

NORTHWEST INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM 10
INCIDENT COMMANDER: ALAN LAWSON

Petes Lake Fire Update – August 31, 2023 – 10:00 a.m.

Deschutes National Forest and Willamette National Forest

Fire Information: (541) 801-3564 Email: 2023.Peteslake@firenet.gov

Inciweb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/orwif-petes-lake-fire>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PetesLakeFireInfo

Resources: 173 Total Personnel | 3 Hand Crews | 1 Dozer | 4 Helicopters | 6 Engines

Central Oregon – The Petes Lake Fire was started by a lightning strike on Friday, August 25, along the border of the McKenzie River Ranger District of the Willamette National Forest and the Bend Fort-Rock Ranger District of the Deschutes National Forest in the Mink Lake Basin area of the Three Sisters Wilderness. The fire is burning five miles west of Elk Lake and is 318 acres in size. An overnight infrared flight has resulted in more accurate mapping data.

The Petes Lake Fire is burning in a rugged and difficult-to-access Wilderness area and although smoke jumpers and hotshot crews made progress through direct attack during the incident's initial stages, continued direct attack on the fire poses a very high risk to firefighter safety without a significant probability of success. The primary objectives on the Petes Lake Fire are public and firefighter safety, followed by protecting values at risk, and confinement of the fire to the west of the Cascades Lake Highway and within the Wilderness area. Fire managers will focus on the Cascades Lake Highway, identifying and strengthening control features. Infrastructure and other improvements near the highway will be evaluated and protected as needed. Because the majority of our current efforts will be focused in areas that are not directly on the fireline, success on this fire will be measured by meeting the primary objectives rather than by containment percentage.

Yesterday: Two hand crews, supported by a dozer, prepped and continued creating a shaded fuel break on the west side of the Cascade Lakes Highway. The gap in weather and smoke provided the opportunity for a successful reconnaissance flight over the fire and allowed fire staff to refine the map.

Today: Hand crews will continue working on the shaded fuel break along the highway. Resources to support the incident will continue to arrive. The structure protection group will continue to assess structures and develop structure protection plans.

Closures: The closure order on the Willamette and Deschutes National Forests for the Petes Lake Fire remains in place and can be found here: fs.usda.gov/detail/deschutes/news-events/?cid=FSEPRD1134682.

Evacuation: Evacuation notices issued Sunday by the Deschutes County Sheriff remain in place: <https://www.deschutes.org/sheriff/page/emergency-information>.

Level 3 (Go Now) Evacuation notice is issued for all areas west of the Cascade Lakes Hwy from the Lucky Lake Trailhead north to the Mirror Lake Trail.

Level 1 (Be Ready) Pre-Evacuation notice is issued for areas around Elk Lake down to Little Lava Lake. This means “Be Ready” for potential evacuation. Be aware of danger in the area.

Level 2 – (Be Set) to evacuate at a moment’s notice. **(There are no level 2 evacuations currently.)**

Weather: Today, a low-pressure system will move in with the potential to bring intermittent rain for the next 48-72 hours. This system has the potential to generate thunderstorms on Friday and Saturday as well.

Safety: The public can assist fire staff by reducing speed and using caution when driving along the Cascades Lakes Highway.

