



NEWS RELEASE
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY
OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL
USDA FOREST SERVICE
USDI BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



GOVERNMENT FLAT COMPLEX UPDATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 22, 2013 @ 9:00 AM

Information: 541-298-9899

541-298-8741

Email: govflatfire@gmail.com

Inciweb: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3662/>

Today will be a crucial day in firefighters' efforts to slow the spread of the Blackburn Fire, one of three fires in the Government Flat Complex. Yesterday, the plume-dominated fire grew to 11,040 acres as easterly, up-canyon winds pushed the fire to the west. Overall containment of the Complex remains at 15 percent.

Fire behavior analysts indicate that conditions today will be at critical levels, with potential for extreme fire behavior and rapid rates of spread. The fire is expected to be plume-dominated (developed column overriding the local environmental influences) and slope driven, again today. Strong winds out of the west are forecasted beginning in the late afternoon with gusts of 20 mph or more. These winds, combined with steep canyon slopes will challenge firefighters attempting to contain the Blackburn Fire.

The night operations section chief stated at this morning's briefing that "the one thing constant with this incident is change." This is a good reminder for firefighters and affected residents to remain vigilant at all times.

Firelines continue to hold on the north, east, and south sides of the blaze. However, fire officials believe it is possible that the fire will move further to the west, north to Ketchum Road and Thompson Point.

Objectives for today are to continue mopping up on the north, east, and south sides of the Blackburn Fire. Where new firelines have been established on the west and northwest sides, burn-out activities may be conducted. Priorities for fire officials are to limit impacts to private lands, structures, public lands, major BPA transmission lines and protection of the City of The Dalles Watershed and water treatment plant.

In cooperation with the Wasco County Sheriff, fire officials will continue to evaluate threats to residences and develop trigger points for decisions regarding evacuations as needed. All evacuation notices remain at Level II (Set) for residences located along Obrist Road, Upper Mill Creek Road, and Wells Road. These roads will remain closed to non-resident traffic until further notice.

Residents in areas with Level II evacuation orders should remain on alert, and set for immediate departure in the event that a full evacuation (Level III) is ordered. Conditions can change rapidly.

When you hear the terms evacuation levels I, II or III, remember "ready, set, go." Level I means be aware of the fire in your area and start getting ready. Level II means make final preparations and get set to evacuate, and Level III means evacuate immediately—GO NOW. For information regarding the evacuation, please contact the WASCO County Sheriff's Office at 541-506-2580 during business hours.

<More>

The American Red Cross continues to be available with sheltering should any residents be evacuated. Questions concerning American Red Cross services may be directed to 888-680-1455.

Other developments:

- A total of four residences and nine outbuildings were destroyed or damaged since the fire began on August 16.
- Structural fire engines and firefighters are continuing to secure and patrol homes and other structures along Upper Mill Creek and Reservoir roads, as well as the water treatment plant. A task force of structural fire engines will be in the Wells Road area to assess and prepare properties for a defensible space.
- The fire has burned onto the Mt. Hood National Forest. It has been burning on a mix of private ownership, City of The Dalles ownership, and Bureau of Land Management.

Mt Hood National Forest Closures:

Forest Road 1722 on the east end	Forest Road 4430 at the 1720 junction
Forest Road 160 at junction with 4440	Forest Road 1720 at the east end
Forest Road 17-660	Forest Road 1711-630

There is potential for a Forest Service Area Closure.

The Knebal Springs Campground is inaccessible due to road closure on the 1720 Road. For more information regarding the Mt Hood National Forest click to their web site: [Forest Service Notice](#)

There are 853 firefighters and support personnel working the fire complex. Efforts are being supported by 29 hand crews, 36 engines (both wild land and structural), 7 helicopters, 11 dozers, and 8 water tenders. The National Guard has arrived with 3 additional helicopters. Three air tankers are available, as needed.

The fire complex is being managed under a unified command of Oregon Department of Forestry Incident Management Team 3 (Incident Commander, Chris Cline) and Oregon State Fire Marshal's Green Team (Incident Commander, John Ingrao).

Cooperators working the incidents include Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal, BLM, USDA Forest Service, City of The Dalles, Wasco County Sheriff's Office, Wasco County Emergency Operations Center, American Red Cross, Oregon National Guard, and Oregon State Police.

To date, an estimated \$4.6 million has been spent in Government Flat Complex fire suppression efforts.

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