

Southwest Idaho Area Command

Daily Fire Summary Sunday, August 19, 2012

Eastern Great Basin Fuel and Fire Behavior Advisory: Very hot and dry summertime weather has led to near record fire danger indices across the state of Idaho and western Wyoming. Sagebrush live fuel moistures are near historic lows and current large fires across the east and central Idaho Mountains have moved into beetle-killed stands further intensifying fire behavior.

Red Flag Warning for dry lightning, isolated thunderstorms and gusty winds is in effect over the fire areas today.

Area Command

271,581 total acres
2,503 total personnel assigned

Area Command continues to monitor and provide correct information to media outlets.

Area Command coordinates with the Incident Management Teams to provide critical strategic planning for the long-duration large fires. Area Command is also providing decision support analysis looking at fuels, topography, weather, climatology, fire history, and fire progression over a large geographic planning area. This wider view allows managers to plan and anticipate fire movement and potential firefighting force needs to protect the public, communities and valuable resources. This analysis aids agency administrators in long-term decision-making and future planning.

Springs

(208) 384-3266

6,150 acres
95% contained

Crews are mopping up and working to secure containment lines, estimating full containment by the end of shift today. They will also be doing rehab work. Contingency lines constructed to protect the community during the suppression operations will be used in the future for fuel breaks. Resources assigned to the fire will continue to provide initial attack support for new fire starts in the area. Threats to the Middle Fork residences have diminished considerably. Excess resources not needed for the suppression effort are being released and made available for reassignment to other incidents.

Hahnenberg's IMT1 will transfer command to a local Type 3 organization on Monday.

Halstead

(208) 774-0011

91,954 acres
3 % contained

There was moderate growth on the fire yesterday. The fire continued moving to the west and southeast. Fire officials are looking for opportunities to safely construct fireline along the southeastern edge to keep the fire north of Highway 75. Crews made progress on the western flank protecting the Highway 21 corridor. Firefighters completed structure prep work in the Yankee Fork and along the Highway 75 corridor. Structure protection is in place for Loon Creek Guard Station.

The campgrounds and residences in the Yankee Fork area, as well as cabins, homes and campgrounds along the Salmon River between Lower Stanley and Sunbeam have been evacuated. Area closures and several road closures are in effect. Highways 21 and 75 remain open through the closure area.

The Bench fire is holding at 220 acres and is 85% contained. Smoke from the Bench fire continues to be a concern on Highway 21. From 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m., pilot cars will guide traffic through the Banner Summit area. The area closure associated with the Bench fire has been lifted, opening campgrounds along Highway 21, including Bull Trout.

Fire managers and local officials are reassessing options for float trip access to the Salmon River in the closure area. Permitted outfitters only may access the river at launch points between Sunbeam and Torreys. They will be re-evaluating the situation daily.

There will be a community meeting on Monday at 7:00 p.m. at the Challis Middle School Auditorium.

Trinity Ridge
(208) 653-2164
88,467 acres
5% contained

A heavy inversion slowed the fire's spread yesterday. Areas of focus include the 376 road, Alexander Flat and Barber Flat to the north and Featherville and Pine to the south. Firefighters continued to work on protecting the threatened communities. Fire managers, in cooperation with Elmore County, will have structure protection in place 24/7. Crews are making good progress in line construction on the northwest corner between Alexander Flat and Barber Flat to keep the fire from spreading to the west towards the North Fork of the Boise River.

Fire managers are working with the National Guard to provide checkpoint security at road closures. The Guard should begin providing security early next week.

The Sheriff's Office issued a mandatory evacuation from Featherville to Paradise at 2:00 p.m. yesterday due to the heavy smoke in the area. Fire officials will continue to meet daily with community members in Pine at 10:30 a.m. to discuss the evacuations, until the threat subsides.

Mustang Complex
(877) 356-8984
78,000+ acres
5% contained

The fire continues to move downhill towards the Salmon River and to the north where it has burned into Montana and the Bitterroot National Forest. Joseph's Team is working with the Bitterroot National Forest in providing support as needed to the Cabin Creek Fire, burning in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. Yesterday there were clear enough conditions over the fire area to get good aerial reconnaissance.

The larger area closure has been enacted; details can be found on the Salmon Challis National Forest website. The Salmon River remains open to rafting and jet boat recreationists. All recreationists are required to stop at the North Fork Ranger Station prior to proceeding down river. The Salmon River road remains open to local residents and river recreationists; however, all launches for the main stem of the Salmon River are from the Cove Creek Boat Launch. The general public is urged to stay off the road so firefighters can work safely to protect structures and prevent the fire from spreading to the south side of the river. It is an on-going challenge to keep the road clear due to multiple rock and debris slides. Structure protection measures are in place around homes in the Spring Creek area, as well as the Shoup Store. Travelers can reach the Shoup Store; however, the Spring Creek Road is closed north from the junction with the Salmon River Road.

What is Open!

Middle Fork of the Salmon River – Open! All floating continues as normal on the Middle Fork. **Short** delays may result at Cache Bar, Stoddard when reaching the confluence. Pilot cars are guiding folks through on the river road.

Main Salmon River – Floaters now need to launch from Cove Creek rather than Corn Creek. Plan for an extra day on the river and check in at the North Fork Ranger Station before you head downriver to your launch.

Sawtooth National Recreation Area – 25 of 36 campgrounds open, including the "Crown Jewels" - Stanley Lake, Redfish Lake, Alturas Lake. The Salmon River from Stanley to Thompson Creek is currently closed to floating due to Emergency Area Closure from the Halstead Fire.