

Yesterday, Incident Information Officer Gil Knight said today's burnout operation on a wildfire at Shortoff Mountain depended on the weather.

Today he says the weather is cooperating, and firefighters will begin to burn potential kindling. The goal is for the fire to reach a point where there will be no more fuel- thus starving out, Knight said. It's a delicate situation, though. If the wind changes or humidity goes down- the burnout will be cancelled. Firefighters

last week had hoped the Shortoff wildfire was mostly contained. The lack of measurable rainfall and low humidity, however, have encouraged its spread from 1,900 acres to 2,995 acres.

Additionally, a hot spot popped up on the Dobson Knob fire over the weekend, 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.