

Update: Delaware crew in California as officials increase “National Fire Preparedness Level” to maximum of 5 on a 5-point scale



The Fork Complex Fire in Northern California has burned more than 28,000 acres but is only 26 percent contained. A crew from Delaware is part of almost 2,400 personnel fighting the fire. The California wildfires have prompted fire officials to raise the National Preparedness Level to the maximum of 5 on a 5-point scale. (Photo by Chris Sturm/Delaware Forest Service).



Katrina Rothbart of Magnolia is part of the Delaware crew assigned to the Fork Complex, a wildfire in Northern California's Shasta-Trinity National Forest that has burned more than 28,000 acres. The crew should return to the First State this weekend.

A wildfire crew led by the Delaware Forest Service is near completion of a two-week assignment on the [Fork Complex Fire](#), a 28,736-acre blaze near Hayfork, California in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Almost 2,400 personnel are battling the fire that is currently 26 percent contained. The Fork

Complex is one of several large wildfires in Northern California that together cover more than 223,000 acres, one of the major factors that prompted the [National Interagency Fire Center \(NIFC\)](#) to increase its National Preparedness Level today to the maximum of 5 on a 5-point scale, which means that “geographic areas are experiencing major incidents which have the potential to exhaust all agency fire resources. Eighty percent (80%) of Type 1 and Type 2 Incident Management Teams and crews are committed, as well as the majority of other National Resources.” According to Aitor Bidaburu, chair of the [National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group \(NMAC\)](#), “A significant amount of initial and extended attack and large fire activity has occurred over the past several days as a result of lightning storms that have intensified local and geographic response,” said “Given the continuing hot and dry weather and the increase in fire activity in the western U.S., the decision to move to Preparedness Level 5 depicts the complexity that fire managers are encountering to assure that adequate firefighting resources are available for protection of life, property and our nation’s natural resources.” According to the [latest NIFC situation report](#), as of August 13 there were 73 uncontained large fires burning nationwide, of which 34 were located in Northern California.



Delaware's crew start their day on Division R of the Fork Complex Fire in Northern California, which has grown to more than 28,000 acres. (Instagram photo by crew member Nikki Testa of Newark).



Jennifer DeCarlo of Felton is part of Delaware's wildfire crew battling the Fork Complex Fire, which has scorched more than 28,000 acres in Northern California's Shasta-Trinity National Forest.



From left, Andrew "Doug" Rawling of Newark is shown with Erich Burkentine of Milton as they work to contain the Fork Copmplex Fire in Northern California's Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

Burkentine, the Delaware Forest Service's southern regional forester, is leading the 20-person team from Delaware. team



Kyle Hoyd of Felton, Delaware Forest Service assistant forestry administrator, is shown on the fire line at the Fork Complex, which has burned more than 28,000 acres in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest.

DFS Assistant Forestry Administrator Kyle Hoyd filed this report from the Fork Complex on Wednesday evening: "Yesterday we held line during a burnout operation. Burnout was a success and we are holding it today. If all goes well today, it will be a win." Fire officials on the scene report that Delaware's team has "excellent crew morale." With an increasingly high demand for firefighters and resources, Delaware state forester

and veteran crew boss Michael Valenti of Dover will be leading a crew from Maryland that will mobilize Saturday morning and is expected to be assigned to fight fires in Montana in the Northern Rockies fire region. Valenti will be accompanied by his son Nathan, who will be on his first firefighting assignment. Delaware's team could return to the First State on August 16 or August 17, depending on travel arrangements and flight times. Keep up with latest news on the wildfire crew on the [Delaware Forest Service Facebook page](#).