



Okanogan-Wenatchee  
National Forest



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## Fire Information – Moderated But Not Out

*Tonasket, WA* –Cooler temperatures and increased humidity have moderated fire behavior and firefighters have been taking advantage of that; building both direct and indirect fireline. They are connecting natural features, such as bare mountain ridges, wet meadows or sparse grass areas, along with roads, trails, or past firelines to construct containment and contingency lines for Newby Lake Fire. Existing features, such as roads, trails or old firelines, often require brush removal along the edges to improve viability for use as firelines.

Safety is the primary concern in every aspect of firefighting. When determining fireline locations, firefighters must also consider the condition and type of adjacent vegetation (fuels), topography and predicted weather. This information guides decisions about the placement and type (direct or indirect) of fireline to be constructed.

In the case of Newby Lake Fire, much of the fuel is beetle killed spruce and lodgepole, both dead and down. When conditions are hot and dry, this fuel type is known to cast embers ahead of the fire front, contributing to rapid fire growth. On Newby Lake Fire, there have been spot fires up to three-quarters of a mile ahead of the main fire. During this morning's firefighter briefing, the fire behavior analyst described the condition of heavy dead and down spruce and lodgepole. This accumulation of fuel builds a lot of heat when it burns, leading to torching and then spotting.

Near-term operations for Newby Lake Fire do not include plans for burn-out. However, in situations where long range spotting occurs, sometimes firefighters improve the viability of firelines by deliberately burning vegetation along the edge (burnout). Burnout consumes fuel, or vegetation, between the wildland fire and the fireline. It is a method of slowing or stopping the fire before it reaches the fireline.

While moderated fire behavior provides excellent opportunities for containment, history has shown that fire in this type of vegetation and topography just needs the right mix of wind and hot-dry weather to again become active. Tripod Fire, in 2006 and Farewell Fire in 2003 were examples of this. Given this fire history, and the fact that fire season in this area can last well into September, firefighters know that their containment lines will likely be tested before summer is over.

### ADDITIONAL FIRE INFORMATION

Facebook - [Newby Lake Fire](#) | Twitter - [@OkaWenNF](#) | Blog - [newbylakewafire.wordpress.com](#)

British Columbia Wildfire Service – [bcwildfire.ca](#)

[inciweb.nwccg.gov](http://inciweb.nwccg.gov)

