

Firefighters gain upper hand on blazes

Evacuations lifted for Anthony Lakes

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
East Oregonian

A wildfire burning near Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is now largely under control as management of the blaze transitions to a smaller, more local firefighting team.

The Bear Butte fire, located 20 miles northwest of Baker City, has charred 499 acres and is 85 percent contained as of Monday morning. The Baker County Sheriff's Office has lifted evacuation orders around Anthony Lakes recreation area, though road closures remain in effect for Forest Service roads 73, 43, 7325, 5185 and the Elkhorn Crest Trail.

A Type 3 incident management team took control of firefighting operations Monday, and approximately 160 personnel remain assigned to the fire. Crews will continue to mop up hot spots around the fire perimeter, as well as identify hazard trees and boulders along the Anthony Lakes Highway.

While recent storms have brought much-needed moisture, the rain has also made for loose and unstable soil within the fire area, increasing the risk for down trees and rock slides across the roadway. Roads will stay closed until firefighters can fully assess the safety of the area.



The Corn Cob Creek fire, located on the Heppner Ranger District of the Umatilla National Forest, burned four acres and is now fully contained.

Photo contributed by U.S. Forest Service

The cause of the Bear Butte fire still is not known.

Weekend thunderstorms also brought ample lightning to the southern end of the Umatilla National Forest, keeping firefighters on their toes. The largest incidents include:

- North Fork Cable Creek fire, located 10 miles southeast Ukiah. The 28-acre blaze was reported Saturday, burning in grass and timber and threatening nearby structures. The fire is now 80 percent lined, and crews are working on securing the perimeter. Resources include six engines and three water tenders.
- Corn Cob Creek fire,

located near Wheeler Point on the Heppner Ranger District. Firefighters have fully contained the fire at four acres, and are conducting mop-up activities.

Red Fir Fire, located 20 miles southwest of La Grande. Like the Corn Cob Creek fire, it is now fully contained at four acres.

The North Fork John Day Ranger District was hit with 12 total fires, and more smoke reports are expected this week as weather conditions improve. Four fires are located within the North Fork John Day Wilderness near Winom Butte, and aerial attacks have so far

been unsuccessful due to low cloud cover that's prevented aircraft from flying into the area.

Fire managers plan to get resources on scene as soon as safely possible. Meanwhile, the fire danger rating is still extreme despite the recent rain, and Phase C public use restrictions are in effect banning all campfires and chainsaw use.

For more information about restrictions, call the forest information hotline at 1-877-958-9663, or visit www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla.

Contact George Plagen at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

Field fire in Stanfield nearly burns house

East Oregonian

A field fire engulfed several pieces of equipment and nearly burned a home and in Stanfield on Monday afternoon. Crews responded to the blaze in a field off East Harding and North Wayne streets a little before 4 p.m., and were able to stop it from affecting the home near where it started.

Adrian Montoa, who lives in a home on North Wayne Street that was closest to the fire, said the flames almost got his house.

"I was just sitting in my computer room, and saw the fire out my window," he said, adding that it burned the bushes near his house.

Up the hill in a field, several pieces of farm equipment were engulfed in the flames, which sent a cloud of black smoke over the area for about 20 minutes. Firefighters had the blaze under control by about 4:20 p.m.

The cause of the fire is unknown at this time.



UCFD Fire Marshal Tom Bohm surveys the field in Stanfield that was burning around 4:00 p.m. Monday.

Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

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HEPPNER Landmark barn destroyed in lightning-sparked fire

East Oregonian

A local landmark was destroyed in a fire this weekend, but the owners of the property are relieved the damage wasn't worse.

Mark and Shannon Miller's barn, located off Highway 206 in the Ruggs area near Condon, was burned in a fire sparked by lightning on Friday night. The blaze spread 700 to 800 acres and took about three hours to extinguish. The barn was the only structure damaged in the fire.

Shannon Miller, whose family has owned the property for many years, said she heard about the fire from her home in North Lexington, where she and her husband raise wheat.

"We stayed here because we were afraid we might get the same storm," Miller said.

Their son went out to the barn, and Miller called the Morrow County Sheriff and told him not to worry about saving the structure.

"We told him, don't worry about the old barn,

but to concentrate on the others," Miller said.

At first, it looked like the barn would be safe — but the next thing they knew, it was on fire.

Miller said two trucks were inside the barn, a 1957 and a 1951, both used by her father for farming many years ago.

"Everything was a total loss," Miller said. "Nothing monetarily, but it was sad when we went up there Saturday and took pictures. My dad loved that place — he farmed it for my mother."

Miller said she was relieved everyone was safe, and appreciated all the help from the neighbors and local fire departments.

Others will miss the barn as well, Miller said. She remembered all the calls she'd gotten from people asking to take pictures in front of the barn and windmill, which she estimated were more than 100 years old.

"It's kind of nostalgic," she said. "It had been kind of a landmark on the Heppner-Condon Highway."

PENDLETON Wells repaired, outdoor watering easement lifted

East Oregonian

Pendleton's two largest water wells are again working. Bob Patterson, the city's public works director, reported the city on Saturday lifted its request for residents to end outside watering.

The well at Roy Raley Park stopped working the first week of August, then the well at Stillman Park quit on Aug. 7. The two wells provide the city with about 4.6 million gallons of water each day.

Patterson in email updates said crews repaired the Stillman well and had it working Saturday. That

returned about 2 million gallons of water to the city's supply, he said.

And Monday morning the Roy Raley well was back at work after repairs. Patterson said the well is the city's largest and provides about 2.6 million gallons per day.

While watering is a go, Patterson said the city "will continue to balance water supply needs with reduced irrigation at city parks and with our largest outside irrigation water customers." He also said the city appreciates all its customers' efforts to reduce their water usage during the situation.

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