

Sourdough Fire Morning Update – Thursday, August 24, 2023

North Cascades National Park

Northwest Incident Management Team 8, Incident Commander Kevin Stock

Fire Information Line: 360-370-4169 Email: 2023.sourdough@firenet.gov

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

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

Resources: 276 Total Personnel | 4 Hand Crews | 10 Engines | 4 Water Tenders | 6 Helicopters



****State Route 20 (SR 20) is now open to through-travel only (no stopping or pulling over). 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>).**

Thank you to the public that drove safely through the fire area yesterday on SR 20! You made opening day a success! Drivers were very courteous and aware of the need to follow the lower speeds and stay on the roadway, not pulling over. Please continue to follow all traffic and fire incident signage using extra caution in areas where people and equipment are working.

(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 6,000 acres with 16% containment. The current suppression strategy involves obtaining full containment primarily along the southern portion of the fire that includes SR 20 and other infrastructure such as buildings, utility corridors and other values at risk. The remote areas of the fire to the north, where most of the fire continues to burn through drought-stricken forest, the strategy is to keep the fire confined on the west and eastern flanks using natural features and past fire scars, and to take action if the fire threatens values.

Yesterday: Cooler temperatures and occasional light precipitation over the fire temporarily slowed its spread to the north. Drought-stricken fuels are anticipated to recover quite quickly over the next few days, with relative humidity once again becoming low, temperatures high and winds promoting fire growth. Due to cloud cover, manned air resources did not fly, however, an unmanned aerial systems (UAS) drone was able to conduct infrared scans (to detect heat) that aided suppression efforts. Firefighters, in coordination with Washington State Department of Transportation, implemented safety protocols when conducting mop up operations in an active highway traffic environment.

Today's planned activities: With SR 20 now open, firefighters will continue to take appropriate safety precautions around traffic while conducting patrol and mop up operations. Firefighters plan to utilize helicopters to do a reconnaissance and 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. Suppression repair operations, intended to return damaged and disturbed areas back to natural conditions, will continue.

Weather: A warming trend is predicted to start today (Thursday) with temperatures rebounding into the mid-80s and winds changing to easterly. The result will be a warming and drying trend that will continue through the weekend. There is a small chance of afternoon thunderstorms starting Friday and 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 is now open 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: 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>