



**U.S. Forest Service
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests
Conasauga District**

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Fire Update

For Immediate Release

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ROUGH RIDGE FIRE UPDATE November 6, 2016, 10:00 A.M.

Rough Ridge Fire Status

Acres Burned: 3,923
Cause: Lightning
Date Started: October 16, 2016
Percent Contained: 10%
Approximate resources: 243

Location: Cohutta Wilderness Area on the Chattahoochee National Forest

Current fire situation: Late yesterday, a section of the Rough Ridge Fire pushed across a control line near the Jones Settlement, but fire crews quickly responded and contained the area. The fire continues to grow on northern perimeter as it backs down into the Jacks River drainage. Also, the fire perimeter has grown on the western edge towards East Cowpen Trail. Because of the extreme drought conditions and the location of this fire within the Cohutta Wilderness, one of the management objectives is to allow the fire to accomplish its natural ecological role.

Planned Actions: Fire crews will patrol Jacks River north from Jones Settlement. There will be prep work on establishing a future line in the Conasauga River drainage from Forest Road 64 to Conasauga Creek. Crews will continue to mop up fire line from Jones Settlement to Bees Knob and continue to construct fireline along East Cowpen Trail to the North Buckeye Mountain. Lines are needing to be reestablished throughout the fire perimeter as the leaf fall continues.

Fire Weather: Mostly sunny skies, light winds, and lower humidity are being forecasted for the next couple days. An inversion and light winds will limit smoke dispersion this morning. High pressure will bring a continuation of north winds 5 mph or less to the fire and temperatures moderate to around 65 degrees. Relative humidity is expected to drop to 25 to 30 percentage in some locations.

Closures: Pursuant to Title 36 CFR, Section 261.50(a) and (b), the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest has issued a Forest Closure for the entire Cohutta Wilderness. All visitors and Forest users are asked to abide by all closure signs posted at entry points, roads and trails. This closure has been put in place due to the increase in fire spread through the Cohutta Wilderness Area to the West and to allow for public and firefighter safety. In addition, South Fork Trail north of Jack's River Fields is closed, including the 2 to 3 mile section of the Benton MacKay Trail overlap. All roads west of Watson Gap are closed to all traffic except residents; this includes Forest Service Road 126.

Additionally, a campfire restriction is in place for all of the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests. The restriction prohibits building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire outside of developed recreation areas from now until December 31, 2016. That means that only campfires built within metal fire rings in developed campsites are allowed. Camp stoves are still permissible. The Forest Service reminds visitors that campfires should always be put out completely and cold to the touch before being left for any period of time.

Due to high fire danger caused by extreme drought conditions across much of Georgia, Fannin and Gilmer Counties have issued a ban on all outdoor burning until further notice due to the extremely dry conditions and high fire danger. No open burning of any type is being permitted including campfires and fire pits. For more information on the burn ban for Fannin County, contact the Fannin County Emergency Management Agency at 706-632-1958.

Air quality: Air quality conditions may change quickly, based on weather, wind direction, and fire activity. Sensitive groups including individuals with asthma, lung or heart disease, children, older adults and pregnant women should take precautions to avoid exposure to smoke. If you feel as though you are having health effects from smoke, see your doctor or health professional as needed. Use caution when driving in or around smoky areas.

Fire Information: For more information about the Rough Ridge Fire, contact: 470-208-2839. Information is also available online on the Forest website, social media pages and on inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5078/#>.

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