



## Southwest Area Incident Management Team

TEAM 5 – Dave Gesser– INCIDENT COMMANDER

### Evacuations in place with continued fire growth expected Daily Update June 19, 2024

**Public Information Line:** 575-323-8258

**Media Information Line:** 575-323-8053

**Phone Line Hours:** 8 am – 8 pm

**Email:** 2024.southfork@firenet.gov

**Acres:** South Fork – 16,335; Salt – 7,071

**Location:** Ruidoso, NM

**Containment:** 0%

**Resources:** Crews, heavy equipment, engines, helicopters and air tankers.

**Start Date:** June 17, 2024

**Personnel:** 254

**Fuels:** mixed conifer, grass, pine/juniper

**Highlights:** Southwest Area Team 5, led by Incident Commander Dave Gesser, assumed command of the South Fork and Salt fires at 6:00AM, Wednesday, June 19, 2024.

**Fire Activity:** Extreme fire behavior occurred across the South Fork and Salt fires on Tuesday, with crowning and long-range spotting observed. Aviation resources, including fixed wing air tankers and helicopters, conducted water and retardant drops throughout the day. Air resources worked in conjunction with ground resources, firefighters and heavy equipment, to continue constructing fireline including around structures. Firefighters quickly secured a spot fire on the South Fork Fire Tuesday.

Fire crews, heavy equipment and additional resources will continue building fireline on both the South Fork and Salt fires while air resources will assist from the sky with ongoing water and retardant drops. Firefighters will be alert for spot fires and respond quickly to all fire threats. Changing wind direction and potential for afternoon thunderstorms could create challenging conditions for firefighter in the air and on the ground. Firefighting resources continue to arrive and will be briefed on current fire conditions before going to the fireline.

**Weather:** The fire area experienced strong southwest flow yesterday. Tuesday night, winds shifted out of the east/southeast to begin bringing gulf moisture into the Sacramento Mountains Wednesday. Afternoon showers and thunderstorms to the east of the fire area are expected with temperatures in the mid to high 80s and 10-20mph winds.

**Smoke:** Smoke will continue to be observed across both the South Fork and Salt fires today. Individuals sensitive to smoke should take precautions and use the New Mexico Department of Health 5-3-1 Visibility Method to determine if it's safe to be outside. For more information visit [Air Quality: https://nmtracking.doh.nm.gov/environment/air/FireAndSmoke.html](https://nmtracking.doh.nm.gov/environment/air/FireAndSmoke.html)

**Evacuations:** A State of Emergency for the Mescalero Apache Reservation has been implemented by the Tribal Council. Evacuations remain in-place. Village of Ruidoso and City of Ruidoso Downs are in "GO" evacuation status. Road closures are also in effect. Numerous additional evacuation orders have been issued including Fantasy Lane, Summit area, Botella Road, Snow Springs, Fence Canyon, Whitetail, and Chihuahua Well. Please

stay out of the fire area to allow firefighters safe access into the area and allow them to work safely. There are hazards in the area including fire weakened trees, downed power lines, and potential for exposed gas lines.