smoke, helicopters are unable to be utilized on the north end of the fire. In addition, all burnout operations have been stopped for the time being. Due to the wind shift, smoke is very heavy in the Mimbres Valley, Silver City and other area west and northwest of the fire. These areas may be observing ash falling from the fire. At this time, no communities are threatened. Areas east of the fire are being monitored by air.

Hanover Real Time Smoke Monitor Report as of 7:21 PM today.



Fire Perimeter Today

June 29, 2013 - 100,000+ Acres

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 101,311 acres.

Photos above, of a helicopter crew fighting the fire by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro. Nothing has been posted on the Forest Service's InciWeb Site for the Silver Fire since Thursday evening. The following photograph is of a hard copy status report for Friday. (see top right of following page)

INCIDENT UPDATED 2 DAYS AGO

June 29, 2013 - 107,000 Acres - Incident Update of June 29 12:30 PM

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 107,000 acres.

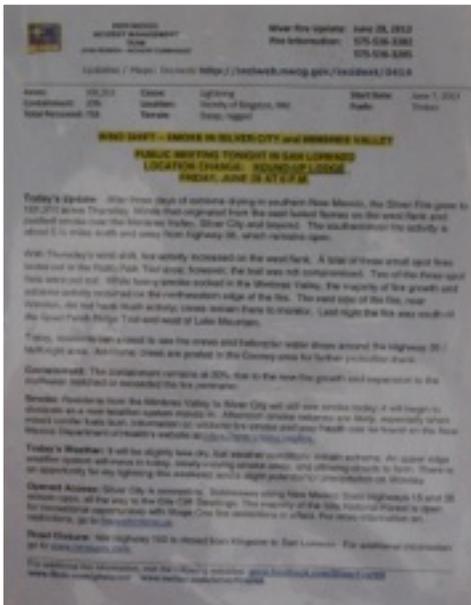
Below: Hanover smoke report from noon today.

As conditions allow, aerial firing operations will continue to help



107,000 Acres - Incident Update of June 29 12:30 PM (Con't) Current Situation

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 126,000 acres.



Total Personnel: 728
 Size: 107,000 acres
 Percent Contained: 35%
 Fire Behavior: Plume dominated fire behavior along the Northern and North Western perimeter with long range spotting.
 Significant Events: Five management action points have been preached in the last 24 hours.
 Continue to hold, patrol, and mop-up as needed. IMT hosting a public meeting for the communities in the Mimbres valley.

Below: Top of the smoke plume from Truth or Consequences. Photos on this and the next page courtesy of US Forest Service.



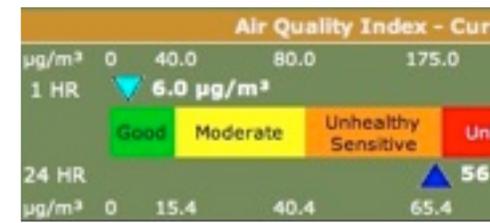
reduce the fire's intensity. Fire crews will continue work on containing fire that spotted to the west and construction indirect fire line further out from fires edge on the west side of the fire within the Cooney Canyon area.

As conditions allow, aerial firing operations will continue to help reduce the fire's intensity. Fire crews will continue work on containing fire that spotted to the west and work on the construction of an indirect fireline further out from fires edge on the west side of the fire within the Cooney Canyon area.

The south and east sides of the fire will be monitored by air as no fire activity has been detected for several days. Smoke observed on the east side of the fire is within the North Seco Canyon near the Forest Service boundary.

Outlook

Planned Actions: Assess visibility to continue aerial firing operations to help reduce fire intensity along the fire perimeter. Hold, patrol and mop-up as needed.



The south and east sides of the fire will be monitored by air as no fire activity has been detected for several days. Smoke observed on the east side of the fire is within the North Seco Canyon near the Forest Service boundary.

June 29, 2013 - Fire Update: 6/29 - 4:30 PM - Notice of Flood Planning Meeting

Moisture has moved into the area bringing more cloud cover, slightly



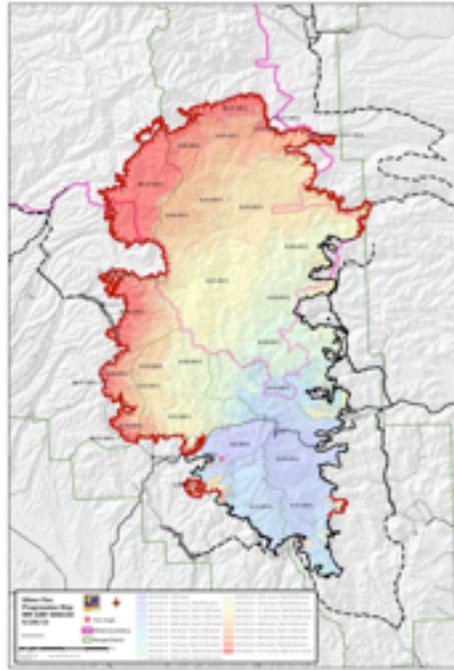
Fire Update: 6/29 - 4:30 PM - Notice of Flood Planning Meeting (Con't)

lower temperatures an increase in relative humidity and winds. There is also a slight chance of isolated thunderstorms on the Black Range that may bring dry lightning.



Silver City, Hillsboro and Winston remain open. Businesses along NM State Highways 15 and 35 remain open all the way to the Gila Cliff Dwellings. The majority of the Gila National Forest is open for recreational opportunities with Stage 1 fire restrictions in effect. NM

Highway 152 is closed from Kingston to San Lorenzo. For more information go to www.nmroads.com.



E-mail to the Hillsboro and Kingston Communities
From Russ Bowen, Asst. Fire Chief of Hillsboro Fire/Rescue

June 28, 2013

To the residents of Hillsboro and Kingston: would like to advise you to the best of my ability of the current and future flooding concerns for our

communities. For those of you who were present at the Planning Meeting of June 25th, you may have left confused and frustrated by the things that you heard. Please understand that what we are dealing with is a large number of unknowns and that many entities are at work trying to assess the possible effects of these unknowns before they become knowns!

Before you judge this to be a lot of gibberish, let me get to some specifics. We have a burn scar on the mountains above us unlike anything that we have experienced before, even for the old timers. A burn scar, as the professionals informed us, is unable to slow down and soak up precipitation in the way that a healthy forest and soil would do. Therefore, increased runoff will result. Increased runoff has the capacity of gathering and transporting larger volumes of debris, in addition to the volume of water that is flowing. Of course, the runoff is dependent upon the rate at which the precipitation falls and the duration of the precipitation event.

Normally, over half of our annual precipitation falls in the months of July, August, and September – the monsoon season. The precipitation falls primarily in the form of convective showers which usually are localized, but produce a



Fire Update: 6/29 - 4:30 PM - Notice of Flood Planning Meeting (Con't)

a large volume of water in a short period of time. The winds aloft which transport the clouds are lighter in this time of the year which compounds the problem, as showers may linger over an area, adding to the precipitation totals. The monsoon flow, moisture from the tropics, shows no signs of establishing itself at present owing to the westerly flow which has persisted at low latitudes later than normal. However, the present meteorological pattern is rotating relatively moist Canadian air down the eastern plains of New Mexico, which is forecast to gradually back into the southwestern part of the state. The result will be thundershowers, as early as Saturday night, but increasing in coverage and intensity Sunday afternoon and evening and still a greater threat on Monday afternoon through Monday night. Some indication is that the showers will persist each afternoon and evening next week.

As moisture begins to present itself over the burn scar, we will begin to learn how great an effect this will have upon the Percha Basin. Hopefully, things will progress gradually. The National Weather Service is keeping a close eye on conditions in our area and will provide us with the earliest possible

notice of any threats to our communities.

