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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Transylvania County Forest Fire Update, 6 PM

*Note: messages will be pushed out on social media and the evacuation map updated on [www.transylvaniacounty.org](http://www.transylvaniacounty.org) as conditions change. A new page has been added with information and helpful links. Reports will be issued three times per day with a press conference at 11 am Saturday.*

### **Fireline, Evacuations and Firefighting Update (See map at end of report)**

Transylvania County is under a State of Emergency due to forest fire danger from three fires:

- Pisgah National Forest fire at Rattlesnake Branch Fire estimated at 700 acres (Not yet breached into the county)
- Persimmon Ridge fire from South Carolina, estimated at 2,000 acres (not yet breached into the county)
- Table Rock Fire from South Carolina 9,000 acres (has breached into the county)

- \* A spot fire formed around 1400 on the NC side. That fire has jumped containment lines in the area of Crane Lane and East Fork Rd and firefighters have stopped active engagement in that area.
  - \* Crews repositioned and set up containment lines and defensive operations in the area of East Fork Road.
  - \* This created an immediate threat to areas on the left side of Dolly Masters Rd and SSW of Big Hill Rd, particularly Streamside Dr and Crane Lane.
  - \* Law Enforcement worked to make contact with all residents that have not evacuated yet and an additional evacuation order alert was sent out to residents in the evacuation area.
  - \* Wind gusts of 20 mph are expected to continue through about 2000.
  - \* An additional NC Strike Team is expected to arrive about 1700 and will be deployed to relieve and reinforce existing crews.
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- The evacuation boundary has not changed since it was initially issued on Wednesday. 758 Structures are under a mandatory evacuation and emergency shelter is open at Transylvania County Parks and Recreation at 1078 Ecusta Rd. RVs cannot be accommodated at the shelter. Mountain Falls RV Park is willing to accept RVs at their location.
  - Aerial support arrived today that will contribute to fire protection and allow for closer tracking of the fire line. Periodic map updates will be issued as a snapshot of the known fire line now that this asset is in place as that data is collected.
  - Transylvania County has approximately 140 fire and emergency management personnel working during today's operational period and expects to add about 30 additional personnel with the arrival of the NC Task Force this evening. Transylvania County has approximately 140 fire and

emergency management personnel working during today's operational period and expects to add about 30 additional personnel with the arrival of the NC Task Force this evening. We currently have 2 Fixed Wing Aircraft and 4 Rotary Wing aircraft working the Table Rock Fire Complex including portions of Transylvania County with requests for additional aircraft pending.

- Unified Command has been established to respond to the forest fires of concern for Transylvania County. This supports the ability to bring resources in and helps consolidate communications. We will be releasing three written updates daily with the midday briefing in person. Miscommunication can be dangerous and creates additional challenges in the response effort. A multi-agency effort has been underway to prepare for potential forest fire spread into the county including coordination with local, state and federal leaders. The Southern Area Blue Team Incident Management Team (federal) assumed Command of the Table Rock Fire Complex this morning. Local Transylvania Emergency personnel maintain command and operations within the county. Plans are being developed to bring the Unified Command staff from NC Emergency Management to support Unified Command Operations. Air assets are being deployed to support firefighting activities in the area of Dolly Masters, Glady Fork, Crane Lane and East Fork. Federal, state and regional/local mutual aid departments are supporting firefighting activities for Connestee Fire Rescue and Cedar Mountain Fire Rescue Inc.

### **Additional Information**

- Transylvania County Cooperative Extension is coordinating with our agriculture community regarding livestock.
- Weather conditions tomorrow afternoon are expected to pose challenges for fire control in the southern section of Transylvania County along the state line. Conditions can change rapidly. Additional evacuations may be ordered. Those signed up for emergency alerts on the Transylvania County website will receive notifications of evacuation only if their address is impacted. All residents are encouraged to be proactive by registering their address and phone number in the county alert system. Take prevention measures around your home and vehicles to remove dry leaves and vegetative debris that could be ignited with embers. A tutorial to support sign up was released today.
- Only call 911 if you see active fire. Smoky conditions throughout the county are expected.
- Comporium has suspended planned broadband outages in Transylvania County to support communication infrastructure and has increased the service to Connestee Fire Department to support response operations.

### **Connestee Fire and Rescue Update**

\* Today has seen increased fire activity. Crews from local, state, and federal partners have worked diligently to increase and reinforce containment lines. We have also received assistance from aircraft, to include spotter planes and air drops of water. Connestee Fire Rescue and our mutual aid have continued structural preparation and fire prevention activities focusing on the areas from Dolly Masters Rd to the Big Hill Community, to include East Fork Rd, Crane Ln, and Busted Rock Rd. Crews will remain in the woods throughout the night, continuing operations to slow and contain the fire.

### **Cedar Mountain Fire and Rescue Update**

\* Crews have been working on structure protection activities and three crews have been added to support Cedar Mountain

\* Residents are encouraged to remove leaves and dry vegetative debris from around their homes, vehicles and gutters. Also remove other flammable items like cushions, cardboard, gas cans and other items away from your home. This will support the ability of fire departments to protect homes. See [Readync.gov](http://Readync.gov) for information on what to consider when being evacuated.



