



## Cowlitz Complex Fire Update

August 30, 2023

### Rocky Mountain Area Complex Incident Management Team Two

Jared Hohn, Incident Commander

**Current Situation:** The Rocky Mountain Area Complex Incident Management Team Two assumed command of the Cowlitz Complex Fire this morning. Local fire crews have done an excellent job of making progress on establishing containment line around several of the more than 40 wildfires currently active in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The majority of these fires are small in size. The accompanying map identifies all of these fires.

Considering the large number of wildfires and limited resources to address them, there is a need to prioritize fire response based on values at risk, such as private property, critical infrastructure, and natural resource concerns. As a result, four of the fires have been identified for immediate attention, while the remaining fires will be addressed based on resource availability, fire behavior, and values at risk over the coming days or weeks.

The 15-acre South Fork Fire is located 5.5 miles west-southwest of Packwood, Washington, in the South Fork Williams Creek drainage. Firefighters have established containment line around the fire perimeter and will continue working to identify and extinguish heat sources within the fire perimeter.

The 15-acre Carlton Ridge Fire is about ½-mile northeast of private property on Carlton Ridge, about 7.5 miles northwest of White Pass. Two homes are currently under Level 3 evacuation orders. Crews have established containment line around the fire perimeter and are securing the edge and mopping up heat sources near containment lines.

The 6-acre Grassy Mountain Fire is located 4.5 miles northeast of Randle, Washington, on the northern slope of Grassy Mountain. The remote location, dense forest canopy, and steep terrain limit access to safely get fire crews in and out of the fire area. The Grassy Mountain fire is currently unstaffed while strategic planners develop a plan of attack.

The Snagtooth and Spencer Quartz Fires are located 21 miles south of Randle on the south side of Snagtooth Mountain. Together, they are the largest of the Cowlitz Complex fires at a combined 449 acres. Access is limited due to the remote location and steep terrain. Crews scouted the fire yesterday and are identifying values at risk and assessing the potential for growth. A suppression response strategy is being developed.

**Fire Restrictions:** Fire Restrictions are in effect. Campfires are prohibited across the Gifford Pinchot National Forest – only propane-fueled fire is allowed. Additional information is available on the forest's website at [Gifford Pinchot National Forest - Fire Management \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/gifford-pinchot-national-forest-fire-management).

**Weather & Smoke Information:** Recent rain, cloud cover, and higher humidity have helped reduce fire activity to creeping and smoldering, giving firefighters time and opportunity to respond. However, a heavy layer of forest duff conceals fire burning at depth, out of reach of humidity and precipitation. There is potential for these fires to rekindle in warmer, dryer, and windier conditions. Last night's rain tapered off overnight and is expected to move out of the area by noon today, bringing afternoon sun and valley temperatures in the 60s. Humidity will be 60 to 70% today, which will help keep fire behavior minimal.

**Closures:** In anticipation of ongoing fire activity in the vicinity of the Snagtooth Fire the following roads and trails will be closed to the public to reduce exposure and help ensure public safety: Forest Roads 9300 and 9341 (currently off limits), Boundary Trail #1 (from Elk Pass to intersection with Summit Prairie), Summit Prairie #2, Craggy Peak #3, Snagtooth #4, Quartz #5, Stabler Camp #17, Wright Meadows #80, Basin Camp #3A, Quartz #5B, Quartz #5C (French Creek), Snyder Pasture #80A.

**Temporary Flight Restrictions:** A temporary flight restriction (TFR) is in effect over the fire area between U.S. Highway 12 and Mount Rainier National Park. Fire aviation response is halted or delayed if an unauthorized aircraft enters the TFR. Temporary flight restrictions also apply to unmanned aircraft systems or drones. If you fly, we can't! Learn more about how to use drones safely and responsibly at [Home - Know Before You Fly](https://www.faa.gov/home-know-before-you-fly).

**Fire Information Phonenumber:** (360) 208-8075 **Time:** 7 a.m.–7 p.m.

**Facebook:** [Facebook/CowlitzComplex](https://www.facebook.com/CowlitzComplex)

**Email:** [2023.cowlitzcomplex@firenet.gov](mailto:2023.cowlitzcomplex@firenet.gov)

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**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/GPNF>