It behooves all of us to be vigilant. If you see heavy showers upstream, anticipate its effects upon us in a matter of time. If you notice flow developing in the Percha or any of its tributaries, you can make Sierra County Central Dispatch aware of it by calling a non-emergency number (894-6617 or 894-7112) or by notifying any of the Hillsboro Fire / Rescue Department members (Bowen 895-5617). If you observe flood waters, dial 911 immediately and provide Central Dispatch with as much information as possible.

If flooding is observed or appears imminent, Hillsboro Fire will sound its siren in an oscillating manner, easily distinguished from the continuous wail that summons volunteers to a call. For those who have informed us that they are out of earshot of the siren, we will give you a short telephone message notifying you of the emergency. If you are in a flood prone area (adjacent to Percha Creek or at a vulnerable elevation, say within 10 to 20 feet of the creek level), you should move to higher ground immediately.

Hillsboro Fire / Rescue Department would recommend those persons living west of the west bridge in Hillsboro to go west on Highway 152 to achieve a safe elevation, even

proceeding to the turnout at the high bridge, if you are unsure of your elevation. If however you are already driving in water, turn up any drive that goes uphill.

If you live east of the east bridge in Hillsboro, the Happy Flats district, you could evacuate up Water Tank Hill (carefully, as the road is rough) and you very quickly gain elevation. If there is time and there is not water flowing over the road at Warm Springs (the Transfer Station turn off), you could travel east on Highway 152 and wait out the danger at a safe pull-off.

Between the bridges, the downtown Hillsboro area would evacuate to the Community Center – this would include all the residents on Main Street, the RV Park, and the low lying areas of Elenora and Rosa Streets.

In a worse case scenario, the bridges or other important places could be compromised. Do not place yourself in danger by prematurely attempting to return home. Stay sheltered in place until you are told by responsible personnel that the danger is past. If portions of the community are isolated, we will have communication by radio and phone and will get the help that is needed on scene as quickly as possible.



Fire Update: 6/29 - 4:30 PM - Notice of Flood Planning Meeting (Con't)

(Photographs of the Noonday Cabin Structure Protection, this page and page 45 - courtesy of the USFS.)

Of course, an evacuation would only be suggested if conditions were or expected to become life-threatening. For less threatening scenarios, sand bags will be made available. There will be bags available at the fire station after 9AM on Saturday, but you would need to fill them and place them yourself. At 1PM on Wednesday, a sandbag machine, sand, and personnel for assisting in filling the bags will be at the Park across from Sue's Antiques.

The next Flood Planning Meeting will be that evening, Wednesday, July 3rd at 6PM in the Community Center.

Russ Bowen, Asst. Fire Chief, Hillsboro Fire/Rescue Department & resident meteorologist

Please share this with your neighbors and friends who have no access to e-mail.

June 30, 2013 - Fire Update for June 30 at 2:00 PM

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 125,757 acres. 45% contained.

Below: Photo courtesy of US Forest Service - Salmon Firefighters Rappel From Helicopter



The fire has increased in acreage to 125,757; containment on the Silver Fire is still at 45% this morning. Variable winds are expected throughout the day. The communities

of Mimbres Valley and surrounding areas can expect smoke intermittently at different times of the day.

Silver City, Hillsboro, Winston and businesses along NM State Highways 15 and 35 all the way to the Gila Cliff Dwellings remain open.

The Gila National Forest is coordinating to retrieve Gila Trout from the South Diamond Creek as a precautionary measure.

The majority of the acres increase reported occurred during the previous days operational period. The District Ranger confirmed one non resident out building was destroyed in Animas Creek.

Silver Fire News Update 6-30-13
Incident: Silver Fire Wildfire
Containment Increases to 45%

Yesterday's Summary: The fire was extremely active yesterday to the northwest, and partially to the north, causing a smoke plume to reach 39,000 feet in the air early in the day. An infrared flight last night could



Fire Update for June 30 at 2:00 PM (Con't)

Photo above, from Emory Pass, courtesy of USFS.

not determine the exact size of the growth due to heavy smoke and cloud cover. One large spot fire on the west side of the fire in Quaking Aspen Canyon continued to grow. Crews are actively trying to suppress that spot fire. Helicopters were not utilized due to extreme fire behavior and heavy smoke. Aerial ignition was utilized on ridgetops on the northwest corner of the fire near the fire's edge which was successful in easing the burn severity in that area.

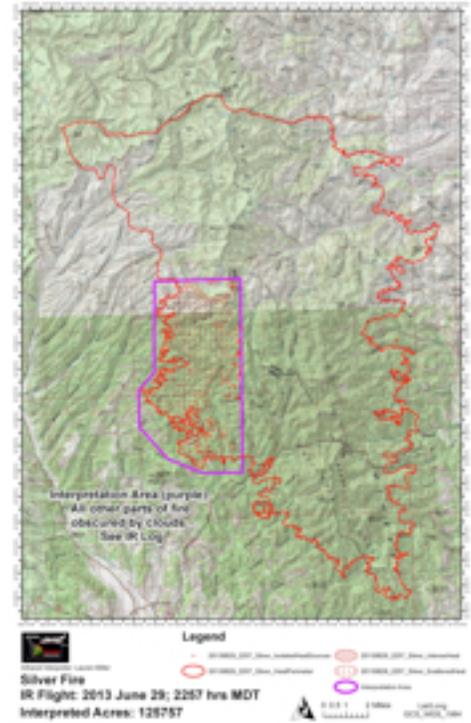
Today's Update: As conditions allow, aerial firing operations will continue to help reduce the fire's intensity. Fire crews will continue work on containing fire that spotted to the west and constructing indirect fireline further out from fires edge on the west side of the fire within the Cooney Canyon area. The south and east sides of the fire will be monitored by air as no fire activity has be detected for several days. Smoke observed on the east side of the fire is within the North Seco Canyon near the Forest Service boundary.

The Incident Management Team has a land use agreement with the State to utilize their allotment of water from Bear Canyon Lake for water drops. The Team is keeping close records of how much water they are taking out of the Lake to make sure they stay within the terms of the agreement.

Smoke: Winds will initially push smoke to the west but will eventually be out of the southwest changing the direction of smoke to the northeast away from the Silver City and Mimbers Valley areas. Smoke columns may again be visible along the northern part of the fire, especially when mixed conifer fuels burn. For information about health effects of smoke, including actions individuals can take to protect themselves, and guidance on distances and visibility based on location of current fires, please visit <https://nmtracking.org/fire>.

Today's Weather: Moisture is starting to move into the area bringing more cloud cover, slightly lower temperatures, an increase in relative humidity, and light winds. There is also a slight chance of isolated thunderstorms on the Black Range that may bring dry lightning.

Open Areas: Silver City, Hillsboro, and Winston remain open. Businesses along NM State Highways 15 and 35 remain open, all the way to the Gila Cliff Dwellings. The majority of the Gila National Forest is open for recreational opportunities with Stage 1 fire restrictions in effect. For more information on restrictions, go to firerestrictions.us. There is an emergency closure on the Forest for the fire area. For more information about the fire closure go to <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gila>



Road Closure: NM Highway 152 is



Fire Update for June 30 at 2:00 PM (Con't)

closed from Kingston to San Lorenzo. For additional information go to www.nmroads.com.

www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM
www.flickr.com/gilaforest
www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM

July 1, 2013 - Monday Morning Fire Update

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 133,625 acres. 50% contained.

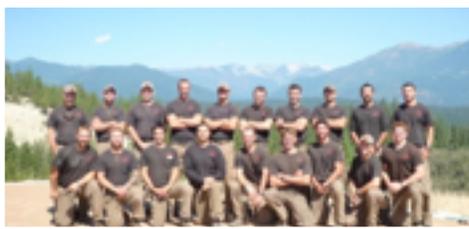
Above: Photo courtesy of US Forest Service. Crown fires on the Silver Fire.

fuel carrying will possibly bring creeping and smoldering in the morning, then transitioning into low to moderate surface fire throughout the day.

