

Rail Fire Update

Sunday, September 4, 2016 8:00 am

Repair tasks become the priority

Unity, Oregon – The 41,716-acre Rail Fire remained at 80% containment yesterday as firefighters continued repair tasks, chipping debris along road corridors, and patrolling the firelines. “It takes a great deal of effort to complete all the firefighting objectives associated with a complex incident like this one,” encouraged Incident Commander Brian Gales at this morning’s day shift briefing. “The road and fireline repair that are occurring now are just as important to the local community as stopping the fire was a few days ago.”

A few pillars of smoke from interior burning rose to a cloudy sky yesterday afternoon and light showers dampened parts of the fire area. Large size fuels like fallen logs or “jackpots” of debris continue to be consumed. They require many days of wetting to stop burning. But when the fine grasses and twigs become moistened, even just by overnight humidity recovery, they are unreceptive to fire and won’t contribute to spreading. Thus, the fire is finding fewer paths to work its way through the remaining unburned areas within the fire lines.

Along FR 13 in the last 3 days, over 100 large loads of firewood have been collected by people with Malheur National Forest personal firewood permits. These fuels were thinned by firefighters constructing a contingency fire line in case the fire moved further west. Along FR16, which remains closed in the immediate fire area, crews are chipping and spreading smaller size debris.

Cool, moist conditions are expected to persist several days until the weather returns to average seasonal temperatures at the end of this week. Light showers are possible as clouds build up in the afternoons. A fine film of water can make both asphalt and unpaved roads slick, so please be alert to and cautious of heavy fire vehicles and holiday traffic volumes.

Northwest Incident Management Team 13
Brian Gales, Incident Commander



Fire at a Glance

Size: 41,716 acres

Containment: 80%

Location: 5 miles west of Unity, Oregon

Cause: Under Investigation

Personnel: 818

Resources:

25 Crews

14 Engines

2 Dozers

28 Water tenders

1 Masticator

1 Skidgeon

Aircraft:

4 Type 1 heavy helicopters

1 Type 2 medium helicopter

2 Type 3 light helicopters

Closures: The area immediately around the Fire remains closed. Forest Road 16 remains closed south and east of the fire area. Most other roads have been opened. The closure order and map can be seen at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4914/>. Click “Maps” for the current closure map.

Fire Information:

(541) 446-3592

Railwildfire@gmail.com