

Eastland Complex Wildfires Alert

Only a year has passed since Texas was devastated by freezing temperatures and rolling blackouts. Now, Texas are facing a new devastation — the Eastland Complex wildfires. The specific fires that make up the Eastland Complex are referred to as the Kidd, Oak Mott, Wheat Field, Cedar Mountain, Blowing Basin, Walling, Mangum, and Powerline fires. According to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, strong winds and critically dry grasses contributed to extreme fire behavior and rapid rates of spread across the landscape. As of March 22, the total acres burned are 54,463, which includes 158 structures. The fires are 60 percent contained.

Once the Eastland Complex wildfires are contained, damage assessments will be undertaken. Structures and other properties damaged by the Eastland Complex wildfires may be located in the following zip codes: 76448, 76454, 76435, 76471, 76470, 76470, 76448, 76444, and 76445.



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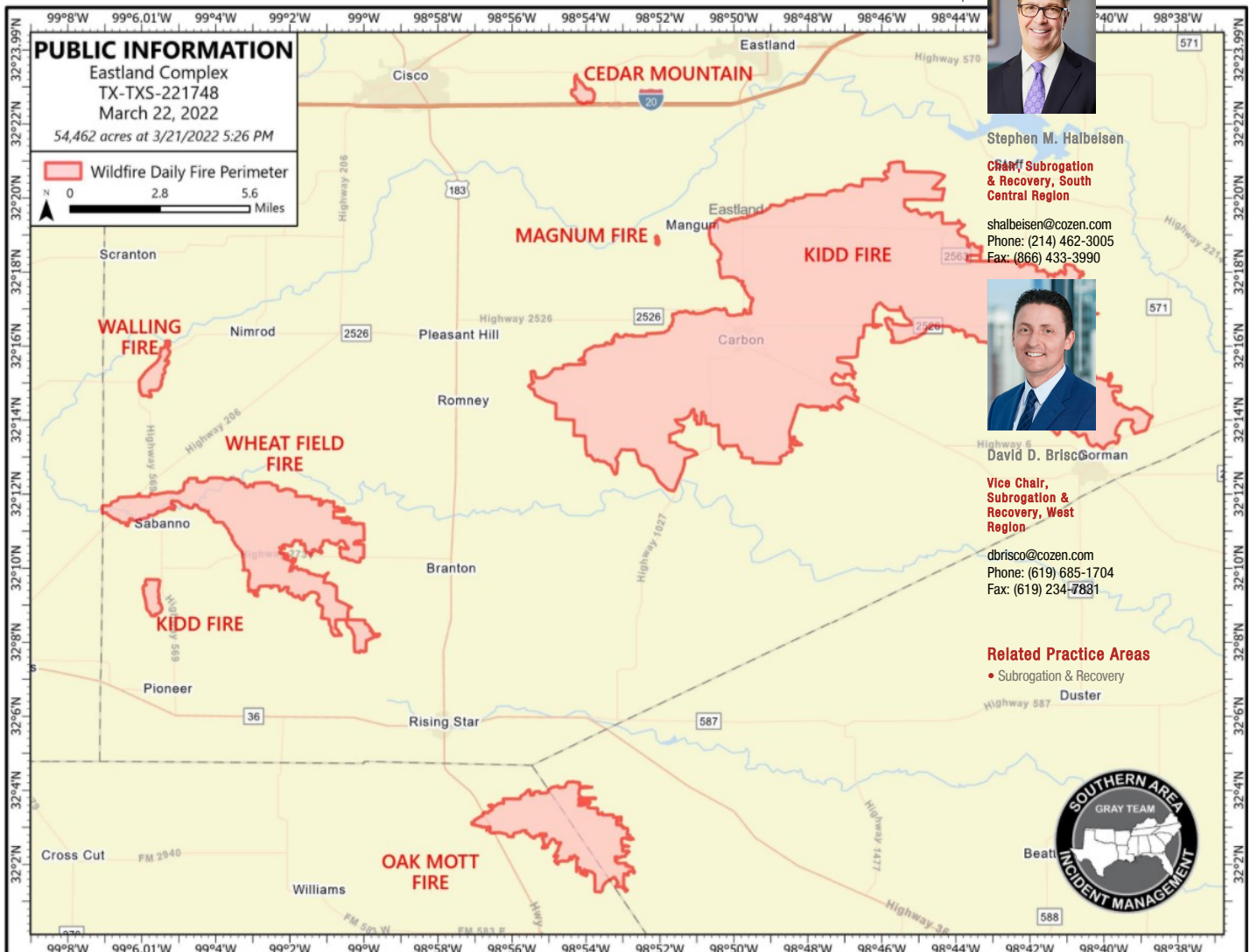
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Related Practice Areas

