



Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 3 – MATT RAU – INCIDENT COMMANDER



Planned perimeter ignitions completed; large scale ignitions completed Daily Update: September 24, 2024

West Fire – 14,985 Acres
Containment: 51%

Start Date: August 28, 2024

Location: Payson Ranger District, AZ

Fuels: Ponderosa Pine, Mixed Conifer, Chaparral

Preacher Fire – 3,167 Acres
Containment: 100%

Cause: Lightning

Personnel: 421

Highlights/Operations: Large scale ignitions are complete on the West Fire as the incident transitions to a local incident management organization. Today at 6 p.m. the Southwest Incident Management Team 3 will transfer command of the West and Preacher Fires to Type 3 Incident Commander Tadd Fagerud.

Yesterday additional sections of the northwest corner of the perimeter were contained as engines found no significant heat. Crews igniting by hand worked south along the dozer line just east of Pine and west along the Control Road until they connected their firing operations. Aerial ignitions assisted by applying fire above the Pine trailhead. Across the rest of the fire area engines and crews focused on mop up, patrol and backhaul of equipment. Heavy equipment is still repairing some of the contingency lines created to the east of the fire, and a road grader is working on the Control Road.

Today, firefighters are mopping up any ignitions from yesterday and last night. Unburned pockets within the containment area may continue to produce smoke. Beginning this morning, the Control Road will be open to residents only heading both east and west from Geronimo Estates. Use caution when driving as there could be periods where smoke is present, and visibility reduced. In addition, there will be a presence of firefighter patrolling and working along the roadway.

Weather: Warm and dry weather conditions will continue Tuesday and Wednesday. Highs in the mid-70s to upper 80s both days. Minimum relative humidity levels will average 15-25%. Winds will be light out the of east northeast on Tuesday and west southwest on Wednesday.

Safety: The Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) will expire at midnight tonight.

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/instance/sidebar/index.html?appid=9bf2ca222ee74f8697bc670ae9c2531a>

To receive emergency notifications from Gila County go to: <https://gilacountyaz.genasys.com/portal/en>

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