

Double-Satellite view of Whitewater-Baldy complex fire

June 6 2012



Credit: NASA Jeff Schmaltz, MODIS Rapid Response Team. Text: NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Rob Gutro

(Phys.org) -- NASA's Terra and Aqua satellites circle the globe in formation and capture images of the Earth from their orbit in space. In the "A-train of satellites," Terra comes before Aqua, and both of them recently captured visible images of the large Whitewater-Baldy Complex

Fire burning in western New Mexico.

Both satellites have the same instrument onboard: the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer, or MODIS instrument and it can capture visible or infrared imagery. On June 4, 2012, Terra captured a visible image of the fire at 1750 UTC (1:50 p.m. EDT) and Aqua followed at 2150 UTC (5:05 p.m. EDT). The winds appeared to be lighter when Terra flew overhead because of a temperature inversion. The winds picked up in a north-northeasterly direction as smoke increased in that direction on Aqua imagery. In addition, the morning image from Terra did not contain any clouds, whereas the later image revealed white puffy pyrocumulus clouds – a type of cumulonimbus cloud that forms as a result of the heat generated from the fires.

The fire has now consumed 250,524 acres and is now 20 percent contained, according to the U.S. Forest Service from Gila National Forest. The wildfire is located in rugged terrain and is burning timber, mixed conifer, ponderosa pine, pinon/juniper and grasses, as well as dead vegetation. For updated information on the [fire](#), visit Inciweb at: www.inciweb.org/incident/2870/ .

Provided by JPL/NASA

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