



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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 remains at 2,206 acres and containment is up to 81% as of Friday morning, November 17th, 2023. The fire area is in steep and rugged terrain in the War Ridge and Backus Mountain areas, a remote part of the park. The cause of the fire is under investigation. There was minimal fire activity on Thursday which produced isolated pockets of smoke. Air quality levels are expected to improve over the next few days.



This will be the final regular update for the Steep Valley Fire.

Resources currently assigned to the fire are being demobilized or dispatched to higher priority incidents throughout the region as Steep Valley Fire operations de-escalate. Further downsizing of personnel is expected after the weekend. Remaining crews will continue to monitor and improve existing lines and scout for any remaining hot spots over the next few days. Management of the fire will transition to a Type 4 local unit at 6:00 AM on Saturday morning, November 18th, 2023. Any fire activity is expected to remain minimal. To date, there has been one minor injury to a firefighter.

A closure order remains in place for the War Ridge and Backus Mountain areas. This closure order will remain in place for the foreseeable future. “We understand this area is a popular hunting spot. To ensure the safety of firefighters, this area remains closed. As things progress, we will reevaluate with fire managers and provide an update on the status of the closure.”, said Charles Sellars, Superintendent at New River Gorge National Park and Preserve. The closure area includes 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.

A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) remains 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 which could put firefighters at extreme risk and could result in grave consequences for those who may be 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.

With this being the final regular fire update, please visit the fire's incident information page at <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/wvnrp-steep-valley-fire> and the park's Facebook page for periodic updates.