



# Cowlitz Complex Fire Update

September 5, 2023

## Rocky Mountain Area Complex Incident Management Team Two

Jared Hohn, Incident Commander

**Current Situation:** Containment on the Cowlitz Complex has increased to 8%, with the size of the complex holding at 697 acres. A total of 417 personnel are currently assigned.

Of greatest concern on every incident is safety of the public, local communities, and firefighters. The Cowlitz Complex is composed of several dozen relatively small fires spread across about 500,000 acres of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Wildland firefighting is generally considered to be a high-risk profession, but just the task of driving is the greatest hazard that crews encounter. The large area encompassed by these fires combined with a high volume of public traffic on roads throughout the fire area, fire crews and the public alike need to exercise caution to keep everyone safe.

In Branch I, additional fires were declared “out” yesterday. Given that improvement, Divisions C and F have been combined and resources are being shifted southward to Branch II fires. In Branch I/Division C/F, the Allen Mountain, Berry, Bertha May, Cougar Gap, Deer Creek, Silver, Skate, Davis Creek, and Lake Creek fires are out. Carlton Ridge, Davis Mountain, and South Fork fires are in monitor and patrol status. Crews continue to work the Yew, Pothole, and Willame fires, assisted by the continued cool, damp weather. Grassy Mountain Fire is unstaffed.

In Branch II/Division L, the Blue Lake, Horseshoe, Klickitat, St. Michael, and Twin Sisters fires are out. Crews are actively working the Adams Fork, Jackpot Creek, and Sanctuary Rock fires. Crews gained access to the Mission Fire yesterday, finding that recent rain has aided in dousing much of the heat there due to the fire’s rocky, ridgetop location. Crews will work on identifying and extinguishing residual hot spots on the Mission Fire over the next few days.

In Branch II/Division W, the McCoy Creek Fire is in patrol status. Crews continue working the Bear Creek and Quartz Junior fires. The Snagtooth and Spencer Quartz fires are unstaffed.

Access has been problematic on the Grassy Mountain Fire in Branch I, and Snagtooth and Spencer Quartz fires in Branch II, due to inadequate road or trail access, steep terrain, and threat of falling trees. In coordination with local resources the Complex Incident Management Team is considering a range of scenarios and risk mitigations to determine the best approach to protect the lives of firefighters and the public, while minimizing impacts to social, economic, and natural resource values.

**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). The decision to lift or maintain fire restrictions depends on a variety of factors including current and expected weather conditions, fuel moisture, the level of fire activity, and the availability of firefighting resources to respond to additional ignitions.

**Weather & Smoke Information:** A break in the cloud cover this afternoon is expected to bring a period of sunshine today, though another weak front is expected to pass through this afternoon, bringing clouds and light drizzle. Temperatures will be 5 to 10 degrees warmer than yesterday. Very little smoke has been visible from these fires over the past week; however, a shot of sunshine today may result in some visible smoke production from the Grassy Mountain Fire.

**Closures:** In anticipation of ongoing fire activity in the vicinity of the Snagtooth Fire the following roads and trails are 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 #3A, Quartz #5B, Quartz #5C (French Creek), Snyder Pasture #80A. Forest Road 8410 is closed for firefighter and public safety in the vicinity of the Pothole Fire, and Forest Road 78 is temporarily closed between the 7802 junction and the 2278 junction due to hazardous debris rolling out onto the roadway.

**Temporary Flight Restrictions:** A temporary flight restriction (TFR) is in effect between 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/air-traffic/flight-restrictions).

**Fire Information Phonenumber:** (360) 208-8075

**Hours:** 7 a.m.–7 p.m.

**Email:** [2023.cowlitzcomplex@firenet.gov](mailto:2023.cowlitzcomplex@firenet.gov)

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

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

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