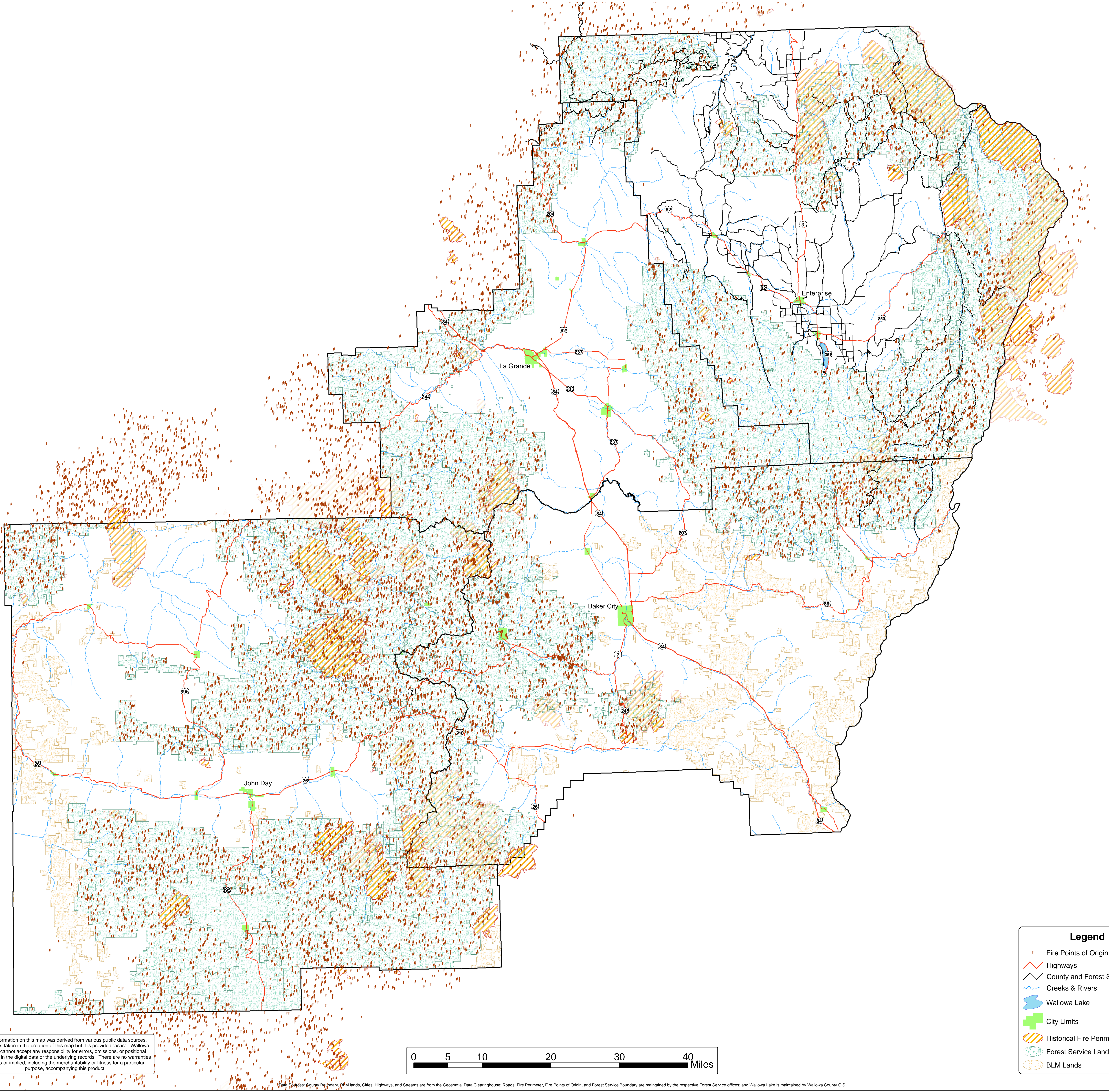
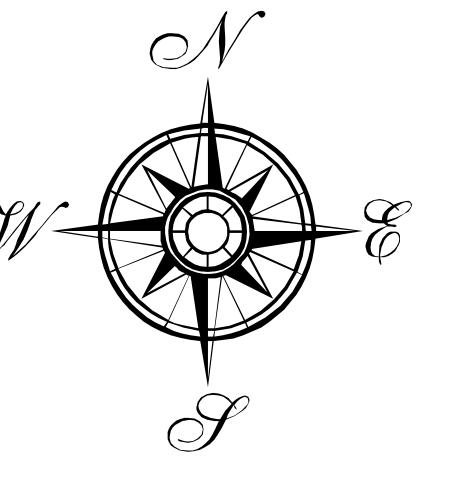


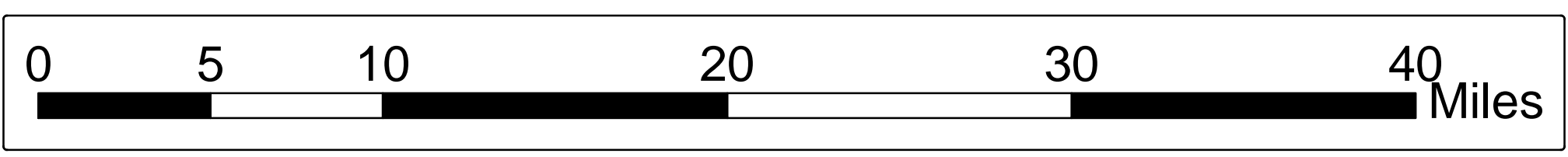
Hazard Annex

Wildfire

Natural Hazard Mitigation Area: Historical Fires



The information on this map was derived from various public data sources. Care was taken in the creation of this map but it is provided "as is". Wallowa County cannot accept any responsibility for errors, omissions, or positional accuracy in the digital data or the underlying records. There are no warranties express or implied, including the merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, accompanying this product.









