



Cow Valley Fire Update for Sunday, July 14, 2024

541-208-4371, staffed 7a.m. to 7 p.m. MDT

2024.cowvalley@firenet.gov

Start date: July 11, 2024	Location: 9 miles east of Ironside, OR	Total personnel: 194
Fire size: 114,559	Cause: Human caused, under investigation	OSFM task forces: 5
Containment: 0%		

Vale, OR— Starting at 6:00 a.m. this morning, the Cow Valley Fire and Bonita Fire are being managed under Unified Command by Oregon State Fire Marshall Red Team and NW Team 6, which are both Complex Incident Management Teams. The Oregon State Fire Marshall Red Team will lead structure protection efforts and defend critical infrastructure. NW Team 6, will focus on fire suppression and request and coordinate wildland firefighting resources including firefighters, engine crews, aviation, and heavy equipment. More resources are being ordered and should arrive over the next several days.

The Malheur County Sheriff's Office has issued evacuation orders, check below for more information or visit the [Malheur County Sheriff's Office Facebook page](#).

The Cow Valley Fire started on July 11 and the cause is under investigation. The fire grew rapidly in size through dry flashy fuels (grass and juniper) due to severe weather conditions conducive to fire including high temperatures, low humidity levels, high winds, and a lack of overnight recovery time. On July 12, 2024 Governor Tina Kotek invoked the Emergency Conflagration Act which mobilized Oregon State Fire Marshall task force units from Marion, Clatsop, Multnomah, Lane, Umatilla counties to Malheur County for the first time in over 30 years.

Yesterday, the Cow Valley Fire grew southeast towards Bully Creek Reservoir and Cottonwood Mountain Lookout Road. Firefighters completed some strategic firing operations from Bully Creek Road to prevent the advancement of the fire towards the geothermal power plant. The fire remains northwest and west of the community of Brogan and west of Hwy 26 near the communities of Jamieson and Vale.

Today, crews will be working to suppress the Cow Valley Fire using direct and indirect attack. Indirect attack will include the creation of fireline, also know as handline or dozer line, some distance away from the fire. Fireline is created by firefighters or heavy equipment when they dig down to the mineral soil to create a perimeter around the fire. Indirect attack also includes the use of water from fire engines and water and retardant drops from aviation. Direct attack tactics will include strategic firing operations to reduce consumable (green) fuels ahead of the fire and to create fireline next to active fire. Firing operations will be minimized the smallest extent possible.

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BONITA FIRE: The Bonita Fire started on July 11 and the cause of it is under investigation. It is currently 2,275 acres. Yesterday, the fire spotted over the fire perimeter, but crews were able to extinguish the flames. Firefighters will continue to mop-up the fire perimeter by removing pockets of heat using water, hand tools, and heavy equipment.

WEATHER AND SMOKE: A red flag warning is in effect until 12:00am Sunday evening. A red flag warning occurs when the weather conditions show high temperatures, low humidity levels, and strong winds. This combination of weather conditions creates unstable conditions and could lead to extreme fire behavior. Thunderstorms are expected to move into the area later this afternoon. Lightning could create new fire starts and firefighters are prepared to address those. Temperatures could reach 104 degrees Fahrenheit today. Winds will be moving southeast at 3-14 mph, with gust up to 60 mph.

Yesterday, smoke from the fire drifted east with the wind during the day and shifted west during the evening. For the current smoke information and the air quality index, visit airnow.gov.

EVACUATIONS AND CLOSURES:

Level 1 – Be Ready – Green

The communities of Westfall and Vale.

- Level 1, or “Get Ready”, evacuation means residents should prepare to evacuate and start packing essentials for themselves, pets, and livestock.

Level 2 – Be Set – Yellow

Residents along Highway 26 from Brogan to Willowcreek. This includes residents located north and west of Range Road (also known as Reservoir Road).

- Level 2, or “Get Set”, evacuation means that there is high danger in the area and residents should prepare to leave at a moment's notice. If you or your family require additional time to evacuate, now is the time to do so.

Level 3 – GO NOW – Red

No locations are under this level of evacuation at this time.

- Level 3, or “Go Now”, evacuation means that there is immediate danger. Leave without delay and do not return until officials announce that the area is safe.

FIRE PREVENTION: A burn ban is currently in effect for all of Malheur County. For more information, visit <https://www.malheurco.org/category/public-notice/>.



[Cow Valley Fire Incident Website](#)

[Cow Valley Fire Facebook](#)

Cow Valley Fire Phone Number: **541-208-4371** (7 a.m. – 7 p.m.)