

Texas Panhandle Wildfires

Six separate wildfires, including the massive Smokehouse Creek wildfire, are burning at this time in the Texas panhandle. Hutchinson, Hemphill, Roberts, Lipscomb, and Moore counties issued evacuation orders on February 27, and Texas Governor Greg Abbot has issued a disaster declaration for 60 counties.

Beyond the Smokehouse Creek fire, firefighters are battling additional wildfires, including Magenta, Windy Deuce, 687 Reamer, Grape Vine Creek, and Juliet Pass wildfires. According to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, strong winds and critically dry grasses contributed to extreme fire behavior and rapid rates of spread across the landscape.

Once these wildfires are contained, all insurers should identify and assess claims for structures and other properties in the following zip codes:

- **Magenta:** 79092, 79010
- **Windy Deuce:** 79036, 79068, 79108
- **687 Reamer:** 79083
- **Smokehouse Creek:** 79083, 79007, 79059, 79014, 79046, 73832
- **Grape Vine Creek:** 79065, 79057
- **Juliet Pass:** 79019

POST-FIRE INVESTIGATION

Our subrogation investigation is underway, though with the number and magnitude of wildfires involved, this is likely to entail a complex analysis of causative factors. We are utilizing drone flyover videography and photography, GPS, LIDAR, and other investigative tools to identify and preserve critical evidence.

We have retained wildland fire investigation experts, who are in the process of conducting their investigations, including collecting fire spread information, interviewing witnesses, and working with public sector fire officials. Initial reports indicate that certain of these fires may involve utility lines, but specific information as to the precise ignition scenario is still under investigation.

SMOKEHOUSE CREEK FIRE

The Smokehouse Creek Fire alone has burned over 850,000 acres in the northeastern Texas panhandle, and has spread into western Oklahoma, making it the second largest fire in the state's history. It is being reported that several homes and businesses have been burned in this fire. A shelter-in-place order was issued for Canadian, Texas. The zip codes affected thus far are **79083, 79007, 79059, 79014, 79046 and 73832.**