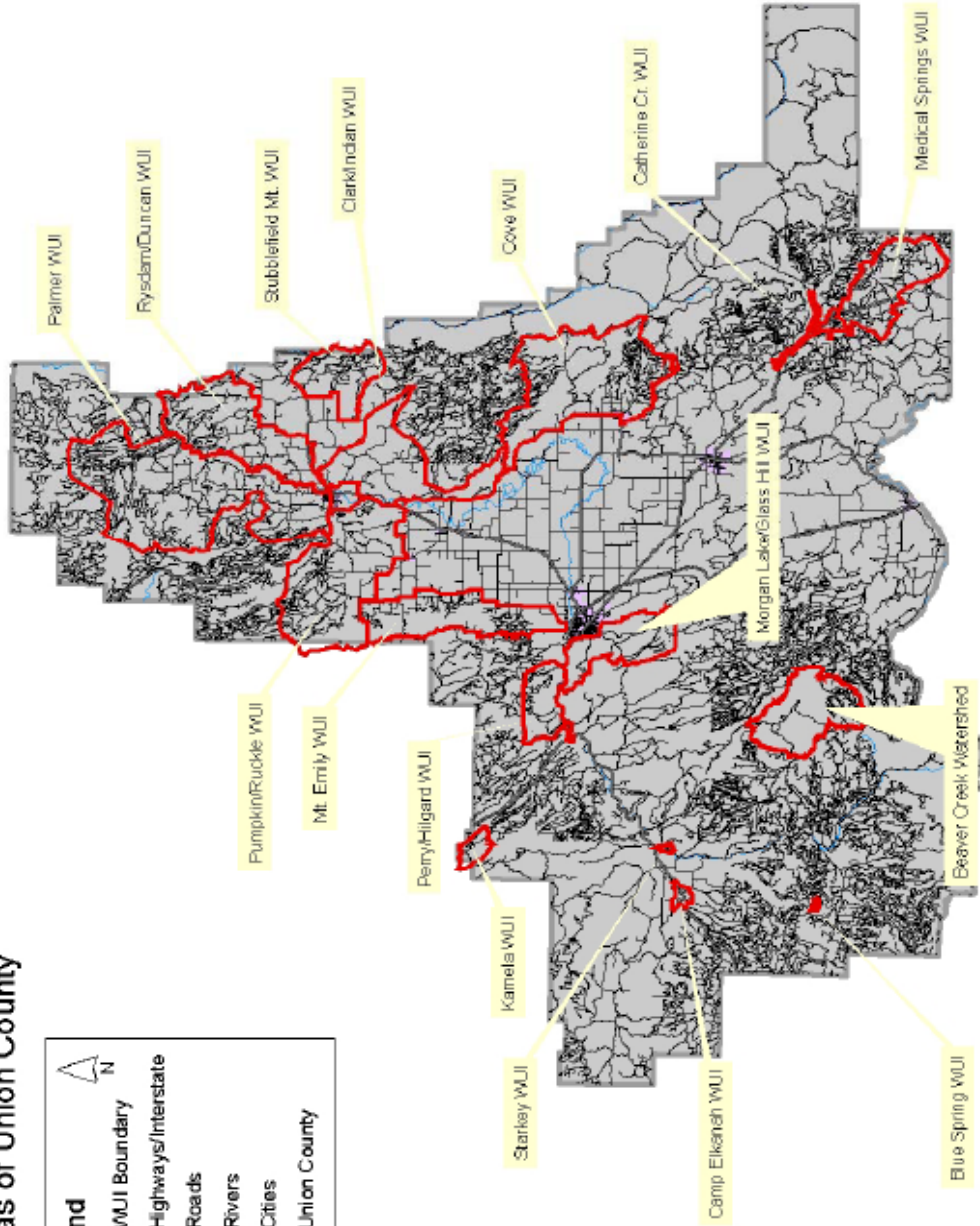
- Legend**
- Fire Points of Origin
 - Highways
 - County and Forest Service Roads
 - Creeks & Rivers
 - Wallowa Lake
 - City Limits
 - Historical Fire Perimeters
 - Forest Service Lands
 - BLM Lands

Map Symbols: County Boundary, BLM lands, Cities, Highways, and Streams are from the Geospatial Data Clearinghouse; Roads, Fire Perimeter, Fire Points of Origin, and Forest Service Boundary are maintained by the respective Forest Service offices; and Wallowa Lake is maintained by Wallowa County GIS.

WUI Areas of Union County

Legend

-  WUI Boundary
-  Highways/Interstate
-  Roads
-  Rivers
-  Cities
-  Union County



For Visual Display Only



Northwest Oregon District 65E-46
 La Grande, OR
 July 25, 2005

Crews scramble as stray lightning sets off scattering of new fires

Published: August 7, 2007

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

The second batch of lightning bolts in as many days sparked at least eight wildfires in Northeastern Oregon Monday, but the high-voltage squalls also splattered rain on the flames.

Those showers, combined with lower temperatures and higher humidities, helped fire crews quickly douse each of the new blazes.

Meanwhile an older and much larger fire, which was ignited by lightning in late July in a wilderness area north of Granite, continued to grow Monday, albeit relatively slowly.

The biggest of Monday's new blazes, on Mount Emily north of La Grande, burned half an acre. A second fire, near the Minam Canyon overlook on Highway 82 east of Elgin, scorched a quarter-acre; the six other blazes were all smaller than one-tenth of an acre.

"We had some pretty heavy precipitation directly under the storm clouds," said Dennis Winkler, assistant fire management officer for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. "We actually had a little bit of good luck."

Good timing, too.

Forests and rangelands are so dry, Winkler said, that each lightning bolt is more likely than usual to kindle a fire. And a single thunderstorm can spawn dozens, even hundreds, of bolts.

"The fuels are ready to burn," Winkler said.

Rain, or just a boost in humidity, can impede a fire's spread for several hours, he said — enough time, in many cases, for firefighters to hack control lines around the guttering flames.

Conversely, lightning fires sometimes smolder, undetected, for days, before blossoming on a hot, dry, blustery afternoon.

"In that case they can be off to the races in a hurry," Winkler said.

The Trout Meadows fire certainly got ahead of fire crews on Friday.

Fire officials believe lightning sparked the fire on July 26, but it wasn't until Friday, eight days later, that the blaze attained any momentum.

In less than two days flames spread over more than 2,000 acres near the northeast corner of the North Fork John Wilderness, about 10 miles north of Granite and 12 miles west of Anthony Lakes.

The Trout Meadows fire grew by about 550 acres on Monday, to an estimated 2,710 acres this morning, said Paul Galloway, an information officer at the fire camp in Ukiah.

The fire moved south, downhill toward the North Fork of the John Day River, Galloway said.

As of this morning the blaze did not pose a threat to the river's runs of chinook salmon and steelhead, he said.

Firefighters have built control lines along about 15 percent of the fire's perimeter, and their goal is to keep the flames north of the river, Galloway said. About 550 people are assigned to the Trout Meadows fire, and the firefighting tab totaled \$1.2 million as of this morning.

To reduce damage to the ground, crews are not using bulldozers or other heavy equipment inside the wilderness, Galloway said. The Umatilla National Forest has, however, temporarily waived the ban on chainsaws in the wilderness so that crews can use saws as they build fire lines.

Sections of Forest Roads 52 and 51 north and east of the fire remain closed to the public, Galloway said. That means travelers can't drive from Granite or Anthony Lakes to either Ukiah or Starkey. However, Forest Road 73, the Elkhorn Drive Scenic Byway, remains open between Granite and Anthony Lakes.

Most of the North Fork John Day Wilderness north of Crane Creek Trail is closed to the public. A complete list of closures is posted on the Umatilla National Forest's Web site:
www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/

Due to the extreme fire danger, restrictions on campfires, off-road vehicle driving and smoking remain in effect on public and private lands in Northeastern Oregon.

Other fires

- * Crawfish Lake, two miles southwest of Anthony Lake
- * Blue Springs Summit, along Granite Highway between Sumpter and Granite
- * Chicken Hill, five miles west of Anthony Lakes
- * Camp Carson Mine, three miles northeast of Anthony Lakes
- * Smith Mountain, north of Wallowa
- * Glass Hill, near Ladd Canyon

FIRES FORCE LAND-USE RESTRICTIONS

Published: July 9, 2007

By MIKE FERGUSON

mferguson@bakercityherald.com

A string of lightning-caused fires forced county officials to restrict use in the county's unprotected areas this morning and convinced federal officials to take similar action effective a minute after midnight Tuesday.

Three Baker County fires, including one in steep terrain near Unity, were still being monitored this morning.

Friday's lightning, which was concentrated in the southern portion of Baker County, started 13 area fires — nine in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, three on Oregon Department of Forest protected lands and one inside the North Powder Rural Fire District. Ten of those fires were contained or controlled at less than one acre in size, forest officials reported.

Two others — the Park Fire, a seven-acre fire a mile west of Granite Mountain in the East Eagle Creek area and the five-acre fire three miles west of Cornucopia near East Eagle Creek — were close to containment this morning, said Judy Wing, public affairs officer for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

By this morning, the Ironside Complex fire on Ironside Mountain southeast of Unity had grown to nearly 700 acres, a spokeswoman for the Bureau of Land Management said. Two national Hot Shot crews were on the scene advancing to the interior of the fire this morning to help battle the fire burning in country with steep terrain with limited accessibility.

The fire burned early in the weekend in grass, brush and scattered juniper on private land protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry. Firefighters contained the blaze by Sunday using bulldozers, hand crews and ODF engines. The fire is being mopped up and patrolled by fire engines, according to Wing.

Upon the advice of the state fire marshal, Baker County Commission Chair Fred Warner Jr. put about 300,000 acres of unprotected lands into regulated use closure. While that's an annual event in Baker County — especially during drought years — it's a little early in the season, he said.

