



# Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 3 – MATT RAU – INCIDENT COMMANDER



## Crews continue to ignite and patrol Daily Update: September 10, 2024

**West Fire** - 174 Acres  
**Start Date:** August 28, 2024  
**Location:** Payson Ranger District, AZ  
**Personnel:** 472

**Preacher Fire** - 15 Acres  
**Cause:** Lightning  
**Containment:** 0%  
**Fuels:** Ponderosa Pine, Mixed Conifer, Chaparral

**Highlights/Operations:** Yesterday conditions were favorable for burning. On the West Fire, firefighters worked east on Milk Ranch Road from the Webber Creek drainage adding fire inside the containment lines to consume the buildup of fuels. They also used UAS and a helicopter with ignition capabilities for efficiency and safety in the challenging terrain of East Webber Creek. On the Preacher Fire, firefighters were able to add fire along the Control Road south of Tonto Village all the way down to the powerlines. They also worked igniting off Diamond Point Road near the Diamond Point Summer Homes southwest to the natural fire's edge. The interior was ignited by a helicopter. On both fires, the fire behavior continues to be moderate which is helping restore the ecosystem and consuming fuels that otherwise may threaten communities in the future.

Today, firefighters will continue with ignitions on both fires. On the West Fire, the goal is to establish fire across the northwest corner of the planned perimeter before proceeding to ignite additional areas. This ignition pattern is designed to moderate fire intensity as they move east with fire, given the predicted winds out of the southwest. Engines are continually testing watering systems around Bray Creek Ranch, Camp Geronimo and Geronimo Estates to be ready if needed. They are also improving the hand line and dozer line east of Pine and masticating fuels along the Control Road from Bray Creek Road to SR 87. On the Preacher Fire, ignitions will continue down the powerline on the southern side of the planned perimeter and south towards Diamond Point on the northern side of the planned area. Engines will patrol the perimeters and staff watering systems around structures through the night.

**Weather:** An isolated shower or thunderstorm may develop on the Mogollon Rim Tuesday afternoon but is not expected to reach the West fire. Otherwise, Tuesday will be seasonably warm and dry with light winds. Southwest winds are forecast to increase by Wednesday and Thursday, with frequent afternoon gusts to 25 mph on Wednesday and even up to 30-35 mph on Thursday.

**Safety:** Two Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) are now in place over the area, which includes uncrewed aircraft systems or drones. The public is reminded, if you fly we can't; unauthorized drone flights pose serious risks to firefighter and public safety and the effectiveness of wildfire suppression operations.

**Closure:** The Tonto National Forest has issued a closure for land surrounding the West Fire, this includes Pine Trailhead.  
<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-publication/aztnf-2024-west-fire-tnf/us-forest-service-closure-order-for-west-fire-09-04-2024>

**Evacuations:** Some residents east of Payson near the Preacher Fire have been moved to SET status, additionally yesterday, Geronimo Estates have also been placed in SET status. An interactive map is available to stay up to date with evacuation levels related to both the West and Preacher Fires.

<https://nifc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=9bf2ca222ee74f8697bc670ae9c2531a>  
To receive emergency notifications from Gila County go to: <https://ein.az.gov/ready-set-go>

**Smoke:** During ignitions, smoke may settle in low-lying areas overnight. Residents are encouraged to close windows at night to avoid smoke impacts. Talk with your doctor and plan for how to manage your health conditions when it is smoky. Additional resources for how to prepare for wildfire smoke can be found at <https://www.airnow.gov/wildfire-guide-factsheets/>

For the latest news and information about the Tonto National Forest, follow along on Facebook @TontoNationalForest, 'X' (formerly Twitter) @TontoForest or Instagram @tontonationalforest and on the Tonto National Forest website:  
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/tonto>

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**Inciweb:** <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/aztnf-2024-west-fire-tnf> **Email:** 2024.west@firenet.gov