



Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 5 – Dave Gesser– INCIDENT COMMANDER

Area closures remain in effect as hazards are assessed and addressed Daily Update, Saturday, June 22, 2024

Public Information Line: 575-323-8258 or 575-323-8378

Media Information Line: 575-323-8053

Phone Line Hours: 8 am – 8 pm

Email: 2024.southfork@firenet.gov

Acres: South Fork – 16,614; Salt – 7,652

Location: South Fork – Ruidoso Area
Salt – 7 mile west of Mescalero, NM

Fuels: mixed conifer, grass, pine/juniper

Start Date: June 17, 2024

Personnel: 1,109

Containment: South Fork – 26%; Salt – 7%

Resources: 23 Crews, 94 Engines, 14 dozers, and 18 water tenders. Helicopters and air tankers remain available for bucket and retardant drops if the need arises, and conditions allow.

Highlights: While rains assisted with moderating fire activity, this incident is not over. Hazards exist across the South Fork and Salt fires. Downed powerlines, damaged water, sewer, and gas lines, localized flooding, fire weakened trees and other environmental hazards continue to pose risks to firefighters and the public. Extra precautions should be exercised along roads as emergency and fire vehicles, engines and equipment continue to travel and work along roadways. As such, evacuations and road and area closures will remain in effect. These will not be lifted until fire conditions are diminished, and hazards have been addressed.

Fire Activity: Widespread precipitation resulted in minimal fire behavior across the area on Friday. Due to these weather conditions, firefighter activity was limited on the South Fork and Salt fires. Conditions are expected to improve on Saturday, allowing crews to continue fire suppression efforts.

Saturday, crews on the South Fork and Salt fires will resume constructing fireline in difficult terrain, patrol firelines, and monitor for hotspots near firelines. Residents should remember that while fire behavior has been reduced to smoldering and creeping in heavy duff and dead/down fuels with minimal spread, fire can and will still actively burn across the South Fork and Salt fires, especially with changing weather conditions. Smoke will persist and hazards are still present across the fire area, including fire-weakened trees along roadways and near critical infrastructure.

In addition to firefighters continuing the work on securing the perimeter and responding to hot spots within the interior of the fire area, damage and structure assessments are being conducted. Crews will be available to respond to any new starts and flare ups as needed.

Weather: On Saturday, wet conditions will decrease as a high-pressure system moves in, bringing less humidity, warmer temperatures and scattered clouds. Weekend weather patterns will see sunny mornings, light winds and early afternoon scattered thunderstorms.

Smoke: Light Smoke was seen on both the South Fork and Salt fires Friday. Smoke production will remain light to moderate on Saturday. More variable wind direction, especially during the morning, may lead to light smoke

and moderate air quality at times for all locations around the fires. Additional details are available at <https://outlooks.wildlandfiresmoke.net/outlook/430b2c05>.

Evacuations: Mandatory evacuation orders remain in effect for several areas in and near the fire. Evacuation information can be found at www.lincolncountynm.gov and www.ruidoso-nm.gov/south-fork-fire. Contact the Lincoln County Emergency Operations Center at 575-258-6900 if you have questions. Road and trail closures are in effect throughout the fire area. Both Highway 48 and Highway 70 at Apache Summit are closed; the open evacuation route is Highway 70 to Roswell. State Hwy 48 is closed from Alpine Village/University to State Hwy 220. US 70 is closed from mm 249 (intersection NM 244), 4 miles east of Mescalero, to mm 258, 2 miles east of Carrizo (<https://www.ruidoso-nm.gov/south-forkfire>).

Closures: A South Fork Fire Emergency Closure Order was issued on June 20, 2024, for national forest lands within the Smokey Bear Ranger District. The identified areas, and roads and trails therein, are closed to public access to allow firefighting personnel to work and through the fire area safely. [Lincoln National Forest - Alerts & Closures \(usda.gov\)](#)

A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is also in place over the fire area. Visit <https://www.tfr.faa.gov> for more information. Drone flights are also prohibited within this area. If you fly, we may have to ground our air resources.

More information:

[Inciweb: https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/nmmea-south-fork-and-salt](https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/nmmea-south-fork-and-salt)