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Kachess Complex Fire Update

August 14th, 2024

Reported date: August 9th & 10th, 2024
Cause: Lightning
Total complex size: ~30
Personnel: 150

Fuels: Timber, timber litter, timber understory
Strategy: Full Suppression
Fire behavior: Smoldering, creeping

CLE ELUM, Washington: The Kachess Complex, a group of three lightning-sparked fires, started in the Cle Elum Ranger District of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest between August 9 and 10, 2024. Recent updates to mapping have refined the estimated acreage of the fires. However, the acreage for the Stave Creek fire remains approximate due to the challenging terrain that limits access.

The Kachess Complex Includes:

- **Stave Creek Fire:** Approximately 20 acres and 0% contained located on steep and rugged terrain. Firefighters are focusing on establishing a secure fire line along the eastern flank while evaluating direct and indirect tactics for the north/ northwestern side. Meanwhile, aircraft are supporting efforts by conducting aerial water bucket drops on the western flank to curb the fire's growth.
- **Thomas Fire:** Currently 9 acres and 20% contained. Firefighters have made significant progress over the past 72 hours, successfully establishing a fire line around the entire perimeter. They are now focused on securing the fire's edge through mop-up operations to prevent further growth and advance toward full containment.
- **Waptus:** Currently ½ acre and 100% contained. Firefighters are continuing to mop up the entire footprint of the Waptus fire today. A final grid will take place in the afternoon to ensure no remaining heat is present.

Message from the Incident Commander, Lino Baca: “Ensuring the safety of firefighters is the top priority for handling these remote and hard-to-reach fires. The team is focused on controlling the spread of each blaze to ensure that, upon departure, the forest can safely move toward containment. For the Stave Creek fire, which is particularly challenging due to its steep and rugged terrain, various strategies are being assessed to manage and limit the fire's growth effectively and safely.”

Location: On the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest northwest of Cle Elum. The Stave Creek and Thomas fires are between Kachess and Cle Elum Lake. The Waptus fire is further north in the wilderness near Waptus Lake.

Safety: The health and safety of firefighters and the public are always the top priority. Members of the public should avoid the Kachess Complex area. A new TFR (temporary flight restriction) is in effect around the fire otherwise noted. Unmanned aircraft such as drones pose a serious risk to firefighting and can cause air operations to cease. The public is reminded that *“If you fly, we can’t!”*. **Temporary flight restriction:** https://tfr.faa.gov/save_pages/detail_4_8687.html

Closures: There are no closures in place for the Kachess Complex, however, the public is reminded that fire restrictions are in effect on the Cle Elum Ranger District. For additional information visit: https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/okawen/alerts-notices/?cid=fsbdev3_053600.

Smoke: Minimal smoke may be visible from the towns of Cle Elum, Roslyn, Easton, and Snoqualmie Pass area. Information on air quality can be found at <https://fire.airnow.gov/>.



<https://linktr.ee/KachessComplex>