

Two fires near the Linville Gorge have been blamed on Friday lightning strikes.

According to forest service spokesman Terry Seyden, both fires spread overnight. A fire near Dobson Knob has burned over 500 acres. The blaze near Shortoff has burned about 400 acres. The dry weather and lack of humidity overnight have further complicated things. The area around the Shortoff fire in particular is very steep terrain, which, according to Seyden, makes it difficult to set up control lines. More retardant drops via helicopter are expected today. Trails in the southern part of the Linville Gorge Wilderness area are still closed until further notice.