County commissioners will vote on the formal declaration during their regular meeting Wednesday morning.

Prohibited actions within the county's unprotected lands include:

- o Smoking while traveling, except in vehicles on improved roads, in boats on the water or in cleared areas.

- o Open fires, except in permitted burn barrels.
- o Debris burning, except in burn barrels.
- o Non-industrial chain saw use between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.
- o Off-road use of any motorized vehicle, except on improved roads.
- o Mowing of dried and cured grass between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Federal public-use restrictions take effect at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, said Wallowa-Whitman Forest Supervisor Steve Ellis.

Matt Reidy, the Forest's fire management officer, said the restrictions are necessary because "long-range weather predictions indicate a continuation of hot, dry weather conditions" and "potential for large wildfires."

According to a U.S. Forest Service press release, public-use restrictions prohibit campfires outside of designated recreation sites. Liquified and bottle gas stoves and heaters may be used for cooking and heating.

Under the restrictions, motorized travel off developed Forest roads and trails is not allowed, except to get to a campsite within 300 feet of the road. At this time, there is no restriction on firewood cutting.

The public use restrictions for the Wallow-Whitman National Forest allow the use of campfires in the Eagle Cap Wilderness, with the exception of standard campfire restrictions in parts of the Wilderness.

A regulated closure on private land in northeast Oregon protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry will take effect at the same time federal restrictions apply.

Near Baker City, here are the federal and state recreation areas where campfires are allowed:

- o Anthony Lakes campground and picnic area.
- o Grande Ronde Lake campground and day use.
- o McCully Forks campground.
- o Millers Lane campground.
- o Mowich Loop picnic site.
- o Mud Lake campground.
- o Peavy Cabin.
- o Southwest Shore campground.
- o Union Creek campground and picnic area.

In the Unity area, campfires are allowed at the Anglers Guard station, Elk Creek campground, Oregon campground, South Fork campground, Stevens Creek campground, Wetmore campground and Yellow Pine campground.

Near Halfway, they're permitted in these places: Eagle Forks campground, Fish Lake campground, Lake Fork campground, McBride campground, Tamarack campground, and Twin Lakes campground.

For more information, visit this Web site: www.fs.fed.us/r6/w-w/

Red Mountain fire jumps control lines

Published: September 14, 2006

By JAYSON JACOBY

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Gusty winds on Wednesday invigorated the two wildfires burning in Baker County, but officials said the chilly rain that dampened both blazes overnight should help crews subdue the fires today.

"It's definitely good weather for firefighting," said Virginia Gibbons, a spokeswoman at the Red Mountain fire camp near the Anthony Lakes Highway.

Steve Butterworth, who's Gibbons' counterpart at the Clear Creek fire north of Halfway, agreed.

"Today's going to be a good day to knock the fire down," Butterworth said this morning.

Wednesday wasn't so good.

The blustery cold front that barged into Baker County from the north lifted airborne embers across control lines at the southeast corner of the 840-acre Red Mountain fire, Gibbons said.

Those embers ignited a blaze that spread across 30 acres Wednesday afternoon.

"The main objective today is to build a new line around that area," Gibbons said.

The 11,800-acre Clear Creek fire advanced across about 1,300 acres on Wednesday, and flames crept into the Fish Lake campground about 20 miles north of Halfway, Butterworth said.

Crews wrapped fire-deflecting foil around outhouses to protect the structures, he said.

Several air tankers and helicopters dumped fire-retardant and water on the fire as it moved east and northeast.

"We had quite an air show," Butterworth said.

The fire fizzled overnight, though, as the temperature plummeted and rain started falling about 2 a.m.

"We don't have a rain gauge, but the rain hitting my tent kept me awake for at least half an hour," Butterworth said this morning. "Things are really wet and cool."

The temperature at 5 a.m. was 39 degrees, and fog was draped over Fish Lake at 8:30, Butterworth said.

Fire officials have not canceled any of the road, trail and area closures around either fire.

Butterworth said he expects officials will re-open the road to Cornucopia within the next couple days, however. The Clear Creek fire no longer poses an imminent threat to the historic ghost town or to a brand-new 4,000-square-foot guest lodge, but firefighters have not removed the thousands of feet of hose that snake across the road, Butterworth said.

The Elkhorn Drive Scenic Byway remains closed in the Anthony Lakes area, Gibbons said.

FIRE CREWS CORRAL BLAZES

Published: August 18, 2007

UKIAH— Firefighters continue to contain the wildfires sparked in the mountains around Ukiah by Wednesday's lightning storm.

Friday fire crews were busy constructing fire lines around six of the 29 blazes burning on Umatilla National Forest and Oregon Department of Forestry acreage.

The remaining fires were in various stages of mop-up. Crews were actively extinguishing all burning materials to further prevent any escape fire. Many of the fires were discovered early and had relatively good ground access so that fire crews could take quick action on them before they became large fires.

Today, windy conditions are predicted with rain in the forecast for Sunday. Temperatures are expected to be 10 degrees cooler Sunday.

The status of the major fires that the fire crews were taking action on is as follows:

- **Owen Butte:** Several fires have burned together, and unburned fuels are present within the fire perimeter. Night crews conducted burn-out operations to secure the fire perimeter and consolidate multiple fires.
- **Hidaway:** Fire line has been built around the fire, and structural protection resources will be released today.
- **Sugarbowl:** Fire is completely lined and mop-up is continuing. Smoke in the afternoon may be visible due to interior islands of unburned fuels.
- **Camas:** Fire is lined and very few smokes are present. Highway 244 is the southern boundary of the fire.
- **Incident 244** (two miles north of Hidaway Springs) and Incident 246 (north of Owen Butte): Fires are lined and mop-up is very far along.
- **The Otter Creek Fire**, located near Round Meadows, grew to approximately 2,500 acres. The Umatilla National Forest decided to assign a separate group, the Blue Mountain Interagency Incident Management Team, to attend to the fire.

The Otter Creek Fire is near Otter Creek, about 14 miles southeast of Ukiah, and is burning in fairly steep, remote country. This fire has a high potential to grow. Firefighters are working against the difficulty of the terrain and the abundance of fuels. There are no structures threatened. The main concern is to protect vital fish habitat and popular hunting areas.

The public is asked to watch out for fire equipment on Road 46.

Due to extremely fire conditions, public use restrictions remain in effect and a complete campfire ban has been imposed on the following state and federal lands in Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington: Umatilla NF, Malheur NF, Wallowa-Whitman NF, BLM lands in the Burns BLM District and Oregon State Parks in the Northeast Oregon ODF Protection area.

CREWS GAIN GROUND ON AREA WILDFIRES

Published: August 10, 2007

The southern fire line of the 3,570-acre Trout Meadows Fire 30 miles southeast of Ukiah is close to being connected.

Fire crews are constructing the line in some remote areas and must walk great distances into the North Fork John Day Wilderness, the Forest Service reported. To minimize the risk to the firefighters and to maximize their time along the perimeter of the fire, crews have been camping at Moon Meadows — about one mile from the southwest corner of the fire.

The Forest Service said helicopter support is critical in this remote area because of the numerous spot fires that have been discovered in the past few days and lower humidity that will increase the chance of additional ignitions.

The fire is 35 percent contained as 631 firefighters, five helicopters, 14 fire engines, nine water tankers and a dozer are working to suppress the fire. Crews are continuing to use minimum impact suppression tactics within the wilderness area. Full containment is expected Aug. 15.

Closures are still in effect, including portions of Forest Service Roads 51 and 52, due to firefighting traffic and heavy smoke in the area. Numerous road, trail and area closures are also in effect near the fire. The public is advised to visit the Umatilla National Forest web site, <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/>, for latest information.

Suppression results for the Battle Creek Fire near Joseph also looked good Thursday, but that fire is far from dead. The fire was calm Thursday with smoke emerging from heavy fuels. The potential for flare-ups exists when heavy fuels dry out.

