



# VEHICLE FIRE ON I-17 CAUSES WILDFIRE NEAR CORDES LAKES: NUMEROUS TRAFFIC PROBLEMS AS A RESULT

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Director | YCSO



At 4 p.m. Saturday afternoon a vehicle fire on I-17 near milepost 261 became a wildfire that threatened the community of Cordes Lakes and stopped traffic on the freeway and alternative routes. With high winds in the area, the fire from the vehicle reached the roadside vegetation and spread quickly northward, pushing toward the Cordes Lakes community. Mayer Fire, Daisy Mountain Fire, BLM, and State Fire resources responded and attacked the fire from the origin, while other resources were deployed to manage the wildfire.

Air tankers started dropping fire retardant to prevent the fire's spread into the community. Other crews started controlled burns ignitions along Sage Brush and Val Vista to protect residential structures from the forward spread. The ignitions successfully held the fire back and allowed aviation resources to continue work up the eastern flank. The fire was estimated to consume 229 acres by early evening.

YCSO activated a "set" evacuation message as a precaution to the residents in Cordes Lakes and called out Search and Rescue resources to stage for potential evacuations.

The fire closed I-17 and caused traffic to find alternate routes, with several drivers trying to enter Cordes Lakes from Bloody Basin Rd and Tonelea Trail. A tractor-trailer attempted the route and got stuck, blocking all traffic.

More interstate and local traffic flooded Stagecoach Trail and made it difficult for additional responding fire resources to get to the fire, prompting the need for roadblocks at Fremont and Thunderbird, and Fremont and Brahma to prevent drivers from endangering themselves and firefighters engaged in burnout operations along Fremont.

By 9 p.m., the Search and Rescue volunteers were cleared as evacuations were not necessary. The "set" message remained throughout the evening but turned back this morning. Shortly after 9 p.m. DPS opened one northbound and two southbound lanes between Bloody Basin and Cordes Junction on I-17. The grounded tractor-trailer was removed from blocking the road by 10:45pm.

Fire crews worked through the night allowing the interior to continue to burn to consume the available fuel with healthy fire in the cool overnight temperatures. Clean up measures will continue, but State Fire is confident they have completely contained the blaze.