



Boteler, Maple Springs, and Nantahala Branch Fires Update Monday, November 28, 2016

Phone: 828-349-5827, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Websites: inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/34/#
[facebook.com/BotelerFire](https://www.facebook.com/BotelerFire)
[facebook.com/MapleSpringsFire](https://www.facebook.com/MapleSpringsFire)

Email: botelerfire@gmail.com
maplespringsfire@gmail.com

Incident Resources

11 crews, 44 engines, 5 helicopters, 13 dozers, 8 water tender, 1 skidgine, 701 total personnel, 35,402 total acres

Camp Branch Fire (Macon County)

Yesterday, firefighters had another successful day conducting firing operations. The southwest corner has nearly filled in with a nice underburn, and structures in along Forest Road 69 and in the Bear Cove area are secure. The firing group worked from Wayah Bald along the Appalachian Trail (AT) north to Licklog Gap and then east toward Ray Branch Creek. The firing operation created a buffer that will prevent the fire's spread west of the AT and north of DeWeese Branch Creek.

Today, firefighters will hold the east side of the fire along Locust Tree Branch Road. On the west side, they will hold the line from FR 69, across Rocky Bald Ridge to FR 379B, and north to Licklog Gap. They will also continue protecting structures in Bear Cove and on FR 69. Tonight, firefighters will work until midnight, and that will conclude the night shift. It will be reinstated if changing conditions warrant.

Size: 2,146 acres

Containment: 35 percent

Start Date: November 22

Boteler Fire (Clay County)

Firefighters continue repairing firelines, helispots, and roads damaged by fire-suppression activities. Suppression repair work is approximately 40 percent complete on the Boteler Fire. Leaves continue to drop at the lower elevations, increasing the likelihood of interior reburns. Today's up-to-35-mph winds could present a challenge to firefighters today, particularly if new fires start.

Size: 9,036 acres

Containment: 85 percent

Start Date: October 25

Maple Springs (Graham County)

Approximately 75 percent of suppression repairs have been completed. Crews are working hard to accomplish as much repair work as possible before predicted rains arrive. Today, they will work along Forest Road 455 southwest to Naked Ground. They will also remove hazard trees along FR 62.

Where the fire burned within the steep, inaccessible Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness Area, scooper planes dropped water on the fire's edge, creating a wet line in lieu of hand- or dozer-constructed fireline. Six areas of isolated interior heat were detected during a recent infrared flight. They do not pose a threat to containment, however, due to their location near natural barriers. As reconnaissance and infrared flights report that heat is dissipating, the containment percentage will gradually increase.

Size: 7,788 acres

Containment: 78 percent

Start Date: November 4

Initial-Attack Group

No new fire starts were detected yesterday in the Southern Area Blue Team's initial-attack response area. Crews remain positioned to respond to any new fires and are regularly monitoring fires in patrol status (list below).

Suppression-Repair Group

Recent infrared flights have not detected any heat within the perimeters of ten fires. As a result, suppression-repair crews have begun restoring areas affected by fire-suppression activities to prefire conditions. In some situations, repair involves placing organic matter on the firelines, which would not happen if the potential for

interior reburns remained. Fires in repair status: Whitewater (23 ac.), Cliffside (110 ac.), Grape Cove (11 ac.), Wine Spring (93 ac.), Knob (1,130 ac.), Moss Knob (7 ac.), Ridge Gap (1 ac.), Mulberry (1 ac.), Boardtree (0.5 ac.), and Muskrat (104 ac.).

Patrol Group

As long as the potential for interior reburns remains, firefighters are patrolling the following fires regularly and keeping containment lines open and cleared of newly fallen leaves: Buck Creek (6 ac.), Falls (NA), Moses Creek (30 ac.), Jones Gap (8 ac.), Jarrett Knob (NA), May Branch (175 ac.), Charley Creek (6 ac.), Nick (0.2 ac.), Howard Gap (0.2 ac.), Bullpen (6 ac.), Jones Creek (1.3 ac), Cathey Gap (123 ac.), Dick's Creek (729 ac.), and Tellico (13,874 ac.).

