

August 28, 2009

North Fork Complex

FIRE UPDATE

Current Update: Both fires saw a slight increase in acres burned due to active fire behavior during the heat of the day. The two fires are producing noticeable smoke and fire managers have observed significant runs on incident 129 east and south of Kelsay Butte. These fires are burning in steep terrain with heavy dead and down timber. The occasional single and group tree torching is taking place as the fire moves through the heavy fuels.

Inc 136: Incident 136 (Raspberry Creek) continues to slowly back down towards river and progress slowly up Bismark Creek. The fire hasn't displayed the intensity to overcome wet drainages or solid facing North aspects. The spot on the south end of the fire crested the rim of the canyon and hit a patch of lodge pole pine reprod and is currently smoldering. The most activity on this fire continues to be around the larger spot to the east shown on the last IR map. There is no noticeable smoke in Raspberry Creek and we have been pro-active in knocking down any activity along that drainage and the unnamed drainage to the east. Crews are staged along the 5506 (NFJD River) to detect and suppress any potential spot across the river and along the 5505/1010 Roads.

Inc 129: Incident 129 (Cougar/Basin Creek) is by far the most active fire at this time. Most the activity is on the south and southeast flank of fire. There's not much fire activity on the north flank. This fire is hard to monitor due to its location. Aerial recon has provided the best information. We're assessing the need and safety issues associated with placing a small contingent of people further up the river to monitor fire activity and suppress possible spots as the fire gets closer to the river.

Plans for Today: Resources are continuing to actively patrol the containment line and monitor fire behavior. Staffing of the fire has increased slightly as the fires have become more active.

Long Term Suppression Strategy: Fire managers are monitoring the fires closely, watching for "trigger points" such as increased fire behavior, fire spread, and hot, dry weather conditions. Trigger points allow fire managers to adjust firefighting actions and resources accordingly. Managing wilderness fires in this manner provides for firefighter safety and reduces fire costs.

Location: The fires are located 15 miles southeast of Ukiah, OR in the North Fork John Day Wilderness. Lat: 44o55'29" Long: 118o39'5"

Estimated Acreage: 3,382

Cause and Date Started: Lightning, Saturday, August 1, 2009

Resources on the Fire:

20-person fire crews: 4

Engines: 8

Dozers: 1

Overhead: 5

Total Personnel: 111

Management: On August 28, 2009, Mike Johnson's Type 3 organization took command of the North Fork Complex Fires.

Cooperators: US Forest Service; Oregon Department of Forestry

Restrictions and Closures: The Umatilla National Forest has modified the temporary forest closure ordered in the area surrounding the North Fork Complex fires to allow access north of the North Fork John Day River. Forest Road 5506 is closed to motorized travel, but open to foot traffic, from Oriental Creek Campground east to the Big Creek Trailhead. Maps are available at www.inciweb.org. Public Use Restrictions on the Umatilla National Forest have been temporarily lifted. It is possible that the restrictions will be reinstated with the increase in temperatures and drop in the humidity.

Fire Weather:

Saturday: A chance of showers, with thunderstorms also possible after 11am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 68. South wind around 6 mph becoming northwest. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Saturday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 45. North northeast wind between 8 and 11 mph. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

Sunday: A chance of showers, with thunderstorms also possible after 11am. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 65. North wind around 7 mph becoming west southwest. Chance of precipitation is 50%.

Sunday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 46. Chance of precipitation is 50%.