

# Smoke from Va.'s Lateral West Fire

August 11 2011

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Credit: NASA/NOAA GOES Project. Caption by Rob Gutro, NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md.

Today, the GOES-13 satellite captured a visible image of the thick brown smoke streaming from the Lateral West Fire burning in the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (GDSBWR) in southeastern Virginia.

The GOES-13 satellite is capturing images every 15 minutes as the smoke continues from the raging [fire](#) that continues to consume dry brush and grass. The GOES-13 satellite is operated by NOAA, and the NASA GOES Project at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md. creates images and animations from the data, such as the one created on August 10 at 7:31 a.m. EDT (1131 UTC). The image shows a triangular shaped plume of light brown smoke streaming to the south and southeast from the Lateral West Fire. On August 9, smoke from the fire reached the Washington, D.C. area and is now blowing south with the change of wind direction.

The fire is centered southwest of Lake Drummon in the GDSBWR, which is southeast of Suffolk, Virginia. InciWeb, the "Incident Information System" website reported that the fire began from a [lightning strike](#) in the refuge. The [drought conditions](#) provided fuel for the blaze. InciWeb reports wildfire conditions throughout the country.

By late afternoon on August 9, the fire was only 10 percent contained and had already consumed 2,500 acres. Inciweb noted that dense smoke will likely be a public health and safety concern for the foreseeable future. For more updates on the fire, visit the Inciweb site at: [www.inciweb.org/incident/2458/](http://www.inciweb.org/incident/2458/) .

Smoke is affecting populated areas today, including Hampton, Norfolk and Virginia Beach. As a result, an air quality alert is in effect until midnight (Eastern Daylight Time) on Wednesday, Aug. 10, 2011. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) has issued a Code Orange Air Quality Alert across the Hampton Roads area for fine particulates. Code Orange means unhealthy air for sensitive groups with respiratory or heart ailments. The VDEQ alert cautions against prolonged outdoor activity for children and the elderly.

Provided by JPL/NASA

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