



Jude's Gap Fire Update

N.C. Forest Service

Fire Information Officers:

David Brown, (828) 273-0982

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Saturday, Feb. 19, 2011

11 a.m.

Current Status

The Jude's Gap Fire remains at about 1,200 acres in size. The fire size may increase due to ongoing mapping of fire containment lines.

A helicopter equipped with an aerial ignition device was used to spread fire in unburned fuels within the containment lines in steep rugged terrain yesterday. Some small burn-out operations are planned for this morning and may continue while favorable weather conditions persist. With the increase in wind speed and low relative humidity predicted for today, firefighters are concerned that fire intensity will increase in areas that have not been burned out. New fire ignitions in the surrounding area are also a possibility.

The National Weather Service has declared a red flag warning for most of North Carolina today, including Polk and Rutherford Counties where the fire is located. The N.C. Forest Service recommends that outdoor burning, and any use of fire near wooded areas, be delayed during this dry windy period. Today's gusty winds will cause numerous burned-out trees to fall within the fire. For this reason, area residents and visitors should avoid recreating inside or adjacent to the fire perimeter.

One hundred and sixty-three personnel with the N.C. Forest Service, N.C. State Parks and other county, state and federal agencies were assigned to the Jude's Gap Fire on Friday. Personnel and equipment will remain on the scene through the weekend, and continue to patrol the containment lines and monitor fire activity.

Smoke from the fire should not pose any problems in Sunny View, Lake Lure, Chimney Rock and surrounding communities. Fire impacts to area tourism are not anticipated. The minimal smoke coming from the fire is not expected to settle in the valleys until after midnight, and should not be a problem in the early morning hours, as light to moderate winds will disperse remaining smoke throughout the night.

The Incident Command Post is located at the Western Justice Academy in Edneyville.

Fire information is available by contacting the Information Officers listed above and by e-mail at judesgapfireinfo@gmail.com. Fire information is available at post offices in Lake Lure, Chimney Rock, Bat Cave and Edneyville and other locations in these communities. Progress on the fire can also be followed on Twitter @JudeGapFireInfo.

Fire size

Currently 1,200 acres

Personnel Assigned

163 firefighters and fire managers

Plans for tomorrow

Patrol fire breaks and extinguish hot spots. Begin rehabilitation of fire lines.

Cooperating Agencies

N.C. Forest Service, N.C. State Parks, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, South Carolina Forestry Commission, Tennessee Division of Forestry, Western Justice Academy; Edneyville, Sunny View, Chimney Rock, Lake Lure and Mill Spring Fire Departments; Polk, Rutherford and Henderson County Emergency Management; USDA Forest Service and Americorp