

Arizona wildfire near Kitt Peak observatory 40% contained

June 20 2022



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A lightning-caused wildfire that led to an evacuation of the Kitt Peak National Observatory southwest of Tucson is 40% contained, authorities said.

More than 300 firefighters were working the wildfire Saturday. If all goes as planned, authorities said the blaze could be fully contained by next Sunday.

The wind-whipped fire started June 11 on a remote ridge on the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation, about 8 miles (13 kilometers) southeast of Kitt Peak.

It had grown to 27.5 square miles (71 square kilometers) before rain fell on the area Saturday. The fire was about 30 square miles (78 square kilometers) by Sunday.

Flames had reached Kitt Peak by Thursday, and officials evacuated a small community north of the mountain.

Four non-scientific buildings on the west side of the observatory property—a house, a dorm, and two minor outbuildings—were destroyed. But authorities said early indications show the fire didn't damage the [telescope](#).

Structure protection crews have successfully placed defensible lines around all remaining structures at Kitt Peak, according to firefighters.

The University of Arizona, which has had a telescope at the site since 1962, is a tenant of the [observatory](#).

In northern New Mexico, authorities who are concerned about the threat of post-wildfire floods as the state enters [monsoon season](#) have warned residents of San Miguel and Mora counties to be ready to evacuate due to flooding risks, the Albuquerque Journal reported.

The largest area facing flooding threats is where a fire that began two months ago has so far burned 533 square miles (1,381 [square](#)

kilometers). The [fire](#) is 72% contained.

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