

Ray May Fire may take week to contain; 2 teens in custody

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

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It could take close to a week to control a fast-moving wildfire in Douglas County authorities say was started by two teenagers who lit an illegal campfire at a makeshift fort.

By late Wednesday the Ray May Fire had charred an estimated 2,730 acres with officials offering no estimate for full containment.

Crews had cut fire lines around roughly half the fire, which burned more fiercely as afternoon winds picked up and the fire burned into steep terrain covered thickly with pinon-juniper. One unoccupied structure was destroyed shortly after the fire started Tuesday afternoon.

"It's pretty active. It's burning hot," said Rita Ayers, fire information officer.

Late in the afternoon, additional fire engines were ordered to protect about 20 structures along parts of Pine Nut Road threatened as the fire pushed to the northeast.

"It's obviously going to be those homes that are our concern," said Tod Carlini, chief of the East Fork Fire Protection District/

One homeowner in that area watched flames march northeast from U.S. 395 toward his home before he was told by firefighters to leave about 5 a.m. Wednesday. Musician David John grabbed a few prized guitars, fiddles and CDs and fled to his second home in Virginia City.

“You can’t take everything so you have to make choices,” John said. “It was getting close, very close. The trees were just exploding.

“It’s like being a sitting duck,” John said.

Authorities investigating the fire determined it was set by two 15-year-old boys who built a campfire at a fort they erected near Ray May Way, Ayers said. The pair were arrested and are being charged with felony arson, she said.

The two teens arrested were not identified because of their age.

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