

Media Release

Yavapai County Sheriff's Office
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Hillside Area Fire Controlled Quickly Yesterday – Human Caused - Citation Issued

Around 2:15 PM on May 15, 2014, YCSO deputies were notified of a wildland fire north of the community of Hillside burning north of Highway 96 in Yavapai County. Fire units from Arizona State Fire (the lead agency), Bagdad Fire, and Skull Valley Fire departments worked together to contain the burn area to less than 15 acres. No structures were damaged and no evacuations were necessary. State Fire also utilized a water dropping helicopter to control the blaze. An advisory only Code Red emergency notification was issued along with direct contact at the elementary school in Hillside. A team from the Jeep Posse was staged in the area in case evacuations were ordered.

Investigation – The reporting party was identified as a 62-year-old man from Phoenix who called YCSO and admitted accidentally causing the fire. He explained that he had started a fire in his camping stove intending to cook a meal. The stove, which was set on the bumper of his Jeep, 'exploded' and he reacted by accidentally knocking it off the bumper. After landing on the ground, brush around the stove burned and spread quickly. He attempted to control the fire without success then called for help and remained on scene throughout the incident. Deputies indicated he was fully cooperative.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the man was cited for Reckless Burning and Violation of a Fire Ban by utilizing an Open Flame. He was released at the scene. Officials were thankful he called quickly after realizing the fire was out of his control.

As expected, law enforcement and fire officials intend a zero tolerance policy when it comes to any violations of fire restrictions and related state laws.

YCSO activated the emergency alert/update box on its homepage yesterday at www.ycsoaz.gov, which provided near real-time updates during the incident. A copy of that text follows:

EMERGENCY ALERT – HILLSIDE AREA FIRE

4:20 PM – State Fire Incident Commander reports fire contained - crews are in the mop up stage — estimated burn area is 20 acres. No evacuations were necessary. No structures were damaged.

3:30 PM — The lead agency on this fire is Arizona State Fire — they are currently reporting “3/4” containment. There have been no evacuations and no structures damaged. The Jeep Posse is on scene assisting as needed. Roads in the area generally remain open, but non-essential vehicles are encouraged to remain off main roads to allow fire vehicle access. We appreciate your cooperation.

3 PM... Fire crews are currently working a wildland fire about 1 mile north of Highway 96 outside of the Hillside area – A camp fire stove is the possible cause. YCSO was notified at 2:17 PM regarding this fire. The fire is generally moving north, away from the community of Hillside. An emergency notification alert has been issued on the Code Red system just to advise fire activity in the area. Hillside Elementary has been notified — No structures are threatened at this time.

State Fire, Bagdad Fire, Skull Valley, YCSO Deputies are on scene. The Jeep Posse has been called out to assist with evacuations if necessary. The fire area is estimated at 20 plus acres —

Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff’s Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260 or the YCSO website: www.ycsoaz.gov