

San Juan National Forest

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News Release

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Plateau Fire and Closure Updates

Dolores – The Plateau Fire ignited by a suspected lightning strike in steep, inaccessible Plateau Canyon Sunday afternoon, July 22. The fire has been burning in steep rugged terrain in a mixed conifer fuel type. Crews have been battling to create a black line between the fire and the values at risk such as houses, private land and roads. For the last two days winds have been pushing the fire down canyon. The fire is approximately 9,000 acres and is located several miles northeast of the town of Dolores within Dolores County. A new flight tonight will update the exact acres.

The fire has been very active for the last few days, growing approximately 1,000 acres a day. Low humidity and high erratic winds have been pushing the fire in all directions. At this moment the fire is being held north of Forest Service Road 529, however this may not hold. Pre-evacuation orders have been issued for the private land south of Forest Service Road 529 and north of Dolores. For more information regarding Montezuma county road closures and evacuations go to the Montezuma County Sherriff’s Office Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/montezumacountysheriffsoffice/>. The Plateau Fire has burned south to the House Creek Road. House Creek Campground is closed and being evacuated at this time. The Dolores/Norwood Road will be closed at the Cottonwood and House Creek intersections to prevent access to the area. Sherriff deputies will be manning the closures so please avoid traveling to that area of the forest. A Type 2 team, the Black Team will be arriving tonight and assuming command tomorrow. Type 2 teams have the organization to battle more complex fires.

For the safety of the public and to be able to conduct operations safely, the fire closure area has been expanded to include entry prohibited in all NFS lands 1) south of FSR 514, bounded by and including FSR 510 and all lands east of FSR 510 and south to McPhee Reservoir including Dry Canyon, Plateau, Beaver and House Creek drainages and on the east side of the main stem of McPhee Reservoir; bounded on the south end by Forest Service and private property along the southern end of T38N R15W beginning approximately one mile south of the House Creek Campground and on to and including the Dolores/Norwood Road (FSR 526) and continuing east to the Boggy Draw trail head parking and including the Boggy Draw trail parking area; and bounded by FSR 527, FSR 249 to FSR 526 and 2) Within the Dry Canyon, Plateau Creek, Beaver Creek and House Creek watersheds, being upon any portion of FSR 510, FSR 510 A, FSR 510 A1 FSR 523, FSR 523A, FSR 247, FSR 524, FSR 524B, FSR 238, FSR 238A, FSR 525, FSR 525B, FSR 525C, FSR 288.A1, FSR 288 A FSR 525, FSR 526N, FSR 531, FSR 526L, FSR 526B, FSR 529, FSR 529H, FSR 529D, FSR 529F, FSR 529A, FSR 526 (Dolores Norwood Road within the closure area), FSR 528 (House Creek Road), FSR 527 (Boggy Draw Road) FSR 527 C, FSR 527 D, FSR 257 A, FSR 528 B, FSR 528.A 1, FSR 528 G, FSR 527 G, FSR 527 L, FSR 527 K, FSR 526 C, FSR 526 P, FSR 249. It is also prohibited to be upon any portion of the Boggy Draw, Bean Canyon, McNeil and McPhee Overlook Trails within the closure area as well as accessing Italian Canyon or Maverick Trails from areas within the closure area. See attached map.

Smoke has been mixing with smoke from other area fires and California fires and is settling in at night in the valley bottom. Because there are so many large fires in the four corners, smoke that is visible or is affecting residents is a combination of Colorado and New Mexico fires.

More information can be obtained by on-line at <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/> or by contacting the Dolores Ranger District at (970) 882-7296.