

Sourdough Fire Morning Update – Tuesday, August 22, 2023

North Cascades National Park

Northwest Incident Management Team 8, Incident Commander Kevin Stock

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

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

Operational Update: <https://youtu.be/MUFSynbOc1I>

Resources: 264 Total Personnel | 3 Hand Crews | 14 Engines | 5 Water Tenders | 6 Helicopters

(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 12% containment. The firefighting team has protected communities, crucial highways, and essential infrastructure. Most of the fire growth remains located in the remote northern terrain. With no safe access, these terrains highlight the importance of a strategic approach to fire management.

Yesterday: Fire behavior was 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 State Route 20, and continued to monitor the eastern perimeter in the Sourdough Creek drainage as well as the north and west areas of the fire. The fire continued to shed debris onto State Route 20 which was safely cleared from the roadway. Due to limited visibility from heavy smoke, helicopters could not assist with suppression efforts. However, an Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) drone was flown to conduct infrared scans (to detect heat) over portions of the fire to aid suppression efforts.

Today's planned activities: Firefighters plan to utilize helicopters to conduct water drops in the Sourdough Creek drainage to check the fire's eastern progression provided there is adequate visibility. They also plan to continue to patrol and monitor containment lines along the southern (bottom) end of the fire that includes State Route 20. Unmanned 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 cold front will move through the area bringing cooler temperatures and a slight chance of showers on Tuesday and Wednesday. Precipitation is expected to be minimal with limited effects on overall fire behavior.

Safety: 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: State Route 20 remains closed between milepost 120 (Newhalem) and milepost 171 (Silver Star Campground); for up to date information on SR 20 road closure go to: <https://wsdot.wa.gov/> Trail, area and camp closures are in effect; for more information, go to: <https://www.nps.gov/noca/planyourvisit/fire-closures.htm>

