



Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 3 – MATT RAU – INCIDENT COMMANDER



Continued successful ignition on West fire and containment on Preacher fire Daily Update: September 14, 2024

West Fire - 1998 Acres
Containment: 0%

Start Date: August 28, 2024

Location: Payson Ranger District, AZ

Fuels: Ponderosa Pine, Mixed Conifer, Chaparral

Preacher Fire - 3167 Acres
Containment: 27%

Cause: Lightning

Personnel: 463

Highlights/Operations: Yesterday firefighters successfully added fire in East Webber Creek and from the Rim Road down to Bray Creek Ranch. On the northwest side, firefighters aided by aerial ignitions from helicopters and uncrewed aircraft, added fire along the planned perimeter down to Milk Ranch Point. Late in the day fire continued to back down drainages above Camp Geronimo. Overnight, firefighters took advantage of higher humidities to continue igniting under conditions that moderated fire behavior. Today is expected to provide suitable weather for ignitions.

Ignitions are planned to continue again today on the West Fire. Firefighters are focused on adding fire to the planned area ahead of the anticipated moisture over the next few days. The focus is to carefully apply fire around Camp Geronimo when the conditions are right. Firefighters are exercising patience to time this correctly and want to allow the fire to consume hazardous fuels for the future safety of the community.

The Preacher Fire is now 27 percent contained. Containment was added to the northern perimeter from Tonto Village to Diamond Point Summer Homes. Today engines and crews will continue to secure, mop up and patrol the perimeter. Interior pockets of unburned vegetation may continue to produce smoke visible to residents in the area.

Weather: Moisture will be on the increase for Saturday. Morning relative humidity recovery will be between 60-70% but then humidity levels will lower to around 25% in the afternoon. Winds will again be out of the southwest at 5 to 10 mph with gusts between 14 and 18 mph. An isolated shower cannot be ruled out after 2 p.m. Sunday and Monday will see a high likelihood of wetting rain.

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 and Geronimo Estates residents near the West Fire 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/insant/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