



Eric Riener, Incident Commander, NWIMT13

Tom Clemo, Incident Commander, CAIIMT15

Start date: Aug 15, 2023	Location: Wild Rivers Ranger District	Cause: Lightning
Acres: 73,799	Containment: 7 percent	Personnel: 2,780 for Complex

Smith River Complex North update for Tuesday, August 29, 2023

GRANTS PASS, Ore. – Ground crews continue working day and night on tactical firing along the 4402 road west of Gilligan Butte to protect structures in O’Brien and the Illinois River Valley.

While heavy smoke has prevented helicopters from helping with suppression efforts for several days, another aviation asset is providing a different type of assistance. Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS or drones) equipped with infrared sensors have located several small spot fires not visible through dense smoke. Armed with exact coordinates, fire personnel have been able to locate and extinguish these fires quickly.

Monday’s gusty winds aligned with slopes and drainages, pushing embers up to a mile ahead of the main fire. One concerning spot fire was found late Monday afternoon in the Rock Creek drainage northwest of Gilligan Butte near the junction of the 4402 and 461 roads.

Tactical firing plans are being developed to prevent the threat of fire spread from crossing Road 461 and the 4402 northwest of Gilligan Butte. This is a critical operation to protect the communities along Lone Mountain Road and O’Brien.

Tactical firing operations strengthen a fire line by consuming fuels between the live fire edge and established control lines. They are only implemented when weather and fire behavior are suitable and firefighters monitor conditions carefully throughout the operation to prevent escape.

A weak weather front passing over the fire vicinity today will bring cooler temperatures and gusty winds from the west. After the passage of this front, winds are expected to switch to a north-south alignment Wednesday pushing smoke from the Smith River Complex out of the Illinois River Valley. Helicopters expect to be able to work on the north edge of the fire for the first time in five days although some smoke will still be visible from fires further north.

A Level 3 – GO NOW evacuation remains in place for the Hwy 199 area south of O’Brien from milepost 38 to the state line. A Level 2 – GET SET evacuation is in place for O’Brien and the Takilma area. A Level 1 – GET READY evacuation is in place north to Cave Junction. An American Red Cross evacuation shelter is located at Rogue Community College in Grants Pass. Area residents who need to get out of the smoke can also go to the shelter. Livestock can be sheltered at the Josephine County Fairgrounds.

Due to increased fire activity, the public is encouraged to monitor the Rogue Valley Emergency Management site at <https://rvem.org> for evacuation updates. An interactive Fire First Response Map showing evacuation areas can also be found there.

Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest has implemented an area and road closure order for the Smith River Complex. Visit the forest website for additional information at <https://tinyurl.com/2s4hymku>. The Bureau of Land Management Coos Bay District announced an emergency closure of public lands near the Oregon/California border. For additional information see <https://www.blm.gov/orwafire>.

Fire Information line (8 a.m. – 8 p.m.): 541-801-3495 Email: 2023.smithrivercomplex@firenet.gov Smith River Complex InciWeb: https://bit.ly/SmithRiverCxInci Smith River Complex North Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/smithrivercomplexnorth U.S. Forest Service- Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest: https://www.facebook.com/R6RRSNF/	Rogue Valley Emergency Management: https://www.rvem.org Del Norte County Sheriff's Office: https://www.facebook.com/DelNorteCountySheriffDepartment Del Norte County Office of Emergency Services: https://www.facebook.com/DelNorteOfficeOfEmergencyServices Bureau of Land Management: https://www.blm.gov/orwafire
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