

Fire Update

2023 SRF Lightning Complex

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.



Eastern Area Gold Team

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Information Staffing Hours: 8 am to 8 pm

**COMMUNITY MEETING: Wednesday, September 20th, 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 29,839 acres and overall containment is 7%. The 7 uncontained fires described below total 27,621 acres. In total, 1006 personnel are assigned to the incident. Prior to European settlement, millions of acres would burn annually across California, from September until heavy rain or snow extinguished them. Some of these fires were ignited through natural events such as lightning and others through the practice of cultural burning conducted by the local Tribal Nations. These fires were generally low to moderate in intensity and maintained the forest understory from becoming too dense. Since that time, we have suppressed fires to such a degree that these forests are too rich in vegetation, both in the understory and the density of trees. This has led to high intensity fires that consumes all the vegetation and leaves the area devoid of nutrients.

The objective of the strategic firing operations currently being conducted as part of the 2023 SRF Lightning Complex are to reduce the dense understory, and thus lower the risk of a future high intensity fire. This aligns with the ultimate objective of the Incident Management Team, which is to suppress and contain the fires and protect the surrounding communities. To do this fire managers are using historic techniques but with modern technology. The applied low intensity fire allows for resident heat to slowly consume the understory vegetation, remove low hanging branches that serve as a ladder to the tree canopy, and remove small diameter trees that are choking sunlight from the forest floor. As the fire, weather, and fuel conditions allow, fire managers will continue using the technique of strategic firing operations which will accomplish the overall goal of fire suppression, reducing the risk of future extreme wildfires, and upholding our responsibilities to Tribal Nations.

Pearch Fire (7938 acres, 7% contained) – A heavy marine layer rested over the fire area for most of the morning yesterday, significantly decreasing fire activity. Crews continued to monitor fire activity on all sides of the fire, especially those in the Butler and Somes Creek drainages. 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. **An Evacuation Warning has been issued to those in the Butler Creek area (SIS-1704) which means persons in the area need to be prepared to evacuate if conditions warrant.** Additional resources assessed the area to the southeast and looked for ridges that could serve as containment lines should the fire spread further in that direction. Today, higher wind gusts are expected throughout the day so crews will be focused on patrolling established containment lines. No strategic firing operations are planned for the day.

Bluff #1 (3912 acres, 26% contained) **and Mosquito** (5215 acres, 9% contained) **Fires** – On the south end of Bluff #1, crews continued to patrol and contain the fire north of Onion Road yesterday, resulting in minimal fire growth. Masticator and chipping operations continued south along Bluff Creek Road and this work will continue over the

next several days. On the northeast end of Bluff #1, crews continued to mop up and secure the strategic operations from the past several days. On the south end of the Mosquito Fire, crews continued to maintain the south and east containment lines. To the north, firing modules continued to strategically fire north of the Mosquito Fire, parallel to Cedar Camp Road, approaching the intersection of the 13N13 Road using hand ignitions as well as UAS equipment. This work was done at a slow methodical pace allowing fire managers to adapt as needed. Like the Pearch Fire, higher winds are expected across the Complex today so crews will be focused on patrolling and securing containment lines as needed. A contingency of engines remains on both fires throughout the nighttime hours.

Blue Creek #2 (7503 acres, 0% contained) and **Marlow** (1949 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 higher winds, 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: North winds will bring significantly cooler temperatures with dry gusty winds. Wind gusts in higher terrain and exposed ridges may gust up to 20-25 mph. Highs will be in the lower 80s in the valleys and 80s on ridges. Smoke will persist in the valleys throughout the day.

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> .



www.linktr.ee/srffitpio



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