



## Falls Fire Update for July 17, 2024

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The Falls Fire was less active yesterday than predicted. The fire acreage is now estimated to be 91,269 with 0% containment. The fire is burning approximately 13.5 miles north of Burns, 15 miles southwest of Seneca, and 3 miles west of Highway (Hwy) 395. Hwy 395 was reopened yesterday at approximately noon. Traffic traveling between mile posts 44 and 60 will follow lead vehicles through active firefighting operations.

Yesterday, the fire was not as active and growth was relatively moderate despite predicted conditions. Control lines along much of the south and west portions of the fire, along Forest Service Road (FSR) 43, held firm with only a few problem spots that were lined and mopped up. Significant progress was made at the northwest corner of the fire along FSR 4310 where firefighters were able to “turn the corner” and build direct dozer and hand line. Along the northeast and eastern areas of the fire perimeter, firefighters were able to construct both direct and indirect control lines where conditions allowed for safe operations. At the southeastern corner of the fire, firefighters were able to keep the fire from coming out of the Lake Creek drainage. Efforts to establish dozer line to tie into the Silvies River area over to FSR 3110 area continued to make progress. Mop-up operations continue along FSR 43.

Aerial resources, including five helicopters, six single-engine air tankers (SEATs), two large air tankers (LATs), and two very large air tankers (VLATs) helped to slow the fires growth, and supported firefighters as they made progress constructing and securing containment lines.

Today, fire behavior is predicted to be heavily influenced by multi-directional winds. There is an increased possibility of thunderstorms in the area which will produce downdraft winds. New line construction efforts will focus on extending line from the northwest corner of the fire moving to the east across the northern flank. Crews will construct direct and indirect control lines along the northeast and southeast flanks in the FSR 31 area. Efforts to secure line between FSR 3120 and Lone Pine Road will continue. Mop-up operations will continue on portions of the southern and western areas of the fire along FSR 43. Firefighters will continue to scout for future control lines to the north and east.

Yesterday, Oregon State Fire Marshal structure teams were able to document homes and outbuildings that were lost early on in the fire. Ten residences were lost and thirteen “other” structures were also destroyed. The term “other” could be campground buildings, pump houses, sheds, shops, lean-tos and other small buildings. Information for damaged and lost assets will be delivered to Harney County.

**Community members with questions can contact the Non-Emergency County Information Line at 541-589-5579.**

Last night, OSFM night crews focused on the Lone Pine burnout operations and holding triaged homes along the southern edge of the fire. Today, they will continue patrolling the Hines Logging Road and the Lone Pine Road. Two task forces will continue to identify buildings and complete the triaging process along the 31 Road and Hwy 395. Triaging includes establishing water supply, removing fuels near structures, identifying firefighter hazards, and supporting any burnout operations near assets. Structure firefighters will progressively work their way north to the town of Seneca.

There has been a significant arrival of resources on the fire to help with fire suppression efforts. Currently there are 1,413 personnel on the fire; this includes 48 20-person hand crews, 79 fire engines, 17 bulldozers, and 24 water tenders.

Today's predicted weather includes cloudier conditions with an increased possibility of thunderstorms in the general area around the fire that could produce strong outflow winds. Winds in general are predicted to be erratic, shifting, and multi-directional. Temperature highs will be 90 – 98 degrees and relative humidity around 15%.

Evacuation notices remain in effect in Grant and Harney Counties. For the most accurate evacuation information, please visit the Harney County Sheriff's evacuation map here: <https://tinyurl.com/3zst4sjy>, or the Grant County Emergency Management Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068819321423>.

The Malheur National Forest issued a fire area closure. A detailed map and additional information about the fire area closure are available at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/malheur/news-events/?cid=FSEPRD1188914>. A temporary flight restriction (TFR) remains in place over the fire area.

Please continue to do your part to prevent human caused wildfires and remember that #onlyyoucanpreventwildfires! Know Before You Go and check for fire restrictions in areas you are living and visiting.