This morning fire suppression efforts were turned over to a professional Type III organization. Resources remaining will be operating out of Memaloose, near Hat Point Lookout, where the incident command post will be situated. At 79,299 acres, the fire is 80 percent contained. A reduction in total personnel to 135, and the subsequent reduction in all resource categories reflect the smaller Type III organization.

Travelers are advised to use extreme caution while driving on Highway 39 due to hazardous conditions from heavy fire traffic.

Public and industrial restrictions remain in place. For specific details on closures and restrictions, go online to the Wallowa-Whitman web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/w-w/>.

CREWS CONTAIN ELGIN WILDFIRES

Published: August 9, 2007

Fire crews made good progress Wednesday with both the Gordon Creek and Beehive fires northwest of Elgin.

Crews focused on holding and improving control lines and began mop-up. The mop-up work is extensive on both fires due to the amount of downed material within the perimeters of the fires. Crews will continue to mop-up and monitor fires in the coming days.

The Gordon Creek Fire was contained at 17 acres, and the Beehive contained at five acres. The causes of both fires are still under investigation.

Oregon Department of Forestry officials have announced that due to the extreme fire hazard conditions in the area, additional restrictions on private industrial lands will go into effect at 12:01 a.m. Friday. These regulations prohibit the use of mechanized harvesters with high-speed rotary saws, tracked felling or skidding equipment, slash busting equipment and cable yarding systems between the hours of 1 and 8 p.m. local time, except when working at landings.

The public is reminded that a regulated closure is in effect on private land and public use restrictions are in effect on federal land. All burn permits issued by Northeast Oregon District have been canceled. In addition, other city, county and rural fire agencies may have cancelled open burning. Please check restrictions before conducting any activity on private land or on public land.

For more information, go online to the state or federal forests at websites www.odf.state.or.us/areas/eastern/northeast/default.asp or www.fs.fed.us/r6/w-w.

WILDFIRES FLARE UP NEAR ELGIN, RESIDENTS EVACUATED

Published: August 8, 2007

- Mardi Ford
- The Observer

Some rural residents northwest of Elgin were evacuated Tuesday when a fire broke out around 5 p.m., threatening several residences in the Gordon Creek area four miles out of town.

The initial attack on the fire was swift with a joint effort by crews with the Elgin, La Grande, Imbler, Cove and Union rural fire protection districts and the Sammyville Volunteers. The effort was aided by Oregon Department of Forestry resources including seven engines, three dozers, one helicopter, one air tanker and air attack.

The cause of the fire is undetermined, said Jamie Knight with the ODF. Knight also said evacuated residents did return to their homes last night.

The Gordon Creek Fire was 60 percent contained by this morning after burning approximately 15 acres. Full containment is expected sometime today with a Type III incident commander marshaling miscellaneous overhead support along with ground resources including two 20-person hand crews, four engines, two water tenders and a dozer.

Knight said crowning and torching fire behavior was still occurring and that mop-up efforts were challenging firefighters due to the heavily timbered overstory in the canopy. In addition, the ground is thick with dead and downed trees and other fuels, she said.

Interestingly, a second fire in the same area four miles northwest of Elgin was reported at the same time Tuesday. Responders to the Beehive Fire included two Elgin and one Cove rural fire district engines, three ODF engines and the landowner's dozer.

That fire has burned 3 acres in ponderosa pine with brush understory combined with some dead and downed material. Some individual tree torching was also observed. Although the fire is 90 percent contained, Knight said mop-up activities would be extensive because of the amount of material burning on the ground.

A Type IV incident commander managing three engines and an eight-person hand crew are assigned to the day shift for mop-up and patrolling established control lines.

The causes of both fires is under investigation. Knight wouldn't comment on whether the two were related. However, she repeated that the public needs to remember a regulated closure is in effect on private land and public use restrictions are in effect on federal land.

All burn permits issued by Northeast Oregon District have been canceled and the county has canceled open burning.

Other new fires in the area included eight from Monday's lightning storm. They were ignited in the Elkhorn Mountains, Mount Emily area and Minam vicinity — three on ODF-protected lands and five on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

By Tuesday morning, initial attack crews had contained all of the fires, the largest of which reached one-half acre.

CREWS CONTINUE MAKING PROGRESS ON AREA WILDFIRES

Published: July 28, 2007

Aided by scattered rainfall in the past few days, fire crews continue to make progress containing diminishing wildland blazes across Northeast Oregon.

Two of the smaller fires in Hells Canyon's Battle Creek Complex, Grizzly Ridge and Deep Creek, were declared contained on Friday. Lightning started the fires July 14.

The Battle Creek Fire proper, listed at 60,977 acres, continues to expand to the north, but burnout operations have met with success along the boundaries.

Crews hope to confine the fire to the east side of Summit Ridge, and strive to check the burn's northern progress, forecasted at up to 2 miles an hour, in the vicinity of Somers Point, on the eastern edge of the Lord Flat Plateau.

The Monument Complex Fire, three miles northeast of Monument, continued to burn with Friday's drying fuels and increased winds. Nonetheless, the Northeast Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center (NOIDC) reports that "most of the fire ... is in mop-up status, and crews are working in 100-degree weather to extinguish all remaining hot spots within 300 feet of the fire perimeter."

The Monument Fire, sparked on July 13, is currently listed at 54,000 acres and 70 percent containment. Crews are focusing on stabilizing the soil in the burned area, according to the NOIDC.

Oregon Department of Forestry and Forest Service fire crews quickly contained the Pole Creek Fire, ignited by lightning July 26 four miles south of the Unity Reservoir.

Updated fire information may be accessed at www.inciweb.org.

Details on road closures and public use restrictions on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest are listed at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/w-w/conditions/index.shtml>.

HELLS CANYON FIRES KEEP CREWS HOPPING

Published: July 21, 2007

- Ethan Schowalter-Hay
- The Observer

Hells Canyon is presently living up to its name, as wildfires rage on both sides of the Snake River.

Stoked by Friday afternoon's high winds and low humidity, the Battle Creek Complex and Poe Cabin blazes kept fire crews in the rough breaks country busy.

On the east side of the gorge, the Poe Cabin Fire, sparked by lightning on July 18, spread to around 12,800 acres, an increase of at least 8,000 acres since Friday morning.

The fire is burning six miles southwest of White Bird, Idaho. Its coverage extends from the Snake River to the west, Highrange Ridge to the north and Deer Creek Road to the south. Firefighters were temporarily removed from the scene Friday afternoon for safety reasons.

Active fire behavior such as torching, running, and spotting has been observed, and crews expect similar volatility with today's high temperatures, erratic winds, and low

relative humidity. The fire is currently listed at 0 percent containment.

Residents in Getta Creek and Deer Creek were evacuated Friday, and structures in the Twin Creek subdivision and the Pittsburgh Landing area are undergoing protective evaluation.

Road 493 to Pittsburgh Landing is closed except to fire-related traffic. And in the Nez Perce National Forest, Boise Trail Road 420 and Crooked Road 672 are closed, as is the Bureau of Land Management's Hammer Creek Campground.

Strong winds from the southwest also enlarged Oregon's Battle Creek Complex Fire, composed of the Battle Creek, Grizzly Ridge, and Deep Creek burns. The current size listed is 27,398 acres, but the Pacific Northwest Incident Management Team reported this morning that an infrared flight late Friday "indicated a significant increase in acreage."

Wind-whipped fire spread into feeder canyons north of Saddle Creek and across the Hat Point Lookout area, although the Incident Management Team reported the lookout itself "was not lost." Along the southern boundary, fires spread into Buck Creek.

Some structures are threatened; a crew will wrap the Sand Creek Cabin today.

Crews hope to keep the fire contained within Hells Canyon proper, and thus concentrated their efforts along Summit Ridge, the long divide between the Imnaha and Snake rivers.

