



Okanogan Complex Fire Update

September 13, 2015, 9:00 AM

Fire Information: 877-568-0458 or 877-574-5148, 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM



Size: 132,937 acres
Containment: 85 percent
Total Personnel: 611
Committed Resources: 13 crews, 36 engines, 5 helicopters, 12 dozers, 17 water tenders

Estimated Cost to Date: \$39.5 million
Injuries: 7
Residences Damaged or Destroyed: 120

CURRENT FIRE SITUATION

The Chelan Complex fire update, which had been included in the Okanogan Complex update, will now be an independent document. Chelan’s daily update can be found on its Inciweb site: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4538>. Total personnel for the Okanogan Complex decreased yesterday by 371 due to Chelan Complex personnel being removed from the database.

North of Buck Mountain on the west side, the fire was moderately active yesterday as fire managers expected, burning downslope toward Forest Road (FR) 42 and creating a widely visible smoke plume. Firefighters held the fire within established firelines. They did not observe any spot fires outside the perimeter. Islands of unburned trees within the fire’s interior near the Loup Loup Canyon Road also burned yesterday, contributing to smoke on the west side. If weather and fuel conditions are favorable today, firefighters might conduct defensive firing operations of FR 42 to further secure the fireline.

Suppression-repair groups continue to repair dozer lines and firelines across the fire area. Crews will be chipping slash that was piled during fireline construction. Felling crews continue to cut fire-weakened trees that could pose a threat to public safety when roads are reopened. Five helicopters are assigned to the Okanogan Complex but are also available to assist firefighters on nearby fires, such as the Chelan Complex, Tunk Fire, and North Star Fire.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Yesterday was hot and dry as predicted: Omak’s high was 94 degrees, and the temperature on ridgetops was in the lower 80s. At portable weather stations installed at 6,500 feet elevation, relative humidity as low as 10 percent was recorded. Yesterday, as expected, the west side of the fire was the most active it’s been in several days, creating a large smoke plume widely visible to communities surrounding the fire.

Today, temperatures will drop by about 10 degrees, the relative humidity will plummet, and winds will increase as a dry cold front moves across the fire area early afternoon. Although wind gusts up to 25 mph are possible on exposed ridges, winds will be from the west to northwest, which is advantageous for firefighters on the more active western side of the fire. Fire-behavior analysts expect the fire to be slightly less active than yesterday, producing more diffuse smoke rather than a distinctive plume.

SAFETY

Forest Service roads on the west side of the fire within the area closure (see below) are closed to the public. Law-enforcement personnel are enforcing road closures, which are identified with a sign or barricade. Although not every closed road is staffed, fire managers ask the public to respect the closures for firefighter and public safety.

EVACUATIONS AND ROAD CLOSURES

- The Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest issued an area closure, effective September 4, 2015, for federal lands in the fire area: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/article/4534/29367/> or <http://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/okawen/alerts-notice>
- Okanogan County Emergency Operations Center provides information on evacuations and road closures: 509-422-7348, Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Okanogan.County.Emergency.Management>

Okanogan Inciweb



<http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4534/>

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