



## Cowlitz Complex Fire Update

September 2, 2023

### Rocky Mountain Area Complex Incident Management Team Two

Jared Hohn, Incident Commander

**Current Situation:** A total of 444 personnel are currently assigned to the Cowlitz Complex, which is 5% contained and encompasses a total of 646 acres. The word of the day is “safety”. The Cowlitz Complex encompasses a vast area of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, with hundreds of firefighters equally dispersed. The timing of this incident brings added safety concerns occurring during the Labor Day holiday weekend, as well as berry and mushroom picking season, and the Packwood Flea Market. All of this concurrent activity has brought heavy traffic to roads paved and unpaved throughout the area. Please travel slowly in congested areas in town and on the forest. Be sure that parked vehicles are well off of roadways to allow passage by fire trucks and other large vehicles.

The dense forest and steep terrain are impediments to firefighter safety. Fire weakened trees and those with root rot are at risk of falling even under light windy conditions. Crews also need to be alert for potential rolling logs and other debris on steep slopes.

The conditions make for difficult access into and out of several of the individual fires, making extraction difficult in the event of an injury. Yesterday’s break in cloud cover allowed aerial reconnaissance flights to allow an overview of more remotely located fires that are less easily accessed on the ground. Aerial observers saw a few small wisps of smoke. As fuels dry out today, additional smoke may become evident.

In Branch 1/Division C, planning is taking place that could allow firefighters to move into the Deer Creek Fire, about 2.7 miles north of Forest Road 52, near Glacier View Trailhead. Yesterday, rappellers were inserted on the Berry Fire, located on Allen Mountain, about 8 miles north of Randle.

In Branch 2/Division L, additional rappellers dropped into the Sanctuary Rock Fire, located 11.5 miles south of Packwood near St. John Lake. Road access was opened up to the Bear Creek Fire, located 17 miles south of Randle on McCoy Peak, so that crews can begin taking suppression action.

**Fire Restrictions:** Fire Restrictions are in effect. Campfires are prohibited across the Gifford Pinchot National Forest – only propane-fueled fire pits, stoves and lanterns are 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:** Weather is expected to be mostly clear again this morning, with temperatures climbing into the 80s in the valley, cooler at higher elevations. Relative humidity will be lower today, dropping to around 35%. Some thunderstorm activity is expected in the southern end of the fire area, which may bring some scattered showers in the afternoon and overnight tonight.

**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 #3 A, Quartz #5 B, Quartz #5 C (French Creek), Snyder Pasture #80 A. Forest Road 8410 is closed for firefighter and public safety in the vicinity of the Pothole Fire.

**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/learn-more-about-drones).

**Fire Information Phonenumber:** (360) 208-8075      **Email:** [2023.cowlitzcomplex@firenet.gov](mailto:2023.cowlitzcomplex@firenet.gov)      **Hours:** 7 a.m.–7 p.m.

**InciWeb:** [Cowlitz Complex Information | InciWeb \(wildfire.gov\)](https://www.wildfire.gov/cowlitz-complex-information)

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

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