

# Sourdough Fire Morning Update – Wednesday, August 23, 2023

North Cascades National Park

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Inciweb: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/warlp-sourdough-fire>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NorthCascadesNationalPark>

**Resources:** 265 Total Personnel | 3 Hand Crews | 13 Engines | 4 Water Tenders | 6 Helicopters

**\*\*State Route 20 (SR 20) is now open to through-travel only (no stopping or pulling over) as of today, Wednesday, August 23 at around 8 AM. Area, trail, and camp closures remain in effect between mile 120 (Newhalem) and 139 (east NPS boundary), as well as other areas along SR 20 due to the Blue Lake Fire. Diablo Lake, Diablo Lake Overlook, Maple Pass, and other areas are not accessible. For more information go to: <https://www.nps.gov/noca/planyourvisit/fire-closures.htm>).**

**Firefighter and public safety remains paramount as SR 20 re-opens. Please follow all traffic and fire incident signage including posted lower speed limits. Practice extra caution in areas where people and equipment are working. Drivers can make the re-opening a success by staying focused on the road and not becoming distracted by firefighting operations.**

**(Newhalem, Wash.)** -- The Sourdough Fire started with a lightning strike on July 29 near Diablo in the Ross Lake National Recreation Area, 7 miles northeast of Newhalem. The size of the fire remains at approximately 5,997 acres with 16% containment. The current suppression strategy involves obtaining full containment primarily along the southern portion of the fire along SR 20 and other infrastructure such as buildings and utility corridors. The remote areas of the fire to the north, where most of the fire continues to burn, the strategy is to keep the fire confined on the west and eastern flanks by natural features and past fire scars and to take action if the fire threatens values at risk.

**Yesterday:** Fire behavior continued to be moderated by cooler temperatures and higher humidity with no significant flare-ups. Firefighters patrolled and mopped up the southern perimeter of the fire including along SR 20. With good visibility, helicopters were back in the air conducting water drops in the southeast corner of the fire and in the Sourdough Creek drainage. Helicopters also provided support to the Huckleberry Flat fire near the town of Darrington. Also in the air yesterday was an unmanned aerial systems (UAS) drone conducting infrared scans (to detect heat) over portions of the fire to aid suppression efforts.

**Today's planned activities:** With the re-opening of SR 20, firefighters will be taking extra safety precautions around traffic along the highway. Firefighters will continue to utilize helicopters to conduct water drops in the Sourdough Creek drainage to check the fire's eastern progression. They also plan to continue to patrol and monitor containment lines along the southern (bottom) end of the fire that includes SR 20. UAS drone flights are planned to be used in support of suppression efforts. Suppression repair operations, intended to return damaged and disturbed areas back to natural conditions, will continue.

**Weather:** Cooler temperatures and increased humidity is forecasted. A warming trend is predicted to start on Thursday with an increased chance of thunderstorms continuing through the weekend. **Any precipitation is expected to be minimal with limited effects on overall fire behavior.**

**Safety:** Firefighter and public safety will be a priority as SR 20 opens to through-travel in the fire area. Fire danger remains extremely high. The public can help prevent the next wildland fire by observing outdoor burning bans and avoiding other common ignition causes. This is a no-recreation drone zone. Recreational drones pose serious risks to firefighter and public safety and the effectiveness of wildfire suppression efforts. Aerial firefighting is suspended when recreational drones are in the air.

**Smoke:** Smoke from fires throughout the region is significantly affecting many communities. Information about current conditions and a smoke forecast is located at: <https://wasmoke.blogspot.com>. For information on how you can prepare for wildfire smoke, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/smoke.html> and <https://www.wildlandfiresmoke.net/smoke-ready>

**Closures and Evacuations:** Trail, area and camp closures are in effect; for more information, go to: <https://www.nps.gov/noca/planyourvisit/fire-closures.htm>

