



Cowlitz Complex Fire Update

September 3, 2023

Rocky Mountain Area Complex Incident Management Team Two

Jared Hohn, Incident Commander

Current Situation: A total of 504 personnel are currently assigned to the Cowlitz Complex, which remains at 5% containment. Minimal growth occurred over that last 24 hours. The Cowlitz Complex is 697 acres. Firefighter and public safety are the top priorities in any wildfire incident. Driving is one of the most hazardous activities for incident responders. It is often done at early and late hours when visibility is lowest, wildlife is most active, and crews are most tired. Heavy traffic on roads throughout the fire area is a hazard to the public as well as firefighters. Please travel slowly in congested areas in town and on the forest.

Most of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest has no recorded history of fire. The rarity of fire in this forest has resulted in a thick bed of decomposed, unburned fuel (duff) made up of leaves, needles, cones, sticks, branches, and logs at least five feet deep. In order to establish containment, firefighters first create a control line by scraping and digging through duff until they reach mineral soil. Next, they identify and extinguish peripheral heat sources that may be smoldering below the surface. It is exceedingly difficult to establish solid containment with five feet of duff that can carry fire across control lines. As a result, firefighters are cautious not to prematurely declare containment on fires within the Cowlitz Complex.

Under ideal weather conditions, yesterday aerial assets were able to fly resupply missions to fire crews working in remote locations. Additionally, reconnaissance missions allowed hotshot crew supervisors an ariel overview of the terrain providing much needed information for planning insertion and extraction tactics, while also prioritizing risk mitigation to firefighters and the public.

In Branch 1/Division C, the Cougar Gap, Allen Mountain, and Bertha May fires are out. Crews that have been working on the Carlton Ridge Fire are beginning to transition to the Deer Creek Fire. Crews are in place on the Skate, Silver, Yew, Pothole, and Berry fires, ensuring that hot spots with the potential to escape are extinguished.

In Branch 1/Division F, the Lake Creek Fire is out. The South Fork, Davis Creek, and Davis Mountain fires are in monitor and patrol status. Crews are actively suppressing the Willame Fire, while the Grassy Mountain Fire remains unstaffed as a strategy for safely getting crews into and out of the area is developed.

In Branch 1/Division L, the Blue Lake, Kickitat, St. Michael, and Horseshoe fires are out. The Twin Sisters Fire is in monitor and patrol status. Crews are taking suppression actions on the Adams Fork, Jackpot Creek, and Sanctuary Rock Fires. Aerial reconnaissance missions over the Mission Fire gave hotshot supervisors an opportunity to evaluate and recommend a plan of attack.

In Branch 2/ Division W, the McCoy Creek Fire is in patrol status, while crews are getting started on the Bear Creek Fire. Rappelers dropped in yesterday to the Quartz Junior fire, and responders are preparing to insert fire crews on the Snagtooth and Spencer Quartz fires in the coming days.

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: Scattered showers moved in this morning as a easterly marine layer is moving into the fire area. A cold front will move into the area around 5 pm bringing with it a chance of showers changing to overcast and drizzle by Monday. Winds will remain low in the valleys while higher elevations may see 15-20 mph gusts.

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. The road between the junction of Forest Roads 25 and 22 and 22 and 78 is temporarily closed for the next several days due to rollout is occurring.

Temporary Flight Restrictions: The temporary flight restriction (TFR) was modified yesterday, remaining north of Highway 12. 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](#).

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

InciWeb: [Cowlitz Complex Information | InciWeb \(wildfire.gov\)](#)

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