- Subrogation & Recovery

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Post-Fire Investigation

Obtaining and preserving evidence of the fire's start and spread, along with documenting the damage from the event, is a necessary part of the claims handling process. This is especially true when subrogation issues are being evaluated. Evaluation can be complicated by the widespread destruction and the number of interested parties involved in investigating losses. Video, photographs, drone flyovers, GPS, LIDAR, and other high-tech investigative tools can provide critical evidence toward establishing the cause of a wildfire.

We have engaged wildland fire investigation experts, who have been in Eastland County since Saturday, March 19 conducting background investigations, collecting information, interviewing witnesses, and working with public officials. Initial reports are that certain of the Eastland Complex fires may involve utility lines, but specific information

as to the precise ignition scenario is still under investigation.

Kidd Fire

This is the largest of the Eastland Complex fires, and has caused extensive damage in Carbon and Gorman, Texas. As of March 21, 2022, 142 structures have been reported lost; 86 of those homes are in Carbon, Texas. Sergeant Barbara Fenley of the Eastland County Sheriff's office perished in the fire attempting to evacuate residents.

Early reports are that there are two origins, a south origin, which was discovered on March 17, and a north origin. Winds originally came from the southwest. At approximately 9:00 p.m. on March 17, the winds shifted and started from come from the north. The two fires merged after the town of Carbon burned from the fire coming from the south origin area.

The south origin area is believed to be within Comanche Electric Coop's service area. The north origin area is within Oncor Electric's service area. We have received reports that Comanche recently changed out two power poles in the south origin area, and that the power lines contacted the nearby trees.

Oak Mott Fire

This fire started on March 17, southeast of Rising Star in Comanche and Brown counties. As of March 22, 4,031 acres have burned and the fire is 80 percent contained. Early indications are that there may be line-to-line contact or line-to-tree contact in the origin area, but the scene has not yet been processed. This fire is within the service area of AEP Electric Coop.

Wheat Field Fire

This fire started on March 17, northwest of Rising Star. As of March 22, 7,268 acres have burned, including seven structures. The fire is reportedly 60 percent contained. This fire is within the service area of the Taylor Electric Coop.

Cedar Mountain Fire

This fire has currently burned 179 acres and is 40 percent contained. Reports are that one home has been lost. Fire progression was slowed with rain on March 21.

Blowing Basin Fire

This fire has burned 241 acres as of March 21 and is 60 percent contained. Two homes are reported as lost.

Walling Fire

This fire is 100 percent contained after burning 383 acres. No structures are reportedly involved.