THE DAY BEFORE A TRAGEDY STRUCK WHICH HIT HOME WITH GREAT RESONANCE IN THE BLACK RANGE. TWO POSTS ON THE FREE RANGE BLOG RESULTED.

July 1, 2013 - Granite Mountain Hotshots - Our Sorrow

A post by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro.



Granite Mountain Hotshots - photo courtesy of the team.

As a community we wish to express our deep sorrow at the deaths of 19 members of the Granite Mountain Hotshots yesterday. They died fighting the Yarnell Fire in Arizona.

The Prescott Granite Mountain Hotshots were the first municipal Hot

Shot Crew in the nation and were certified as an elite national crew in 2008. They had just finished fighting the Doce Fire near Prescott, a fire which ironically affected some of Kingston's residents who also live in Prescott, before they went to Yarnell.

Hot Shot crews from around the nation have helped fight the Silver Fire that has burned so much of the Black Range. Their courage and their kindness have been noteworthy and we thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

To Hot Shot crews everywhere - take care. Nothing we have is worth your injury or death.

Current Situation	
Total Personnel	400
Size	11,427 acres
Percent Contained	50%
Fuels Involved	Timber (dry) and understory/lightly eroded fuels ranging from dry wood snags to high situations.
Fire Behavior	Backing and flanking with occasional torching.
Significant Events	Received some precipitation on the fire today. Humidity has increased over the fire area last night. Evacuation of a population of 700 City of Yarnell from the South Yarnell Creek from the slide suspect wilderness area.
Outlook	
Planned Actions	Continue to assess the feasibility to utilize firing operations to reduce intensity along the fire perimeter; continue constructing indirect lines and competing structure defensible space.
Growth Potential	Extreme
Terrain Difficulty	Extreme

Crews will be monitoring the perimeter of the fire. The Cooney structure protection is in its final stage with only minimal work remaining. Today fuels are expected to carry slower than previous days. Slower



July 4, 2013 - Yarnell Hill

A post by Harley Shaw of Hillsboro.

Yarnell Fire Photographs, below.

Top - Courtesy of Todd Tamscin, www.toddtamcsinphotography.com

Middle: Peeples Valley, photo courtesy of EPA.

Bottom - looking west from I-17, courtesy of USFS.

Outrage was my first reaction when I read about the 19 Granite Mountain Hotshots who died this week on Yarnell Hill. I know that country. I've worked there. Before any additional information became available, I knew these young people died trying to save human-built structures, not wildlands or forest.



Details remain sketchy, because the Yarnell Hill Fire is still burning. Apparently, in spite of the valiant effort of those young people, the entire town of Yarnell, at the top of the hill bearing its name, is gone. The early estimates are saying 200 houses lost. That tells me that the fire consumed much more than the original small settlement of Yarnell.

Historically, Yarnell and Hillsboro had a lot in common. Yarnell's reasons for being were mining and ranching. Over time, it became more and more of a retirement community with a diverse human population. Before about 1980, perhaps 150 people lived there. With the "white-flight" of the '80s and '90s, that changed. Urbanization and sprawl, so characteristic of Arizona's landscapes, set in and new houses began to appear on the brushy hillsides. Several studies of historic vegetation change in Arizona have disclosed that shrub and woodland densities increased immensely between about 1900 and now. People still argue over causes, but climate change, undetected until the 1960s, is one that is frequently cited. The

picture that evolves is one two forces converging toward disaster—gradual, almost undetectable increasing woody vegetation on the one hand and encroachment of unknowing newcomers building homes in a growing tinderbox on the other. As with our own Black Range fire, it was just a matter of time. If you can envision placing Hillsboro and Kingston halfway up the slope between Kingston and Emory Pass,

you will get a picture of the situation. Had that been the case, neither of our towns would have survived. Yarnell Hill rises abruptly from



lowland Sonoran Desert north of Wickenburg almost vertically to become a rugged escarpment of massive granite boulders interspersed with dense Arizona chaparral—ergo scrub oak, ceanothus, Manzanita, stuff that evolved to periodically burn and burn explosively. Yarnell itself sits (or rather sat) in a tight valley surrounded by granite and chaparral. Scattered evergreen oak trees—Emory oak, Arizona white oak, probably others—along with scattered junipers provided a gentle landscape amenable to our own savannah-adapted species. It was an idyllic setting with an ideal southwestern climate—low enough to avoid the extreme cold of places like Flagstaff, high enough to avoid the extreme heat of Phoenix. Much like Hillsboro, you couldn't find a better place to retire. And on the whole, real estate was pretty cheap. You didn't have to be a billionaire to settle there.

Yarnell Hill was notorious among travelers in the 1930s and 1940s in Arizona. For many years, the highway that ascended it was the only paved road connecting Phoenix, Wickenburg, and Prescott. This was true into the 1960s. More importantly, however, the automobiles of the

Yarnell Hill (Con't)

'30s and '40s were manufactured in places like Michigan, where no-one had any concept of the effects of desert heat on vehicles. No one tackled Yarnell Hill in an auto of that vintage without a couple of recently-filled canvas water bags. Ideally, they had a five-gallon can of water in the trunk as well. Although the climb up the hill was less than 10 miles, you were almost guaranteed of at least one, more likely two, stops to pour water over and then refill a boiling radiator. Additionally, some vehicle brands (Chrysler products come to mind) were notorious for vapor locks in hot weather. Vapor locks were a phenomenon of the past. Essentially, in the old carburetor fuel systems, driven by rather puny mechanical fuel pumps (which worked only if your engine was running), excessive heat and rapidly changing elevation would cause the gas to virtually boil (vaporize) within the gas lines and the engine would die. When this happened, you found a nearby shade tree and resigned yourself to a half hour wait until the gas cooled enough to liquefy. Sometimes you'd have to prime the carburetor to get the system cranking again. My father's 1937 Dodge predictably vapor locked at least twice any time we ascended Yarnell Hill on a summer day. In truth, vapor locks are my first memory of Yarnell Hill.

I reminisce on this subject mainly to provide a picture of what those young fire-fighters encountered. They were undoubtedly uphill from a growing fire on a steep, granite-boulder hillside that is almost unclimbable, where narrow passages between the boulders were clogged with dense brush. The steep slope

faces west, perhaps a little south. Rock surface heat, even without fire, can exceed 130 degrees. It's a place one could die of heat stroke on a normal summer day. Trying to fight a conflagration there is, to me, unimaginable.



I read that an investigation has already begun. This means that someone, probably one or two individuals will be blamed. But, as in most catastrophes, the causes are complex and the outcomes only partly predictable. We can blame the long history of increasing woody vegetation throughout the Southwest, in itself caused by a complicated combination of local land use, including perhaps grazing and early fire protection. If some observers are right, changing climate may have exacerbated the vegetation change, and some say that climate itself has been modified by global human industry. Add to this the unthinking subdivision of lands by developers who were either ignorant of the land or totally irresponsible. A bit of greed certainly flavors their enterprise. Include outlanders seeking moderate climate and open

space in which to build their dream homes. Add also county land planning and zoning people perhaps thwarted by laws passed by legislatures who by nature tend to be ideological fools regarding private property rights, especially in current day Arizona. Or perhaps the planning and zoning folks operate under their own foolish ideology, which might have involved a bit of cash under the table. Whatever the case, Arizona has a history of bypassed zoning regulations when money started flowing. Add perhaps the pressure in our money-hungry society to place perhaps too much value on poorly-placed and mis-built structures, and you have the mix that ultimately places young people heroically trying to do their job at excessive risk.