The Grizzly Ridge and Deep Creek fires, the smaller components of the complex, did not spread notably Friday.

Despite "unprecedented levels of (fire) intensity," the Incident Team stated that "good progress is being made and containment is expected on Aug. 20."

The complex is currently at 15 percent containment. Firefighters from 21 states are assisting.

The Trout Creek Fire, 20 miles southeast of Union in the Wallowa Mountains, is still listed at 514 acres and 45 percent containment. But a large spot fire along the South Fork Catherine Creek drainage, when mapped, will increase the coverage. Crews are expected to concentrate on this spot fire today.

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest reports that the Cottonwood Fire about 30 miles northeast of Wallowa is now contained.

Closures remain in effect for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. They are listed at www.fs.fed.us/r6/w-w/conditions/orders/index.shtml.

There are currently 313,943 acres ablaze in Oregon. The largest fire remains the Egley Complex in the high desert near Burns.

Updated fire information may be accessed at www.inciweb.org.

WILDFIRES KEEP CREWS HOPPING

Published: July 17, 2007

- Mardi Ford
- The Observer

Oregon currently has the dubious distinction of leading the nation's wildfire incidents with 15 large fires burning over more than 197,000 acres.

Four of Oregon's new large fires reported Monday include two in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest — the Trout Creek Fire and the Battle Creek Complex.

Twenty miles southeast of Union, the Trout Creek fire reportedly grew to approximately 380 acres Monday afternoon. However, Wallowa-Whitman Public Affairs Officer Judy Wing said conditions are so smoky it is hard to get an accurate report on acreage.

The fire is burning on the east side of Trout Creek and northwest of West Eagle Meadow in patchy sub-alpine fir in three drainages and on ridge tops.

Monday afternoon District Ranger Kurt Wiedenmann confirmed the fire had crossed the northeast line into the Eagle Cap Wilderness Area.

Wednesday, the Rocky Mountain Management Team will be at the fire camp situated at Taylor Green. The team will transition into management of the fire, Wiedenmann said.

The Battle Creek Complex of four fires stretches from approximately 28 miles northeast of Enterprise to southeast of Hells Canyon Dam on the Idaho side. It is reportedly at 2,945 acres with zero containment. These fires are burning in timber and grass. Hydroelectric facilities and power lines are now threatened. Base camp for the Central Oregon Type I Interagency Management Team managing the fire is at the Wallowa County Fairgrounds.

Crews from the Oregon Department of Forestry are in steep, rugged terrain about 30 miles northeast of Wallowa where the Cottonwood Creek Fire is now estimated at 3,600 acres. That fire was started by lightning Friday evening and quickly spread through grass, brush and scattered timber.

An ODF incident management team headed by Tom Savage took over management of the fire Sunday so firefighters from the Wallowa Unit could return to regular fire patrol and control responsibilities.

The team's goal is to establish and secure fire control lines and stop the fire's spread. By Monday afternoon, the fire perimeter was 15 percent contained due to the efforts of 302 personnel, including 13 hand crews, two fire engines, three bulldozers and three helicopters.

For public safety, temporary road and trail closures have been put in effect. It is anticipated more closures, including some areas, will be added near the fires. The most current closure information is can be found online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/w-w/conditions/orders/index.shtml>.

AREA WILDFIRES HEAT UP

Published: July 16, 2007

- Mardi Ford
- The Observer

The smoky haze over the Grande Ronde Valley indicates just how busy fire crews were during the hot, dry weekend, as several new lightning fires grew significantly in size.

Eleven fires were reported on Saturday — one on both state and national forest land, two on land protected by Oregon Department of Forestry and the rest on land protected by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

The 2,500-acre Cottonwood Creek Fire is burning at the confluence of Horse Creek and Trail Creek, 35 miles north of Enterprise.

The lightning-caused fire began Friday. Based out of the Thomason Meadows Guard Station, ODF Fire Team No. 1 began management of the fire Sunday afternoon. They report it is moving fast in steep terrain and exhibiting active fire behavior with running, torching and spotting.

Twenty miles southeast of Union, the 100-acre Trout Creek Fire is burning on the east side of Trout Creek about 2 miles northwest of West Eagle Meadow. La Grande District Forest Service crews report it is burning in patchy sub-alpine fir in drainages and on ridge tops and is moving northeast toward the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

A 30-acre fire started by lightning 10 miles southeast of La Grande was staffed by local ODF engines and crews who lined the fire Saturday and worked on mop-up Sunday.

In addition, the Battle Creek Complex of four fires totaling 2,350 acres is located southeast of Hells Canyon Dam on the Idaho side. Base camp for the Central Oregon Type I Interagency Management Team is at the Wallowa County Fairgrounds.

On the Umatilla National Forest, the 1,000-acre Juniper Canyon Fire 40 miles west of Milton-Freewater was 75 percent contained as of Sunday.

The Pendleton fire dispatch center also reports that a number of lightning-caused fires have merged into one large fire burning on 21,000 acres of Umatilla National Forest 15 miles north of Monument. And the Bear Creek Fire on the South Fork of the Walla Walla River has grown to 75 acres.

HIGHWAY 3 REOPENS AFTER BEING CLOSED BY WILDFIRE

Published: September 2, 2006

ENTERPRISE — The north end of Highway 3 in Wallowa County has been reopened to traffic, following closure because of a forest fire.

Motorists, however, are being urged to use extra care on the route because of the presence of fire crews and equipment. They were also being asked to use alternate routes when possible.

The north end of the highway was closed Tuesday afternoon near the Washington State border to protect travelers during initial fire fighting operations for the Applegate Fire. ODOT said the highway was reopened about 8:30 p.m. Thursday.

ODOT and the Oregon Forestry Department will monitor potential fire related hazards and use flaggers and pilot cars during the day when fire fighting operations are taking place and equipment may be on the highway.

Travelers are advised to plan for extra travel time while taking this highway.

Flaggers and pilot cars will be used as long as necessary to help reduce the risk to firefighters and motorists, said Mike Buchanan, ODOT District 13 manager.

ODOT advised that while the route is scheduled to be open during the Labor Day weekend, the highway could be closed again without notice, if conditions worsen.

For updated information on this highway and other current travel information throughout Oregon, visit www.tripcheck.com, or call the toll-free Oregon road report at 511, or 1-800-977-6368.

The Applegate Fire, near Flora along Highway 3, started Tuesday. By Friday, it had grown to 169 acres. At 11 a.m. Friday, it was estimated to be 70 percent contained.

SHARP'S RIDGE FIRE CUTS LOOSE

Published: August 22, 2006

A wildfire reported Saturday, burning on both Umatilla and Malheur National Forest lands, has grown to approximately 500 acres.

Believed to be a holdover from a lightning strike, the Sharp's Ridge fire is 30 miles southwest of Ukiah and 26 miles northeast of John Day.

Due to the steep terrain, heavy accumulation of dead and down trees and limited access for ground resources, the fire is zero percent contained.

With Monday's weather forecast of high temperatures, low humidity and dry lightning, forest officials are expecting significant fire behavior.

The fire is burning in the Jumpoff Joe Roadless Area and Vinegar Hill Indian Rock Scenic Area. A lookout and campground are threatened.

Roads north of the Middle Fork of the John Day River, in the Susanville area, are temporarily closed due to fire activity. Road closures in the Desolation area may impact hunters' plans for the upcoming opening weekend of archery season. Hunters should check with the appropriate Forest Service office for updated closures and restrictions before heading out.

The Malheur National Forest roads north of the Middle Fork of the John Day River, in the Susanville area, that have been temporarily closed due to fire activity include Forest Roads 45, 4550, 2090 along Big Creek, 893 along Mosquito Creek, road 914 and road 045. These roads are closed beginning at their junction with County Road 20.

