

Ranch Evacuation Alert

On Saturday, June 16th there was a major wildland fire in the proximity of the South part of our Ranch. The fire began in New Mexico about 1:30 p.m. and quickly spread. At 4:00 p.m. the Santa Fe Trail Ranch was notified by the New Mexico fire official in charge that he was requesting that the Santa Fe Trail Ranch be put on an "evacuation alert". As chairman of the Emergency Services Committee I began calling each of the Area Leaders to notify them of a possible evacuation request if the New Mexico fire took a turn toward our Ranch. They in turn initiated the notification process for residents in their respective areas.

At the same time that these calls were being made, the Fisher's Peak Fire Protection District put two groups of fire fighters and equipment at the southern edge of the Ranch to watch for spot fires. At this point no one knew exactly which track the fire was going to take or exactly how far it was from the Ranch. We were also not able to monitor the New Mexico fire channel, and all our information was coming from the Air Attack Commander.

After a long, tense night the winds died down, the humidity rose and the New Mexico fire fighting efforts were successfully diminishing the immediate threat to the Ranch. Mid-afternoon on Sunday, we began the process of releasing the north portions of the Ranch from the evacuation alert. Late in the afternoon, our fire team walked several miles into the northern part of New Mexico in the direction of the fire. We were finally able to determine that our Ranch was no longer in imminent fire danger. At approximately 5:30 p.m., Chief Buddie Curro told us that we could have the remaining portions of the Ranch taken off evacuation alert. The Area Leaders were notified, and the calls to the Ranch residents were made.

We have been planning a "mock evacuation" on the Ranch to test our Emergency Services Plan. How could we know that our "mock" would be real and that Mother Nature would be in charge.

We will be meeting with all of the Area Leaders and back-ups on July 7th at 10:00 a.m. at my home to critique this evacuation alert. We think we gained some very practical knowledge and plan to incorporate this into the Santa Fe Trail Ranch Emergency Services Plan. We certainly found some "holes" in our communication network and plan to fix these problems long before we get tested again.

I want to thank everyone involved for their cooperation and patience. If nothing else, the events of this past weekend should send a strong reminder to all residents that in the midst of the beauty of our surroundings, there is also a serious threat of wildland fires. We all need to be alert, prepare our properties for adequate fire prevention, and be prepared to assist our neighbors as necessary.

If you have suggestions or feedback, please contact me or your Area Leader. ([Click Here](#) to find your leader's name.) Working together, we can refine our Plan and be better prepared if we're threatened in the future.

Rick Johnson,

Chairman Emergency Services Committee