



Malheur National Forest

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UPDATE PROVIDED BY BURNS INTERAGENCY FIRE ZONE

AUGUST BRINGS MORE WILDFIRES TO HARNEY COUNTY

HINES, Oregon – With little rest between assignments, firefighters are busy yet again with several *new* wildfires caused by an early-August lightning storm in Harney County.

The most recent wildfire discovered is called Spear Springs. Reported this afternoon around 1:00 p.m., approximately 22 miles directly north of Burns, on the Malheur National Forest along Forest Road 31, the Spear Springs fire received quick suppression attention from air tankers, engine crews and dozers. By 5:00 p.m. the fire was estimated around 100 acres and burning in brush, timber and mahogany with active burning upslope, torching, and high potential for spotting. Crews are expected to work well into the night securing the fire perimeter. Forest Road 31, from its junction at Highway 395, has been closed temporarily due the fire's close proximity to the roadway.

Two other fires remain active this afternoon as well. The Coleman Mountain fire, located approximately 15 miles northeast of Crane, is around 3,800 acres and 40 percent contained. Erratic fire behavior was reported yesterday, due to very dry fuels and thunderstorms passing over. Fire spread in all directions late Tuesday, but has been most active on the southwest flank this afternoon. The High Desert Type 3 Incident Management Team has been assigned to the Coleman Mountain fire and has a base camp established near Warm Springs Reservoir.

The Juniper Ranch fire, located on the east side of Steens Mountain approximately 20 miles north of Andrews, showed considerable spread yesterday as well, with significant wind driven runs. The fire was most active to the southwest this afternoon and is estimated at approximately 1,000 acres.

As firefighters continue their work on area wildfires, the public should be aware of increased traffic on roadways and possible smoky conditions. Also, to help limit *new* fires to those caused by lightning or other natural occurrences, remember the extremely hot and dry conditions and the regulated fire closure currently in place within the Burns Interagency Fire Zone. The closure allows campfires only in designated campgrounds and prohibits all off-road vehicle travel, smoking out of doors, and parking a vehicle or operating an internal combustion motor in areas not free of vegetation.

The area closure in the Egley wildfire complex vicinity remains in place until further notice. Federal, state and county officials are evaluating the closure weekly and will open more of the area as conditions continue to improve.

The Industrial Fire Precaution Level in the Burns Interagency Fire Zone is a Level 4 and fire danger is EXTREME.

For more information on current wildfire activity or closure information, related to these fires call (541) 573-4519.