

## WESTERN WILDFIRES

## Firefighters to get additional resources

The Associated Press

Firefighters across the West saw little relief over the weekend as wildfires raged in the drought-stricken region, but for those in Washington state, other states will soon provide additional resources.

A look at large Western wildfires:

## WASHINGTON STATE

Fire officials say a complex of wildfires burning in north-central Washington has grown to cover 374 square miles. Infrared mapping found the fires spread about 19 square miles Saturday evening.

Fire spokeswoman Suzanne Flory says there could be some explosive fire growth Sunday if a cap of smoke lifts from Okanogan County, as has been forecast. When the smoke lifts on a wildfire, humidity drops, heat rises and fires can flare up. Flory says it's similar to what happens when the flue is opened on a fireplace.

Flory says the good news is that less smoke means restrictions on air travel will be lifted and more fire tankers can fly over and drop water and chemical retardant.

Meanwhile, officials have downgraded some evacuation notices, allowing some people to return to their homes.

On Sunday evening, the state Department of Health said that should nearby wildfires reach the site of a now-defunct uranium mine in Stevens County in eastern Washington, the smoke won't be any more toxic than the standard smoke from a wildfire.

In an announcement, the department said that radioactive materials at the Midnight Mine, which is about three miles northwest of Wellpinit on the Spokane Reservation, "won't exacerbate the dangers of wildfire smoke if the fires overtake the site as the naturally occurring radioactive material stays in its original rock form and does not burn."



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson

University of Alaska Fairbanks firefighting students Preston Roberts, back, and Ben Schrage send up a cloud of steam as they douse a hotspot left from a wildfire Sunday in Chelan, Wash. Sixteen large wildfires are burning across central and eastern Washington, covering more than 920 square miles. More than 200 homes have been destroyed and more than 12,000 homes and thousands of other structures remain threatened.

## CALIFORNIA

Planes and helicopters were making major liquid drops on a wildfire that broke out Sunday afternoon near a ski resort in the San Bernardino Mountains, bringing the first gains against the blaze.

The U.S. Forest Service says the fire near Snow Summit Ski Resort south of Big Bear Lake has forced evacuation orders for about 400 homes, many of them cabins and vacation homes.

It has grown to 85 acres, but it is 10 percent contained. Water cannons from the ski resort usually used for making snow are being pointed toward the fire.

Earlier Sunday, firefighters were gaining ground against a wildfire that led to the evacuation of thousands of people and destroyed a lodge in Kings Canyon National Park.

Despite relentlessly high temperatures, fire crews increased the blaze's containment to 7 percent, the U.S. Forest Service said. The wildfire has burned across more than 73 square miles of timber and brush left parched by the state's extended drought.

At least 2,500 campers, hikers, employees and residents fled the area last week, including staffers and summer campers at The Hume Lake Christian Camp.

Nobody was hurt when the Kings Canyon lodge, which bills itself as a folksy getaway for tourists, was burned to its foundation.

The lightning-sparked blaze has been burning for three weeks. It is one of 15 wildfires burning across California.

## MONTANA

Firefighters and residents are bracing for a return to more intense fire activity in western Montana where wildfires have scored thousands of acres and threatened some small communities.

A fire weather watch posted Sunday warned that gusty winds and low humidity were expected Monday afternoon in Glacier National Park and the Kootenai and Flathead national forest areas.

On Glacier's southern boundary, a wildfire is about a mile south of the town of Es-

sex where about 100 area residents have been advised to be ready to evacuate.

Fire spokesman Jonathan Moor says crews are working to keep the fire away from the town but it's difficult to predict what the fire will do over the next couple of days.

## OREGON

Cooler temperatures and reduced winds helped firefighters on Saturday who were battling a large wildfire in Oregon south of the towns of John Day and Canyon City.

Fire officials expect wind to pick up on Sunday, but since winds were expected to blow out of the southeast, they will send the fire back into an area that has already burned.

The lightning-caused Canyon-Creek Complex of fires has burned about 109 square miles since Aug. 12.

To the northeast, firefighters also made progress Saturday on the Grizzly Bear Complex of fires in northeast Oregon and southeast Washington. The five-lightning caused fires have burned more than 95 square miles since Aug. 13.

## Local task force sent to help fight Oregon fire

The Daily Astorian

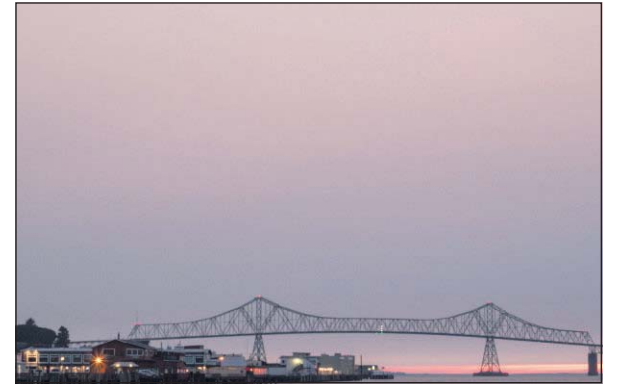
Another Clatsop County task force was mobilized Friday morning by the State Fire Marshal for response and assistance on the Grizzly Bear Fire in northeast Oregon near Troy. The fire has expanded to 12,000 acres.

Last week, a local task force was dispatched to Baker County to help protect homes and other structures threatened by the Cornet fire in nearby Hereford.

The task force sent Friday departed for a staging area in Enterprise at about 12:30 a.m.

David Rankin, Seaside Fire Department captain, is leading the task force that consists of personnel from Seaside, Gearhart, Lewis and Clark, Warrenton and Knappa. They will primarily be used for structure protection.

Smoke from the fires drifted over the North Coast during the weekend, clouding skies.



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

An immense cloud of smoke from wildfires across the Pacific Northwest floats down the Columbia River.

## Highway 26 closed due to wildfire

The Daily Astorian

U.S. Highway 26 remained closed Monday morning because of a fire burning near milepost 43, two miles west of Manning.

The Oregon Department of Transportation has diverted traffic onto U.S. Highway 47 and Timber Road. The department hopes to have Highway 26 opened sometime Monday, according to ODOT District Manager Mark Buffington.

The fire, which began at around 3:00 p.m. Saturday,

has covered about 26 acres, Buffington said. About 185 people, including personnel from the Oregon Department of Forestry, contract crews and rural fire departments, have been working to battle the blaze, which is about 10 percent contained.

The fire is localized and is not threatening any towns or structures, Buffington said.

A firefighter who suffered from smoke inhalation Saturday was taken to a Portland hospital. No other injuries were reported.

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