Blame, I'm sure will be placed, but I'm betting that it doesn't land on those who benefitted economically from this long and complicated series of events.

I have some pleasant memories of Yarnell. Perhaps I can write them as well in a later essay.





**RETURNING TO
THE SILVER FIRE BLOG**

July 1, 2013 - Highway 152 is Open (2nd post of the day)

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 133,625 acres. 50% contained.

Top and Below: Photos courtesy of US Forest Service.

Yesterday's Summary: Fire activity was moderate. Precipitation was primarily on the northern aspect of the fire, and lightly on the south. The southwest side of the fire has been contained to the Raab Park Trail. In addition to the southwest perimeter, minimal activity remains on the east and south. Fire growth continues to the north, including the Reed's Peak vicinity.

Today's Update: Crews will be monitoring the perimeter of the fire. The Cooney structure protection is in its final stage, with only minimal work remaining. Today fuels are expected to carry slower than

previous days. Slower fuel carrying will possibly bring creeping and smoldering in the morning; transitioning into low to moderate surface fire throughout the day.



A total of 83 Gila Trout were successfully relocated to the Mora Fish Hatchery by the Gila National Forest and cooperators.

Anyone seeking information regarding the Yarnell Fire please contact: Mike Reichling at the AZ

State Forestry Division ([928-427-3347](tel:928-427-3347)) or Carrie Dennett ([602-399-3078](tel:602-399-3078)).

Smoke: Much like yesterday, variable winds are expected near the Silver Fire. Communities of Mimbers Valley and surrounding areas can expect smoke from the Silver Fire intermittently at different times of the day as the winds shifts directions.

Additional smoke may be visible along the north and northwest part of the fire if the burnout operations are initiated. For information about health effects of smoke, including actions individuals can take to protect themselves, and guidance on distances and visibility based on location of current fires, please visit <https://nmtracking.org/fire>.

Today's Weather: A high pressure system is moving south over the fire. With this system brings a greater chance of storms, anticipating much needed precipitation. Strong erratic winds are possible, with wind shifts out of the southwest. The temperature today is expected to be lower than the last few days; most likely staying around the mid 70 to 80 degree range.



Highway 152 is Open (Con't)

Open Areas: Silver City, Hillsboro, and Winston remain open. Businesses along NM State Highways 15 and 35 remain open, all the way to the Gila Cliff Dwellings. The majority of the Gila National Forest is open for recreational opportunities with Stage 1 fire restrictions in effect. For more information on restrictions, go to firerestrictions.us. There is an emergency closure on the Forest for the fire area. For more information about the fire closure go to <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gila>

Roads: NM Highway 152 is open as of 10:00 a.m. July 1, 2013 from Kingston to San Lorenzo. Although NM Highway 152 is open, there is a forest closure still in effect for some areas. Safety is still a concern, watch for domestic livestock, wildlife, rocks, fallen trees and debris. For additional information go to www.nmroads.com.

www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM
www.flickr.com/gilaforest
www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM

July 2, 2013 - Tuesday AM Fire Update

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 137,326 acres. 54% contained.

All photos on this and following page are courtesy of US Forest Service.

The Silver Fire is 137,326 acres and 54% containment as of the morning of July 2. Despite rainfall in Silver City, along the east flank of the fire, and in San Lorenzo, rain did not fall over the active part of the fire, along the northern section.

NM Highway 152 is open, however, fire crews are working along the road. With rains, motorists should be watching for falling rock and debris. Livestock may be crossing the highway. Drive carefully.

Incident Information	
Total Personnel	524
Size	137,326 acres
Percent Contained	54%
Fuels Involved	Thicket (litter and understory) highly varied fuels ranging from dry mixed conifer at high elevations. Fuel is high due to lack of fire disturbance in past century.
Fire Behavior	Mainly backing and flanking along the western and northern flanks, with some isolated tree torching.
Significant Events	All personnel assigned to the Silver Fire incident participated in a 2-hr. stand-down as a result of the tragedy on the Forest Hill fire yesterday. At 10:00 am highway 152 was reopened for public vehicle traffic.
Outlook	
Resource Actions	Plan to breakdown Cooney again. Continue hot spotting along the Fire perimeter on Division C and D as conditions allow. Will finish setup effort in the town of Kingston as well as patrol and monitor Divisions A/E and J/T.
Growth Potential	Extreme
Terrain Difficulty	Extreme
Remarks	No IR data was collected again last night due to weather conditions. Aves release reflect more accurate aerial mapping along the northern perimeter.



July 3, 2013 - Clean-Up Along NM-152 - End of the Fire May Be In Sight



As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 137,326 acres. 54% contained.

July 1 Summary: Fire activity remains moderate due to thunderstorm activity. Most of the fire activity was to the northwest and fire growth remains slow. There was only slight heat detected on the west side. No fire was observed to the east and south. Crews continued chipping operations along Highway 152, around Kingston and in the Cooney area.

July 2: Crews will construct and prep line from Rabb Park southwest to Rosencran cabin. Resources will also continue to hold and mop-up the spot fire near Rabb Park. Fire crews will



Clean-Up Along NM-152 - End of the Fire May Be In Sight - (Con't)

continue to monitor the west, east and south perimeter of the fire. Direct line will be constructed on the northwest corner of the fire in the Cooney Canyon area as conditions allow and can be done safely. Crews will also continue to prep Forest Road 150.

While things are winding down, crews continue to mop up and rehab suppression lines. Within the next few days, the demobilization of resources will begin. The BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response) Team will continue to assess the area.

Smoke: Information on wildland fire smoke and your health can be found on the New Mexico Department of Health's website at <https://nmtracking.org/fire>.

Open Areas: Highway 152 is now completely open to the public including San Lorenzo to Kingston. Safety is still a concern; watch for livestock, wildlife, rocks, fallen trees and debris on the Highway. Silver City, Hillsboro, and Winston remain open. Businesses along New Mexico State Highways 15 and 35 remain open, all the way to the Gila Cliff

Dwellings. The majority of the Gila National Forest is open for recreational opportunities with Stage One fire restrictions in effect. For more information on restrictions, go to firerestrictions.us.

Closures: For more information about any fire closures go to <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gila>. For information on road closures, go to www.nmroads.com.

For additional fire information, visit the following websites:
www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM
www.flickr.com/gilaforest
www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM

July 3, 2013 - July 3 Update

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 137,326 acres. 59% contained.

Top of Column: Fire Map from June 12 - remember when. Map courtesy USFS.

Estimated Acres: 137,326
 Containment: 59% Total personnel: 590 Cause: Lightning Start Date: June 7, 2013 Location: Vicinity of Kingston, NM Fuels: Timber Terrain: Steep, rugged

Yesterday's Summary: Although some areas of the fire received rainfall, heavy fuels are not responding much to the small amounts of rainfall as some pockets of timber burned intensely. Overall, low to moderate fire intensity was observed. Direct line was constructed on the northwest corner of the fire in the Cooney Canyon area. Crews continued chipping along Forest Road 150 and Highway 152. Helicopters dropped water on the spot fires on the west side of the fire. Direct and indirect line was constructed in Hefner Canyon. Fire crews safely monitored the west, east and south ends of the fire perimeter.

Today's Actions: Crews will continue full suppression strategies, constructing direct and indirect line on the west and northwest sides of the fire. Chipping and rehab of firelines will proceed in the south and western part of the fire. The eastern and southern perimeter will be monitored by air.

