

# Fire Update

## 2023 SRF Lightning Complex

Monday, September 18, 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 8 of the 14 fires being managed as part of the SRF Lightning Complex. 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 26,408 acres and overall containment is 7%. The 8 uncontained fires described below total 26,374 acres. In total, 1,122 personnel are assigned to the incident. These fires are all on the Six Rivers National Forest and as of today, have been burning on the landscape for 34 days. Throughout this time, fire managers have continued to implement a full suppression strategy utilizing a variety of tactics.

Containment of a fire is achieved by using a combination of man-made and natural barriers. During suppression, firefighter safety is our number one priority. The landscape where these fires are burning is very steep and often inaccessible. This compelled fire managers to look at alternative roads and ridge lines farther from the immediate fire perimeter that would allow for increased firefighter safety while still protecting the communities, cultural resources, and other values. Man-made containment of a fire is often constructed using a combination of handline, tree fallers, dozers, and masticators. Another highly effective tool to increase containment is to strategically introduce low-intensity fire to remove fuels from an advancing fire.

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.

In support of historical fire regimes and cultural burning, but also recognizing our commitment to protect the community of Orleans, firing modules will continue strategically firing north of the Mosquito Fire along Cedar Camp Road, and eventually continuing north along the Go Road, and northeast along the 13N13 Road. In addition, Tribal members part of the Hoopa, Yurok, and Karuk, who are also assigned to this incident, will begin strategically firing north of the Go Road along Lightning Ridge and other adjacent ridgelines in the coming days. This practice will progress at a slow methodical pace over the next several days. Engines are being deployed at night in locations where firing has occurred to guard against any unexpected fire behavior.

**Pearch Fire** (7299 acres, 8% contained) – In response to the thunderstorms and wind gusts yesterday, fire fighters re-assessed the fire perimeter. Fire behavior continued to be moderate with fire slowly backing downhill into the Butler Creek and a portion of Somes Creek drainages on the northeastern side of the fire. On the west side, along Whitmore Creek, a hotshot crew used minimal strategic firing to bring low intensity fire down to Highway 96. They will continue using this parallel tactic throughout the week. The Structure Protection Group continued reinforcement and placed additional hoses. They will remain on the fire during both day and night shifts. Today, crews will continue to patrol completed fire lines, mop up and secure the fire perimeter on the south and west sides of the fire.

**Bluff #1** (3750 acres, 29% contained) **and Mosquito** (4740 acres, 11% contained) **Fires** – Yesterday on Bluff #1, crews continued to patrol and contain the fire north of Onion Road. As a result, there was minimal fire growth on the south end of the fire. On the northeast end of Bluff #1, crews continued to tactically ignite along Bluff Creek Road and will continue to do so today. On the south end of the Mosquito Fire, fire behavior was similar to previous days and crews continued to maintain the south and west containment lines. On the north end, parallel to Cedar Camp Road and Road 12N13, strategic firing was introduced to removed unburned fuel and strengthen containment lines. A contingency of engines remains on both fires throughout the nighttime hours. Following discussions among the team, agencies, and tribal leaders a plan and alignment has been agreed upon to use crews and masticator equipment to begin widening the Bluff Creek Road to the south of Bluff #1 Fire. The long-term objective is to build a stronger fuel break line to protect and preserve the tribal lands to the west.

**Blue Creek #2** (8575 acres, 0% contained) **and Marlow** (1917 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. Dead material from a 2008 fire continue to burn in the interior as the 3 fires merge together. **The Copper and Blue Creek #2 Fires have merged and going forward will only be referred to as the Blue Cree #2 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** (89 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 cool today by 5 degrees and increase the relative humidity 5-10%. 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 upper 70s to 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/srffitrpio](http://www.linktr.ee/srffitrpio)



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