



Eastern Cherokee Complex Fire Update

Update: 1

Thursday November 10, 2016

9:00 AM

Incident size: 450 acres

Current Situation: 20% contained

Number of personnel: 83

The Southern Area Blue Team assumed command of the Eastern Cherokee Complex Fire starting at 7:00 a.m. today. This Type 1 Team, one of 16 in the nation, is comprised of personnel from the 13 southern states, and are noted for their expertise in operations, logistics, planning, financial support, safety, and are rated to handle the most complex incidents across the entire country.

Fire crews from several states are arriving through a mobilization center located in Knoxville, TN and are expected to arrive today. Three Type-2 Initial Attack 20 person crews, along with one Type-1 Hotshot 20 person crew will begin assisting the local resources of three engines, one hand crew and two eight person modules currently based in Cherokee. Engine support from Cherokee Fire and Rescue have supported structure protection. An "aerial supervisor," also known as an Air Attack, will be established today to help map, control helicopter traffic and monitor the fires.

There are 14 fires currently burning within the Cherokee Reservation, with the Dobson-3 Fire currently at 180 acres, the Washington Creek Fire at approximately 200 acres, and 12 other fires of various acreages. Lucas Minton, Bureau of Indian Affairs Regional Fire Manager noted that, "Thirty fires have burned on the reservation in the past month." He also said that the current firefighting operations have primarily focused on point protection of homes and structures. "With the addition of the team, new crews and aircraft coming online, we expect to start gaining some significant containment."

Near record drought conditions, along with high winds and warm temperatures, are drying forest fuels and making it difficult to extinguish the fires. Wind gusts up to 20 m.p.h. are expected on the ridgelines today, with crews looking at extreme fire behavior. All of the fires currently burning are under investigation by local law enforcement.