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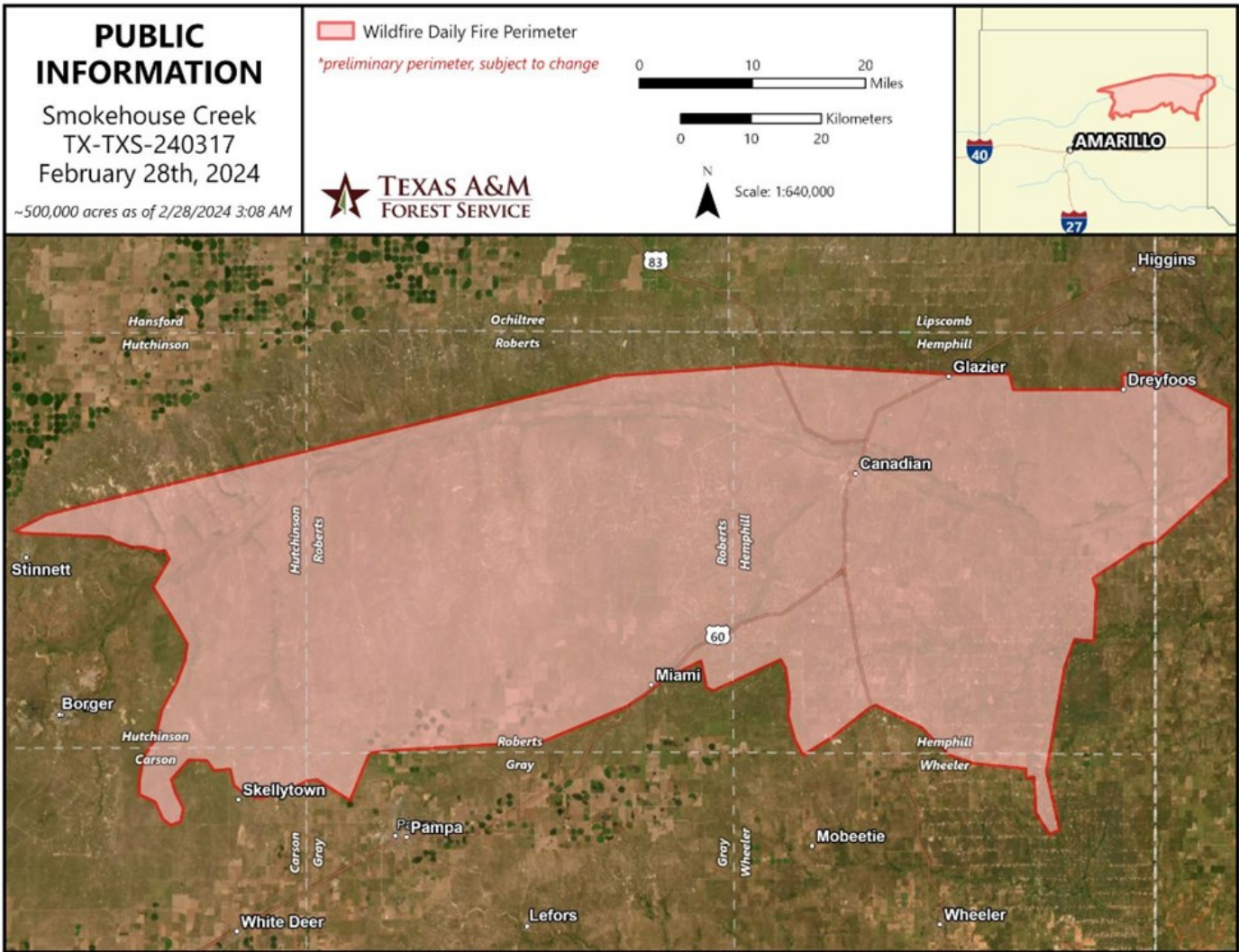
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Related Practice Areas

- Subrogation & Recovery

Industry Sectors

- Insurance



MAGENTA FIRE

This fire is currently burning in Oldham county. As of February 28, 2000 acres have burned, and the fire is 40% contained. This fire affects the following zip codes: **79092, 79010.**

WINDY DEUCE FIRE

As of February 28, this fire has destroyed 40,000 acres and is only 20% contained. Multiple communities in the town of Fritch (Hutchinson county) are under mandatory evacuation, as the fire reportedly entered into the south side of the town. Multiple structures have been reported lost in this fire. This fire affects the following zip codes: **79036, 79068, 79108.**

687 REAMER FIRE

This fire is currently burning in Hutchinson county. It has burned 2,000 acres and is only 10% contained. This fire affects the following zip codes: **79083.**

GRAPE VINE CREEK FIRE

This fire is currently burning in Gray county. It has burned 30,000 acres and is reported to be 60% contained. This fire affects the following zip codes: **79065, 79057.**

JULIET PASS FIRE

This fire is 100% contained as of February 28, 2024. This fire burned 2,963 acres south of Claude, Texas. This fire affects the following zip codes: **79019.**

PROTECTING YOUR INTERESTS

It is important that insurers hit the ground running in order to maximize chances of recovery arising

from a wildfire. Cozen O'Connor has retained, on behalf of our clients, consultants to investigate the circumstances of these fires and document the fire scenes and origin areas, including the utility lines. When our investigators provide preliminary information on the cause of the fires, we intend to place the responsible party on notice of our clients' potential claims, such that our firm will be advised and involved in the continued investigation as to cause and origin.

As our investigation develops, we will collect and preserve evidence and notify all identified parties of our potential claims, and request they preserve all evidence, interview witnesses and record statements, and gather damage documentation for each of our clients' losses.

Please advise promptly regarding whether we should protect your company's subrogation interests for each of these wildfire events.
