

Chimney Tops 2 Fire

NEWS RELEASE

Dec 3, 2016

Park Requests Information Regarding Chimney Tops 2 Fire

The National Park Service Investigative Branch Services (IBS) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

Approximate Location

35.631 latitude, -83.478 longitude

Incident Overview

The Chimney Tops 2 Fire was reported in Great Smoky Mountains National Park near Gatlinburg, TN on Wednesday, November 23, 2016. The wildfire began burning in a remote location (Chimney Tops) of the park in steep terrain with vertical cliffs and narrow rocky ridges making access to the wildfire area difficult for firefighting efforts. On Monday, November 27th, continuous exceptional drought conditions and extreme winds caused the wildfire to grow rapidly, causing numerous new wildfire starts from embers and downed powerlines in and adjacent to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The wildfire was human-caused and is currently under investigation at this time. There have been a number of confirmed fatalities and over 700 confirmed structures lost. This fire hit the communities of Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge, and surrounding areas adjacent to Great Smoky Mountains National Park hard as they were preparing for both Christmas and the final few weeks of a bustling tourist season. The feelings of loss are palpable. While many areas within the basic fire perimeter did not burn, the city of Gatlinburg lies literally in the center of the fire perimeter. The Southern Area Red Team assumed command of the Chimney Tops 2 Fire, Wednesday, November 30th, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. The Red Team, the Type 3 Gray Incident Management Team from Colorado, and other firefighting resources are on site. Chimney Tops 2 Fire is currently burning in brush, hardwood slash, and leaf litter. Fire crews are still assessing and locating the fire edge to see what actions are needed to prevent additional spread of fire. The priorities are: 1) public and responder safety, 2) structure protection, and 3) limiting the spread of the fire. Crews will be working along U.S. 441, locally known as The Spur, to keep the road open for emergency traffic. In forested areas outside of the park, the Tennessee Division of Forestry is playing an integral role in firefighting efforts. Local fire departments continue to take the lead in structure protection. Aircraft will be overhead today with an additional 6 helicopters enroute to the fire.

Basic Information

Current as of 12/3/2016, 9:25:37 PM

Incident Type Wildfire

Cause Human

Date of Origin Wednesday November 23rd, 2016 approx. 05:00 PM

Location near Gatlinburg, TN

Incident Commander SA Red Team IC Mike Dueitt

Incident Description Suppression

Current Situation

Total Personnel 622

Size 17,006 Acres

Percent of Perimeter Contained 38%

Estimated Containment Date Tuesday December 20th, 2016 approx. 12:00 AM

Fuels Involved Dormant brush, hardwood slash, Hardwood litter

Significant Events Minimal. Smoking and smoldering in heavy fuels.

Outlook

Planned Actions

Identify and mitigate hazards along control lines and roadways. Conduct damage assessments in accordance with Park standards.

Projected Incident Activity

12 hours: Fire will continue to smolder overnight with minimum spread due to high fuel moisture.

24 hours: Rainfall is forecasted to return to the fire area during this period, fire spread will be minimum.

48 hours: Minimum spread is expected due to wet conditions from rainfall received.

72 hours: Minimum spread is expected due to wet conditions from rainfall received.

Remarks Acreage change due to improved mapping.

Current Weather

Weather Concerns

High pressure exited the area today as moisture from the Gulf of Mexico ahead of the next low pressure system overspread the region. Clouds began moving into the area early this morning with skies becoming overcast by early afternoon and relative humidity slowly increasing from early afternoon

onward. Additional moisture will be pushed into the area tonight with scattered light rain showers expected overnight and through Sunday. Widespread rain is expected Monday night and Tuesday as the low pressure ejects from the far western Gulf of Mexico and crosses the area.

Unit Information

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

National Park Service

107 Park Headquarters Road

Gatlinburg, TN 37738

Incident Contacts**Chimney Tops 2 Fire Information**

Email: chimney2fire@gmail.com

Phone: 865-407-0025

Hours: 8am - 8pm

SOURCE: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5112/>