

Gorge fire acreage less than anticipated

Written by Lauren Ohnesorge
Tuesday, 01 May 2007 08:59

Firefighters from the Eastern Arizona Incident Management Team took over control of operations yesterday on a fire that has been raging since Wednesday near Linville Gorge.

A more precise mapping system revealed the fire charred 550 acres, not up to 800, as firefighters thought earlier.

Over 200 firefighters, 2 helicopters, and 2 bulldozers have attacked the fire in hopes of keeping it south of Pinch in Trail and east of N.C. 105. Today's plan, according to Public Information Officer Diane Bone, is to secure the Northwestern Flank along 105 by attacking from Pinch in Trail. If the attack works, Bone says more helicopter drops are likely this evening.

This afternoon, the wind is supposed to change directions, something Bone assures the U.S. Forest Service is keeping close tabs on. Weather will be a big factor in how quickly the fire can be contained. Latest reports suggest 20 percent containment.

Firefighters believe the fire started at Pinnacle Trail as an escaped campfire and are investigating accordingly. Old N.C. Highway 105, Spence Ridge Bridge, and several trails remain closed until the fire is under control.