



Durkee, Cow Valley, and Bonita Fires Update for Friday, July 26, 2024

541-208-4371, staffed 7AM to 7PM PDT

2024.durkee@firenet.gov

DURKEE FIRE: Start date: July 17, 2024 | Location: 5 miles southwest of Durkee, OR | Personnel: 565 | OSFM Task Forces: 4 | Fire size: 288,690 acres | Cause: Lightning | Containment: 20%

Near critical fire weather conditions persist on the Durkee Fire. 20% containment was gained from Brogan to Dennis on Hwy 26 yesterday. Positive fire behavior effects from precipitation earlier in the week are no longer present in the forecast. Amidst unprecedented fire weather challenges, NW Team 6 is in unified command with the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM). Structural threat is diminishing and OSFM has been working with local partners to ensure they are in a good spot to reengage.

The Durkee Fire is currently the largest fire in the nation. Sandwiched between the Cow Valley Fire footprint to the southwest and the Thompson Fire to the northeast, it is considered a megafire. Megafires are large wildfires that grow to more than 100,000 acres. Its perimeter is 169 miles, comparable to driving from the Oregon towns of Vale to Umatilla.

Fire Front Activity by quadrant

Burnt River, northern fire front: Firefighters are successfully holding the fire with a strategy of direct suppression.

I-84 Corridor, eastern and southwestern flank: Fire is approaching the I-84 corridor north of Rye Valley. South of Lime, the fire is holding. Continuing to secure the cement plant and Shirttail Road are top priorities.

Wide-spread structure mop up within a 100-foot perimeter is a focus for firefighters today. Heavy equipment will be utilized to protect power lines and other infrastructure. Firefighters are focused on attaining containment from Lockett Road around the southern tip of the Durkee Fire footprint to extend the southwest containment line.

Bridgeport to Dark Canyon, northwest fire front: Dark Canyon is an area of concern due to heavier winds and drier conditions at high elevation and a shift in fuel type to more timber, as compared to Durkee Fire's predominant fuels to date: grass, shrubs and sparse Juniper.

Fire Weather Forecast

Today and for the next week, winds will be gusty and variable. In the afternoons, winds are expected to taper to 20mph gusts and come from the south/southeast. North to northwest 40mph gusts will rise into the evening and overnight. This pattern is expected for the next week. Although morning temperatures have dropped significantly, humidity recovery remains poor and only around 20 to 30 percent.

It was reported that blown dust and ash created near to zero visibility along HWY 26 last night.



We continue to see extreme fire behavior that will be challenging. With burn periods projected for 22-24 hours a day, high elevation fuels in the NW quadrant of the Durkee Fire footprint are particularly dry and likely to burn with high rates of spread.

Aerial resources will be coordinated and prioritized between the Badland Complex, Durkee Fire and Vale BLM going forward due to state-wide fires and resource availability.

The [Malheur County Sheriff's Office](#) and the [Baker County Sheriff's Office](#) have issued evacuations for multiple areas through Durkee Fire timeline and some evacuation levels have diminished. Residents in Level 3 Evacuations "GO NOW", should leave immediately. Residents should not return to their property until evacuation levels have been removed. Carry enough supplies to support you and your family for multiple days. A real time map of fire evacuations can be found at the [State of Oregon Fire Dashboard](#).

Weather and fire behavior could impact transportation, power transmission, cell service and other utilities. Monitor these resources for additional information.

- Oregon Department of Transportation - [TripCheck.com](#)
- Idaho Power - [IdahoPower.com](#)
- American Red Cross of Eastern Oregon and Idaho - <https://www.redcross.org/local/idaho.html>

The Durkee Fire is located west of Interstate 84 (I-84). The Thompson Fire, a convergence of lightning fires that started near Thompson Creek on July 22, is located east of I-84. Both have grown rapidly with the persistent high temperatures, strong winds, and extremely dry fuels. Although moderate fire behavior and weather conditions are expected today, be aware of the possibility of fire growth.

BURN BAN: A burn ban is currently in effect for all of Malheur County, including all BLM lands. For more information, visit <https://www.malheurco.org/category/public-notices/>.

TEMPORARY FLIGHT RESTRICTION: There is a temporary flight restriction over the Durkee Fire, please remember, if you fly we can't! If a drone or other aircraft enters the air space, all firefighting aviation equipment will be grounded.

COW VALLEY FIRE: Start date: July 11, 2024 | Location: 9 miles east of Ironside, OR | Personnel: 0 | Fire size: 133,490 acres | Cause: Human caused | Containment: 99%

BONITA FIRE: Start date: July 11, 2024 | Location: 9 miles south east of Ironside, OR | Personnel: 0 | Fire size: 2,727 acres | Cause: Human caused | Containment: 90%

[Cow Valley Fire Incident Website](#)
[Durkee Fire Incident Website](#)
[Durkee and Cow Valley Facebook Page](#)

