



HAOE LEAD FIRE - DAILY UPDATE

Sunday, April 20, 2025

828-367-0523 (8am-8pm daily), 2025.haoelead@firenet.gov
<https://www.facebook.com/nfsnc>



InciWeb: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/ncncf-haoe-lead>

Size: 2,043 acres **Location:** 7 miles west of Robbinsville, NC. **County:** Graham
Start Date: April 12, 2025 **Cause:** Lightning **Containment:** 0% **Total Personnel:** 94

ROBBINSVILLE, N.C., April 20, 2025 – The Haoe Lead Fire is burning within the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness on the Cheoah Ranger District of the Nantahala National Forest, approximately 7 miles west of Robbinsville, North Carolina, and 2 miles west of Lake Santeetlah. The Southern Area Gray Team is managing this fire under a full suppression strategy using existing barriers and a combination of direct and indirect tactics. The fire is burning predominantly in hardwood leaf litter in steep and rugged terrain. Much of this fire is burning in the fire scar of the 2016 Maple Springs Fire.

Yesterday's Activities – Firefighters constructed handlines and began deploying hoselays and other protection measures in the Little Santeetlah Creek and Horse Cove Ridge areas to keep the fire away from the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest and Memorial Loop Trail. A heavy helicopter dropped water throughout the day on the most active portions of the fire. Personnel patrolled the eastern portion of the fire along and near Maple Springs Overlook Road (SR 1127) and strengthened containment features there. Fire managers scouted the western and southwestern sides of the fire for future containment line opportunities.

Today's Activities – On the east side of the fire along and near Maple Springs Overlook Road (SR 1127), firefighters will patrol and mop up areas near the firelines, searching out any stumps or heavy fuels still burning after the strategic firing operations two days ago. On the south side of the fire, crews will continue to improve existing firelines and construct additional handlines to the west of the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest and southward to Santeetlah Road (FSR 81). Firefighters will install portable pumps and hoselays near the Memorial Loop Trail for additional protection in this area if needed. On the west side of the fire, firefighters will begin construction of both handline and dozer line in the Wolf Laurel Branch and Stratton Bald areas. Dozer work will only be done on land outside of the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness. Aviation assets are available and will be utilized as needed.

Weather and Smoke – Today will be partly sunny with a high temperature of 81 degrees, minimum humidity of 42 percent, and light winds from the south. Today's higher humidity and lighter winds are expected to aid fire suppression efforts. Fire activity is expected to increase in the afternoon, particularly on south and west facing slopes. Smoke may be visible from area roads and communities. Air quality information can be found at <https://fire.airnow.gov/>.

Closures – The Haoe Lead Fire is burning entirely on National Forest System lands. There are no evacuations in effect at this time. However, the public is asked to use caution on all area roads.

The USDA Forest Service closure order for the area around the Haoe Lead Fire remains in effect for the safety of both the public and fire personnel. The closed area includes the North Carolina portion of the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness including the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest, and non-Wilderness lands in the Santeetlah Road (Forest Service Road 81) area.

The following trails remain closed: Slickrock Creek (TR 42), Joyce Kilmer Memorial Loop (TR 43), Haoe Lead (TR 53), Jenkins Meadow (TR 53A), Stratton Bald (TR 54), Naked Ground (TR 55), Hangover Lead (TR 56), Wolf Laurel (TR 57) and Strawberry Knob (TR 217-H). Several of these local trails are also sections of the Benton MacKaye Trail. In addition, Santeetlah Road (FSR 81), Wolf Laurel Road (FSR 81F) and the Big Santeetlah Creek area are closed.

Aircraft and Drone Restrictions – A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is in effect for the fire area. No public aircraft of any type, including drones, are allowed within the TFR area. Unauthorized drone



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(UAS) flights pose serious risks to the effectiveness of wildfire suppression operations. Aerial firefighting is suspended when unauthorized UAS are in the area, allowing wildfires to grow larger. **If you fly, we can't.**