



Pacific Northwest Region  
Malheur National Forest  
541-575-3000  
[www.fs.usda.gov/malheur](http://www.fs.usda.gov/malheur)

# FIRE UPDATE

## ***South Fork Complex – August 29, 2014***

Acres: 65,126	Start date: August 1, 2014 (12:45 a.m.)
Cause: Lightning	Location: 20 miles southwest of John Day, Oregon
Containment: 96%	Fuels: Timber (Grass & Understory)
Terrain: Various	Resources: 6 20-person handcrews, 14 engines with 3-4 firefighters each, 1 dozer with operator and swamper, 3 water tenders with drivers
Total personnel: 245	Helicopters: 3 (1 heavy/large and 2 light/small), with pilots and support teams.

### **Firefighters Hold Line during Flare Ups within Fire Area**

Warmer and drier weather the last two days caused some fire activity within a ¼ mile of the current perimeter on the northeast side of the fire, as crews reinforced established containment lines there. Meanwhile, more accurate mapping determined that the total fire size is slightly smaller than previously reported.

While some smoke has been visible, most of the smoke in the John Day Valley has been drifting in from other fires. Satellite imagery shows smoke from northern California and the Willamette Valley blowing northeast into the John Day Valley.

### **Weather and Fire Behavior**

After a lingering temperature inversion over the fire area, skies are expected to remain clear and mostly sunny, with temperatures high of 75 degrees and relative humidity during the day of 30 percent. Winds will be blowing out of the west at 2-5 mph, with gusts up to 8 mph. Continued interior burning on the northeast side of the fire is likely for several days.

### **Today's Operations**

Yesterday firefighters set up portable water tanks and lay nearly two miles of hose along a portion of the 2150 Road. Mop-up is now completed in this area within 100 feet of the fire line. If winds should shift and cause the fire to move closer to the 2150 Road, fire crews are prepared to conduct a "burn-out" operation, if necessary to ensure firefighter and public safety, which would remove fuels between the fire and containment line. A Burned-Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) team of local natural resource experts will commence on Tuesday to prepare a formal BAER plan for restoring any areas of the landscape that would likely not recover naturally. This will likely include taking steps to prevent erosion at the upper end of Oliver Creek, to avoid negative impacts to steelhead spawning areas.



for the greatest good

## NEWS RELEASE

(continued)

### Closures

The Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Grant County Sheriff's Office have reduced closure areas and evacuation levels. These agencies recognize the importance of restoring access into the closure area and are working with agency representatives to reopen areas when it is safe to do so. However, the following closures remain in effect for firefighter and public safety. We ask that you travel slowly when near these areas and be aware of the possibility of falling trees weakened from fire, rolling rocks and fire traffic.

- Malheur National Forest: The roads notes and areas lying within the following perimeters are closed:
  - Road 24 will be closed until further notice from the Malheur NF boundary, west to Forest Road 2400-270, Dewey Creek, as well as Forest Road 2150, from Forest Road 21 west to the end at Aldrich Lookout.
  - North of the 24 road, east of and the Forest Boundary (as well as BLM land east of the 42 Road), west and north of the 2180 road to the junction of the 21 Road and west of the 21 road, north of the 2180 junction, north of the forest boundary.
  - **The 21 Road is now open for public travel.**
- BLM Prineville District Lands: Deer Creek, Jackass Creek Road, Murders Creek Road, and Oliver Creek Road are closed to vehicle traffic in conjunction with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODF&W) Phillip P Schneider Wildlife area.

Malheur National Forest official Area Closure Orders will be available at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/malheur/alerts-notices>. As conditions warrant, Forest Officials may modify the closure areas. This information will be shared as soon as the decisions are made.

***As hunting season approaches, Forest officials want to remind visitors to check frequently with local district offices on fires in the area and closures associated with fire activity.***

***FIRE RESTRICTIONS: The Malheur National Forest is currently in Phase B of the Public Use Restrictions (PURs), which prohibits or restricts use of campfires except in designated campgrounds, chainsaws (firewood cutting), internal combustion engines, smoking, generators, and off-road/off-trail vehicle travel. Find more on PUR's at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/PURS>.***

***Forest officials encourage everyone to be safe and careful when recreating or using the National Forest. Although cooler temperatures and precipitation moved across the Forest last week, not all parts of the Forest received precipitation and the weather is forecasted to become hot and dry this week. Due to this, Fire Managers are leaving Public Use Restrictions in Phase B, and evaluating conditions frequently based on current weather predictions. Fire Managers anticipate detecting holdover fires from past lightning storms over the next several days as conditions warrant.***

Maps and other information of the South Fork Complex are available online at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4042/>. For further information on the South Fork Complex, please contact the Malheur National Forest at 541-575-3000.

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