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| **Size: 303** acres | **Start Date:**  August 16, 2023 |
| **Cause:** Lightning  **Completion: 3**0%  **Total personnel: 130** | **Location:** 11 miles northeast of Young, Arizona and 27 miles east of Payson, Arizona  **Fuels: Ponderosa Pine,** Hardwood litter and timber |

**Highlights: Firefighter’s were able to successfully complete tactical firing operations yesterday around infrastructure** which include powerlines that are in the fire area.

**Operations:** Fire managers plan to take advantage of favorable conditions and reintroduce fire at low to moderate intensities minimizing impacts to wildlife, culturally sensitive areas, critical infrastructure, and community watersheds. Tactical firing operations include ground resources conducting hand firing operations along FS RD 512 to the east and FS RD 291 along the north perimeter. These roads will be used as containment features keeping the fire from extending to the north and east.

**Fire Ecology:** The Valentine Fire is the first step in restoring fire to a fire-adapted ecosystem which historically burned at least every 10 years. Fire has been absent for well over 50 years and, during that time, litter, duff, and woody debris accumulated to unnaturally high levels. The excessive fuel could support unnaturally severe fire effects and extreme fire behavior if it burned under more extreme conditions. The moisture from the last few weeks, combined with carefully chosen ignition patterns and patience, is allowing the Valentine Fire to burn with desirable fire behavior that is producing beneficial results. The Valentine Fire is considered a ‘first entry’ because it has been so long since the area last burned. It will produce more smoke than subsequent fires as it acts as nature’s janitor, cleaning up the excessive fuel accumulation. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/wildfire-crisis>.

**Weather**: Dry conditions will persist through the weekend. Temperatures will gradually warm to above normal levels into the middle to upper 80s with relative humidity dropping below 20% each afternoon. A consistent southwest daytime wind will shift more westward later this week. Cloud cover increases over the weekend with slight chances of rain showers returning early next week.

**Closures**: An emergency closure order is in effect for the Valentine Fire as of 0600 September 5th 2023. The public is asked to avoid the fire area. 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. Signs and gates will be in place to remind the public not to enter the fire area. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tonto/home/?cid=FSEPRD910473>.

**Safety:** The health and safety of firefighters and the public are always the highest priority. With hunting season upon us we want to remind all hunters in Unit 23 to be vigilant and watch out for fire equipment.

**Smoke:** Smoke from the Valentine Fire may be visible in the surrounding areas for many days. Smoke will be heavier in the mornings as it settles into the lower elevations and will lift as temperatures increase. Smoke-sensitive individuals and people with respiratory problems or heart disease are encouraged to take precautionary measures An interactive smoke map at [https://fire.airnow.gov/](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ffire.airnow.gov%2F&data=05%7C01%7Cwilliam.dudley%40usda.gov%7C0b0c978334344e2cc87d08dba9b43f42%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C1%7C0%7C638290363923501419%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2ByGXqREHvfdNK837w9H9RMRWYgJpJ3ab%2BefmOkD6fis%3D&reserved=0) allows you to zoom into your area to see the latest smoke conditions.

**Information Links and Contacts:**

**Tonto National Forest** [**https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/tonto/fire**](https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/tonto/fire)

**InciWeb** [**https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/aztnf-valentine-fire**](https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/aztnf-valentine-fire)

**Fire Email** [**2023.valentine@firenet.gov**](mailto:2023.valentine@firenet.gov)

**Fire Information Line** (928) 421 4579 • Office Hours: 8:00 AM – 8:00 PM