The New Mexico Type II Incident Management Team is preparing to transition the management of the fire to a smaller Type III team on Friday morning. The Type III Team will

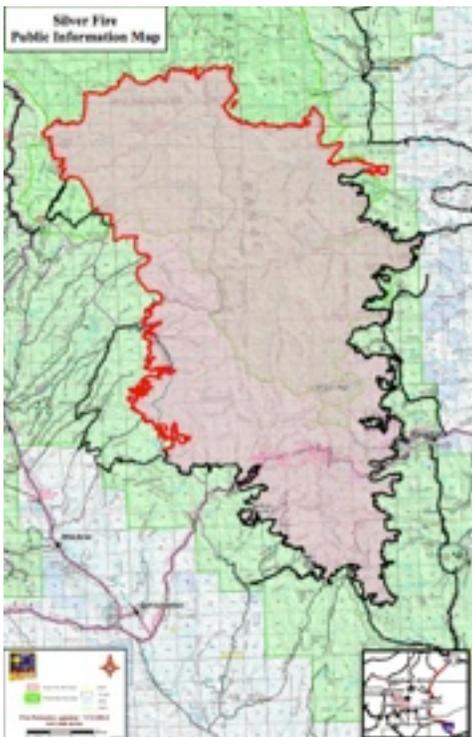


July 3 Update (Con't)

continue suppression efforts to reach further containment on this fire.

more information on restrictions, go to firerestrictions.us.

area. Chipping work continued alongside FS Road 150 and Highway 152.



Closures: There is an emergency closure on the Gila National Forest for the fire area. For more information about the fire closure go to <http://www.fs.usda.gov/gila>. For information on any road closures, go to www.nmroads.com.

Today's Planned Actions: Full suppression activity continues. Crews are monitoring the fire by air and ground. Rehab and mop up work will be ongoing. Chipping work continues at several areas along the fire perimeter.

July 4, 2013 - July 4 Update

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 137,326 acres. 59% contained.

The Type 3 team will arrive today to shadow the current Type 2 team. The Type 3 team will continue with full suppression efforts to increase containment. They will assume command of the fire on Friday July 5th at 6am.

Death and destruction occur when people build where they should not. Photos across top by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro, below from Yarnell fire. Courtesy of Todd Tamscin, www.toddtamscinphotography.com

Open Areas: New Mexico State Highway 152 and New Mexico State Highway 35 into San Lorenzo and the Mimbres Valley remain open. Particularly on Highway 152 expect heavy traffic and watch for livestock, wildlife, rocks, fallen trees and debris. The public is reminded that Forest Service campgrounds on Highway 152 are still closed. Emory Pass Vista remains open. The majority of the Gila National Forest is open for recreational opportunities with Stage One fire restrictions in effect. For



Yesterday's Summary: Fire activity remained low to moderate. Light rain occurred on the fire in the afternoon. Some crews continued the demobilization process in preparation to downsize to a Type 3 organization. Containment lines were increased on the east to the Middle Seco Canyon area and to the west in the Rabb Park

Fire Activity: As a result of rain and higher humidity, fire perimeter is not expected to increase in size in the short term. Isolated pockets of fire burning in the interior may occur. Creeping and smoldering has been observed. Smoke will be visible in the area until a seasonal rain ending event occurs.

Today's Weather: Scattered thunderstorms are expected in the afternoon and evening with frequent lightning, strong winds, and moderate to heavy rain possible. The maximum temperature should be in the lower 80's.



July 4 Update (Con't)

Open / Closed Areas: NM Highway 152 is open. Safety is still a concern and drivers should be alert for domestic livestock, wildlife, rocks, fallen trees and debris along the road. For road information go to www.nmroads.com. An emergency closure remains in effect for a small portion of the Gila National Forest in the vicinity of the fire area. Recreation sites along Hwy 152 remain closed and the entire Aldo Leopold Wilderness area is also closed. For more information about the area of the fire closure go to www.fs.usda.gov/gila.

All communities adjacent to the fire remain open for business including the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. The majority of the Gila National Forest is open for recreational opportunities with Stage 1 fire restrictions in effect. For more information on restrictions, go to firerestrictions.us. Emory Pass Vista is open.

Fireworks are prohibited on National Forest Lands. Your compliance is greatly appreciated.

Anyone seeking information regarding the Yarnell Fire in Prescott, AZ please contact: Mike Reichling at the AZ State Forestry Division

(928-427-3347) or Carrie Dennett (602-399-3078).

www.facebook.com/SilverFireNM
www.flickr.com/gilaforest
www.twitter.com/SilverFireNM

July 5, 2013 - Kirtland AFB Crash Rescue - Fire Perimeter Map As of July 3

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 138,546 acres. 59% contained.

Above and Below: Photograph by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro



Helicopters were a critical asset in helping to suppress the Silver Fire in the Gila National Forest. At the peak of the incident, six helicopters were used to make water drops, fly reconnaissance missions, and transport cargo and personnel. When fire management personnel realized they would be using several helicopters each day throughout the duration of the fire, they wanted to make sure they had a crash rescue unit on scene in case of an aircraft accident.

Chief of Party Kristopher Gitter eagerly responded to a request from the Gila National Forest for aircraft crash and rescue support by sending Crash Rescue Unit #16. "Our mission when ordered was to stage at the incident Helibase to respond to helicopter landing emergencies. Our primary function was to get the pilot and crew members out of the helicopter, then suppress fire."

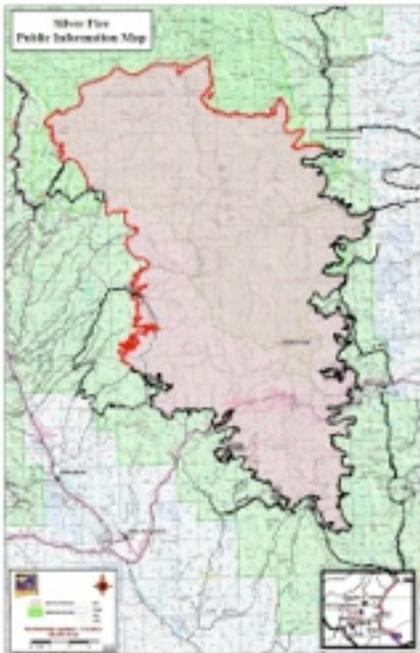
Crash Rescue #16 is a P-19 crash rescue engine that holds 1,000 gallons of water and 130 gallons of Class B foam concentrate (AFFF-Aqueous Film Forming Foam) that is specifically designed to extinguish fire with flammable liquids. It is also equipped with a 500-pound dry chemical unit used to extinguish electrical fires and chemicals that are present in aircraft accidents. Engines that normally respond to wildfires are equipped with Class A foam which is intended to extinguish woody material. The P-19 has two exterior nozzles that can shoot water or foam up to 175 feet in order to extinguish an exterior aircraft fire. The cab is setup so the driver can operate nozzles and the extinguisher to provide for safety and establish a safe passage to extricate aircraft occupants.

Firefighters train continuously in aircraft crash and rescue, hi-angle



Kirtland AFB Crash Rescue - Fire Perimeter Map As of July 3 (Con't)

rescue, swift water rescue and many other rescue techniques. Firefighters are also certified Emergency Medical Technicians.



Since June 11, crews have been rotating out on a ten day schedule. Fourteen days is the normal tour of duty, however, Gitter said, "I have so many firefighters who wanted to help

we reduced the number of days per tour."

Placing the KAFB Crash Rescue Unit on scene was crucial in maintaining safe ground operations on the Silver Fire.

Type 3 team is shadowing the Type 2 team.

Active and ongoing demob of resources. Heavy wetting rains across the fire. Mc Night weather stations receiving ".84 inches of rain/hail. Ongoing rehab efforts continue. Perimeter was monitored for hotspots.

July 5, 2013 - July 5 Update - Type 3 Incident Management Team Assumes Control

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 138,546 acres. 78% contained.