Umatilla National Forest roads in the Desolation area temporarily closed due to fire activity include portions of Forest road 10 along Desolation Creek and all National Forest Road 10 collector roads along that road segment. Umatilla National Forest trail 3026 in the Desolation area is also temporarily closed.

The Central Oregon Incident Management Team No. 2 will assume management of the Sharp's Ridge fire today. Local initial attack resources will be released and made available to fight newly reported fires.

Over the weekend, three 20-person crews and two dozers were ordered to assist the two 20-person crews, smokejumpers, rappellers, two dozers and skidgen assigned to the fire Sunday.

Aerial support continues with multiple heavy air tanker and single-engine air tanker retardant drops and helicopter bucket work.

On the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, lightning activity during the weekend started 10 small fires all less than one acre in size, except one 50-acre fire in the north end. That fire is burning four miles northwest of the Billy Meadows Guard Station.

Crews are working to establish a perimeter around the fire. Containment is expected today.

TWO SMALL WILDFIRES BURNING NORTH OF WALLOWA

Published: August 19, 2006

WALLOWA — Two wildfires are burning on either side of the Grande Ronde River north of Wallowa.

The Harlow Springs 25-acre fire is 21 miles north of Wallowa.

It was reported about 5 p.m. Thursday, and containment was estimated at about 25 percent as of Friday afternoon.

This fire on the north side of the Grande Ronde River on ODF-protected lands, along with the nearby Sickfoot Fire on the south side of the river, were caused by lightning strikes Thursday.

The fire, managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry's Wallowa Unit with assistance from other ODF resources, is mid-slope in steep terrain. On the fire Friday were eight rappellers, two 10-person inmate crews, one 10-person U.S. Forest Service hand crew, a strike team of USFS severity engines and two tenders.

Thursday, two helicopters and an air tanker, in addition to two engines, two USFS hand crews and eight rappellers, were used on the fire. Total personnel on the fire is 55.

The Sickfoot Fire, meanwhile, is 20 miles north of Wallowa along the south side of the Grande Ronde River.

The 16-acre fire on ODF-protected lands was contained at about midnight Thursday. It was reported about 4 p.m. It was managed by ODF's Wallowa Unit. Resources on the fire included a dozer, five engines, a helicopter and a 10-person inmate crew. Rural fire departments also provided assistance. Working on the fire Friday were six local severity engines, one tender and one inmate crew.

On the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, meanwhile, firefighters have controlled the six lightning fires.

New lightning activity over Thursday night started four fires on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and five fires on private lands.

Fire crews reported quickly to all the fires. Two of the fires on private land were suppressed with the help of an air tanker, two helicopters, and a single engine air tanker from Oregon Department of Forestry. Firefighting resources continue suppression and mop up work on two remaining fires. The fires ranged in size from one-tenth of an acre to 20 acres.

The fire locations are:

- Innaha River vicinity, one mile north of the Innaha Fish Weir, Hells Canyon NRA

- Dead Horse Ridge, eight miles southwest of Imnaha, ODF-protected land
- Cayuse Flat area, off Hat Point Road, Hells Canyon NRA
- West Eagle Meadow vicinity, La Grande Ranger District
- Flora vicinity, ODF-protected land
- Eight miles west of Sled Springs, Wallowa Valley Ranger District
- Two miles south of Sled Springs, ODF-protected land

WILDFIRE THREATENS TO EXPLODE

Published: July 29, 2006

RICHLAND — Firefighters at the Foster Gulch Complex expect wind gusts up to 40 miles per hour this afternoon.

Extremely dry fine fuels and wind driven events will allow for perimeter growth in all directions, the fire incident command expects.

With high wind gusts, fire brands could be carried at least a half mile ahead of the fire, incident command says.

The Foster Gulch Complex, which includes the Foster Gulch Fire about three miles east of Richland, and the McLean Fire about 12 miles northeast of Halfway, had reached 34,487 acres early this morning.

The 600 firefighters on scene had the complex about 20 percent contained, incident command reported.

Friday, high temperatures, low humidities, large quantities of available fuel and challenging terrain contributed to active fire behavior. The Foster Gulch Fire spread farther to the northeast in the steep, broken ground west of the Snake River.

Today firefighters plan to patrol around all divisions of the fire. They will continue with Pine Creek and Oxbow

Village structure protection, mopping up 300 feet around structures from Oxbow Village to Homestead. There will also be continued structure protection in the Brownlee Reservoir area and along Highway 71.

Crews are continuing to burn out and look for suppression opportunities in the timber area from Hess Saddle to the west.

The weather forecast for today is for continued warm, dry conditions.

Winds are expected to be terrain driven and switching to stronger southwest winds 12 to 17 miles per hour with possible cumulus cloud buildup.



Firefighting Supplies Asap: Chelsea Herron, left, and Jared Blakely of La Grande and other La Grande Fire Cache personnel get a shipment of supplies headed for the Foster Complex fire in order Friday. As of this morning the Foster Complex fire, a combination of the McLain Creek and Foster Gulch fires about 70 miles east of Baker City, had burned over 34,000 acres and was listed at 20 percent containment.

Chris Baxter/The Observer

FIRE BURNS 450 ACRES NEAR MT. HARRIS

Published: August 8, 2005

Mardi Ford

Staff Writer

A wildfire that started Sunday afternoon in the Clark Creek and Indian Creek area 15 miles northeast of La Grande has burned an estimated 450 to 500 acres of grass, brush and agricultural fields, and approximately 100 acres of timber in the vicinity of Mount Harris.

The fire threatened at least three ranches, residences and numerous structures, according to Oregon Department of Forestry Northeast Oregon District Forester John Buckman.

The call for assistance to the ODF was made at 1:45 Sunday afternoon by the Imbler Rural Fire Protection District. Also responding were rural fire departments from Elgin, Cove, La Grande and Union, which provided structure protection, five dozers and several crews for line construction.

"It's too rocky in some areas to get a line in, so I don't want to say the fire has been contained, but we've stopped the spread," Buckman said.

By Sunday night, firefighters had made significant progress in limiting the spread of the fire. Aerial resources included three air tankers and three helicopters. Air tankers dropped 14 loads of retardant on the fire to keep it from spreading to nearby homes and private timber.

Buckman said it was the team effort of all those responding that kept the fire from getting out of control.

"They hit it hard and aggressive. You look to the north and you can see that column from the big fire in northeast Washington. Jumping right on it kept this one from getting out of control," Buckman said, referring to the School Fire, a wildfire 16 miles south and west of Pomeroy, which has burned over 32,000 acres.

At 7 this morning, a meeting was held at a fire camp at Imbler High School to plan the strategy for combatting the fire. According to a press release by the ODF, a Type III incident team will manage the fire with approximately 160 firefighters on the incident. The objective will be to secure the line and continue structure protection in the area. Buckman said he hoped to have the fire contained early today or tomorrow. He also said crews will be fighting this fire for two or three days before mop up begins. A helicopter will remain on the scene to provide water-bucket support.

At this point, Buckman said, the cause of the fire is still unknown, and he reminds the public that fire danger is extremely high.

Elsewhere, the Mule Peak fire in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest shows the 1,150-acre fire is 25 percent contained. This fire is 20 miles southeast of La Grande. Mule Peak Lookout, outbuildings and endangered species habitat remain threatened. Steep terrain and heavy subalpine fuels continue to hamper containment efforts. Short fire runs with short range spotting and isolated torching continued.

Other fire activity reported by the ODF that took place this weekend included several lightning fires in Baker County as a result of a storm that moved across the area Saturday afternoon and evening and a half-acre incident in Umatilla County in the East Birch Creek area.

Weather forecast for Monday includes a red flag warning for dry lightning — increased fire potential. The public is encouraged to heed the regulated-use closure that is in effect on all private and state-protected land within the Northeast Oregon District, which includes no smoking, no open burning unless a valid burn-barrel permit is in place, no wood cutting between the hours of 1 and 8 p.m., and no campfires unless in a designated area.

