



HAOE LEAD FIRE DAILY UPDATE

Monday, April 21, 2025

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

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



Size: 2,436 acres **Location:** 7 miles west of Robbinsville, NC. **County:** Graham

Start Date: April 12, 2025 **Cause:** Lightning **Containment:** 12% **Total Personnel:** 158

ROBBINSVILLE, N.C., April 21, 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 – The Haoe Lead Fire grew slightly to the southwest yesterday to near the Wilderness boundary on Horse Cove Ridge. Heavy helicopters dropped water on active portions of the fire throughout the day. On the east side of the fire near Maple Springs Overlook Road (SR 1127), firefighters patrolled and mopped up remaining heavy fuels near the firelines. On the south side of the fire, firefighters completed and improved handline from west of the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest over Horse Cove Ridge south to Santeetlah Road (FSR 81). They completed and tested portable pumps and hoselays near the Memorial Loop Trail. On the southwest side of the fire, firefighters constructed both handline and dozerline in the Wolf Laurel Branch and Stratton Bald areas. On the northwest side of the fire, personnel scouted future fireline locations.

Today's Activities – Firefighters will conduct a burnout operation on the southeast side of the fire from Little Santeetlah Creek southward towards Santeetlah Road (FSR 81). The public can expect to see increased smoke from this planned operation throughout the day. This burnout will consume the burnable vegetation near the established firelines to secure this area against any future fire spread. Aviation assets will support this operation as necessary. On the southwest side of the fire, crews will continue to construct and improve firelines in the Stratton Bald area. Firefighters will continue to scout and assess potential future fireline locations on the west and northwest portions of the fire in the Wilderness. On the east side, engine crews will continue to patrol and mop up along Maple Springs Overlook Road (SR 1127).

Weather and Smoke - Today will be partly sunny with a high temperature of 79 degrees, minimum humidity of 42 percent, and southwest winds of 7-9 mph with gusts to 28 mph. Light rain may begin in the late afternoon and continue overnight. Planned burnout operations will result in increased smoke visible throughout the day. 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. The public should 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



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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 (UAS) flights pose serious risks to 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.](#)