Above: Photograph by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro

Fire Information: 575-533-6231
Hours of Operation: 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Estimated Acres: 138,546 Cause: Lightning Start Date: June 7, 2013

Containment: 78% Location: Vicinity of Kingston, NM

Total Personnel: 292

Agner's Type 3 Incident Management Team assumed command of the Silver Fire this morning at 6:00 a.m. The Incident Command Post will be moved from the San Lorenzo Elementary school to the Wilderness Ranger District at 10:00 a.m. today.

Today's Planned Actions: Ongoing downsizing of personnel continue, as well as rehab where it is feasible. Crew will continue to monitor the perimeter for hotspots. Chipping continues along FS road 150 and Highway 152.

Fire Activity: No fire spread is expected, although a drying trend is forecasted in the next few days, limited fire spread is expected mainly isolated along the northern perimeter if any spread at all.

Today's Weather: Partly cloudy and thunderstorms in the evening then isolated showers and thunderstorms after midnight. Maximum temperature between 79 and 84°.



July 5 Update - Type 3 Incident Management Team Assumes Control (Con't)

Open/Closed Areas: FS Road 150 is now open, high clearance vehicles are recommended. NM Highway 152 is open. Safety is still a concern and drivers should be alert for domestic livestock, wildlife, rocks, fallen trees and debris along the road. For road information go to www.nmroads.com. An emergency closure remains in effect for a small portion of the Gila National Forest in the vicinity of the fire area. Recreation sites along Hwy 152 remain closed and the entire Aldo Leopold Wilderness area is also closed. For more information about the area of the fire closure go to www.fs.usda.gov/gila

Active and ongoing demob of resources. Heavy wetting rains across the fire area again today, at the McKnight IRAWS .84" rain/hail. Ongoing rehab efforts continue over the fire area; personnel monitored the perimeter for hotspots.

July 7, 2013 - July 7 Update

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 138,546 acres. 80% contained.

Above: Photograph by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro - Human print in the black mud of Percha Creek.

Fire Information: 575-533-6231 hours of operation 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Estimated Acres: 138,546 Cause: Lightning Start Date: June 7, 2013

Containment: 80% Location: Vicinity of Kingston, NM

Total Personnel: 94

There has been no increase in acreage on the Silver fire since Friday. The crews that remain on the fire are concentrating on rehabilitation of dozer and hand lines and removing snags from affected roads and trails.

Priorities have now shifted from active fire suppression to rehabilitation of the burned area. The Silver Fire Baer Team members are currently evaluating the burn scar to determine the emergency to reduce flooding and erosion to downstream communities.

A public meeting is being planned for the Mimbres area residents for early

next week. Date, location and time will be posted once finalized. Grant Co. Emergency manager and planning manager are planning to attend.

Open/Closed Areas: FS Road 150 is open, high clearance vehicles are recommended. NM Highway 152 is open. Safety is still a concern and drivers should be alert for domestic livestock, wildlife, rocks, fallen trees and debris along the road. For road information, go to www.nmroads.com.

An emergency closure remains in effect for a small portion of the Gila National Forest in the vicinity of the fire area. Recreation sites along Hwy 152 remain closed and the entire Aldo Leopold Wilderness area is also closed.

For more information about the area of the fire closure go to www.fs.usda.gov/gila

July 11, 2013 - Wrap-Up of The Silver Fire Blog

As of the last official report the Silver Fire has consumed 138,546 acres. 80% contained.



Wrap-Up of The Silver Fire Blog (Con't)

The number of personnel working on the Silver Fire has dropped below 100 and the focus has shifted from fire suppression to rehabilitation. The fire is at least 80% contained and the summer rains are making things better by the moment (any second now we will cross the magic mark here in Hillsboro and have had more than one inch of rain this year).

Recognizing that the Forest Service has stopped its regular fire updates (little to update) and the fire is the past and regeneration and flooding is the future we will be closing down this blog early next week. The mothballed Silver Fire Blog will retained on The Natural Observer blog and can be accessed from that blog via a link.

THUS ENDED THE SILVER FIRE BLOG. ALL OF THE BLOG ENTRIES HAVE BEEN ENTERED INTO THIS DOCUMENT AND THE BLOG WILL BE ERASED TO FREE UP SERVER SPACE. THIS DOCUMENT WILL REMAIN AVAILABLE AS A .PDF FILE, ENHANCED WITH "THE REST OF THE STORY"

Part 2 - What Happens When It Rains?

WITH THE FIRE OUT OF THE WAY THE FOLKS OF THE BLACK RANGE TURNED THEIR ATTENTION TO THE SKY, THOSE WONDERFUL CLOUDS OF VAPOR RATHER THAN SMOKE, CLOUDS WHICH WOULD BRING MUCH NEEDED RAIN AND THE THREAT OF FLOOD. BLOGGING CONTINUED ON THE FREE RANGE BLOG OF THE BLACK RANGE RAG - AS FOLLOWS.

July 8, 2013 - After the Fire, Before the Flood

A post and photograph by Jan Haley of Hillsboro who is the editor of "Home on the Free Range".



I think it's fair to say that most of us in the Black Range neighborhood have been obsessed with fire during the last month. We thought about fire; we talked about fire; we dreamed

about fire. Our village resembled a movie set depicting a dystopian future. Smoke filled the air, and the hot wind blew incessantly. Fire and Forest Service vehicles moved steadily through town or were parked on the streets, with minimal civilian traffic due to the closure of highway 152. Water toting helicopters could be seen and heard most of every day. By the time the fire had moved north, and it was clear that Kingston would be safe, we knew what it meant to live on the border of impending disaster.

This morning, July 4th, it struck me that we were in a state of grace, at least for the moment. It's cooler here than most of the West, and there is moisture in the air. The winds have gone away and the summer sky is a sight for sore eyes, with clouds forming in every direction.

Several nights ago, Mother Nature treated us to an astounding pre-fourth of July display of heat lightning that looked like, depending on whom you talked to: The northern lights, the opening scene from Close Encounters of the Third Kind, or a high tech light show put on by nerds



After the Fire, Before the Flood (Con't)

in heaven. I have yet to talk to anyone who had ever seen anything like it. The rain came down and Percha Creek ran black with ash. It was shocking to see, but at least there was water in the creek for the first time in a long while. The beauty of our beloved Percha Creek was apparent, in spite of the black water from the burn scar on the mountain above us.



The four-tenths-inch of rain we've received over the past couple of days has already brought the sad looking vegetation back from the brink. The birds are singing, dogs are wagging their tails and people are smiling again. The electricity in the stormy sky seems to have jump-started our weary hearts and we're ready to face what comes next.

We'll hope for the best, be as prepared as possible for the worst, and face

whatever comes. In the meantime, I hope we're all savoring this sweet time in the "boro".

July 11, 2013 - The Hopi Camp Crew Gives Back

A photograph of "Conejo Mimbrenño" on a Mimbres bowl by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro.

The blog post is a Forest Service News release from the end of June. Reprinted here as an exception and in recognition of the service that the US Forest Service has provided to all of us.

The Hopi Camp Crew Gives Back to Mimbres Valley Children's Garden

The Hopi Agency Camp Crew of Arizona was recently dispatched to the New Mexico Incident Management Team to work the Silver Fire. The fire broke out June 7, 2013 when lightning hit in the Gila National Forest. The Hopi Camp Crew of 11 cared for the incident command post in San Lorenzo and its 728 personnel who camped there while fighting the fire. The command post was established at the San Lorenzo Elementary School.

Crew Boss Arley Woodty said it was "the best assignment yet", because during down time, the Hopi Crew

also completed a service project for the youth and community.

The school is home to the Mimbres Valley Community Nature Garden. School Custodian Linda Jones has been watering the vegetables during summer break and needed help expanding plots for a new crop of sweet potatoes.

