

# Fire Update

## 2023 SRF Lightning Complex

Tuesday, September 19, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.



### Eastern Area Gold Team

Brian Jenkins, Incident Commander

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**Information Staffing Hours:** 8 am to 8 pm

**COMMUNITY MEETING: Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.  
Karuk Tribe DNR (39051 CA-96, Orleans, CA 95556)**

This update covers 7 of the 14 fires being managed as part of the SRF Lightning Complex. The Copper Fire (2184 acres) has been absorbed by the Blue Creek #2 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 in this incident total 27,573 acres and overall containment is 7%. The 7 uncontained fires described below total 25,355 acres. In total, 972 personnel are assigned to the incident.

Decades of research shows that fire is critical for healthy forests and maintains important forest functions like water quality, clean air, and wildlife habitat. In addition, Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge supports the practice of cultural burning that was historically conducted by local Tribal Nations. The fire, weather, and fuel conditions on the 2023 SRF Lightning Complex have been favorable for using strategic firing operations to accomplish fire suppression, reduce the risk of future extreme wildfires, and uphold our responsibilities to Tribal Nations.

Man-made containment of a fire is often constructed using a combination of handline, tree fallers, dozers, masticators, and strategic firing operations. As fire managers decide where and when to use these tactics, they also consult with tribal and forest Resource Advisors (READs). These technical specialists provide guidance to the crews on potential impacts to natural and culture resources in the area. Some of the READs assisting on this Complex have direct ancestral ties to the land and serve an invaluable role as fire managers strategically use fire to mimic cultural burning to aide in protecting these sacred lands and communities. Several crew members guiding the strategic firing operations are Tribal members part of the Hoopa, Yurok, and Karuk tribes.

**Pearch Fire** (7666 acres, 8% contained) – Crews continued to monitor fire activity on the north and east side of the fire. On the northeastern side of the fire, fire behavior continued to be moderate with fire slowly backing downhill into the Butler and Somes Creek drainages. On the west side, along Whitmore Creek, a hotshot crew continued to monitor any northern fire progression and will continue doing so over the coming days. No additional ignition is planned today. The Structure Protection Group continued reinforcement and assessed structures at the confluence of the Klamath and Salmon Rivers. Crews will remain on the fire during both day and night shifts.

**Bluff #1** (3814 acres, 27% contained) **and Mosquito** (4943 acres, 11% contained) **Fires** – Yesterday on the south end of Bluff #1, crews continued to patrol and contain the fire north of Onion Road, resulting in minimal fire growth. South along Bluff Creek Road, masticator and chipping operations began and made significant progress yesterday. This work is tied to a larger strategic objective to build a stronger fuel break line to protect and preserve the tribal lands to the west. On the northeast end of Bluff #1, crews continued to tactically ignite along Bluff Creek Road, further securing the top of the horseshoe and continuing approximately another 2 miles north. If conditions are favorable today, crews will continue igniting along Bluff Creek Road to the intersection with Nikowitz Road.

On the south end of the Mosquito Fire, fire behavior was similar to previous days and crews continued to maintain the south and east containment lines. In support of historical fire regimes and cultural burning, but also recognizing our commitment to protect the community of Orleans, firing modules continued to strategically fire north of the Mosquito Fire, parallel to Cedar Camp Road, approaching the intersection of the 13N13 Road. As the fire adjacent to the road was secured, UAS equipment was used to add small amounts of low intensity fire to interior ridgeline pockets. This work was done at a slow methodical pace allowing fire managers to adapt as needed. As conditions allow, similar actions will continue tomorrow along the Go Road and 13N13 Road. A contingency of engines remains on both fires throughout the nighttime hours.

**Blue Creek #2** (6897 acres, 0% contained) and **Marlow** (1942 acres, 0% contained) **Fires** – These fires are bounded by indirect control lines to the east and south and prior fire footprints where fuels are lighter. Fire growth was moderate yesterday. Today, with the forecasts predicting warmer and drier weather, activity in the interior pockets may become more active as the fire continues to consume dead material from a 2008 fire. No values are currently threatened. 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 are coordinating daily 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** (92 acres, 0% contained) **Fires** – Due to limited values at risk, the remote, steep terrain and associated safety concerns for our firefighters, these fires are being addressed with a confinement strategy. 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:** Temperatures will warm today by several degrees thus decreasing the relative humidity in the valley and ridges. The increased onshore flow will support breezier westerly conditions. Up-canyon winds 10-15 mph will develop this afternoon. Highs will be in the upper 80s in the valleys and lower 80s on ridges. Smoke will persist in the valleys through the day.

### 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](http://www.linktr.ee/srffirepio)

For Air Quality Information: [www.airnow.gov](http://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> .



[www.linktr.ee/srffitpio](http://www.linktr.ee/srffitpio)



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