



SOUTHWEST AREA INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

TEAM 4 – AARON HULBURD – INCIDENT COMMANDER



Firefighters identify objectives for lightning-caused Valentine Fire

August 26, 2023 – Daily Update

Acres: 14 acres
Cause: Lightning
Completion: 0%
Total personnel: 228

Start Date: August 16, 2023
Location: 11 miles northeast of Young, Arizona and 27 miles east of Payson, Arizona
Fuels: Hardwood litter and timber

Highlights: Fire managers are measuring progress on the lightning-caused Valentine Fire in terms of percent completion of management objectives, rather than traditional percent containment. Percent completion of objectives more accurately captures and reports the specific amount of work accomplished on the ground to manage fire spread and reduce the negative impacts to communities, infrastructure, and other identified values. By using percent completion, fire managers can illustrate how they are progressing with the accomplishment of objectives each day. On the Valentine Fire, the intended operational objectives are to reintroduce fire into a fire-dependent ecosystem to reduce future wildfire severity in support of the Forest Service Wildfire Crisis Strategy. Benefits will include reduction of hazardous fuels, encouragement of native forage growth, improved range and watershed conditions, and improved species diversity and wildlife habitat. To learn more about the Wildfire Crisis Strategy, please visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/wildfire-crisis>.

Operations: Firefighters are continuing efforts to confine the Valentine Fire within the planning area. Confinement is a wildfire response strategy that involves restricting a wildfire to a defined area, primarily using natural barriers; however, additional response actions are sometimes needed to augment or connect natural barriers. Currently, firefighters are focusing on prepping the perimeter of the planning area by removing heavy concentrations of vegetation along National Forest System Roads 200, 291, 411, and 955, and improving the conditions of these roads using dozers and graders. Where gaps exist between these Forest Service roads, crews are constructing handlines to connect and build a continuous boundary to restrict fire spread. Firefighters will continue similar handline construction, road improvement, and fuels reduction activities in the coming days.

Weather: A slight downturn in activity and a few degrees of warming is expected over the weekend, however, scattered showers and thunderstorms will still be present each afternoon and early evening. Winds will be generally light, but will begin to trend easterly. High dew points and shower activity will keep relative humidity values fairly high throughout the day.

Closures: The Tonto National Forest has issued an emergency area closure for the Valentine Fire. The purpose of the closure order is to protect public health and safety during the Valentine Fire, and to protect assigned firefighting personnel engaging in wildland firefighting operations. The full closure order ([No. 03-12-05-23-22](#)) and map are available on the Tonto National Forest website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/tonto/alerts-notice/?aid=82769>.

Safety: The health and safety of firefighters and the public are always the first priority. Members of the public should stay away from Valentine Fire operations. A temporary flight restriction (TFR) is in place over the area, which includes unmanned aircraft, or drones. More information on the dangers drones pose to wildland firefighting aircraft and personnel on the ground can be found at: <https://uas.nifc.gov/>.

Smoke: Smoke from the Valentine Fire may be visible in the surrounding areas. Learn more about smoke impacts on the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality website at <https://azdeg.gov/wildfire-fags>. An interactive smoke map at <https://fire.airnow.gov/> allows you to zoom into your area to see the latest smoke conditions.

Fire updates are posted on [InciWeb](#) and the Tonto National Forest [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) pages
Email: 2023.valentine@firenet.gov • **Phone:** (928) 588-4033 • **Office Hours:** 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM

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