



Pacific Northwest Region

Umatilla National Forest
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NEWS RELEASE

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Ben Harrison Fire Final Update

PENDLETON, Ore. (August 15, 2023 – 10 a.m.) — Firefighters have completed handline construction around the 95-acre **Ben Harrison Fire**, which is located approximately 20 miles west of Sumpter, Oregon on the North Fork John Day Ranger District. The fire is burning in sub alpine fir, which is known for holding on to heat that can reignite and produce embers that start spot fires. Because of this fire managers are keeping the containment at 0% until conditions are more stable.

Fire behavior was minimal yesterday, primarily consisting of creeping and smoldering with larger fuels burning on the interior. Low fire behavior allowed firefighters to complete control lines around the perimeter of the fire. An infrared flight conducted last night showed the fire had interior scattered heat and a few isolated heat sources. The fire has not moved outside of the estimated perimeter in the last few days.

Today firefighters will continue to scout for spot fires while strengthening containment lines and conducting mop up operations. Mopping up includes searching for pockets of heat, digging out the heat source, and cooling with water. Resources assigned to the fire include 20 smoke jumpers, three handcrews, four rappellers, and local district personnel. Aircraft are available as needed. Based on operational needs as containment increases, fire managers will begin demobilizing resources over the next few days to be available to respond to other fires.

This will be the final daily update unless conditions change. Information regarding progress on the fire will be shared on the Umatilla National Forest Facebook page, Blue Mountain Fire Information Blog and Inciweb.

Olive Lake Campground remains temporarily closed. The campground is currently being utilized as the Incident Command Post for the Ben Harrison Fire. The Forest will reopen the campground once conditions moderate and suppression resources are moved out of the campground.

High pressure has built over the west this week. High temperatures across the Columbia Basin are expected to be 100 degrees or higher. Excessive Heat Warnings are in effect throughout the week. Fire officials want to remind everyone

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that the current fire danger rating remains at **HIGH** and public use restrictions involving chainsaw use, smoking and off-road travel are in effect.

For more information regarding Restrictions, please contact:

Umatilla National Forest:

Information Hotline: Toll-Free (877) 958-9663

www.facebook.com/UmatillaNF Twitter: [@UmatillaNF](https://twitter.com/UmatillaNF)

The latest fire information will be posted on the Blue Mountains Fire Information Blog. To receive updates on fires in the Blue Mountains, follow our blog at <http://bluemountainfireinfo.blogspot.com/>.

Additional information about the Umatilla National Forest is available at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla>.

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