



Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 5 – Dave Gesser – INCIDENT COMMANDER

Final update from Southwest Area Incident Management Team 5 Daily Update, Thursday, July 4, 2024

Mescalero Apache Tribe Emergency Operations Center: 575-464-9214 (8am-6pm)

Village of Ruidoso and Lincoln County Emergency Operations Center: 575-258-6900 (7am-10pm)

Fire Information Phone: 575-323-8378 or 575-323-8258 (8am-8pm)

Media Information Phone: 575-323-8053 (8am-8pm)

Email: 2024.southfork@firenet.gov

Acres: South Fork – 17,569; Salt – 7,939

Location: South Fork – Ruidoso Area

Salt – 7 miles west of Mescalero, NM

Fuels: mixed conifer, grass, pine/juniper

Resources: The South Fork and Salt fires are currently staffed with 3 crews, 1 helicopter, 6 engines, 2 bulldozers, and 4 water tenders.

Start Date: June 17, 2024

Personnel: 354

Containment: South Fork – 87%; Salt – 84%

Highlights:

Final update: Today will be the last daily update you will receive from Southwest Area Incident Management Team 5 on the South Fork and Salt Fires, unless significant changes occur. Additionally, updates on the Southwest Area Team 5 Facebook page will end today, July 4; the media phone line will disconnect tonight at 8 pm; both public phone lines will disconnect on Sunday, July 7 at 8 pm; and updates to the South Fork and Salt fires inciweb page will end on July 7.

Going forward, to obtain information about the South Fork and Salt Fires, please contact the following agencies: Mescalero Apache Tribe at 575-464-4494; Lincoln National Forest at 575-270-2726 and/or New Mexico State Forestry Division at 505-699-0601.

It has been a pleasure for Team 5 to support and assist with this dynamic incident, including the management of suppression efforts and suppression repair work, as well as assisting the community in its flood response efforts. The Team will turn over control of the South Fork and Salt Fires to local Agencies, BIA, Mescalero Apache Tribe, Lincoln National Forest and New Mexico State Forestry Division, at 6 pm, July 7. Capable resources are in place to continue to support the ongoing efforts to reach 100% containment.

Holiday reminder: As you celebrate this Independence Day, please remember that fireworks can cause new ignitions in the persistent dry fuels still present across the region. Fire restrictions are in place and more information is available below, in the “Closures and Restrictions” section.

Fire Activity: Fire activity remains limited on the South Fork and Salt fires. Hot spots remain within dense large, dead/down fuel, dense conifer stands and snags. These heat sources do not threaten containment lines.

Suppression repair and structure assessments are still underway. Suppression repair crews assisted with filling sandbags and conducted chipping operations on Wednesday. Today, crews will conduct excavator work on the south end of the South Fork Fire, and bulldozer and chipping work in areas of the Salt Fire, where safe to do so.

Please remember to slow down along roadways and in communities as fire personnel, equipment and utility vehicles continue to work in the area.

Weather: Today, high pressure will return, bringing sunny skies with less afternoon clouds and thunderstorms. Temperatures will be warmer and relative humidity will decrease. Relative humidity, storm chances, and rain probabilities will increase Friday and Saturday.

Closures and Restrictions: A South Fork Fire Emergency Closure Order was issued on June 20, 2024, for national forest lands within the Smokey Bear Ranger District. More information is available at www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/lincoln/alerts-notice/?aid=88199.

The Lincoln National Forest lifted fire restrictions on July 3, 2024. Additional details are available at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/lincoln/news-events/?cid=FSEPRD1187089>

The Mescalero Apache Tribe issued an updated Class V/Stage II – Extreme Fire Restriction Notice on July 1, 2024. More information is available at www.facebook.com/mescaleroapachetribe.

The Village of Ruidoso is under a Level 1 Fire Restriction. More information is available at <https://www.facebook.com/villageofruidoso>.

A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) remains in effect. Public/commercial drone flights are also prohibited within this area. Visit <https://tfr.faa.gov/tfr2/list.html> for more information.

More information:

Inciweb: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/nmmea-south-fork-and-salt>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SWIMT5>

Lincoln County Government: www.lincolncountynm.gov

Mescalero Apache Tribe: <https://mescaleroapachetribe.com>

Village of Ruidoso: www.ruidoso-nm.gov/south-fork-fire