



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Morning Update on the Black Cove Complex fires in Polk and Henderson counties

POLK COUNTY – According to the National Interagency Fire Center, the Black Cove Complex is the highest priority fire in the Southern U.S. Currently, there are 303 personnel from North Carolina and other states across the nation.

Today, the National Weather Service issued a Red Flag Warning for the mountains of Polk and Henderson counties, indicating the potential for severe fire behavior and the possibility of rapid fire spread. Firefighters continue preparing firebreaks and protecting structures in anticipation of elevated temperatures, high winds and low humidity this afternoon.

Fire managers and emergency officials held a community meeting Tuesday, March 25, at 6 p.m. to provide information and updates on the Black Cove, Deep Woods and Fish Hook fires. Officials discussed the current state of the fires, management strategies, and containment. Local residents were able to bring questions and concerns to management team members, with over four hundred people in attendance.

Yesterday a firefighter was injured on the Black Cove Fire. The individual was airlifted to Spartanburg, South Carolina, where he received medical attention and is currently stable. The North Carolina Forest Service will provide more information on the nature and extent of his injuries at a later date.

- **Black Cove Fire:** (35° 17' 7.53" N , 82° 17' 49.96" W)
The Black Cove Fire is 3,046 acres in size and 0% contained. The fire is burning in timber on state-owned and private land, approximately 2 miles northeast of Saluda, in the Green River Gorge.

Fire behavior was intense yesterday, with rapid fire spread and extreme burning conditions as high winds and dry weather returned to Western North Carolina. The Black Cove Fire



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continued to burn to the west, on both sides of the Green River, as firefighters continued protecting structures and attempted to prevent it from spreading towards homes off of Summerhaven and Macedonia Roads.

At this time, Polk County has issued 165 evacuation orders, and Henderson County has issued 60 evacuation orders. Yesterday Henderson County issued mandatory evacuations for residents of the following areas:

- Macedonia Road east of Interstate 26
- Skyland Acres Road
- Knight Road
- Summer Haven Lane
- S. Fine Way

Voluntary evacuations for Henderson County residents include:

- Laurel Mountain View Road
- Boulder View Road

Evacuation orders for Polk County residents include:

- 1091-1528 Green River Cove Road
- Lady Slipper Trail
- Big Hungry Road
- Spurgeon Cove Lane
- English Heifer Cove Road
- Deer Trail
- Scarlets Mountain Road

The Black Cove Fire was first reported Wednesday, March 19. The cause of this fire has been determined to be a downed powerline.

- **Deep Woods Fire:** (35° 17' 34.77" N , 82° 15' 34.00" W)
The Deep Woods Fire is 2,923 acres in size and 0% contained. The fire is burning approximately 5 miles northwest of Columbus in timber on state-owned and private land in the Green River Gorge and in the neighboring Holbert Cove community. Firefighters continue protecting structures on the southern end of the fire and working to prevent the fire's spread to the south of Holbert Cove Road.

Yesterday firefighters on the Deep Woods Fire detected a spot fire that had crossed over Cove Creek in the vicinity of Big



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Bradley Falls. Air support was called for and the spot fire was attacked by helicopters dropping water before nightfall put a stop to air operations. Firefighters are looking at possible containment lines along Cove Mountain and will attempt to keep the spot from yesterday from moving further west.

Evacuation orders have been issued for residents at:

- 5079-7265 Holbert Cove Road
- Fox Paw Lane
- 1091-1528 Green River Cove Road
- Lady Slipper Trail
- Deep Woods Lane
- Wesley Lane
- Piney Overlook Lane
- Piney Gate Road
- Gamelands Trail
- Oakview Lane
- Volley Way
- Charity Branch Drive
- Windsong Lane
- Moonshine Trace

The Deep Woods Fire was first reported Wednesday, March 19. The cause of this fire remains under investigation.

- **Fish Hook Fire:** (35° 20' 52.42" N , 82° 14' 5.01" W)
The Fish Hook Fire is 199 acres in size and 72% contained. The fire is burning approximately 5 miles northwest of Mill Spring on private land near Lake Adger.
Firefighting personnel have stopped forward progress of the fire. Firefighters continue securing firebreaks along the fire's edges and extinguishing smoldering fuels. Containment is expected to continue in the coming days, and firefighters will remain on scene until the fire no longer poses a threat.
All evacuations related to the Fish Hook Fire have been lifted.
The Fish Hook fire was first reported Thursday, March 20. The cause of this fire has been determined to be a downed powerline.

A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is in place at an altitude from the surface up to and including 5,500 feet, daily (24 hours) until further notice. Flying drones within a TFR designated area is unlawful. Flying a drone near



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or around a wildfire compromises the safety of pilots and interferes with firefighting efforts.

Effective 8 a.m. Friday, March 21, the N.C. Forest Service issued a statewide ban on all open burning that remains in effect until further notice.

To check wildfire activity across the state, use the North Carolina Wildfire Public Viewer at <https://ncfspublic.firesponse.com/>.

Subscribe to receive updates from the N.C. Forest Service about wildfires, burn bans and other topics at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/NCFS/subscriber/new>.