

## WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA FIRES SUMMARY

**November 16, 2016 7:00 PM**

More than 25 wildfires have been burning in the North Carolina mountains during the last few weeks mostly in remote areas, due to a severe drought (no rain in more than two months) and an enormous fuel load that has been building for years. Most of the fires are southwest of Asheville with 45,000+ acres burning in just the last couple of weeks. Southeast of Asheville, wildfires have closed Chimney Rock Park, Lake Lure and South Mountains State Park.

There are now nine major fires burning. Some of them are detailed below and there is a chart showing other NC fires. There are several fires that are less than 500 acres and most of them are contained or out.

The Lake Lure and South Mountains fires continue to grow. More than 3,000 firefighters and support staff from more than 40 states are engaged in trying to control the fires. Evacuations include sections of Lake Lure, most of Chimney Rock Village and areas near the Nantahala Gorge (Swain, Macon and Graham Counties).

The latest evacuations in Henderson County will include areas of Highway 9 between the intersections of Highway 74-A and Shumont Road (Lake Lure area). The evacuation notice will include all roads that connect to Highway 9.

### **Lake Lure**

The 4,500-acre "Party Rock" forest fire is now the second most "critical" fire in the USA. Since no rain is in sight, it will probably burn another two weeks and total more than 10,000 acres. More than 450 firefighters from across the country are fighting it. It's only 18% contained. The lake is closed, along with neighboring Chimney Rock Park. Many sections of Chimney Rock Village, Bat Cave and Lake Lure have been evacuated (1,000+ people).

### **South Mountains State Park**

The Chestnut Knob fire that started on November 6th has closed this park south of Morganton. It continues to grow, currently at 4600 acres. More than 100 rangers and firefighters are working to create a containment area, but the fire has just crossed the park boundary onto private property.

### **Tellico Fire (near Nantahala Outdoor Center)**

This fire is located about 3 miles south of Almond & Fontana Lake. A massive fire has been burning since November 3. A ten-mile section of US 19/74 in the Nantahala Gorge earlier closed to traffic was reopened November 14th. With about 13,982 acres burned with about 39% containment.

## **Boteler (Clay County)**

Progress in the Shooting Creek community, 6 miles east of Hayesville is being made with about 37% containment. Fire continues to burn active along Big Piney Ridge and continues to back down into the Fish Prong Branch and Buck Creek region.

Acreage: 8,695

## **Maple Springs**

The Maple Springs fire, (a few miles northwest of Robbinsville) today reached 49% containment by ground crews, helicopters and water scooping aircraft. The Maple Springs fire is now 7700 acres.

## **More Local**

At this time, one of these fires can be considered a minor threat to Lincoln County but still a threat; that one being South Mountain State Park. The fire has actually reached the park border and is moving outside the park confines. Weather conditions could easily spread the fire by windy conditions into the western part of Lincoln County. This threat is not going away soon because of the lack of moisture and the changes in the air currents. We are now victims of the enormous amounts of smoke being generated and the only solution is to stay inside as much as possible and cover our mouths and noses when we are outside.

All the fires listed below are in the far western area of North Carolina except the Party Rock (Chimney Rock) and Chestnut Knob Fires (South Mountain Park). Both of these will continue to cause smoky conditions locally.

Incident	Type	Unit	Status	Acres	Updated
Dick's Creek	Wildfire	National Forests in North Carolina	Active	728	
Tellico Fire	Wildfire	National Forests in North Carolina	Active	13,679	
Cliffside Fire	Wildfire	National Forests in North Carolina	Active	101	
Knob Fire	Wildfire	National Forests in North Carolina	Active	1,130	
Muskrat Valley Fire	Wildfire	National Forests in North Carolina	Active	103	
Ferebee Fire	Wildfire	National Forests in North Carolina	Active	3,175	
Chestnut Knob Fire	Wildfire	N.C. Forest Service	Active	4,600	
Maple Springs Fire	Wildfire	National Forests in North Carolina	Active	7,705	
Old Roughy Fire	Wildfire	National Forests in North Carolina	Active	657	
Party Rock Fire	Wildfire	N.C. Forest Service	Active	4,480	

**Air quality alert in effect until midnight EST Thursday night...**

The North Carolina department of environmental quality in Raleigh NC has issued a code Orange air quality action day for fine particulates... in effect until midnight EST Thursday night.

Code Orange means that older adults, children, active people, and those with heart or lung disease may experience health effects. Everyone may experience health effects. Limit prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors.

An air quality action day means that fine particulates concentrations within the region may approach or exceed unhealthy standards. For additional information... please visit the North Carolina division of air quality web site at:  
[www.Ncair.Org/airaware/forecast/](http://www.Ncair.Org/airaware/forecast/).