



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

Wildfire Notification #23

The New Mexico Forestry Division would like to update you on wildfires that are requiring the attention of tribal, federal, state, and local resources in New Mexico. The **South Fork Fire** and the **Salt Fire** are burning on Mescalero tribal land, US Forest Service land, and the area of surrounding Ruidoso. Both fires are being managed by Mescalero Apache Fire Rescue and Bureau of Indian Affairs. A Complex Incident Management Team will take over the fire on Wednesday, June 19 at 6 a.m.

South Fork Fire

Update: The South Fork fire is estimated at 15,276 acres and is zero percent contained. Fire activity included crowning and long-range spotting, which increased the fire's footprint from this morning's acreage total. Today, response crews were able to directly engage areas of the fire's footprint when conditions allowed. Approximately 1,400 structures in the area have been lost.

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. Fire growth has been rapid with extreme fire behavior. Long range spotting and intense heat with plume domination. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Weather: Tonight, a low temp of 56, SW winds 5 to 15 mph, 12-16% RH. Tomorrow, scattered showers and thunderstorms, mainly after 3 pm. Increasing clouds, with a high near 85. Southeast wind 5-10 mph increasing to 10-15 mph in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

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: An estimated 8,000 people have been evacuated from the area. Village of Ruidoso is under mandatory evacuation. US 70 is closed from mm 249 (intersection NM 244), 4 miles east of Mescalero, to mm 258, 2 miles east of Carrizo. The only available evacuation route is on Sudderth to Highway 70, leading out to Roswell.

Acres: 15,276 acres per Incident Status Summary

Start 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; approx. 1,400 structures lost

Resources: Erick Kimbrell, IC Type 3, BIA, Mescalero, Forest Service, multiple aviation assets, Lincoln County, Otero County, Village of Ruidoso, Ruidoso Downs, Forestry Division. Complex Incident Management (CIM) Team arrived at 1300 today for inbrief and shadow. CIMT will take over the fire on Wednesday June 19, at 6 a.m.

Containment: 0%

Fuels: Mixed conifer

##

Salt Fire

Location: Mescalero Reservation, Otero County, Southwest of Ruidoso

Size: 5,557 acres estimated

Fire Activity: Active

Resources: BIA, Mescalero, US Forest Service, multiple aviation assets. CIMT will take control of the Salt Fire in addition to the South Fork Fire Wednesday, June 18 at 6 am.

Weather: Tonight, a low temp of 56, SW winds 5 to 15 mph, 12-16% RH. Tomorrow, scattered showers and thunderstorms, mainly after 3 pm. Increasing clouds, with a high near 85. Southeast wind 5-10 mph increasing to 10-15 mph in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 30%.