

Fire Update – Oakridge Lightning Fires

Chalk, Coffee Pot, McKinley, Moss Mountain, Tire Mountain, 208, and 217 Fires

Tuesday, July 23, 2024 – 11:00 a.m.

Rocky Mountain Complex Incident Management Team 1

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Information Staffing Hours: 8 am to 8 pm



Special Note: This update covers seven wildland fires on the Willamette National Forest being managed by the Rocky Mountain Complex Incident Management Team 1 (CIMT1). The Team assumed command of the fires this morning, July 23, 2024. We thank the Willamette National Forest and initial attack firefighters for setting us up for success as we continue working to suppress these fires.

Current Situation: A lightning storm passing over the Willamette National Forest on July 17 started numerous wildland fires. Rocky Mountain CIMT1 has been delegated authority to manage the seven fires listed below. These fires lie to the north, south, and southeast of Oakridge and Westfir, OR. Local initial attack forces have made good progress on assessing suppression opportunities and safety concerns. Suppression activities are underway on those fires deemed the highest priority. Additional resources are on order to bolster suppression efforts. We are working to get infrared flight coverage of all fires to better assess current acreages and fire perimeters. Coordination of suppression activities with local, state, and industry representatives is ongoing. Information about the fires and our suppression activities will be shared daily through these updates, social media, InciWeb, community information boards, and community meetings as needed.

208 Fire (7 acres, 0% contained) – This fire is lower priority than the fires below because it is entirely within the Diamond Peak Wilderness, presenting no current threat to values at risk. The Pacific Crest Trail, which runs near this fire, is closed within the Wilderness.

217 Fire (26 acres, 0% contained) – This fire is also within Diamond Peak Wilderness and is threatening to spread outside the Wilderness boundary on its north flank. Smokejumpers are currently working to prevent its spread and suppress the fire. A Type 2 initial attack crew will be assigned to the fire today.

Chalk Fire (1,400 acres, 0% contained) – The fire made a run to the southeast and spread across the 19 Road. Crews are using direct attack to put a control line around this area. Mechanized equipment, including two excavators, one dozer, and a feller-buncher are enroute to begin control efforts on the main part of the fire. An objective is to keep the fire north of the 1920 Road and to tie control lines into the 1912 Road. A portion of the fire abuts the 2021 Gales Fire scar, which will slow its progress and assist with control. **NOTE: An earlier erroneous map layer showed the fire had greatly increased in size. Current estimates are that the fire is 1400 acres.**

Coffee Pot Fire (40 acres, 0% contained) – This is a new lightning holdover fire in a rugged difficult to attack location. The fire did not hold where work was completed yesterday. Scooper planes are being used with water from Hills Creek Reservoir to attack the fire.

McKinley Fire (estimated 14 – 16 acres, partially contained) – In steep terrain south of the 19 Road. Three 20-person crews, four engines, and a helicopter are working the fire. Containment is anticipated in the near term.

Moss Mountain Fire (80 acres, 0% contained) – The fire is threatening the Wolf Mountain communications site. Heli-rappellers are working to contain the fire edge. Road 2308 accessing the fire is in rough condition due to slides. Old fires scars may help to limit fire spread.

Tire Mountain Fire (estimated 10 – 15 acres, partially contained) – This fire is in steep old growth timber on a north slope and is accessible to smaller engines by road. Firefighters have made good progress constructing fireline on the west and south sides. Containment is expected in the near term.

Weather and Fire Behavior:

The heat dome that has been over the area for the past seven days is now moving to the east. A northwest air flow is establishing with seasonal temperatures. Nighttime temperatures will be 45-55 with relative humidities of 70-100. An inversion over the area this morning will hold smoke at ground level. The inversion will break around 1:00 pm, allowing temperatures to rise to 70-80 and humidity to lower to 35-40. These conditions will contribute to increasing fire activity in the afternoon, with potential for spotting and increased rates of spread.

Evacuations:

There are no evacuations in place at the present time.

Closures and Fire Restrictions:

Area, road, trail, and recreation site closures are in place on the Willamette National Forest in the vicinity of many active fires. For specific information follow this link: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/willamette/alerts-notices/?cid=fseprd552029>

Fire restrictions on the Willamette National Forest may be found at this link: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/willamette/alerts-notices/?aid=81487>

Wildfires are a no-fly zone for unauthorized aircraft, including drones. **If you fly, we can't.** For more information, visit <http://knowbeforeyoufly.org>.

Fire Statistics: Size and Containment: see above Total Personnel: TBD Location: N & S of Oakridge, OR Reported: various Cause: lightning	For More Information: Information Phone: 541-208-1742 Email: 2024.mossmountain@firenet.gov InciWeb: https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/orwif-oakridge-lightning-fires-2024 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/OakridgeLightningFires2024/
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