



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 22, 2016 p.m.

Contact:

Bill Swartley, NCFS - ICP Fire Information Center – 919.218.3179

Eric Muecke, NCFS – ICP Fire Information Center – 828-432-7920

Bonnie Strawser, Alligator National Wildlife Refuge – 252.216.8667

Whipping Creek Road Fire, Dare and Hyde Counties

Limited Rainfall Could Slow Fire Growth But Only Temporarily

The Whipping Creek Road Fire is presently 9,780 acres and 15% contained. Accurate mapping of the fire yesterday caused the fire footprint to be downsized over four thousand acres. Fire manager's suppression plans continue to hold the fire south of Jackson and Maple Roads as contingency lines; however, the western flank of the fire is still south of Whipping Creek Road. NC Forest Service heavy equipment is being used to improve this road as a primary fire break.

With a cold front approaching from the west today, the wildfire will push north under less favorable growth conditions. Increased cloud cover, higher humidity, and periodic rain showers or thunderstorms will be working against the fire. However, forecasted gusty winds from the southwest could overcome these weather obstacles and speed the fire's growth to the north and east. Moving in this direction, smoke from the fire could impact the Outer Banks and communities to the north, including the Hampton Roads and Virginia Beach metropolitan areas. For information on local and regional air quality the NC Department of Environmental Quality provides daily air quality updates at <https://xapps.ncdenr.org/aq/ForecastCenter>.

US Highway 264 between the Communities of Stumpy Point and Engelhard remains closed due to safety hazards associated with the fire on the road shoulder, poor visibility due to smoke, and burned-out power poles and guard rail supports. The NC Department of Transportation has installed detour signs as needed to redirect traffic normally traveling along this highway.

Although the fire has burned lands in Dare and Hyde Counties, its flames have not directly threatened any near-by communities. All public facilities in the area are open for business.

####