



# Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 3 – MATT RAU – INCIDENT COMMANDER



## Ignitions continue despite weather delay Daily Update: September 9, 2024

**West Fire** - 138 Acres  
**Start Date:** August 28, 2024  
**Location:** Payson Ranger District, AZ  
**Personnel:** 446

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

**Highlights/Operations:** Ignitions began yesterday on both the West and Preacher Fires. On the West Fire, south-facing slopes and areas exposed to sun and wind were receptive to ignitions, which began in the West Webber Creek drainage. Mastication of fuels along the Control Road just north of Geronimo Estates continued. On Preacher, the Control Road near Tonto Village was still not dry enough to carry fire, so crews began lighting from the active fire's edge along the Diamond Point Road and headed south towards Diamond Point. Engines worked across all the communities to finish installing hoses and testing them as part of the structure protection plan.

Today on the West Fire, aerial and hand ignitions will continue where they left off yesterday in East Webber Creek Drainage and begin on the top of the Rim off the 300 road. On Preacher, the area south of Tonto Village will be reassessed for ignitions. If it still isn't dry enough, crews will move back over to the Diamond Point Road to pick up where they left off yesterday.

Across the rest of the area on both fires crews, engines and equipment are improving containment lines, testing structure protection equipment like hoses and sprinklers and removing any remaining fuels necessary. A night shift is patrolling in communities to ensure private property and structures are protected around the clock.

**Weather:** A few showers may develop on the Mogollon Rim Monday afternoon but are not expected to reach the Preacher fire. Otherwise, the week will be seasonably warm, dry and rain-free. Southwest winds will increase by mid-week with frequent afternoon gusts over 25 mph.

**Safety:** Two Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) are now in place over the 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:** Some residents east of Payson near the Preacher Fire have been moved to the SET level. 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/.../sidebar/index.html>

**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