MULE PEAK FIRE GROWS TO 800 ACRES

Published: August 1, 2005

Bill Rautenstrauch

Staff Writer

Wildfire continued to race through the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest today, with crews and equipment battling blazes in Union, Wallowa and Baker Counties.

The Mule Peak Fire, burning in rugged country 20 miles southeast of La Grande, has grown to over 800 acres.

In Wallowa County, meanwhile, initial attack crews were mobilized to fight seven fires ignited by lightning Sunday.

And in Baker County, crews were getting the upper hand on the Burnt River Complex.

At about 6 p.m. Saturday there was a flare-up of the Thief Valley rangeland fire near North Powder. Rural departments responded and brought the flareup under control by 8:30 p.m. The Thief Valley fire burned 3,000 acres before it was brought under control Friday.

According to reports from Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Public Affairs Specialist Angelica Johnson, a Type II Interagency Incident Management Team took command of the Mule Peak fire about 6 a.m. Sunday.

An incident command post was established at the Union High School baseball field and a spike camp was set up at Taylor Green on Forest Road 77.

Johnson said the fire, fueled by heavy subalpine fir, was burning in very steep country.

Some torching of trees and spotting was observed Sunday between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. when the fire was most active.

By Sunday afternoon three Hot Shot crews, nine contract crews, two helicopters, two air tankers, 12 engines, two dozers, overhead personnel and camp crews had been mobilized to fight the blaze.

"Firefighters continue to make good progress in constructing fire lines," said Johnson.

Due to hazards associated with the fire, Forest Roads 77 and 7787 are closed to the public.

Forest Road 77 is closed from the junction of Highway 203 to its junction with Forest Road 7755. Forest Road 7787 is closed from the junction of Forest Road 7785 to the end at the Buck Creek Trailhead.

Forest visitors are asked to use alternate routes to the Eagles Cap Wilderness, such as East Eagle Trailhead, Main Eagle Trailhead, North Fork Catherine Creek Trailhead and the Moss Springs Trailhead.

Little information on the Wallowa County fires was available by press time this morning. Johnson said firefighting efforts were in the early stages. She said Sunday's lightning storm was accompanied by between .45 and .85 inches of rain in spots.

Meanwhile in Baker County, the Blue Mountain Interagency Fire Team is managing the Burnt River Complex under a unified command between the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Crews appear to have a handle on the fires, which are burning on about 600 acres. All the fires are contained, said Johnson.

"Control lines were built on the remaining fires Sunday, and mop-up is in progress," Johnson said.

The fires are burning in the area west of Black Mountain, Forest Road 11 and near Highway 26 west of Unity. The incident command post is located at the fairgrounds in Sumpter.

A 150-acre fire on Saw Flour Flat was of primary interest, as was a 35-40 acre Mid Fork Burnt River blaze.

One helicopter was dividing duty between the Burnt River Complex and the Mule Peak fire Sunday.

Johnson said the Burnt River Complex fires are burning in widely dispersed locations and none threaten homes, major recreation areas or communities. All recreation facilities remain open in the area.

Firefighting resources are split into day and night shifts so that suppression efforts continue around the clock.

The public is asked to watch out for fire equipment, and to use extra caution when driving on roads near the fire, including Highway 7 and Oregon Highway 26 between Unity and John Day.

In other fire-related news, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is monitoring one small fire in the Eagle Cap wilderness and two others in the Seven Devils Wilderness within the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area in Idaho.

Public-use fire restrictions are in effect on the Wallowa-Whitman, Malheur and Umatilla National Forests.

On the Wallowa-Whitman, the restrictions apply to the use of campfires, smoking and motorized travel.

The Oregon Department of Forestry, Northeast Oregon District, has a regulated closure in place.

Restrictions include having campfires in designated places only, no smoking outside vehicles, and a prohibition on non-industrial chainsaw use between the hours of 1 and 8 p.m. The use of ATVs is prohibited on unimproved roads.

Beginning today the Industrial Fire Precaution Level will change to Level III on the Whitman and Emily IFPL units. The Wallowa IFPL unit will remain at Level II.

IFPL restrictions apply to industrial operations.

WILDFIRE BLOWS UP

Published: July 30, 2005



The Mule Peak fire was on the march at approximately 7 p.m. Friday. The fire is a result of a Thursday morning lightning strike and is burning in the upper headwaters of the South Fork of Catherine Creek. It is approximately 1/4 mile below Mule Peak Lookout, which was evacuated Friday evening by helicopter.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE photo

T.L. Petersen

Staff Writer

By the end of the day Friday, the controlled 3,000-acre fire near Thief Valley wasn't even on the radar of Northeast Oregon firefighters.

They had much bigger problems.

According to John Denne of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, the Mule Peak fire, about 30 air miles from both La Grande and Baker City, had jumped from between five and seven acres early Friday, to 500 acres of moving hot wildland fire during the day.

And fire analysts expected it to keep growing today, possibly threatening the public's access into the Eagle Cap Wilderness Area.

A Type 2 incident management team, with more fire-fighting resources, was scheduled to arrive today to set up a base at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show Grounds in Union, Denne said.

"That fire will be putting up smoke this afternoon," he warned area residents, although no private land

or residences are threatened.

Three fires reported Friday to be burning without suppression efforts in the Eagle Cap Wilderness Area, separate from the Mule Peak fire, are considered to be "producing a resource benefit," Denne said this morning, who called those fires "a management tool."

But that's not the case at Mule Peak, where two 20-person firefighting teams were at work Friday afternoon.

Also working to suppress the fire is an air tanker from the La Grande fire base dropping retardant, helicopters with water and retardant buckets, and U.S. Forest Service hot shot crews.

"It's very steep terrain," Denne said this morning. "The fire is now in the Sand Pass Creek drainage, and in the South Fork of Catherine Creek drainage, moving east, southeast."

Friday evening two people stationed at the Mule

Peak Lookout were evacuated by helicopter.

The fire is burning at elevations of 5,500 to 6,000 feet, Denne said.

With the direction the fire is moving, it is threatening access to the wilderness area in the West Eagle area, not far from the Boulder Park and Two Color public areas popular with summer campers, hikers and fishermen. Some access roads are likely to be closed during the weekend.

The Oregon Department of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service will keep people advised of fire-related closures and smoke dangers via local radio stations, Denne said.

He advised that travelers heading to the wilderness areas keep listening to the radio.

And, "we're contacting land owners in the area" about fire danger, he said.

"People may see active fire later today," if they're watching that area, he said.

A second major concern locally, he said, is the so-called Burnt River Complex of fire, a group of about 12 smaller fires burning north, west and east of Unity.

While the fires are not threatening road closures today, there may be smoke problems along Highways 7 and 26 for travelers.

Bringing in state resources today, Denne said, is in part being done so that some local resources can be kept ready for initial attacks on new fires.

There is worry about winds, dry conditions and the threat tonight and Sunday of more hot weather — highs in La Grande are expected to be 97 today and 99 Sunday. There is a 30 percent chance of a storm moving through the area, bringing lightning and a larger area of dry lightning, Denne said.

Caution, he said, is going to be key for those outdoors in the next few days.

"The story might be significantly different by Monday morning."

CREWS MAKE GAINS ON WALLOWA COUNTY FIRES

Published: August 25, 2003



LOTS OF SMOKE: The 9,961-acre Two Corral Creek Fire two miles west of the Snake River is 20 percent contained.

Photo/USFS

JOSEPH — Firefighters have made significant gains on the Lightning Creek Complex fires but are holding their breath to see if winds of a predicted front for tonight will cause any more problems in the Wallowa County wildfires.

"We hope things will stay quiet out there," said Steve Butterworth, fire information officer of the U.S. Forest Service Blue Mountain Incident Command Team headquartered at the Joseph rodeo grounds.

