



Joint News Release
USDI - Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Spokane Tribe of Indians



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For Immediate Release

Carpenter Road Fire Determined to be Human Caused

Wildland fire investigators have examined the origin of the Carpenter Road Fire, and other evidence to determine that the fire was not lightning-caused; rather it was human-caused. The fire was discovered on August 13, 2015 around 09:30 p.m. alongside the Westend-Wellpinit Road, just north of the Rock Church on the Spokane Indian Reservation. To date, it has burned over 65,000 acres and 42 structures, and cost over \$20 million to suppress.

“This fire has done a tremendous amount of damage to 18 primary residences, the natural resources and surrounding communities during a very dry summer”, said the Superintendent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Spokane Indian Reservation, in Wellpinit, WA. “To discover that this fire was intentionally set is very disappointing. We will continue to perform the mop up tasks around the perimeter of the fire to securely and fully contain this fire. We will also assist local law enforcement in their efforts to find the arsonist(s) responsible for setting this fire” she continued. The Fire Management Officer for the Spokane Tribe of Indians, said “unless we get a wet fall and spring, along with a normal winter, we will see this type of fire again”.

The public can also assist law enforcement officials by reporting any information they may know by calling WeTip arson hotline at 1-800-47-ARSON (472-7766). This is a nationwide, toll-free telephone number, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to report information about suspicious fires. Callers remain anonymous and may be eligible to receive up to \$10,000 dollars if their information leads to a conviction of arson on tribal lands. Tips may also be submitted online at www.wetip.com.

Approximately 83% of the fires on the Spokane Indian Reservation are attributed to human causes, which include carelessness, neglect, and accidental causes along with arson. The cost to the government agencies and volunteer fire departments responsible for suppressing all fires is high.

Fire officials want to alert the public to the facts regarding wildfire arson:

- Wildfire arson is a crime.
- These fires are preventable.
- These fires pose a real and significant danger to life, property and natural resources.
- They place the health and safety of fire fighters and members of the public at great risk.
- Taxpayers must eventually cover the cost associated with fire suppression.
- Fire officials need the public’s help in stopping this destructive behavior. They ask people to be alert and report any suspicious activity.
- This could happen again...