

# Wallow Fire

## White Mountains, AZ

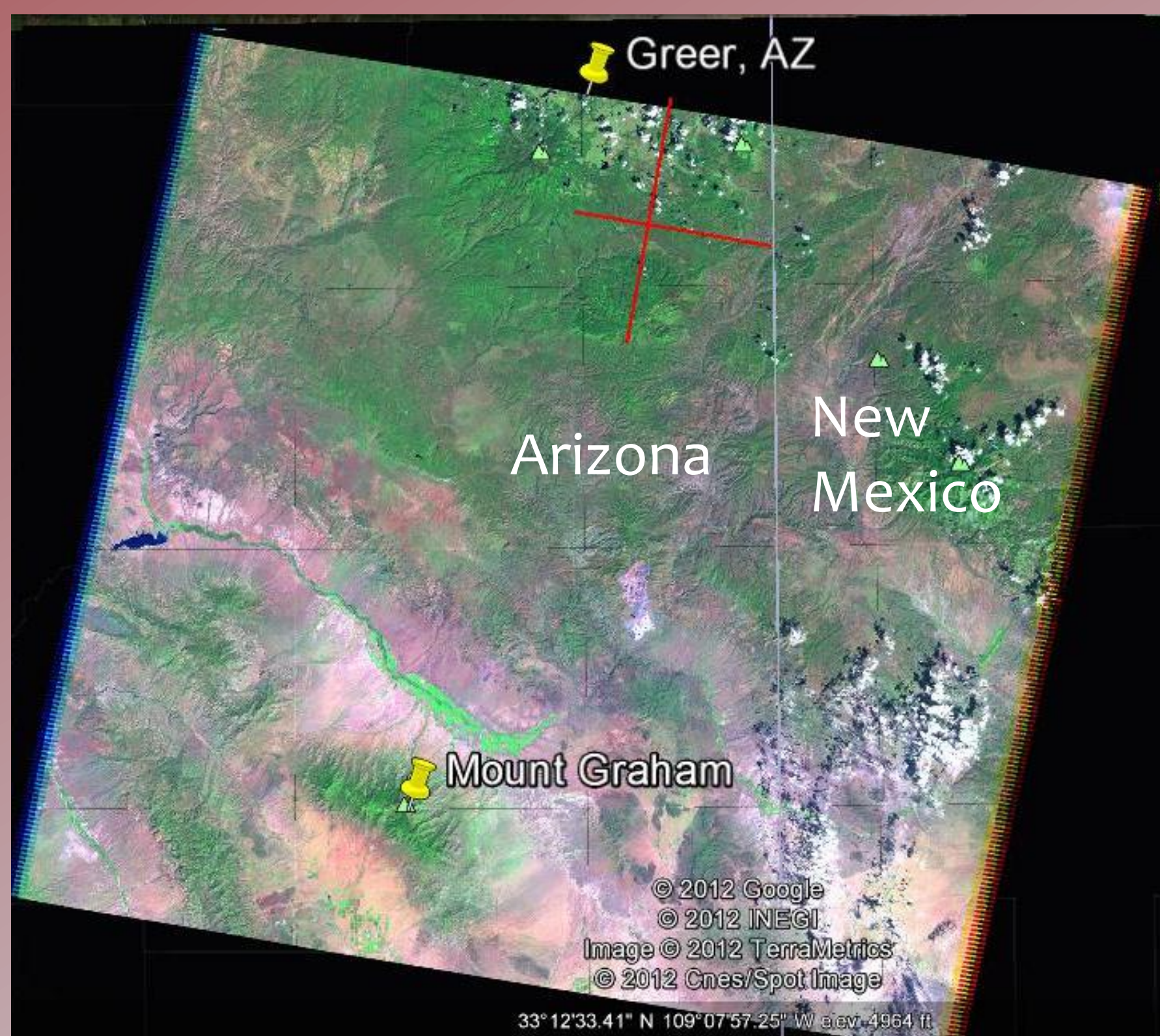
Tracey Lou Dodrill and Charlyne Herman, Mountainside Middle School, Scottsdale, AZ, Earth Camp for Educators 2011



The Power of Perspective

Artist's view of a U.S. Landsat satellite. Credits: NASA.

**The Wallow Fire was the largest wildfire in Arizona history.** It burned a half-million acres from May 30 to June 20, 2011, destroying 32 homes and forcing thousands to evacuate. Depending on your perspective, you might also say it rejuvenated a half-million acres of forest.



The bright green in these false-color Landsat images highlights healthy vegetation. Mountain tops and river valleys are greener than the surrounding desert.



The extent of the Wallow fire shows up as the reddish area in this false color image. Total burned area was about 500,000 acres.



Wallow Fire images from the ground

### The frequency and size of wildfires in the Western US will likely increase in the next decades because:

- Fire suppression has created an over-abundance of snags and small trees that have increased fuel supplies.
- Increases in summer temperatures are causing trees to be more moisture-stressed, making forests more susceptible to fire.
- Warmer annual temperatures are causing snowpack to melt earlier in the spring, increasing the length of the dry season. A longer dry season creates drier fuels as well as a longer period in which fires can occur.
- Growth in human population is likely to increase the number of wildfire starts.