



## Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 5 – Dave Gesser– INCIDENT COMMANDER

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### Community meeting tonight; storms pose flooding and debris flow risk Daily Update, Thursday, June 20, 2024

**Public Information Line:** 575-323-8258

**Media Information Line:** 575-323-8053

**Phone Line Hours:** 8 am – 8 pm

**Email:** 2024.southfork@firenet.gov

**Acres:** South Fork – 16,335; Salt – 7,071

**Location:** Ruidoso, NM

**Containment:** 0%

**Resources:** Crews, heavy equipment, engines, helicopters and air tankers.

**Start Date:** June 17, 2024

**Personnel:** 824

**Fuels:** mixed conifer, grass, pine/juniper

**Highlights:** A community meeting is schedule for 5 pm, Thursday, June 20, 2024. All community members are welcome to join via <https://www.facebook.com/SWIMT5>. Please note, a Facebook account is not needed to participate in the live stream.

#### Fire Activity:

Wednesday, the South Fork Fire experienced active fire behavior through the early part of the day until storms moved into the fire area. Firefighters observed torching trees, uphill runs where wind and terrain aligned and short-range spotting across the South Fork and Salt fires, including within the dead/down fuels of the 2012 Little Bear Fire. In addition to responding to and catching several spot fires yesterday, firefighters worked to secure a portion of the South Fork eastern perimeter from Cedar Creek to eagle Creek (~3 miles) and the south side from Cedar Creek to Flume Canyon.

The north and eastern sides of the South Fork Fire remain the focus for today's operations, including North Fork and South Fork of Eagle Creek, and along the Rio Ruidoso. Crews will continue constructing firelines to prevent further fire growth, while continuing to protect homes, properties, and critical infrastructure. Ground and aerial ignitions may be used where needed to strengthen protection of values at risk and burn out fuels between constructed firelines and the main fire.

**Weather:** On Wednesday, the South Fork and Salt fires received varying amounts of rain. The highest rainfall recorded was 1.62" along Skyline Ridge near the Monjeau Fire Lookout on the northern side of the South Fork Fire, while rainfall on the Salt Fire measured .05". Thursday's incoming weather will produce clouds, cooler temperatures (68-75 degrees) and higher day/night relative humidity. Storms will likely develop over the lower east slopes of the Sacramento Mountains in the afternoon and into the early evening, producing 20-30mph gusts. Heavy rain, flash floods and debris flows are a potential risk from these storms through the week.

**Smoke:** Smoke will continue to be observed across both the South Fork and Salt fires today. Individuals sensitive to smoke should take precautions and use the New Mexico Department of Health 5-3-1 Visibility Method to determine if it's safe to be outside. For more information visit [Air Quality: https://nmtracking.doh.nm.gov/environment/air/FireAndSmoke.html](https://nmtracking.doh.nm.gov/environment/air/FireAndSmoke.html)

**Evacuations:** A State of Emergency for the Mescalero Apache Reservation has been implemented by the Tribal

Council. Evacuations remain in-place. Village of Ruidoso and City of Ruidoso Downs are in “GO” evacuation status. Road closures are also in effect. Numerous additional evacuation orders have been issued including Fantasy Lane, Summit area, Botella Road, Snow Springs, Fence Canyon, Whitetail, and Chihuahua Well. Please stay out of the fire area to allow firefighters safe access into the area and allow them to work safely. There are hazards in the area including fire weakened trees, downed power lines, and potential for exposed gas lines.

Road and trail closures are in effect throughout the fire area. Both Highway 48 and Highway 70 at Apache Summit are closed; the open evacuation route is Highway 70 to Roswell. State Hwy 48 is closed from Alpine Village/University to State Hwy 220. US 70 is closed from mm 249 (intersection NM 244), 4 miles east of Mescalero, to mm 258, 2 miles east of Carrizo (<https://www.ruidoso-nm.gov/south-fork-fire>).

**Closures:** A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is also in place over the fire area. Visit <https://www.tfr.faa.gov> for more information. Drone flights are also prohibited within this area. If you fly, we may have to ground our air resources.

**More information:**

Inciweb: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/nmmea-south-fork-and-salt>