"Our students started a pollinator garden and grow their own food and learn the importance of agriculture to this valley that began 1,000 years ago with the Native Americans, continued with the homesteaders, and organic farms today."

Thanks to the Hopi crew, the school has three new raised garden beds that are decorated in traditional Hopi symbols; Butterflies, Bears, Corn, Eagles, and Horses.

"We are artists back home; we all do arts and crafts, making baskets, dolls and jewelry, but we hardly ever get to do things for kids. We like it," Woodty said.

Each member of the crew, even the bus driver, took part in painting. They hope the youth appreciate the meaning of the art as it relates to agriculture, snow, water, and prayer.



The Hopi Camp Crew Gives Back (Con't)

(Photos above by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro)

Jones saw the work and started showing it off. "I had no idea of the talent of this crew."

She called the school's volunteer archaeologist, Marilyn Markel. When Markel saw the garden work, she brought the school's historic mascot (of sorts), a wooden rabbit named Conejo Mimbrenño.

The rabbit is painted in the traditional style of Mimbres pottery.

Archaeologist Markel, a member of the Grant County Archaeological Society, takes the rabbit to important natural and cultural places of valley, takes a photo, publishes it in the Mimbres Messenger community newsletter, and the youth must guess the location in nature where Conejo Mimbrenño visited.

He also made his way to another fire camp in the Cooney area and posed with firefighters there from the New Mexico Forestry Division, who were stationed to protect property and resources during the Silver Fire.

"Because it's fire season, we had Conejo Mimbrenño visit Smoky Bear," Markel noted. The scene became a

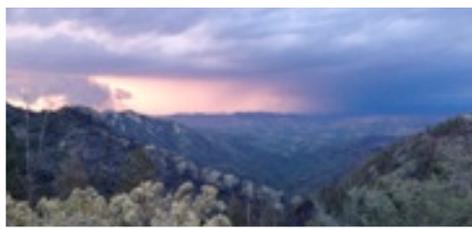
coloring page for the students. "We teach the kids about the history of the valley through the rabbit visits," she explained.

The next lesson will focus on the locations where the firefighters were stationed and how their work, and the New Mexico Incident Management Team, helped protect Mimbres Valley resources.

During down time in fire camp, it is common for firefighters to assist the communities that host them in service projects. Facilities used by crews are always left looking better than when the emergency trucks rolled in to town.

July 12, 2013 - The Long View

A post and photographs by Susan D. Roebuck of Kingston.



Atop the Caballos, looking west toward the Black Range, you're standing at 7,500 feet. The Rio Grande is 3,500 feet below, and if you look almost straight down, there's Caballo Lake. There you can see Highway

152, heading west. Follow 152 up across the flats, through the foothills, and finally, to the dusk-blue silhouette. Your gaze has settled on Emory Pass — the low spot. The highest spots to its north and south,



equally distant, are Hillsboro Peak and Sawyer's Peak, each around 10,000 feet. Here is a close-up of that section. This is a picture of a photograph at the Forest Service office.

From your perspective atop of the Caballos, you see many creeks descending from the Black Range highlands to the Rio Grande. These green threads drop through foothills and hide in canyons, then flow for miles in flat-bottomed, cottonwood-filled arroyos, then at last, their green becomes mesquite-pale, and just below you now, the water — in our imagination — fans out to meet the Rio Grande. Fact is, these creeks rarely do meet the Rio Grande. But in the mountains even the driest ones are still creeks, because sometimes they run just like any creek, for days at a time, cold and clear, and can be nice for camping near on an autumn day.



The Long View (Con't)

From north scanning south, you see:

1. Las Animas, which begins in a vast, geographically complex region due north and northeast of Hillsboro Peak, and joins the river near the 152 junction 25 miles or so from the headwaters. Animas often has flowing water, though not often all the way to the river.
2. The North Percha begins in extremely rugged, steep country on Hillsboro Peak.
3. The Middle Percha originates in extremely rugged, rocky country, between Emory Pass and Hillsboro Peak. Middle Percha runs through Kingston. Ladrone empties into it here in Kingston, at the corner of Walnut and North Streets.
4. The South Percha's headwaters are in the high country between Emory Pass and Sawyer's Peak, and this includes Drummond Canyon — a big contributor. The South and Middle Percha join waters just above Bason's ranch gate and then head on toward Hillsboro. North Percha joins at Hillsboro, near the old schoolhouse, and the three become one about 5,000 feet lower than where they each originate. The Percha then flows

on and joins the river between the south end of Caballo Lake and Arrey.

5. Trujillo Canyon begins up there on the east-facing slopes of Sawyer's Peak. Waters from Trujillo Canyon join the river at Arrey.
6. Tierra Blanca originates around Sawyer's Peak and a bit south, and joins the river south of Arrey.

The Rio Grande flows to the Gulf of Mexico at Brownsville, Texas and starts as a trout-filled mountain freshet in the San Juans of southern Colorado.

Here is a picture of the storm that came Monday, July 1. (ed: photo top left) My mom and I happened to be at Emory Pass because 152 opened over the mountains that morning. We had gone on an outing to Lake Roberts and were on our way back. This is taken from Emory Pass, looking down on Kingston and beyond, Hillsboro. Emory Pass is about four miles as the crow flies from Kingston. This storm hit us when we were two miles by road out of Kingston.

We got to my house, and the creek was running a healthy trickle. It was dark, there had been rocks in the road, and you know about the cows, so I decided to give my mom a ride

home and leave her car at my place. I came home from Hillsboro an hour later almost exactly. I thought I might not be able to cross the creek, which was right, it was pretty dang spooky in the headlights: flowing ashes, charcoal, mud, and debris had come to a standstill, a torrent of thinner mud and ashes lashed its way through. It smelt like a wet campfire. I backed all the way up and drove down Main Street to the bridge on Italian by the orchard. It was fine; the water, though roaring, was down in its channel.

I took this picture of the creek crossing early the next morning. (ed: photo top center)

The one I found most interesting was the arroyo that comes down beside the forest road from the Black Colt Mine area. Comparatively speaking, it doesn't even have that large a watershed. You can see this is a burned area, though. It burned the day we returned to Kingston. The biggest rocks are tumbleweed size. (ed: photo top right)

This is Ladrone. That storm had velocity and sailed away quickly. Catherine measured seven-tenths at the lodge. Good thing it wasn't one of those slow-moving types. The ash sludge is quite firm to walk on, and not slippery. (ed: photo following page top left)



The Long View (Con't)

The third meeting about flooding was this evening, and there is a plan. (ed: photo top center)

The plan is to keep the water moving through town and get out of the way. Alerts, warnings, communication, and evacuation methods are in place. Work is being done on culverts, bridges, dikes, water channels, etc. There are the sandbags. There is an early-warning mechanism in the

wouldn't affect Kingston. It could come down Middle Percha and put both Kingston and Hillsboro at risk. Or just Hillsboro. Or it could come down North Percha. It could be a big, fast storm, or a micro-burst, or a big, slow storm. It will be difficult to be alert, to be ready. But it helps to see for yourself where those clouds are forming and where those bands of rain are coming down. It may help to smell the air. And it will help to listen.



Life goes on here in geologic time.



Melvin Guerro, on the Magdalena hotshot crew, drew this in Spike Camp, on cardboard. It's about 12" x 24". Call if you would like to commission his work: 575-854-2933.



Middle Percha made by Tom Lander and Jack Stewart, which is a float that will sound an alarm if the water reaches four feet. (But that's only the Middle Percha.) Residents will keep an eye on weather.gov, and there will be phone calls between Kingston and Hillsboro about rain. A flood can come so suddenly. It could come down South Percha, and Kingston wouldn't know about it. And it

Meanwhile, we have had rain. The burnt trees are dropping their needles. The needles become mulch, seeds rest under them, then open. It rains as I write tonight. (ed: photo top right)



The carbon in this tree has been a part lot of things, and now some will subside into the ground to nourish new life, while some will be on its way in water, to the Rio Grande and beyond. Much ascended into the atmosphere, and is still drifting around up there.

