



**Malheur  
National Forest**



# Canyon Creek Complex

## *After the Fire Fact Sheet*

12/31/2015

### Fire Information

Phone:  
(541) 575-3000

For Online Updates:  
[BAER Report](#)

[http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/  
4495/](http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4495/)

<https://www.facebook.com/CanyonCreekFireOregon/>

### **Background**

The Canyon Creek Complex resulted from two lightning strike fires that burned together on August 14, 2015, during an extreme weather event that caused over 33,000 acres of fire growth on a single day. The fire activity continued for several weeks, including additional significant fire growth under dry conditions on windy days, one of which caused a part of the town of Prairie City to evacuate.

A Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team arrived in John Day in late August to assess imminent post-wildfire threats to human life, safety, property, and critical natural and cultural resources. The team proposed actions to manage the identified risks, including stabilizing soil, controlling water and sediment movement, and reduction of threats to critical resources.

Over 110,220 acres burned with the highest percentages of severe burn in the sub-watersheds of Canyon Creek, south of John Day, Oregon. Indian Creek on the northern part of the Strawberry Mountain range also had a significant portion of acres burned. Within the entire fire area the percent by acre of soil burn impacts were high (11%), moderate (33%), low (47%), and low to unburned (9%).

Resources at risk included roads, trails, critical fish habitat, campgrounds, native plant communities, road-stream crossings, Canyon Meadow Dam, and soil productivity. The Malheur National Forest was funded by the Pacific Northwest Regional Office and the Washington Office for various treatments that could be implemented within the first year after the fire and have a track record of being effective. These treatments included felling trees away from roads and trails, mulching severely burned areas of vulnerable hillslopes, signing for safety, closing high risk areas to the public, drainage work on roads and trails, surveying for invasive plant spread, and placing large wood jams into streams to stabilize bedload movement.

In addition, there was funding for patrolling after storms and cooperating on early warning systems for future storms and rain or snow-melt events. The BAER report is available at

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/malheur/home/?cid=FSEPRD487852> and is also available at front desk of Malheur National Forest offices located in John Day, Prairie City, and Hines, Ore.

<b>Estimated Acreage</b>	Forest Service: 90,584 acres BLM: 2,658 acres Private: 17,019 acres
<b>Estimated Cost to Date</b>	\$31,453,602.00
<b>Cause</b>	Lightning caused fires, which was started on August 12, 2015 and burnt together on August 14, 2015
<b>Personnel</b>	At the peak of the fire, approximately 1,026
<b>Structures Lost</b>	Primary residences: 43, as reported by Grant County Sheriff's Department, plus several miles of fences and range improvements to be completed.
<b>Structures Damaged</b>	50
<b>Rehabilitation</b>	<p>The team of specialists (hydrologists, soil scientists, archeologists, botanists, engineers, recreation staff, and fish biologists) who assessed and recommended the emergency response work went home in October, leaving implementation to the Malheur National Forest personnel.</p> <p>The BAER implementation has largely been wrapped up until after winter, except for storm patrols (as needed) and ongoing road maintenance (such as cleaning ditches and culverts) to prevent additional immediate damage and safety risks.</p> <p>A portion of hazard trees along roads have been removed as part of the post-fire BAER response. Additional hazard trees along roads in the fire area are being removed under a NEPA Categorical Exclusions, along with maintenance activities to stabilize the road conditions.</p> <p>Log jams to hold bedload in streams were completed in Vance Creek, Canyon Creek, Middle Fork Canyon Creek, Overholt Creek, Indian Creek and Pine Creek by Fisheries and Watershed staff with the support of helicopter contract workers.</p> <p>Soil stabilization mulching in the Vance Creek area was complete with the assistance of helicopter and fire crew staff.</p> <p>Mulching in the Berry Creek area was 50% complete when weather conditions caused completion to be delayed until spring (after assessing the initial work).</p> <p>Road work is ongoing as needed.</p> <p>For information on the area closure, see <a href="http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/malheur/home/?cid=stelprd3845529">http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/malheur/home/?cid=stelprd3845529</a>.</p>