



NEWS RELEASE

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY
OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Government Flat Complex Update

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 20, 2013 @ 7 AM
Information: 541-298-9899
govflatfire@gmail.com

**MEDIA Advisor: Fire Tour at 1 PM for
credentialed media. Please RSVP.**

The public is invited to community meeting tonight at 6:30 PM at the Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue headquarters at 1400 West 8th Street. Information and maps on the status of the fire complex will be provided by the fire team.

The Government Flat Complex, 7 miles southwest of The Dalles, Oregon is comprised of three fires that were started by lightning on Aug 16th. Two of the fires, Government Flat and Wells have been lined and smoldering spots are being extinguished. The third and most active fire, the Blackburn Fire, is estimated at 6,430 acres. The combined containment of all three fires is estimated at 10%.

Fire officials received confirmation of the loss of two homes and five outbuildings since the fire started.

The **Blackburn Fire** continued to grow yesterday, providing more challenges to fire crews. The strong, erratic Columbia River Gorge winds continued to push the fire making active fire runs to the south, west and east yesterday. Today, winds are predicted to be lighter.

Firefighters today will continue work establishing and strengthening firelines and preparing for burn-out operations. Burn-out operations are intended to burn the vegetation between established firelines and the active portion of the fire, resulting in a more secure, defensible control line.

Structural fire engines will continue work to assess and defend homes around the fire, as well as working with The Dalles Public Works Department to protect the water treatment plant where the fire is slowly approaching, but not posing any immediate danger.

The evacuation notices were expanded yesterday. Level 3 evacuations include homes from 9500 block of Upper Mill Creek Road east to the 6500 block of Mill Creek Road, Reservoir Road and Obrist Road. A level 3 evacuation (Go Now) means that residents should leave immediately. These roads are now closed to all but firefighters and support personnel.

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There are 714 firefighters and support personnel working the fire complex. This includes 5 task forces of structural firefighting equipment from Clackamas County, Washington County, Hood River County, Columbia County, Marion County and Multnomah County assisting local resources from Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue. Each task force includes 5 pieces of equipment a leader. In addition, 25 hand crews, 19 wildland fire engines, 10 dozers, 6 water tenders and 7 helicopters are working the fires.

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 State Fire Marshall's Office, BLM, City of The Dalles, Wasco County Sheriff's Office, Wasco County Emergency Operations Center, American Red Cross, US Forest Service and Oregon State Police.

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