The team is in charge of the 414 people assigned to the Lightning Creek Complex, four large fires in three general areas from the Harl Butte Lookout area to Hass Ridge and the Snake River. Firefighting costs so far are estimated \$1,144,121.

The 9,961-acre Two Corral Creek Fire two miles west of the Snake River is 20-percent contained.

The La Grande Hotshot Crew is working spots in timber along the northern perimeter. Structure protection is complete for Forest Service structures at the Pittsburg Administrative Site, and the Wisnor Place and Brockman Ranch on Temperance Creek, all on the Oregon side.

Two engine crews are stationed on the western perimeter. Helicopter water drops are targeted for the southern perimeter.

The 4,872-acre Hass Ridge Fire on the ridge between Lightning Creek and Horse Creek is 55 percent contained. Hand crews and several engines, with helicopter support, are working on hot spots, containment and mop-up.

The 213-acre Grouse Creek Fire and the 134-acre Butcherknife Fire are both 100 percent contained.

About 16 other spot fires have been put out or have been contained by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest initial attack crews.

That includes two sleepers that were located over the weekend.

Crews are mopping up a one acre fire at Owl Creek on the Divide, and two rappellers are expected to finish up today on a spot fire at Mount Moriah in the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

LIGHTNING CREEK FIRES GROW TO 9,000 ACRES

Published: August 22, 2003



FIRE CAMP READIED: Chow tents were set up Thursday by Bishop Services Inc. of Goldendale, Wash., in preparation to feed the anticipated 300 people who will be staying at the fire camp situated at the Joseph rodeo grounds.

The Observer/GARY FLETCHER

By Bill Rautenstrauch

Observer Staff Writer

Cooler weather with some moisture today should help fire crews contain four wildfires burning about 9,000 acres in Wallowa County.

"We're expecting a quarter to a half inch of rain," said Nick Lunde of the U.S. Forest Service. "Most of the fires are burning in grass, so we'll probably see a slowdown."

The Blue Mountain Incident Management Team was in charge of battling the fires, which comprise the Lightning Creek Complex, Lunde said.

Those blazes include the 6,500-acre Two Corral fire in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area; the Haas Ridge fire, a blaze estimated at between 1,500 and 2,000 acres between Horse Creek and Lightning Creek; the 120-130-acre Butcher Knife Creek fire east of Lightning Creek, and the 120-acre Grouse Creek fire.

About 320 firefighters were involved in the overall effort this morning, with more expected to check in today, Lunde said. A fire camp has been set up at the rodeo grounds in Joseph. More resources, including engines and helicopters, were being brought in.

The Two Corral Fire was burning about two miles west of the Snake River near Two Corral Creek in the Hells Canyon NRA.

The Blue Mountain Incident Management Team reported this morning that the blaze had moved south to Hominy Creek, north to the South Fork of Durham Creek, and had crossed over into the head of Summer Creek.

Two hand crews and engines were assigned to the fire today.

The Haas Ridge Fire, also in the HCNRA, grew southward Thursday. Today, six, 20-person hand crews were assigned to the fire.

The Grouse Creek fire is burning about a mile southeast of the Harl Butte Lookout in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Four hand crews and engines were

doing mop-up on that blaze this morning.

An intensive effort was being mounted to protect structures on private land, especially in the area of the Haas Ridge fire. So far, no structure damage has been reported.

About eight other small fires that were staffed Tuesday and Wednesday were either contained or controlled, said Lunde.

Meanwhile, the Hazel Mountain Fire in the Eagle Cap Wilderness was being allowed to burn as a Wildland Fire Use type fire. It had grown to about 500 acres by this morning.

"It made a little movement last night but we don't think it will do much today," said Lunde.

Travelers are advised that the Hat Point Road and the Harl Butte Road are closed. The Imnaha River Road below Imnaha is closed at Fence Creek. Travel off-road in most forest areas is prohibited as well.

Campfires are forbidden on public and private lands, though they are still permitted in the Eagle Cap Wilderness. Use of chainsaws and generators is also prohibited.

Gas stoves are permitted when used on a three-foot area barren of flammable materials.

All industrial operations on the Wallowa-Whitman forest have been curtailed.

HIGHWAY 3 REOPENS AFTER BEING CLOSED BY WILDFIRE

Published: September 2, 2006

The La Grande Observer

ENTERPRISE — The north end of Highway 3 in Wallowa County has been reopened to traffic, following closure because of a forest fire.

Motorists, however, are being urged to use extra care on the route because of the presence of fire crews and equipment. They were also being asked to use alternate routes when possible.

The north end of the highway was closed Tuesday afternoon near the Washington State border to protect travelers during initial fire fighting operations for the Applegate Fire. ODOT said the highway was reopened about 8:30 p.m. Thursday.

ODOT and the Oregon Forestry Department will monitor potential fire related hazards and use flaggers and pilot cars during the day when fire fighting operations are taking place and equipment may be on the highway.

Travelers are advised to plan for extra travel time while taking this highway.

Flaggers and pilot cars will be used as long as necessary to help reduce the risk to firefighters and motorists, said Mike Buchanan, ODOT District 13 manager.

ODOT advised that while the route is scheduled to be open during the Labor Day weekend, the highway could be closed again without notice, if conditions worsen.

For updated information on this highway and other current travel information throughout Oregon, visit www.tripcheck.com, or call the toll-free Oregon road report at 511, or 1-800-977-6368.

The Applegate Fire, near Flora along Highway 3, started Tuesday. By Friday, it had grown to 169 acres. At 11 a.m. Friday, it was estimated to be 70 percent contained.

TWO SMALL WILDFIRES BURNING NORTH OF WALLOWA

Published: August 19, 2006

The La Grande Observer

WALLOWA — Two wildfires are burning on either side of the Grande Ronde River north of Wallowa.

The Harlow Springs 25-acre fire is 21 miles north of Wallowa.

It was reported about 5 p.m. Thursday, and containment was estimated at about 25 percent as of Friday afternoon.

This fire on the north side of the Grande Ronde River on ODF-protected lands, along with the nearby Sickfoot Fire on the south side of the river, were caused by lightning strikes Thursday.

The fire, managed by the Oregon Department of Forestry's Wallowa Unit with assistance from other ODF resources, is mid-slope in steep terrain. On the fire Friday were eight rappellers, two 10-person inmate crews, one 10-person U.S. Forest Service hand crew, a strike team of USFS severity engines and two tenders.

Thursday, two helicopters and an air tanker, in addition to two engines, two USFS hand crews and eight rappellers, were used on the fire. Total personnel on the fire is 55.

The Sickfoot Fire, meanwhile, is 20 miles north of Wallowa along the south side of the Grande Ronde River.

The 16-acre fire on ODF-protected lands was contained at about midnight Thursday. It was reported about 4 p.m. It was managed by ODF's Wallowa Unit. Resources on the fire included a dozer, five engines, a helicopter and a 10-person inmate crew. Rural fire departments also provided assistance. Working on the fire Friday were six local severity engines, one tender and one inmate crew.

On the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, meanwhile, firefighters have controlled the six lightning fires.

New lightning activity over Thursday night started four fires on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and five fires on private lands.

Fire crews reported quickly to all the fires. Two of the fires on private land were suppressed with the help of an air tanker, two helicopters, and a single engine air tanker from Oregon Department of Forestry. Firefighting resources continue suppression and mop up work on two remaining fires. The fires ranged in size from one-tenth of an acre to 20 acres.

The fire locations are:

- Innaha River vicinity, one mile north of the Innaha Fish Weir, Hells Canyon NRA
- Dead Horse Ridge, eight miles southwest of Innaha, ODF-protected land
- Cayuse Flat area, off Hat Point Road, Hells Canyon NRA
- West Eagle Meadow vicinity, La Grande Ranger District
- Flora vicinity, ODF-protected land
- Eight miles west of Sled Springs, Wallowa Valley Ranger District
- Two miles south of Sled Springs, ODF-protected land