



## Boteler Fire and Nantahala Branch Fires Update Tuesday, November 15, 2016



**Phone:** 828-389-6570, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
**Websites:** [inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/34/#](http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/34/#)  
[facebook.com/BotelerFire](https://www.facebook.com/BotelerFire)  
**Email:** [BotelerFire@gmail.com](mailto:BotelerFire@gmail.com)

**Notice: US Highway 19/74 is open to all traffic.**

### Incident Resources

21 crews, 64 engines, 6 helicopters, 1 fixed wing, 16 dozers, 4 water tenders, 891 total personnel

### Boteler Fire (Clay County)

Yesterday, firefighters had another productive day. Overcast skies and light winds enabled handcrews to complete fireline on the fire's northeast corner west of Buck's Creek Road. The structure-protection group completed more assessments between Nelson Ridge Road and East Vineyard Road, near Highway 64. Mop up and patrol continued along containment lines near Highway 64. On the fire's west side off Cold Branch Road, firefighters checked control lines and felled hazard trees near structures. The blasting crew felled sixteen hazard trees on the Chunky Gal Trail south of Perry Gap. Fire activity was minimal overnight.

Today, firefighters will continue to improve containment lines and search for heat sources, such as smoldering stumps. On the northeast corner of the fire off Thunderstuck Road, crews will extend their hoselays to solidify fireline and extinguish any afternoon flare-ups. On the western side of the fire, heavy equipment will be used to reinforce dozer lines. Additional structure assessments will be completed today in the Birch Cove and Chairmaker subdivisions off Tusquittee Road. The blasting crew plans to remove more hazard trees along the fire line between Passmore Spur and Nelson Ridge Road. Road guards will be in place to maintain a safe perimeter from the blasting areas.

**Acreage:** 8,967      **Containment:** 43 percent      **Start Date:** October 25

### Tellico Fire (Swain and Macon Counties)

Crews accomplished a lot yesterday, holding, mopping up, and patrolling containment lines around the fire's perimeter. In the last remaining places where the fire was moving downslope to firelines—on the south side near Shields Creek Road, on the southwest side near Queens Creek, and on the northwest side by Johnson Cove—the fire has reached the containment lines and is no longer progressing. Firefighters did not detect any spot fires yesterday. Most of the isolated pockets of heat remaining within the perimeter are on the east side near Loudermilk Creek and on the west side north and west of Lowing Bald. Reburn potential remains a concern. Burning or smoldering snags, particularly hemlock, are the primary ignition source for reburn, which can lead to spot fires outside containment lines. Firefighters will work on those lines again today to hold and secure them.

**Acreage:** 13,679      **Containment:** 68 percent      **Start Date:** November 3

### Muskrat Valley Fire, Knob Fire (Macon County), and Dick's Creek Fire (Jackson County)

With dozer and hand lines constructed around all three fires, crews are focusing on the slow, dirty, time-consuming—but very important—tasks of walking the perimeters daily to mop up the last remaining smoldering hot spots and blow leaves off containment lines. These fires are not growing, and with containment at more than 90 percent, no additional growth is expected. However, firefighters remain assigned to all three fires to ensure that any interior reburning does not result in spot fires getting established outside containment lines.

<b>Muskrat:</b>	<b>Acres:</b> 103	<b>Containment:</b> 90 percent	<b>Start Date:</b> November 11
<b>Knob:</b>	<b>Acres:</b> 1,130	<b>Containment:</b> 95 percent	<b>Start Date:</b> November 2
<b>Dick's Creek</b>	<b>Acres:</b> 728	<b>Containment:</b> 94 percent	<b>Start Date:</b> October 23

### **Fires in Patrol Status**

Buck Creek Fire (8 ac.), Falls Fire (NA), Grape Cove Fire (35 ac.), Moses Creek Fire (30 ac.), Jones Gap Fire (115 ac.), Jarrett Knob Fire (NA), Wine Spring Fire (95 ac.), Mulberry Fire (NA), Moss Knob Fire (7 ac.), May Branch Fire (175 ac.), Boardtree Fire (0.5 ac.), Charley Creek Fire (3 ac.), Ridge Gap (2 ac.), Cliffside Fire (101 ac.), and Whitewater Fire (23 ac.)

Firefighters monitoring and patrolling these fires to ensure containment lines are holding are also responsible for initial attack of new fire starts. Yesterday afternoon, some of them responded to a fire start—the Howard Gap Fire—on Highway 106 near the Georgia border. They contained it at approximately a quarter acre.

### **Weather and Fire Behavior**

Weather today will be very similar to yesterday: light northwest winds (4–12 mph), moderate minimum relative humidity (35–45 percent), and moderate maximum temperatures (55–65 degrees). Slightly stronger winds, especially on ridgetops, could affect fire behavior as the smoke clears and the sun warms and dries south-facing slopes. The incident meteorologist expects clear skies by mid-morning, which would benefit aerial operations.

### **Road and Trail Closures**

#### Swain County

- Only residents are allowed on the following roads: Big Dog, Gassaway, Licklog, Long Branch, Luther Bingham, Mason, Morgan, Northern Partridge, Silver Mine, East Silver Ridge, Wesser Creek, Wilkes.

#### Macon County

- Only residents are allowed on Dewese and Partridge Creek Roads.

#### Nantahala National Forest

- The following Forest Roads (FR) are closed: 6226 (Vineyard), 351 (Nelson Ridge), 350 (Perry Gap), and 348 (Old 64).
- The following trails are closed: Wesser Creek, Chunky Gal from Glade Gap to Tusquitee Gap, Whitewater Falls, Foothills from NC Hwy 281 to the Bad Creek access (detour maps are posted at trail junctions), and the Appalachian Trail from the Nantahala River at Wesser south to Rock Gap Trailhead on FR 67.

### **Burning Restrictions**

A total fire ban for all lands in the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests is in effect. Gas camp stoves are allowed. More information is at [www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nfsnc/alerts-notices/?cid=fseprd524246](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nfsnc/alerts-notices/?cid=fseprd524246). A North Carolina Forest Service ban on all open burning in Clay, Jackson, Macon, and Swain Counties is also in effect. More information is at [ncforestservice.gov/news\\_pubs/newsdesk\\_2016.htm#1107161](http://ncforestservice.gov/news_pubs/newsdesk_2016.htm#1107161).

### **Notice**

The National Forests of North Carolina is investigating these fires for suspicion of arson. Call the National Forests of North Carolina at 828-257-4200 if you have information about people setting fires or bragging about setting fires. If you see someone starting a fire, call 911.