

Bad news for firefighters in gorge: Shortoff fire spreads

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It's been over a week since measurable rain has hit the Linville Gorge area and the Shortoff wildfire, the blaze firefighters hope might be contained by now, has spread.

The fire has increased from 1,900 acres to 2,995 acres, according to Incident Information Officer Gil Knight.

The steep terrain makes it difficult for ground crews- so burnout methods will be employed today, weather permitting.

This entails burning up combustible materials so that the fire will get to a point where there will be no more fuel- thus starving out the fire itself.

Additionally, a hot spot popped up on the Dobson Knob fire, thought to have been under control.

Combined, the fires in Linville Gorge have burned over 3,800 acres. Portions of the Linville Gorge Wilderness west of Linville River are still open to the public today. Everything from the Blue Ridge Parkway south to Spence Ridge Trail is open, while the remaining area south of Spence Ridge Trail from the Linville River east to the Wilderness boundary and down to its southern boundary is still closed until further notice.