

U.S. Forest Service
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests
Conasauga District
3941 Highway 76
Chatsworth, GA 30705
706-695-6736
Web: www.fs.usda.gov/conf

Fire Update



For Immediate Release

Contact: (470) 208-2839

f Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ChattOconeeNF/>

Inciweb: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5078>.

#RoughRidgeFire

Rough Ridge Fire Update: November 15, 2016, 10 a.m.

FAST FACTS: The Rough Ridge Fire is 21,533 acres and 20% contained. 203 personnel are assigned to the fire. Resources include 3 crews, 2 helicopters, 8 engines and 2 dozers.

Location: Cohutta Wilderness Area on the Chattahoochee National Forest

TONIGHT: The Southern Area Incident Management Gold Team is planning an Open House at the Powerhouse (2985 Old Hwy 5, Blue Ridge) from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. The Open House will allow the public to find out about incident wildland fire management. All members of the local community are welcome to come and visit with us and learn about our operation and hear an update on the Rough Ridge Fire.

Current Fire Situation: Creeping and smoldering will continue on the eastern flank of the fire area. The fire continues to back downslope, meeting up with established containment lines on Forest Service Roads 64, 68, and 17. Leaf drop and reburn remain a concern for firefighters. Structure protection efforts continue around private properties near the fire. Smoke will linger in the valleys throughout the next active burning period.

Planned Actions: Firefighters will finish bringing the fire up Forest Service Road 17 north of Hickory Creek Trail toward the Conasauga River. Monitoring and mop up will continue as crews ensure that the lines around the fire perimeter are contained. All containment lines will continue to be patrolled to remove falling leaves.

Fire Weather: An area of high pressure will remain in the area through today with a weak cold front moving in tonight. Warmer temperatures and stronger winds are expected for Wednesday afternoon through Friday while humidity levels will remain in the 20 percent range.

Closures: The entire Cohutta Wilderness, National Forest lands north and west of FS Road 64, and National Forest lands east of FS Road 16, and the Conasauga River are closed. In addition, the following areas are closed:

- FS Road 68 from Watson Gap to Potato Patch (entire length).
- FS Road 68 from Holly Creek Gap to Lake Conasauga.
- FS Road 49 from Lake Conasauga to Grassy Mountain Tower.
- FS Road 17 from the intersection with FS road 68 north to Alaculsy Valley.

- FS Road 16 between the Conasauga River and Jacks River.
- FS Road 51 from the intersection of Cottonwood Patch to the wilderness boundary.
- FS Road 630 west of Hickey Gap at Lackey Knob and Hal Brannon Road.
- Jack's River Fields, Cottonwood Patch, Lake Conasauga (and the day-use area) and Overflow Campgrounds.

The Conasauga Ranger District has brought in additional Law Enforcement personnel to assist with road closures and fire restrictions. Officers are increasing patrols and working extended shifts.

Hunters preparing for the big game hunt season should remain aware of closure information. Please respect all closures and monitor changes in the coming days. Closures are in place for public and firefighter safety.

A total fire ban is in place on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. This means building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire (including charcoal based fire whether contained in a grill or not) is prohibited. Commercially available fuel stoves (camp stoves) are allowed. **In addition, Fannin, Gilmer, and Murray Counties are among counties that have issued a ban on all outdoor burning until further notice.** No open burning of any type is permitted, including campfires and fire pits.

Due to the extreme drought conditions, we are encouraging all individuals to use Firewise tactics around their home and property. For information on Firewise, visit www.firewise.org. Below are a few recommendations:

- Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
- Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire. If it is brown cut it down to reduce fire intensity.
- Remove fuel within 3-5 feet of your home's foundation and out buildings including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- Remove dead vegetation surrounding your home, within the 30-100 foot area.

Air Quality: Smoke will continue to impact areas southeast of the Cohutta Wilderness today. However, fires throughout northern Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and North Carolina all have the potential to impair air quality. The public should also be aware of limited visibility on area roads due to smoke and atmospheric conditions. 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 like you are having health effects from smoke, see your doctor or health professional as needed. Use caution when driving in or around smoky areas. For the most up-to-date air quality report, visit Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5078>.

Fire Information: Fire information, photos and videos can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5078>. Also, updated information is available on the Chattahoochee-Oconee Facebook page or by calling the Rough Ridge fire information line at 470-208-2839. For information about closures or fire restrictions, visit the Chattahoochee-Oconee website at www.fs.usda.gov/conf.

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