



NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH • CAROLINA

USDA FOREST SERVICE, 160A ZILICOA STREET, ASHEVILLE, NC 28801

NEWS • RELEASE

FIRE UPDATE

Contact: Deborah Walker, 910-975-0803
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For Immediate Release

Fire Update on McDowell County Wildfire

Efforts continue to contain the fire in the North Cove area of McDowell County. The “Sunrise Fire” has burned approximately 700 acres in the Pisgah National Forest including some private land bordering the National Forest. The fire is approximately 50% contained at this time.

The wildfire began on private land adjacent to the national forest boundary from a house fire early last Friday morning and quickly spread to National Forest system lands. Other than the home that started the fire, no other structure damage has occurred. Suppression resources (crews, engines and dozers) are taking necessary action to protect private homes in the area and minimize fire activity on private lands. Coordination efforts between the NC Division of Forest Resource, area volunteer fire departments and the US Forest Service have been ongoing since the beginning of the fire.

The fire is located approximately 15 miles north of Marion, off US Highway 221. The primary objective is to keep the fire contained north and east of Bridge Branch, south of Pond Branch and west of NC highway 105.

Firefighting strategies are being based on daily weather and fire conditions. Light rain showers Saturday slowed the fire and gave resources time to make progress toward establishing containment lines around the fire. Area residents and businesses should expect periods of

increased smoke over the next several days as forest fuels within the containment lines are consumed by the fire. The intensity of fire activity and resulting smoke from within the containment lines may fluctuate based on changes in the weather and forest conditions.

The Grandfather Ranger District will begin transitioning command of the fire to the Southern Area Incident Management Team, lead by Incident Commander Tony Wilder. This team will utilize current and local resources and bring in any additional resources as needed to manage this incident.

NC highway 105 (county line road) which runs along the eastern boundary of the fire and the western edge of Linville Gorge Wilderness is closed from Wisemans View south to the National Forest property boundary, until further notice.

Currently, three helicopters, four dozers, 16 engines, and approximately 180 personnel are assisting with suppression activities.

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