



Vale District
Bureau of Land Management
Malheur County, Oregon

Juntura Complex DAILY UPDATE

August 9, 2016
0800 Hours



NWIMT #13
Brian Gales, Incident
Commander
Larry Nickey, Deputy IC

<http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4935/>

Fire Information
junturacomplex@gmail.com
360 791-6515 7 am to 9 pm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Crews Make Significant Progress on Juntura Complex Fires

Vale, Oregon – A lightning storm on August 7th sparked fires across eastern Oregon in light, flashy fuels that spread quickly, aided by wind and terrain. Local fire departments responded to multiple locations and were able to handle many of the starts.

Several incidents in Malheur County remain active, including the Simmons Gulch, Sheep Rock and Rooster Comb fires. These fires have been combined into the Juntura Complex. Northwest Incident Management Team #13, under the command of Brian Gales, took over control of the complex at 6:00 AM today (August 9, 2016).

Management objectives include providing for public and firefighter safety as we work with local agencies and the Juntura RFPA to reduce the risk of fire spread. The fire area includes valuable range allotments of importance to local ranchers as well as sage grouse habitat.

The Simmons Gulch fire is approximately 5,000 acres and is burning south of Highway 20, roughly 30 miles west of Vale and 20 miles east of Juntura. Yesterday, crews worked successfully to keep the fire from crossing the highway and limit spread.

The Sheep Rock fire is approximately 7,680 acres and is burning about six miles south of Juntura along the Shumway Road. Yesterday the fire crossed the Road but was caught by crews. It is burning on both sides of the Malheur River.

The Rooster Comb fire is approximately 145 acres and is located southeast of the Easterday Reservoir. Local resources worked tirelessly to contain the blaze.

Cool and moist conditions this spring have produced heavier than normal fuel loads in the form of dense, continuous grasses that carry fire rapidly across the landscape. Crews face the added risk of explosive fire spread as the weather warms and dries.

At this time, resources from across the region are engaged in containment efforts on all three fires and are making excellent progress. Currently the fires are threatening four primary residences and one commercial building.

QUICK FACTS

Three Fires:

Simmons Gulch: 5,000 acres, 50% contained
Sheep Rock: 7680 ac, containment undetermined
Rooster Comb: 145 ac, containment undetermined

Location: West of Vale, Oregon and south of State Highway 20

Hazards: Heavier than normal fuel loads (dry grass and brush) contribute to rapid rate of spread

Values at Risk: Rangelands, Sage Grouse habitat

Cause:

Lightning

Containment: Complex 20%

Resources Committed or Available:

3 Type I Crews
3 Type II Crews
8 Engines
3 Water Tenders
1 Fuel Tender

Personnel: approx. 200

Road Closures: No road closures in place at this time, prepare for slowed traffic and pilot cars along Highway 20 between Vale and Juntura. Be alert to firefighting personnel, equipment and aviation activity in the area.