

Cougar Creek Fire Daily Update

August 3, 2024



Quick Facts

Size: 19,089 Acres

Start Date: July 15, 2024

Cause: Under investigation

Location: SW of Clarkston, 1 mile west of Hwy 129 and Grand Ronde River intersection

Containment: 35%

Personnel: 503

Fire Strategy: Full suppression

Resources Assigned: 9 crews, 3 helicopters, 37 engines, 14 water tenders, 29 heavy equipment

The Cougar Creek Fire is burning within a mountainous and remote area on the Umatilla National Forest bordering the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness.

Operations: Yesterday fire activity increased significantly due to the higher heat and lower relative humidity, and spot fires crossed FSR 40 near Saddle Butte. Last night firefighters burned out fuels from the dozer line bordering the western edge of the wilderness in an attempt to stop this slopover fire from entering the wilderness, and night shift crews worked to control another spot fire nearby; halting the growth of this new spot fire will be a priority task for fire crews today. Firefighters and aerial resources engaged several spot fires that had ignited west of FSR 40 near Saddle Butte, stopping the progression of these small fires. A large air tanker dropped multiple lines of retardant along a key sector of the fire's western flank and helicopters dropped 100,000 gallons of water in response to the increased fire behavior. Aerial and ground resources will continue working to slow fire growth east of FSR 40 today, as well as control spot fires west of FSR 40.

Firefighters continue to patrol, mop up, and monitor near Grouse Flats to ensure no uptick in fire behavior. Increased fire behavior led to several spot fires near FSR 43; firefighters quickly responded and caught these spot fires before they grew. Fire managers are prioritizing defending the strategically important eastern flank from FSR 43 down to Medicine Creek to prevent the intense interior heat from pushing east of control lines. Fire managers have adjusted staffing to ensure firefighters are available and ready to respond to any increases in fire behavior during the change from day to night shift.

Evacuations and Closures: Forest closure descriptions and maps are available online on the [Umatilla National Forest closure website](#). In Washington, evacuation notices are posted on the [Asotin County Sheriff website](#) and [Asotin County Emergency Management Facebook website](#). Grande Ronde Road is closed from Troy, Oregon, to the Highway 129 junction in Washington. A level 2 evacuation remains in effect for all of Grouse Flat from Bear Creek Road north to the State boundary and the Garfield County line to Grande Ronde River. The TFR remains in effect: <https://bit.ly/4duptei>. Drone activity is prohibited under the TFR as firefighting aircraft cannot fly with unauthorized drones present. Please respect road and area closure orders and use extra caution while driving for your safety as well as our firefighters.

Weather and Smoke: The fire area experienced a continuing heating and drying trend, with poor nightly recovery rates. Storm cells are expected to build through the weekend and the increased winds are conducive to thunderstorms with dry lightning. Any precipitation will be at higher elevations. Learn more about smoke at <http://wasmoke.blogspot.com/>.

InciWeb: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/wases-cougar-creek-fire>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CougarCreekFire2024>

Fire Information Line: 509-210-2928, 8 AM to 6 PM

Email: 2024.cougarcreek@firenet.gov