



National Park Service  
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National Park and Preserve

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# New River Gorge National Park and Preserve

## News Release

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### Steep Valley Fire Update

GLEN JEAN, WV - The Steep Valley Fire is currently 2,182 acres and containment is up to 78% as of Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The fire continues to burn in steep and rugged parts of inaccessible terrain in the War Ridge and Backus Mountain areas, a remote part of the park. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Fire activity increased on Tuesday which produced pockets of smoke in the fire area. However, upon reaching the established containment lines, activity was significantly reduced. Pockets of smoke accompanied the increased fire activity and could linger in the area for a few days. With minimal fire activity, air quality levels are forecast to be in the good and moderate range.



Today, crews will improve existing fire lines as the fire is expected to remain minimally active. Yesterday during suppression efforts, firefighters made tactical decisions that included strategic firing to burn out pockets of fuel to help strengthen lines. Firefighter safety remains a number one priority. To date, there has been 1 minor injury to a firefighter.

A UAS, or drone, was spotted in the fire area earlier this week. A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is currently in effect for 5,000 feet above ground level and a 5-mile radius around the fire area. Any drone incursions into the Steep Valley Fire TFR area are a violation of FAA regulations. Additionally, all aircraft supporting firefighter operations would temporarily be grounded as drones endanger air crews that are flying. This interruption in firefighting support could put firefighters at extreme risk and could result in grave consequences for those actively engaged in fire suppression. Remember, ***If You Fly, We Can't***. As a reminder, launching, landing, or operating a drone within National Park Service lands is strictly forbidden.

A closure order remains in place for all National Park Service lands bounded by the New River on the south and west to the town of Quinimont, due east along State Highway 41 to the intersection of Backus-Red Spring Road, then continues directly south to the CSX railroad right of way at the river. The remainder of the park is open for normal hours of operation. Should conditions change, park management will reassess for any needs to adjust park operations.

Resources from multiple federal and state agencies from across the country along with a private crew from Oregon have arrived to assist fire personnel. For additional fire information, drone restrictions, and smoke and air quality reports please visit <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/wvnrp-steep-valley-fire>.