SOMETIMES THE FIRE AND FLOODS BROUGHT UNSUSPECTED RESULTS

August 26, 2013 - A Cache of Weapons

A post and photographs by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro

This morning several of us took a stroll up Middle Percha west of Kingston to look at the changes that the fire and floods have brought to the area.



A Cache of Weapons (Con't)

Beautiful scenery, a Black-tailed Rattlesnake, and great company made for an enjoyable day. On our walk out we found a cache of weapons which had been burned, adding a bit of mystery to the day.

It was not clear exactly what we had stumbled on to, but it was not a normal event for the Percha. In a small area there was a shotgun, a pistol, several bayonets, various shell casings from exploded ammunition, the remains of what appeared to be a first aid kit and assorted other items.

A number of questions flowed through our minds. What was this site? Had someone stashed a weapons store? If so, why did they fail to remove it before the fire? Was there foul play? It appeared to be a fairly expensive cache. Was it someone's equipment that they had left in camp and then met with ill fortune? What? Why? When?

In any case, the authorities have been notified.

September 17, 2013 - Death of A Tree

A post and photographs by Bob Barnes of Hillsboro.

On the 13th I was on the dike at the east end of town watching the water eat away at the bank of dirt that some

people there thought was going to provide protection. For a long time it had been noted that the dike in that area was in general disrepair, but the people living alongside it did not seem to mind. Following the Silver



Fire and the water event on August 4, more interest was expressed in the dikes in town. Sierra County came out and "fixed" the levees. I have no particular expertise in water flow, so I can't address the claim made by many that the changes they made in the stream bed at the east end of town channelled the water flow directly into the dike. What is obvious to me, however, is that their solution to the dike problem was to pile loose dirt on top of the existing dike. No particular expertise is required to observe that loose dirt, even when it is compacted



a bit, does not stop running water. The only thing that seemed to be holding the dike together was the

roots of a tree that was growing on the old dike.

The top photo is of the dike at 10:00. The photo to the right is of the dike at 11:00, with the tree in the water and the top of the dike gone in places. Video of the event can be seen on The Black Range Channel.

The County's solution to the levee problem reminded me a lot of the story of *The Three Little Pigs* - especially the outlook and capability of the first little pig. The County was back after the dike had collapsed a bit to pile more loose dirt on top, guess they never read the story.

As I watched the loose dirt slid into the stream taking the tree with it I was saddened. I am particularly fond of trees. They take a long time to grow, they are survivors, and they are in "it" for the long haul. Trees die - of old age, by fire, by murder, just like humans - but anyone who has spent time in the desert appreciates shade (or at least should), and I think we owe something to the givers of shade.

We have reached our average annual rainfall (a little over 12 inches). That is a very good thing.



Since Then

Photographs and opinions which did not appear in the Black Range Rag.



The Chances of Flood Are Greater Now

This year, as I have walked the slopes of the Black Range, I could not help but notice that they are in bad shape.

Following the fire, grass seed was dropped onto the slopes and last year the slopes were often covered with heavy grass. Small trees and shrubs were growing back, recovery was well along, things looked good.

This year the story is different, the slope, in the photo above, is heavily vegetated from a Black Range perspective.

Cattle are grazing everything in sight, all of the fencing is burned and none is been replaced. The ground is quickly becoming bare.

Thus far the ground has not become saturated. If the monsoons arrive, however, they will become soaked, unable to absorb more water. And



then the run off will start and there will not be anything to hold it back.

Rather than be complacent because there were no floods last year we had better fill the sand bags and hope for the best, because hope is all we have now.

The Trees Came Through Better Than Expected

It is possible to hike in the Black Range and not know a fire happened, at least for a little while. Instead of the Range being completely scorched it tended to burn in spots and sections, leaving other areas relatively unscathed. By far the worse slope that I have seen is the east slope of Drummond Canyon. A long slope (pictured at the top of this page) which drains directly into South Percha - part of Hillsboro's watershed.



In some areas the Aspens are absolutely beautiful, in other areas they were hit pretty hard. But Aspen groves are typically clones of one individual and are connected with vast root systems. When a section of an Aspen grove burns it is more like an amputation than death.

The Flowers Have Loved It

The Flowers have been great since the fire, species rarely seen are more visible, the slopes are covered for a bit with color - to die away and leave bare earth.

The ladybugs have returned to Sawyers Peak and life is good. If we can just keep most of the water up there and out of our houses.

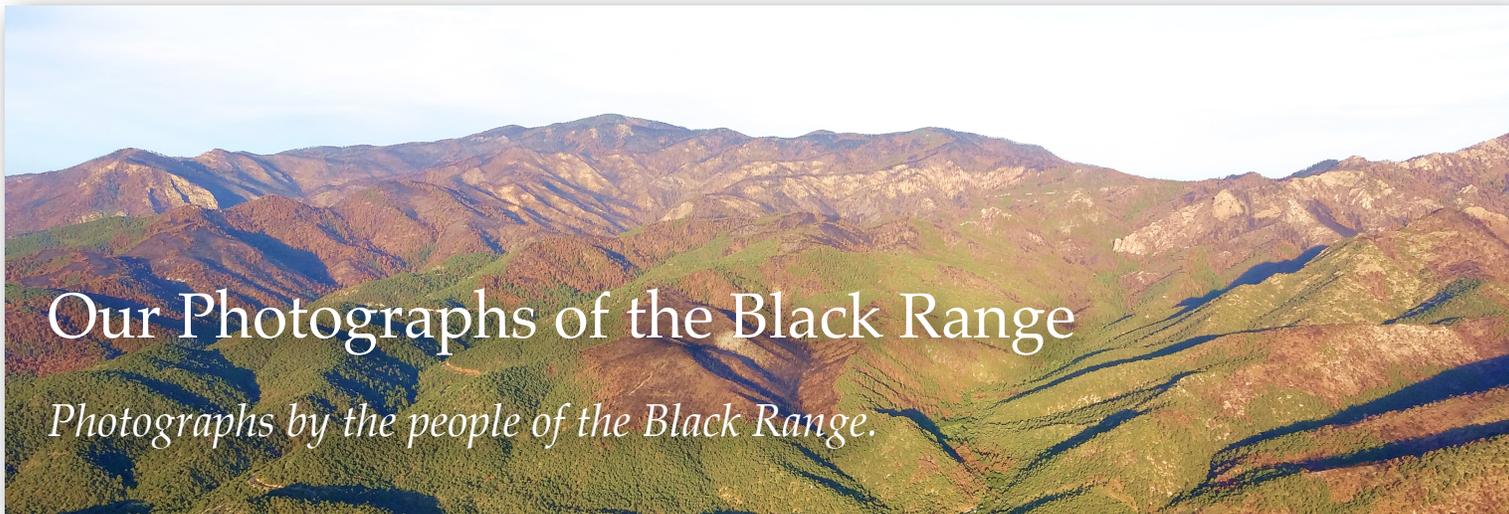
Most of the trails are in reasonable shape, although detours around wash-outs are still required in places.

Our Photographs of the Black Range

Photographs by the people of the Black Range.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
VÉRONIQUE DE JÆGHER



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
CATHERINE WANERK





PHOTOGRAPHS BY
CATHERINE WANER



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
CATHERINE WANERK



Our special thanks go out to the Federal employees who risked “life and limb”, who worked incredibly long hours, and whose selfless devotion to service saved our property and most of our forest.