Weather and Fire Behavior

A strong disturbance will move over the southeast states today. Because windy conditions will develop locally ahead of this weather pattern, the incident meteorologist has issued a wind advisory for this afternoon at elevations over 4,000 feet. South winds will be very breezy, up to 25 mph, with gusts up to 35 mph. Smoke from the last two days of firing operations never dissipated at lower elevations in the Franklin area yesterday, but today's strong south winds should clear the smoke out of the area. Rain is forecasted for this evening, with an inch or more expected to fall over 8–10 hours. A second rain event, which could bring another half inch to one inch of rain to the area is predicted for Wednesday. Today's temperatures will likely climb into the 60s and the minimum relative humidity should be in the 50s.

Today's strong winds could dry vegetation further and cause rapid surface spread of the Camp Branch Fire or any new starts. Although some areas will be more sheltered from winds, such as north of Wayah Bald and at the bottom of Wayah Road, fire behavior of new starts moving upslope and exposed ridgetops could be very active. Despite rain forecasted for later today, the incident meteorologist strongly encouraged firefighters at this morning's operational briefing to "be prepared all day long." If rain materializes, fire behavior will be minimal.

Closures

Macon County

- A segment of Wayah Road (SR 1310) near the Camp Branch Fire is closed to through traffic; residents who live in the closed section are allowed access to their property. Westbound traffic is stopped at Enloe Farms. Eastbound traffic is being stopped at the Wayah Bald Road junction. Northbound traffic on Crawford Road is being turned around at the junction with Wayah Rd (SR 1310).

Nantahala National Forest

- Forest Road 711 is closed from Wayah Road (SR 1310) to Cold Springs Road (SR 1397). The Dirty John Shooting Range is not accessible.
- The Bartram Trail is closed from Harrison Gap at FR 713 (Shingletree Road) west to Nantahala Lake and from the trailhead at SR 106 to SR 1643 (Hickory Knoll Road). The Foothills Trail from SR 281 to the Bad Creek access, the Wesser Creek Trail, and the Whitewater Falls Trail are also closed.
- An area closure order (No. 08-11-02-17-01) for the **Cheoah Ranger District** is in effect for lands, trails, and roads in the area surrounding the Maple Springs Fire including the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness Area. To view a map and complete list of closed roads and trails, go to bit.ly/2fDZuqt.
- An area closure order (No. 08-11-09-17-02) for the **Tusquitee Ranger District** is in effect for lands, trails, and roads in the area surrounding the Boteler Fire. To view a map and complete list of closed roads and trails, go to bit.ly/2fArtYf.
- An area closure order (No. 08-11-00-17-03) for the **Tusquitee and Nantahala Ranger Districts** is in effect for lands, trails, and roads southeast of the Boteler Fire. The closed area extends south from Highway 64 to the Georgia border and includes the Southern Nantahala Wilderness. The Appalachian Trail is closed from the Nantahala Outdoor Center south to the Georgia border. To view a map and complete list of closed roads and trails, go to bit.ly/2g1iPm1.

Burning Restrictions

A total fire ban is in effect for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests (bit.ly/2fikSmG) and for forty-seven western North Carolina counties (bit.ly/2gIBVyt).

Joint Information Center (JIC)

A JIC in Asheville is distributing information about all western North Carolina wildfires. Email ncjicinformation@gmail.com, call 828-575-2840 (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.), or go to <http://ncjic.blogspot.com>.

Nearby Fires

The Rock Mountain Fire—which originated in Georgia and is now south of Franklin, North Carolina, and west of US Highway 23—is being managed by Pacific Northwest 3, a type 1 incident management team. Fire information can be obtained at 470-208-2866 and inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5100/.

Arson Reporting

North Carolina is offering a reward up to \$10,000 to be issued to anyone who provides information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for setting wildfires in western North Carolina. Anyone having information concerning these wildfires should contact Macon County Crimestoppers at 828-349-2600 or Jackson County Crimestoppers at 828-631-1125.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is also seeking information regarding arson fires on Indian Lands of North Carolina through the WeTip Program. Up to \$10,000 is being offered through this anonymous program. WeTip can be contacted through its website wetip.com or by calling its hotline 800-47-ARSON (800-472-7766).