



Forest Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Forests in North Carolina

## U.S. Forest Service News Release



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<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/ncncf-rattlesnake-branch>

<https://www.facebook.com/nfsnc/>

### Rattlesnake Branch Fire Daily Update -- March 31, 2025

***Note: Please drive cautiously on State Route 276 and other roads around the fire. Please do not stop along the side of the road for your protection and the protection of firefighters and equipment.***

**CRUSO, N.C., March 31, 2025**—The Rattlesnake Branch Fire is on private land and the Shining Rock Wilderness Area on Pisgah National Forest around the community of Cruso, approximately 11 miles southeast of Waynesville, North Carolina. It started on March 26, 2025, and quickly spread due to dry conditions and hardwood leaves and branches on the ground. The cause is under investigation.

The fire is approximately **1,865 acres** and **21-percent** contained. The decrease in acreage is due to better mapping. More than 100 personnel are on the fire.

#### **Yesterday's Activities**

Firefighters had another day of minimal fire activity to continue protecting homes and containing the fire. Some fire areas received a few hundredths of an inch of rain, which was less than predicted. Crews mopped up along US-276, Crawford Creek and Cold Creek and continued structure protection and work under powerlines in these areas. They continued to build and improve fire containment lines north of the fire footprint on the east side of the fire, including putting in fire lines around homes.

The Southern Area Red Team met with local firefighters at Lake Logan-Cecil Fire Department to gain situational awareness, and they scouted out areas north and west of the fire to identify structures to be included in protection planning. A drone flew to identify hot spots with infrared technology and map the fire's perimeter, but the weather limited its use.

## Today's Activities

Today, crews will continue to construct, hold and improve fire lines and mop up as necessary, including efforts to secure the fire's edge around powerlines and private property in Cruso, along US-276, Crawford Creek and Rattlesnake Branch Road. Firefighters will work on fire lines from Cold Creek Road to Burnette Cove Road and identify structures to be protected.

Fire personnel will scout areas around Dix Creek, Chambers Cove and Schoolhouse Branch roads to identify structures needing protection and places to put in fire containment lines to prevent the fire from spreading from the Shining Rock Wilderness Area onto private lands. In the wilderness, firefighters will use only chainsaws, leaf blowers and bucket water drops from helicopters and will coordinate with a resource advisor to protect wilderness values during fire suppression. This includes determining appropriate areas from which to draft water.

A drone is assigned to the fire to help with aerial ignition, mapping and reconnaissance. Other aircraft available include two large helicopters, two small helicopters, two air attack platforms and two and fixed-wing "super scoopers".

**Weather/Fire Behavior:** Showers and thunderstorms are likely in the morning after 10 am, with rain amounts up to 0.30 inches. Winds associated with storms may be erratic, strong and potentially damaging. Fire personnel will remain vigilant for stormy weather and will take shelter if necessary. The high temperature is predicted to be in the low 60s and relative humidity 60-65 percent early on, decreasing to around 40 percent later in the day with passage of a frontal system. Winds will be southwest, shifting to west then northwest after 3 p.m., 8-12 mph, gusting to 26 mph.

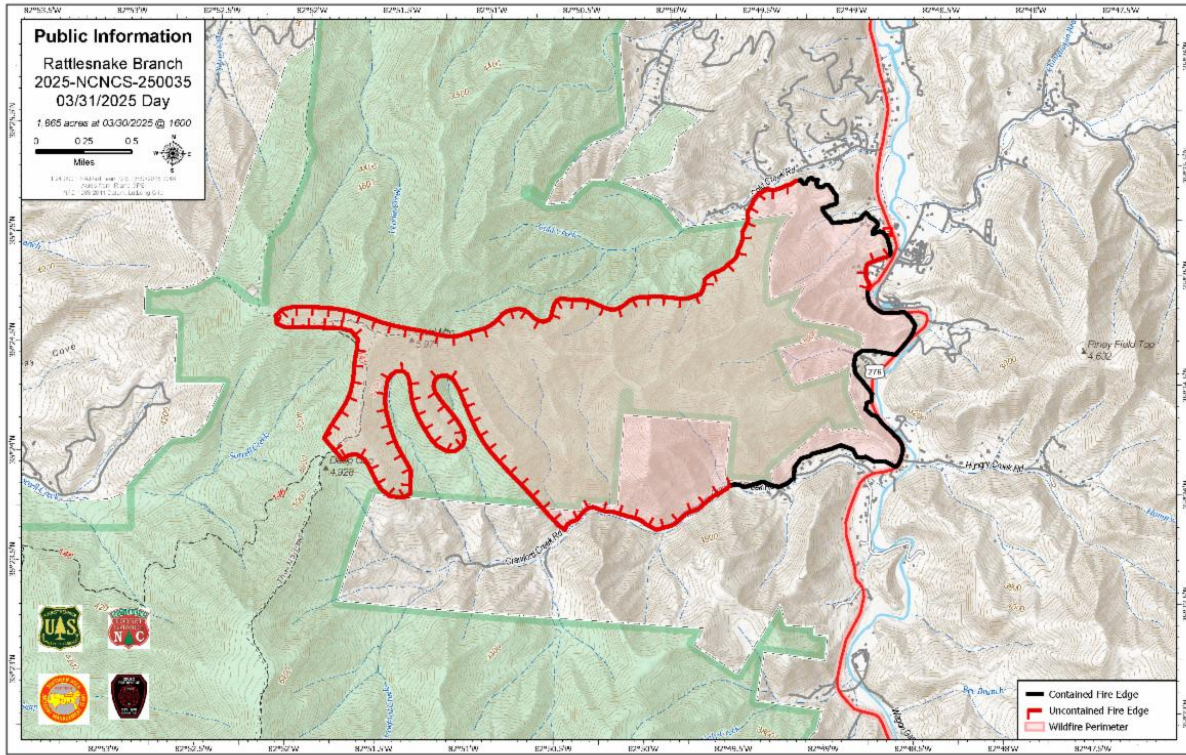
Fire potential will be moderated again today due to increased moisture. The fire may smolder and creep before and between rain events and areas not receiving rain may become active. Although rain is expected today, it is predicted to be minimal. Air quality information is available at **Smoke Outlook for Western North Carolina and Upstate South Carolina**, [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov) and [www.wildlandfiresmoke.net](http://www.wildlandfiresmoke.net).

**Closures and Restrictions:** The Pisgah National Forest has issued an **area closure of the Shining Rock Wilderness Area** to protect the public from wildfire and firefighting operations. 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). Please stay safe and keep out of these areas.

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

**A temporary flight restriction** is in effect in and around the fire area. This includes use of personal drones. If you fly, we cannot fly!

For wildfire updates, follow the National Forests in North Carolina on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nfsnc](http://www.facebook.com/nfsnc) or visit <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/ncncf-rattlesnake-branch>.



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