



Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
Melanie A Kenderdine, Cabinet Secretary-Designate
Dylan M. Fuge, Deputy Cabinet Secretary
Laura McCarthy, State Forester

Wildfire Notification #22

South Fork Fire

Update: This morning, the South Fork Fire is 13,921 acres and zero percent contained. An estimated 500 structures have been impacted by this fire. Crews worked together last night to stop the fire's spread and providing structure protection where they could. Currently fire behavior is creeping, but a concern today is increased winds that could push the fire further to the east and the northeast.

Air resources will be active today for as long as it is safe to operate, working in tandem with ground resources from multiple agencies, including tribal, federal, state and local cooperators. This is a full suppression fire, and all available resources are responding to help secure line and perform point protection for homes in and around Ruidoso. Fire response will be broken up into three divisions that will work the fire's south, east and northeast areas along the fire perimeter. Firefighter safety is a top priority.

Due to lack of cell service in the area, crews will work to set up communication lines. Southwest Area Incident Management Team 5 – a Complex Incident Management Team – will arrive today for inbriefing, and will assume command of the fire at 0600, tomorrow, June 19.

The South Fork Fire was discovered at 9 a.m., Monday, June 17, 2024; it is burning on Mescalero Tribal land, US Forest Service land and within the areas surrounding Ruidoso. Yesterday fire growth was rapid with extreme fire behavior and long-range spotting and intense heat with plume domination may occur this afternoon and evening. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

RESOURCES: The fire is managed by a Type 3 Incident Commander, with resources from agencies including BIA, Mescalero, Forest Service, Lincoln County, Otero County, Village of Ruidoso, Ruidoso Downs, Forestry Division. Complex Incident Management (CIM) Team arriving at 1pm today. Dozers, heavy equipment and engines are responding from a number of tribal, state and federal agencies. Additional resources on order.

Weather: Today's high will be near 87 and southwest winds 5-15 mph. Near critical fire weather expected in the area today.

Smoke: Individuals sensitive to wildfire 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. Learn more at <https://nmtracking.doh.nm.gov/environment/air/FireAndSmoke.html> An interactive smoke map at <https://fire.airnow.gov/> allows you to zoom into your area to see the latest smoke conditions.

Evacuations / Closures: Red Cross has reported 270 individuals checked in to shelters in Roswell, and 120 in Capitan. Further evacuation numbers will be released once an approximate count has been generated. Village of Ruidoso is closed for mandatory evacuation. Roads are now closed into town. Persons are requested to stay away from the area.

Shelters:

ENMU-R Gymnasium
52 B University Blvd

Church on the Move
901 W. Brasher

NMMI Godfrey Center
101 W. College

NM Dream Center
2700 W. Second Street

ENM Fairgrounds
RVs and Large Animals
2500 SE Main

Roswell Convention Center
900 N. Main

Roswell Aquatic Center
1500 W. College

Mescalero Evacuations: The Tribe's evacuation center for Reservation residents is at the Community Center Gymnasium.

Community Resources: Emergency Operations Center is now operational. For information or assistance regarding the South Fork Fire or other emergencies, please call 575-258-6900.

Pets to Humane Society of Lincoln County: Address: 25962 US-70, Ruidoso, NM 88345

Social Media/ Internet:

Incident Map URL:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=e2c6d99f914c44cbb18b75e73beef035>

More information about shelters and evacuations can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/villageofruidoso>

<https://www.facebook.com/mescaleroapachetribe>

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Acres: 13,921 estimated per 11:40 p.m. IR Flight, 6/17

Discovery Date/ Time: June 17, 2024; 9 a.m.

Cause: Under investigation

Location: Rio Ruidoso, west of the Upper Canyon area of Ruidoso

Ownership: Tribal

Structure Threat: Multiple structures threatened; approximately 500 structures lost

Resources: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Mescalero Apache Fire Rescue, US Forest Service, multiple aviation assets, local resources, a Complex Incident Management Team is on order for Tuesday. June 18.

Containment: 0%

Fuels: Mixed conifer

Salt Fire

Location: Mescalero Reservation, Otero County, Southwest of Ruidoso

Size: 4,876 acres estimated

Fire Activity: The Salt Fire's progression slowed somewhat during the night. The fire is creeping through difficult, mountainous terrain south of Ruidoso. Aircraft will be able to identify the spots closest to Ruidoso Downs and will seek to perform air attack today.

Evacuations: Evacuation orders will remain in effect for: Chatto Bluff, Apache Summit, Fantasy Lane, homes along Highway 70 from Highway 244 to the east Reservation line, Bear Canyon, and Snow Canyon.

Weather: 75 degrees, 15% humidity. Winds from the north at 9 mph. Today's high will be near 87 and southwest winds 5-15 mph.

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George Ducker

Communications Coordinator

New Mexico State Forestry Division - EMNRD

george.ducker@emnrd.nm.gov

505-699-0601

