



# Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 3 – MATT RAU – INCIDENT COMMANDER



## Preacher fire 90% contained Daily Update: September 18, 2024

**West Fire** - 8171 Acres  
**Containment:** 12%

**Start Date:** August 28, 2024

**Location:** Payson Ranger District, AZ

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

**Preacher Fire** - 3167 Acres  
**Containment:** 90%

**Cause:** Lightning

**Personnel:** 633

**Highlights/Operations:** The West Fire continues to slowly back down the south and east slopes of Milk Ranch Point as firefighters work towards the final phase of their plan. Yesterday crews and aerial resources continued establishing fire off Milk Ranch Point to achieve desired fire effects and consumption of the buildup of fuels. They also continued mopping up the perimeters on the north and east side, extinguishing any remaining heat.

Today the focus will be to complete ignitions around the west side of Camp Geronimo. They are patiently waiting for the moment when fire can be applied in the bottoms of the drainages in a way where it will meet the backing fire from above and the intensity will be moderate. Once ignitions are complete around Camp Geronimo, the plan is to continue applying fire westward along the Control Road and off Milk Ranch Point towards the containment line east of Pine. The timing of these actions will depend on how the fire moves and consumes the fuels over the next several days. Engines and firefighters continue to have watering systems and structure protection resources ready and are patrolling both day and night.

The Preacher Fire is now 90 percent contained. Crews will continue to patrol the perimeter and complete the suppression repair work along the constructed lines.

**Weather:** Dry, breezy, and cooler than normal for Wednesday and Thursday. Highs temperatures 68 to 75 degrees both days. Winds are predicted to be south-southwest 8 to 12 mph with gusts 20 to 25 mph. Minimum humidity levels will range between 20 and 25%.

**Safety:** The Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) over the Preacher has been lifted. The TFR over West, however, remains in place over the West fire 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:** Pine residence 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