



Coconino County SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Jim Driscoll, Sheriff

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: April 21, 2022

Contact: Jon Paxton

Phone: 928-226-5089

SUBJECT: Tunnel Fire Evacuation Update

Flagstaff, AZ – On Tuesday April 19, 2022 Sheriff Jim Driscoll ordered the “GO” evacuation of several neighborhoods in the Timberline/Fernwood area north of Flagstaff along Highway 89. This was in response to an active and fast-moving wildfire in the Coconino National Forest moving towards those neighborhoods.

As deputies were evacuating the area, the fire quickly moved into the vicinity, ultimately burning several properties, outbuildings, and residences. Deputies have conducted preliminary evaluations of the area and estimate approximately 109 properties were impacted by the fire, including 30 residences that were burned and 24 properties with outbuildings destroyed. At this point, all the owners of the residential structures have been notified of the loss. The fire moved extremely fast through this area due to the extreme weather conditions and high winds.

Since the “GO” order was given on Tuesday, the Coconino County Sheriff’s Office has been re-evaluating the need for the evacuation on a constant and continual in coordination with the Tunnel Fire Incident Management Team. To this point, it has been deemed unsafe to allow residents back into the area due to active fire still in the Timberline neighborhood, open and harmful utilities, active firefighting efforts around the houses, and the fact that the neighborhoods are still in harm’s way.

This morning, CCSO met with the Tunnel Fire Incident Management Team to assess the need to keep the evacuation in place. Part of this assessment is based on weather forecasts for the next several days. The National Weather Service has forecasted southwest winds of 20-25 miles per hour, gusting to 36 miles per hour tonight, southwest winds of 20-25 miles per hour with gusty and erratic winds of 40-50 miles per hour on Friday, northwest winds on Saturday, and North winds on Sunday.

Due to the forecasted change in wind direction, wind speeds and gusts, the observed fire behavior and the condition of the fire line protecting the neighborhoods, the CCSO is following the recommendations set forth by the Tunnel Fire Incident Management Team and keeping all “GO” evacuations in place for the next 72 hours (until Sunday morning, April 24). There is still a high level of danger in the “GO” evacuated areas and it is not prudent to open it to residents at this point. Safety of the community and the welfare of those who reside in and visit Coconino County remain the top priority.

Public Information Office: (928) 226-5089

Silent Witness (928) 774-6111

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As always, CCSO will maintain in continual contact with the Incident Management Team and if conditions or forecasts change, this decision will be re-evaluated.

Deputies have been and will continue to provide escorts for residents who reside in the evacuated neighborhoods. These escorts will be reserved to remove or feed animals and pick up emergency items. Security of the evacuated areas are a priority for the Sheriff's Office and there will be several deputies in the area patrolling. Those found in the area without lawful and legal reason will be held accountable.

Areas under the "GO" evacuation status are areas North of Campbell Road to the Sunset Crater Road (FS 545) east and west of Hwy 89. This includes the Timberline, Fernwood, Wutpatki Trails, Girls Ranch Road, Lenox Park, Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, and the areas around Moon Crater. Areas under the "SET" evacuation status include Areas South of Campbell Road to Elden Springs Road east and west of Hwy 89, Antelope Hills, the areas north and east of Moon Crater to the Navajo Reservation. This includes Hutchison Acres, Anasazi Trails, and the north end of Doney Park.

If you are unsure about an evacuation notice or feel it maybe a scam, please contact your local law enforcement agency to confirm the location of any Evacuation stage or Set stage areas, please call the non-emergency numbers for the Coconino County Sheriff's Office (928) 774-4523 and Flagstaff Police Department (928) 774-4114 and report any suspicious calls.

If you receive what you believe to be a fraudulent call to evacuate or any other suspicious call, it is important to provide as much information as possible when reporting this activity. This includes not only phone numbers from which calls are received but also names (even if names appear to be fake), email addresses, web domains, times/dates of contacts, etc.

For an interactive map and other Tunnel Fire and Evacuation information visit www.coconino.az.gov/2894/Tunnel-Fire.

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