

# EAGLE CREEK FIRE

*At-A-Glance Facts, March 2018*

**Reported:** September 2, 4:00 pm  
**Size:** 48,861 acres, including the 373 acres of Indian Creek Fire  
**Contained:** 100% contained on November 30  
**Origin:** Eagle Creek Drainage, 2.5 miles west of Cascade Locks, OR  
**Cause:** Human, Fireworks

## Suppression Response

Air resources were the primary suppression tool during the first 4-5 hours of the fire due to steep terrain. Hikers were rescued through joint efforts with Hood River County Sheriff's Office. Dozer and hand lines, burnout operations, brushing, fire wrap, sprinklers, and strike teams of engines were all used to protect values at risk through the course of the fire.

**Dozer Line:** Estimated 30 miles  
**Hand Line:** Estimated 5 miles  
**Personnel:** 1,060 personnel at peak effort  
**Cost to Date:** Latest estimate, \$20 million

## Human Impacts

Level 3 evacuations affected residents in Bridal Veil, Corbett, Dodson, Latourell, Warrendale, Cascade Locks, OR; Skamania County, WA

**Hikers rescued:** 176  
**Lives lost:** 0  
**Hospital visits:** 2 (x-rays)  
**Injuries:** 4 (2 bee stings, shoulder injury, sprained ankle)

## Lands and Infrastructure Impacts

**Private Residences burned:** 1 primary residence, 3 secondary  
**Union Pacific Railway:** Trains halted 3 days (Sept 4-7)  
**Columbia River:** Closed for 2 days (Sept 5-7)  
**Interstate 84:** WB closed 11 days, EB 19 days (Sept 4-14&16/23)

**Natl Forest System Trails:** 121.4 miles in fire perimeter

- 83.5 miles in Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
- 37.9 miles in Mt. Hood National Forest
- 83 miles in Wilderness; 10.1 miles of Pacific Crest Trail

**Natl Forest System roads:** 12.43 miles in burned area

**Bridges:** Eagle Creek Suspension Bridge damaged/removed.

**Campgrounds:** 3 federal, 2 state park

**State Lands:** State Parks - 1,283 acres; other state lands - 44 acres

**State Parks:** 20 state parks, 30 miles of trails closed at some point

**Private lands:** 232 acres in fire perimeter

**Historic Multnomah Falls Lodge:** structure intact, with only smoke damage; closed for almost 3 months

**Historic CCC-era structures at Eagle Creek:** remained intact but damaged suspension bridge to be removed

**Historic Columbia River Highway (Hwy. 30):** Bridal Veil to Vista House segment closed 80 days; Ainsworth to Bridal Veil segment closed since Sept 4.

**Fisheries/Hatcheries:** Bonneville, Cascade, and Oxbow hatcheries; impacts to fishing season

**Bonneville Power Administration** powerlines – lines de-energized during fire; hazard trees removed

## Archer Mtn Fire

**Reported:** September 5  
**Contained:** September 13  
**Size:** 260 acres  
**Cause:** Ember from Eagle Creek Fire  
**Dozer Line:** 3.46 miles built  
**Hand Line:** 0.50 miles built  
**Cost:** Latest estimate, \$850,000

Located in Skamania County, WA, 10 miles northwest of North Bonneville on National Forest System and Washington Department of Natural Resources lands.

Managed by Western Washington IMT Type 3, came under Eagle Creek Fire on September 16.



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### **Suppression Repair**

Suppression rehabilitation is the process of replacing dirt, vegetation, and other natural materials back into formations that resemble a natural landscape. Suppression rehabilitation speeds the natural process of recovery, reduces visible traces of suppression activities, and can help prevent erosion.

- Safety zones, staging areas and drop points were rehabilitated.
- Road drainage work was installed.
- 30 miles dozer line & 5 miles handline waterbarred
- 4.5 miles of fireline seeded

### **Ecological Facts**

Fire is a natural phenomenon, even in the wet West Cascades forests, and therefore the forest ecosystem has natural processes for regenerating. The fire interval in the west Cascades can vary from 100-400 year intervals. Vegetation types within the fire perimeter consisted of “Western Hemlock Zone” (37,418 acres), “Pacific Fir Zone” (9,706 acres), “Grand Fir Zone” (880 acres), “Douglas Fir Zone” (500 acres), “Steppe” (174 acres), “Mountain Hemlock Zone” (58 acres), with 51 acres of other vegetation types.

Most of the fire perimeter was located within the Mark O. Hatfield Wilderness area, so USFS policy is to “Allow reforestation only if a loss of the wilderness resource, due to human influence, has occurred and there is no reasonable expectation of natural reforestation” (FSM 2323.54). Due to this, there will not be a widespread replanting of the burned area; however, there will be early detection and rapid response efforts in place to prevent invasive species from becoming established. USFS has also been putting in place erosion control measures to protect Chinook, coho, and steelhead.

### **Burned Area Hazards and Issues**

The Gorge has a complex history involving volcanic lava flows, ice-age floods, tectonic plate collisions, and other dynamic geologic processes. The steep slopes and rock walls that make the Gorge so beautiful also make it prone to landslides, and even before the fire, landslides, rockfalls, and debris flows were not unusual.

**Burn Severity.** The higher the burn severity in a given drainage, the less likely that soil will absorb water from rainfall and snow melt. This increases the risks of flash floods, debris flows, landslides, and rockslides.

- 55% of the area within the fire perimeter is was unburned or low burn intensity
- 30% had a moderate burn intensity
- 15% had a high burn intensity

**Rockfall and landslide hazards.** In areas where fractured rocks have long been stabilized by moss and other vegetation, slopes are steeper than the natural “angle of repose.” Since Eagle Creek Fire burned through the vegetation, rockfall and landslide potential has increased, as these slopes are prone to collapsing without the “glue” of natural vegetation holding them in place.

**Flash floods and Debris Flows.** The fire perimeter contained 325.8 miles of streams (141.4 year-round streams). Predicted post-fire peak streamflows show increased potential for flash floods, which can also lead to debris flows. Estimated recovery time for ground vegetation, which affects these risks, is 5-10 years.

**Most affected drainages:** Eagle Creek, Tanner Creek, Moffett Creek, McCord Creek, Horsetail Creek, Oneonta Creek

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