

Rattlesnake Branch Fire Daily Update March 28, 2025

Location: Less than one mile southwest of Cruso, North Carolina
Start date: March 26, 2025
Estimated size: 629 acres
Containment: 5 percent
Personnel: 80

Firefighters from the USDA Forest Service, the North Carolina Forest Service and nearby counties continue to make progress to contain the Rattlesnake Branch Fire.

Initially igniting on private land in Haywood County, the fire has continued to spread into both state- and federally managed public lands, including the Shining Rock Designated Wilderness Area on the Pisgah National Forest. These areas include hardwood forests impacted by Hurricane Helene.

Firefighters have constructed dozer lines and handlines near State Highway 276 to protect structures and conducted burnout operations to remove fuel near homes.

Weather: Conditions this spring have increased fire danger in North Carolina. Above-average temperatures are expected today with a southwesterly breeze gusting to 25 mph. Saturday should remain dry with warm daytime highs reaching the upper 70s to lower 80s. Increased fire activity will increase smoke production and degrade air quality in the area. Asheville and surrounding areas will likely see air that is unhealthy for sensitive groups.

Closures and Restrictions: Shining Rock Wilderness Area is closed due to the spread of the Rattlesnake Branch Fire. This closure includes all National Forest System land between US-276 and NC-215 north of the Blue Ridge Parkway (between mile markers 405 and 420). Visitor and employee safety are the highest priorities for the Forest Service, so the public should stay out of this area while federal, state and local fire crews work to contain the blaze.

Following the statewide burn ban issued for North Carolina, the Forest Service issued a restriction on open burning National Forest land, including building, maintaining or using campfires, open stove fires and fire rings, to mitigate wildfire risks.

For wildfire updates, follow the National Forests in North Carolina on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nfsnc. Updates will be posted on our website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/nfsnc/alerts-notices>.
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