



National Park Service  
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New River Gorge  
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 2,206 acres and containment remains at 78% as of Wednesday, November 15<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. Minimal fire activity Wednesday produced pockets of smoke within the gorge. With minimal fire activity, air quality levels are forecast to be in the good and moderate range.

Today, crews will monitor existing fire lines as the fire is expected to remain minimally active. Firefighters continued to make tactical decisions that included strategic firing to burn out pockets of fuel to help strengthen existing lines. “We appreciate all the dedicated crews and the countless hours they have put in while working the fire. We will continue to monitor the fire and focus on firefighter safety,” said Nate Orsburn, Incident Commander Trainee for the Steep Valley Fire. Orsburn continued, “We would like to thank the community for their hospitality, support, and patience since the beginning of this challenging fire, it hasn’t gone unnoticed.” To date, there has been one 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. 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 Quinnimont, 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.

Resources from multiple government and private agencies from across the country have arrived to assist fire personnel. For additional fire information, drone restrictions, and smoke and air quality reports please visit

<https://inciweb.nwcp.gov/incident-information/wvnrp-steep-valley-fire>.