



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 -- April 1, 2025

CRUSO, N.C., April 1, 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 of the hardwood leaves and branches on the ground. The cause remains under investigation. The fire is approximately **1,865 acres** and **24 percent** contained. Nearly 160 personnel are on the fire.

Yesterday's Activities

"There was no fire movement yesterday," said Dave Walker, Operations Section Chief for the Southern Area Red Team.

Rainfall amounts on the fire ranged from 0.3 to 0.6 inches, with the higher amounts in the western part of the fire. Crews held fire containment lines, patrolled for hot spots along the edge of the fire, and mopped up along US-276, Crawford Creek, and Cold Creek. They also continued structure protection in these areas. No heat or hot spots were detected around structures in Cruso. Structure protection was a focus of work in the Barnette Cove Road area.

A structure protection group worked close to the Shining Rock Wilderness Area boundary northwest and west of the fire to identify structures at risk and to map old roads and trails that could potentially be used as fire containment lines if the fire spread in those directions.

Today's Activities

Today, crews will continue to improve, hold and monitor fire lines, mopping up as necessary, to secure the fire's edge around powerlines and private property in

Cruso, along US-276, Crawford Creek and Rattlesnake Branch Road. A resource advisor will hike the Art Loeb Trail in the Shining Rock Wilderness to do fire impact assessments. In the Burnette Cove Road area, firefighters will extend the fire containment lines to protect private properties. They will identify opportunities to use Lenior Creek as a control feature running south into the Shining Rock Wilderness Area. In the wilderness, firefighters will use only chainsaws, leaf blowers and bucket water drops from helicopters as necessary and will coordinate with a resource advisor to protect wilderness values during fire suppression operations. This includes determining appropriate areas from which to draft water.

Fire personnel will continue to scout areas around Dix Creek, Rocky Branch and Chambers Cove roads to the northwest of the fire and Schoolhouse Branch and Panther Branch roads to the west of the fire to assess structure protection needs, to develop a structure protection plan, and identify potential fire line locations. Today, a drone will fly to do some infrared mapping of the fire, launching from the Schoolhouse Branch Road area west of the fire. Other aircraft available include large helicopters, small helicopters, air attack platforms and fixed-wing "super scoopers."

Weather/Fire Behavior: A warmer and much drier day is expected as a cold front that brought rainfall to the fire moves off the coast. High temperatures across the fire area are predicted to be around 70 degrees and minimum relative humidity in the lower 30 percent range. Winds will be northwest early, shifting to the south/southeast after 11:00 am. Wind speed will be 8-12 mph with gusts 18-26 mph.

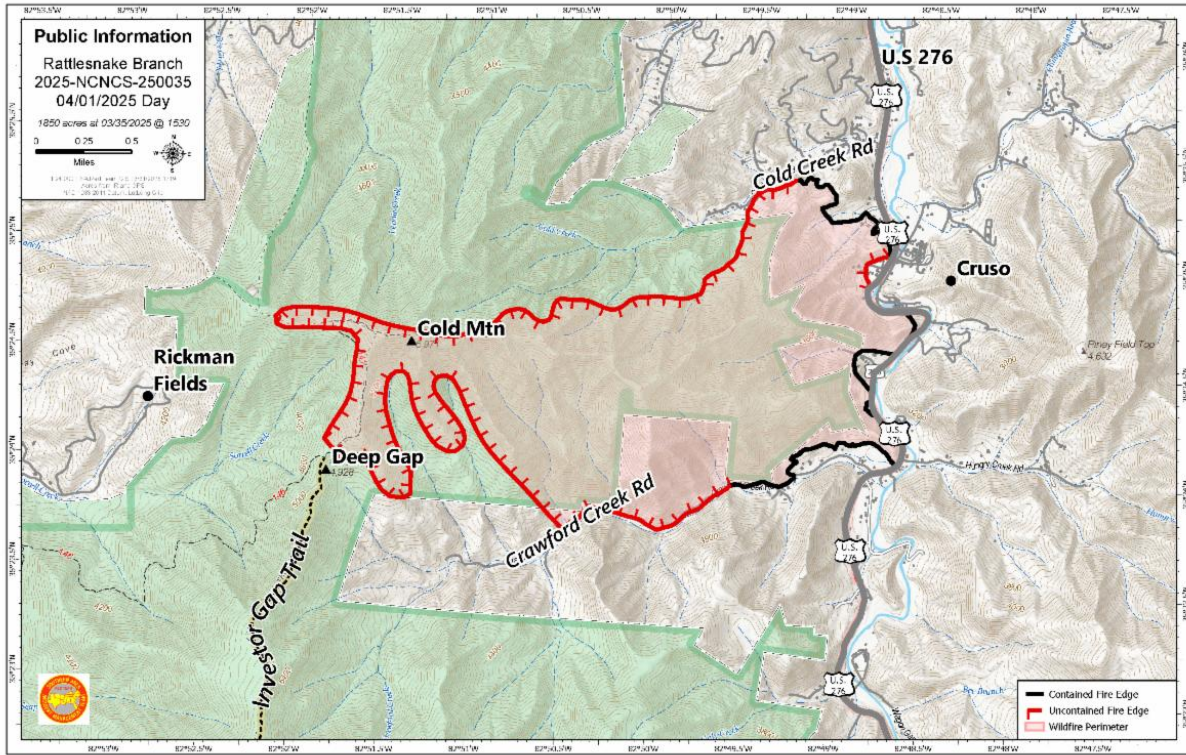
Minimal fire activity is expected due to recent wetting rains. Fire movement is unlikely until after more drying days. However, with lower humidity and higher winds, heat retained in large logs and dead trees may begin to come to life. Live and dead vegetation on the ground may become receptive in exposed areas on southern-facing or canopy-damaged slopes and ridges later in the day. Air quality information is available at [Smoke Outlook for Western North Carolina and Upstate South Carolina](#), www.airnow.gov and 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 the latest wildfire updates, follow the National Forests in North Carolina on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nfsnc or visit <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/ncncf-rattlesnake-branch>.



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