



# Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 3 – MATT RAU – INCIDENT COMMANDER



---

## Public Meeting scheduled for Friday, September 6 Daily Update: September 5, 2024

**Start Date:** August 28, 2024

**Location:** Payson Ranger District, AZ

**Personnel:** 224

**Containment:** 0%

**Cause:** Lightning

**Fuels:** Ponderosa Pine, Mixed Conifer, Chaparral

**Highlights:** The Tonto National Forest and SW Area Incident Management Team will be holding a public meeting on Friday, September 6, 2024 at 6 p.m. at the Pine Community Center 3872 AZ-87, Pine, AZ, 85544.

### Operations:

**West Fire -24 Acres:** No significant growth was observed overnight. Today firefighters and equipment will focus on removing fuels along Forest Service Road (FSR) 218. Dead trees are being cut along the Milk Ranch Road (FSR218). Masticators and dozers are also working along portions of FSR 300. Additional control lines are being scouted in Bray Creek Ranch and Camp Geronimo. Dozers are improving existing fuel breaks west of Pine.

**Preacher Fire - 2 Acre:** The Preacher Fire is burning about 8 miles northeast of Payson, Arizona. The fire is burning within an area previously prepared for prescribed burning. Today engines are patrolling the existing control lines and checking for any improvements needed. Sparse vegetation that re-grew along portions of the previously constructed lines will be removed in preparation for firing operations.

Both fires are being managed under a confine/contain strategy with the goal of reintroducing fire into a fire dependent ecosystem. The intended result of managing naturally caused fires are to reduce hazardous fuels, encourage the growth of native forage, improve range conditions, increase species diversity, protect and improve wildlife habitat, improve watershed conditions and restore ecological balance. The total planning areas for the West Fire includes 16,700 acres, for Preacher Fire 3,200 acres. This will decrease unnaturally high accumulations of fuels and the potential for future fires to burn with unnaturally high severity, aligning with the Forest Service Wildfire Crisis Strategy: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/wildfire-crisis>.

**Weather:** Sunny and hot conditions persist with temperatures in the middle to upper 80's. The relative humidity has fallen to around 20% and the wind is terrain driven at speeds less than 10 mph with gusts to 15 mph. The overall weather pattern will not change through the end of the week with hot and dry conditions. Low shower and thunderstorm chances are anticipated to return to the region on the weekend.

**Safety:** The health and safety of firefighters and the public are always the first priority. Members of the public are asked to avoid the fire area while fire operations are being conducted.

**Smoke:** Smoke from the West and Preacher Fires 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. As temperatures increase the volume of smoke may increase due to the drying and ignition of available fuels. Smoke-sensitive individuals and people with respiratory problems or heart disease are encouraged to take precautionary measures. Learn more about smoke impacts on the [Arizona Department of Environmental Quality website](#).

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:** [Aztnf 2024 West Fire Tnf Information | InciWeb \(wildfire.gov\)](#) **Email:** 2024.west@firenet.gov