

Firefighters make progress in Pisgah

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Heavy rain showers brought relieve to the nearly 400 firefighters tackling the Linville Gorge fires in the Pisgah National Forest Friday.

Between .8 and 1.0 inches of rain fell on the Dobson Knob and Shortoff Mountain fires overnight, knocking back the fires and allowing crews to continue building and strengthening containment lines. As of 4 p.m. Friday, approximately 1,700 acres had burned from the two Burke County fires. The fires began with lightning strikes on June 6.

The damp conditions helped firefighters complete lines around the 818-acre Dobson Knob fire. Officials hope to be able to declare it contained this weekend. The Shortoff Mountain fire, however, due to its steep rugged terrain, poses more of a problem. Firefighters hope to continue back-burning, or clearing out combustible fuels inside the control lines to make it more difficult for fires to spread. The Linville Gorge Wilderness remains closed to the public.

More information, including detailed maps showing the current locations of the fires, can be found at the National Forests in North Carolina website, <http://www.cs.unca.edu/nfsnc>.