



Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 3 – MATT RAU – INCIDENT COMMANDER



Ignitions continue east of Pine Daily Update: September 22, 2024

West Fire – 12,412 Acres
Containment: 44%

Start Date: August 28, 2024

Location: Payson Ranger District, AZ

Fuels: Ponderosa Pine, Mixed Conifer, Chaparral

Preacher Fire – 3,167 Acres
Containment: 90%

Cause: Lightning

Personnel: 512

Highlights/Operations: Focus is all on the east side of Pine as firefighters look to add containment while burning fuels built up over many years. Yesterday on the West Fire, crews ignited down a hand line on the northwest corner of the perimeter. A helicopter established additional fire in the tops of the drainages above east Pine to encourage moderate fire behavior. Aerial resources also continued to assist crews igniting along the Control Road west of Geronimo Estates by reaching areas interior to the perimeter. Mop up, removal of dead trees and road repair continued across the rest of the fire area.

Today crews will keep working along the Control Road west of Geronimo Estates, igniting towards State Route 87. East of Pine, the plan is to allow the fire to back down from high on the slopes and then ignite along the upper part of the thinned forest area. Firefighters don't plan to ignite directly off the dozer line closest to Pine, but to use the previously thinned area as a buffer that is unlikely to carry fire well. Engines will continue to patrol the east side of the fire and mop up around Camp Geronimo.

The Preacher Fire has been placed into a patrol status. Engines are periodically patrolling the perimeter to check for heat and smoke.

Weather: Temperatures are turning warmer and drier on Sunday and Monday. Highs in the upper 70s to upper 80s both days. Relative humidity levels will drop down in the 20 to 28% range on Sunday and then 16 to 24% range on Monday. Winds will be light out of the northwest on Sunday and the west-southwest on Monday.

Safety: A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is in place over the West fire area, which includes uncrewed aircraft systems or drones. Reminder that 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: Pine residents on the east side of SR 87 and east of North Pine Creek Canyon road are in SET status. Geronimo Estates residents near the West Fire are 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>

Phone Number: (928)-291-7354 (7 a-7 p) **Media Phone Number:** (928)-291-6528 (7a -7p.)

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