

Fire Update

2023 SRF Lightning Complex

Saturday, September 23, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.



Eastern Area Gold Team

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Information Staffing Hours: 8 am to 8 pm

This update covers 5 of the 14 fires being managed as part of the SRF Lightning Complex. The Copper Fire (2184 acres) was absorbed by the Blue Creek #2 Fire. On September 22, 2023 the Bluff #1 Fire (4270 acres) and Blue Creek #2 Fire (9751 acres) were absorbed by the Mosquito Fire. The remaining 6 fires (Big Foot, Blue Creek, Creek, Flat, Iron, and Merrill) totaling 34 acres, are contained and in patrol status. They are checked daily, and their size and containment are unlikely to change.

Current Situation: The 14 fires on this incident total 40,670 acres and overall containment is 7%. In total, 1,039 personnel are assigned to the incident. Yesterday's strategic firing operations were very successful. Ground crews have spent several operational shifts working in conjunction with aerial assets to accomplish objectives. Substantial progress was made in strategic firing operations on the top of several ridges in the interior area between the Mosquito and Bluff #1 Fires. These ridges are within the established control lines that have been improved and secured with recent firing operations from ground crews. Using low intensity fire, under these ideal conditions, moves us towards restoring and protecting resources vital to the culture and well-being of the tribes and communities of the Klamath River Basin. Additionally, the Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) firing operations provided a valuable tool needed to accomplish the incident objectives. The UAS, along with helicopters with ignition capacity, were able to reintroduce fire in areas too steep and remote for ground crews to safely achieve objectives.

The weather yesterday allowed for not only strategic firing conditions, but also favorable flying conditions for the aerial assets. The result was a low intensity burn, slowly backing downhill off the ridges, through yesterday evening, reducing the amount and density of fuels available to burn and reducing the likelihood of high intensity fire in the area in the future. The interior strategic firing operations that were accomplished are important culturally and scientifically and represent a shift in the approach to fire suppression when safety priorities and conditions allow.

The combination of Blue Creek #2 Fire's movement to the south and the successful strategic firing operations between the Bluff #1 and Mosquito Fires has resulted in all these fires being combined into what will now be referred to as the Mosquito Fire.

Pearch Fire (10,659 acres, 7% contained) – Yesterday, the Structure Protection Crews were joined by additional crews to hold and improve the containment line around the southwest flank of the Pearch Fire. Firefighters were inserted into the southern area of the fire to assess fire growth and provide additional information for the structure protection plans. Fire managers took advantage of the weather conditions and continued to conduct the strategic firing operations north of Butler Flats, south of Somes Bar. Smoke from these operations was visible yesterday north of Orleans. The Pearch Fire has reached Highway 96 on the northwest flank and the fire is sending material rolling downslope onto the road. Crews are working with CalTrans to keep travel on the highway safe. Please observe posted reduced speed limits and watch your surroundings if you are traveling through the fire area as rocks and debris may be falling into the road. Today crews are holding and maintaining yesterday's successful operations, working point protection around the Butler Flats community, and monitoring the fire along the highway. Structure Protection crews are working with pumps, hose systems, and sprinklers where needed to protect structures. **An Evacuation Warning is in place for those residents in the Butler Creek area (SIS-1704) which means persons in the area need to be prepared to evacuate if conditions warrant.**

Mosquito Fire (27,892 acres, 17% contained) – Crews are holding and improving containment line along the eastern side and along portions of the Go Road, to secure the road as a control line. There was minimal fire activity on the Bluff #1 Fire and south flank of Mosquito Fire yesterday and crews focused on checking the fire's edge along the Onion Creek Road. Crews continued to use firing operations to secure the remaining control lines to close off the potential for the wildfire to move east of the Go Road. Firefighters are mopping up, holding and improving the line, taking advantage of the wind direction yesterday to increase containment depth along Bluff Creek Road. As firing operations on the exterior control lines came together, aerial platforms shifted and started strategic firing operations on the top of several ridges within the fire perimeter above Bluff Creek. The use of aerial ignition devices allows firefighters to meet incident objectives while providing for firefighter safety. Firefighters continue to monitor the fire behavior and effects. The Mastication work continued to make important progress south along the Bluff Creek and Slate Creek Roads. A contingency of engines remains on both fires throughout the nighttime hours.

Marlow Fire (1,987 acres, 0% contained) – This fire and the northern part of the Mosquito Fire are bounded by indirect control lines to the east and south and prior fire footprints where fuels are lighter. Yesterday, the Marlow Fire had some small growth but remained relatively quiet. These fires are in a remote area and burning within prior fire footprints and no values are currently threatened. The Marlow and Mosquito Fires are anticipated to burn together within the next few days. A Wildland Fire Module continues to monitor and assess conditions on the ground and air resources will monitor from above. Fire managers from the 2023 SRF Lightning Complex continue to coordinate with fire managers on the Happy Camp Complex due to the proximity of the Elliot Fire.

Monument (2 acres, 0% contained) **and Let er-Buck** (96 acres, 0% contained) **Fires** – A confinement strategy is being used to address these two fires due to limited values at risk and the remote, steep terrain with associated safety concerns for the firefighters. Terrain, natural fire barriers such as rock outcroppings, and old fire footprints where fuels are limited will be used to confine fire growth until season ending precipitation extinguishes the fires. These fires are checked regularly by aerial patrols to ensure they remain within acceptable bounds.

Weather: Today will conclude the warm and drying trend, with precipitation forecasted to start moving into the area tomorrow. Temperatures today will range from 56-70, with winds from 5-9 mph. A high cloud layer will move over the fire area in the afternoon, bringing with it slightly cooler temperatures and breezy conditions on exposed ridgelines. Cloud cover will increase overnight with a chance of light rain.

Evacuation Information

Siskiyou County Office of Emergency Services: <https://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/emergencyservices>

Closures

Six Rivers National Forest: Area and campground closures are in effect on portions of Six Rivers National Forest. They can be found at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/srnf/notices/?cid=FSEPRD1096395>.

Additional Fire Information

InciWeb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/casrf-2023-srf-lightning-complex-and-redwood-lightning-complex>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/2023SRFRedwoodLightning>

More Fire Information Links: www.linktr.ee/srffirepio

For Air Quality Information: www.airnow.gov

NOTE: For information about the Elliot or Hancock Fires which are part of the Happy Camp Complex, please visit <https://linktr.ee/happycampcomplex2023> .