Mangum Fire

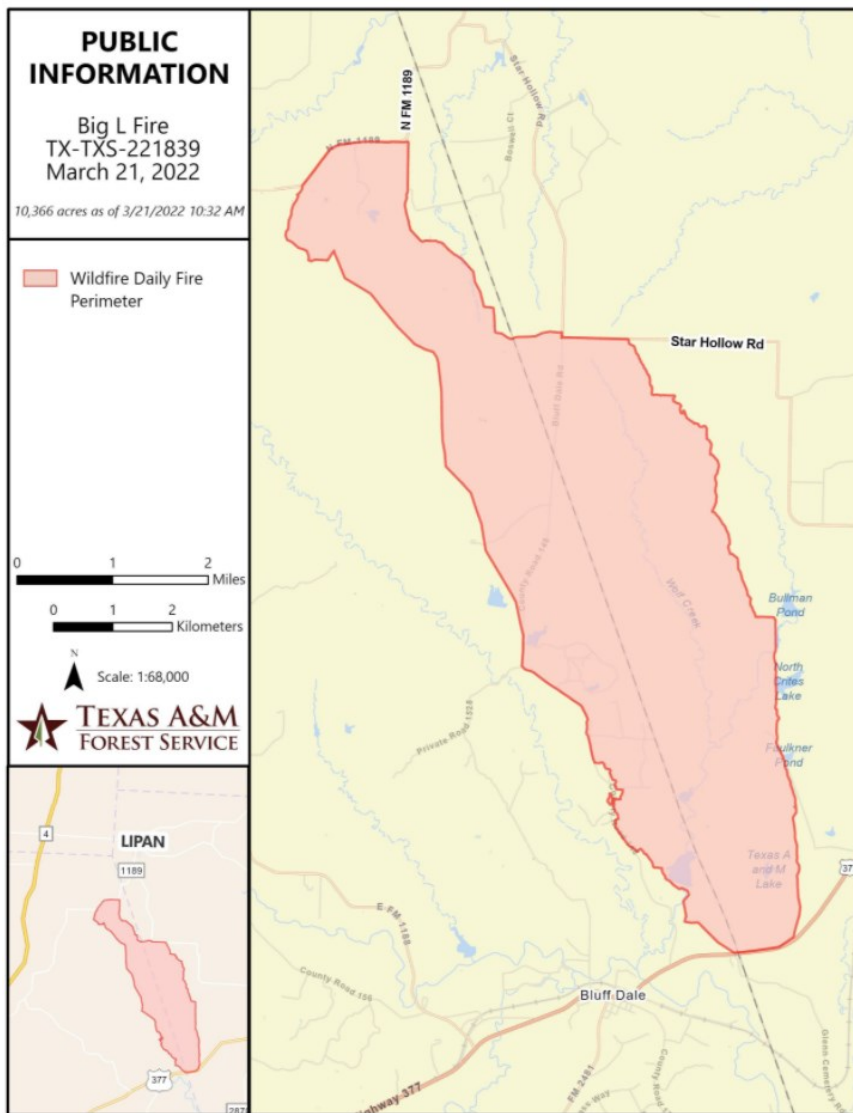
This fire has thus far burned 11 acres, but is 95 percent contained. The Mangum fire is southeast of the Kidd Fire, but had a separate start.

Powerline Fire

This fire has burned four acres. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group has reported that there was a small new start on March 21 that was caused by a damaged power line in the wind. The fire was quickly suppressed and will be monitored by responding crews. No structure damage has been reported.

Big L Fire

This fire is not a part of the Eastland Complex, but is burning in this same timeframe. This Big L Fire is burning in the counties of Hood, Erath, and Parker. As of March 21, approximately 11,000 acres have burned. The fire is reported to be 20 percent contained as of March 21. Experts report that the overhead lines in this area are copper lines, but they have not been able to observe the lines closely due to the active fire. This wildfire has forced an evacuation of the town of Lipan, where the gas has been shut off. The affected zip codes for the Big L Fire are 76462 and 76433.



Protecting Your Interests

It is important that insurers hit the ground running in order to maximize chances of recovery arising from a wildfire. Cozen O'Connor has retained, on behalf of our clients, consultants to investigate the circumstances of the loss and document the fire scenes and origin areas, including the utility lines. When our investigators provide preliminary information on the cause of the fires, we intend to place the responsible party on notice of our clients' potential claims, such that our firm will be advised and involved in the continued investigation as to cause and origin.

As the investigation develops, we will collect and preserve evidence and notify all identified parties of our potential claims, and request they preserve all evidence, interview witnesses and record statements, and gather damage documentation for each of our clients' losses.

In terms of retaining experts, we note that wildfire investigations with potential utility-based causes are a very specialized field and some of the most experienced experts have already been retained by parties involved in the investigation. There is, therefore, a need to act promptly.

Contact Cozen O'Connor as soon as possible so that we can assist in protecting your subrogated interest.