



Pacific Northwest Region
Malheur National Forest
541-575-3000
www.fs.usda.gov/malheur

FIRE UPDATE

For more information: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4055/>

September 6, 2014

Bald Sisters Fire grows as dry weather continues

JOHN DAY, OREGON – With more than a week without rain and conditions still very dry in the mountains, fire activity has picked up the Bald Sisters Fire. The fire has been burning since August 2 in heavy timber primarily above 6,000 feet on the top and west slope of Baldy Mountain in the Inventoried Roadless Area.

The fire has moved slowly in this steep terrain, growing a total of 59 acres over the last eight days. An infrared flight over the area last night detected the majority of heat in the northwest portion of the fire, downslope toward Wildcat Creek, with isolated pockets of heat throughout the fire perimeter. The total fire size is now estimated at 1,306 acres.

“Weather conditions over the next few days will lead to increased fire activity and some fire spread,” said Dana Skelly, a long-term fire behavior analyst assigned to the incident. “With warmer temperatures over the weekend and a dry cold front moving in on Monday, we can expect visible smoke each day with the peak activity from mid-afternoon until dark around 7:30 p.m.”

A defensible containment line around the fire area was built by fire crews last month to provide a safe point of engagement, should the fire behavior escalate. Firefighters also cleared several “safety zones,” which remain in place, to ensure their survival should they be overrun by flames. While the fire is currently slowly backing down slopes, fire managers are expecting an uphill run if the fire crosses Wildcat Creek.

Temperatures are expected to reach the mid 70’s over the fire through the weekend with very low daytime relative humidity. While relative humidity has recovered to higher levels overnight at lower elevations, humidity recovery has been only moderate on ridgelines. With drier conditions on Monday, relative humidity could dip as low as 8% during the day, making vegetation more susceptible to burning.

An area closure remains in effect around Baldy Mountain between Reynolds Creek and Deardorff Creek, due to the fire activity. The current closure order and map are available at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/malheur/alerts-notice>. Perimeter roads around the closed area are open to public travel, including Road 2635 and the 13 Road, but drivers are cautioned to remain alert for potential smoke and to drive at safe speeds.

The closure area may be modified in the future by Forest officials as conditions change, to ensure public and firefighter safety.



for the greatest good

NEWS RELEASE

(continued)

FIRE RESTRICTIONS: Effective September 1, **the north half of the Malheur National Forest moved to Phase A of the Public Use Restrictions (PURs)**, which addresses use of campfires, chainsaws (firewood cutting), internal combustion engines, smoking, generators, and off-road/off-trail vehicle travel. The specific PURs information can be found at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/malheur/>.

To learn what restrictions are in currently place, call **Malheur National Forest** at **541-575-3000** or **Prairie City Ranger District** at **541-820-3800**, or visit the **Forest's website** at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/malheur/>.