

Subject: Small Forest Fire Near Area 51
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Newsgroups: alt.conspiracy.area51
Date: Sun, 14 Jul 1996 15:53:28 -0700
Organization: Area 51 Research Center
Lines: 43

Small Forest Fire Near Area 51

July 14, 1996, 3:30 pm PT

Word has reached me that there is a small forest fire in the Groom Mountain Range about 15 miles NE of Area 51. The fire itself seems unremarkable, probably caused by lightning in the area, but it's location is mildly interesting, since it may be within a restricted military area.

My assistant in Rachel says she saw the flames and smoke while driving on Route 375 in the Tikaboo Valley. The fire was in the foothills on the east side of the Groom Mountain Range, probably just out of sight of Area 51 but within the Air Force restricted zone. This area is close to White Sides mountain, the viewpoint into the Groom Lake base that was closed by the Air Force last year. The fire cannot be seen from Rachel. Current whether in the area is cloudy with occasional rain, suggesting lightning was the cause of the fire.

The fire could burn itself out, or it might consume more of the forest areas of the Groom Mountain Range. The Groom Range was withdrawn by the military in the 1980s as a buffer zone for the base. The base itself is not in any danger from the fire, however, since the mountain range is about 10 miles from the base at the closest, and there is empty desert in-between.

More interesting is the jurisdictional problems in fighting a fire like this. Will the Air Force let BLM firefighters into this restricted military area to fight the blaze? Will they need security clearances? What would happen if the fire was much closer to the base? Would the Air Force have the resources to fight the fire on its own, or would it require outside assistance?

If the fire burns out, this is a non-story, but if it continues, it could be interesting. I will post any new information that comes to me.

Glenn Campbell

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Area 51 Research Center - Las Vegas & Rachel, Nevada
<http://www.ufomind.com>

FIRE FOLLOWUP - 7/20

As of 7/17, the fire in the Groom Range was out. It generated a lot of smoke, but was apparently extinguished within 24 hours.

A Las Vegas reporter called BLM about it. A BLM representative said they were aware of the fire, but they weren't doing anything about it. It was on military land, and BLM firefighters could enter military land only if invited -- and they weren't. This suggests that the Air Force has its own forest fire equipment.

A Rachel resident gave me photos of the fire. Smoke filled the Tikaboo Valley late Sunday afternoon. Nearest I can tell from the pictures, the fire was about halfway between White Sides and Bald Mountain in the Groom Range. It must have been in a depressed area, because I could see no burn marks from the Tikaboo Valley on my 7/17 visit. This general area is out of sight of the Groom Lake base, but the weekend crew at the base could certainly have seen the smoke. This area is also accessible by a road from the base, so there would have been no need for Air Force equipment to be seen on public land.

An unconfirmed report by tourists passing through Rachel said that vehicles were blocking the dirt roads west of 375 on Monday.

A lightning strike remains the best explanation for the fire. Such fires are quite common, caused either by lightning or flares.

Examination of any satellite image of the area shows many fire scars both on and off the range. The brush in this area isn't very thick, so most fires burn themselves out. Trees are limited to the mountain ranges. Around the Groom Lake base itself, there isn't much to burn, so fire isn't a threat there.

Glenn

[[Parent](#)]

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7/16/96