Rainy forecast may help firefighters

BY STEPHANIE JADRNICEK
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SENECA — If the forecast doesn't fail, a little relief is in sight for the Golden Corner.

According to National Weather Service meteorologist Scott Krentz, about half an inch of rain should have soaked into the ground by daybreak today from light, spotty showers through the night.

Although that's not a whole lot of precipitation, more rain is expected. Monday night's system was the first of two forecast to hit the Upstate this week.

"We're going to have a lull during the day, maybe another tenth of an inch through mid-morning," Krentz said. "But (tonight) some more rain will move in and continue through Wednesday. The heaviest

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A Chinook helicopter pulls water out of Lake Oolenoy near Table Rock State Park to douse a wildfire in northern Pickens County last week. Rain expected for this week should help firefighters in their battle against the blaze.

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rain should hit Wednesday afternoon through midnight. We should be on par for getting a storm total of between 2 to 2 1/2 inches."

The much-needed rain should help crews fight the fire on Pinnacle Mountain. As of Monday morning, the fire was 50 percent contained and had burned more than 10,000 acres.

Crews completed the burnout on the northeast side of the fire on Sunday afternoon. This helped strengthen fire lines from Slicking Gap down to part of Slickum Falls Road and established firebreaks near Brushy Knob down to the Table Rock Reservoir.

Sunday night, fire crossed containment lines

: Wet weather coming

south of Brushy Knob, but firefighters worked into the early-morning hours and set lines around the area. Work continued on the rest of the Pinnacle Mountain fire as firefighters extinguished hot spots and cleared falling leaves from fire lines.

On Monday, firefighters planned to strengthen firebreaks and conduct a burnout operation just north of the Table Rock Reservoir toward Buzzard Mountain Road to secure the northeast side of the fire. If successful, this strategy will stop the fire from spreading east. Crews also patrolled fire lines and cooled hot spots throughout the fire perimeter.

So far, the Pinnacle Mountain fire has cost about $4 million, however, that estimate does not include individual county expenses.

Table Rock State Park is expected to reopen in stages, possibly as early as this afternoon. Some trails and interior areas of the park will remain closed due to fire activity. For more information about park closures, call (864) 878-9813 or visit southcarolinaparks.com/tablerock/introduction.aspx.

Krentz said the second system of rain should move out fairly quickly and be replaced by dry, cooler high pressure into the weekend.

"The next system will start pushing in Sunday night," he said. "The mountains should get enough rain this week to help put out the fires — that's the best thing."

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