

NEWS RELEASE

Washington Department of Natural Resources and Umatilla National Forest



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The School Fire Grows to 15,000 - Emergency Closures Implemented

August 7, 2005 11:00 a.m.

Pendleton, Oregon: The School Fire, wildfire located 17 miles south and west of Pomeroy, WA, on both Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR) and Umatilla National Forest lands. The fire has now burned over 15,000 acres according to last night's aerial infra red observation flight about. The perimeter of the fire is 11 miles by 5 miles, and the cause of the fire is currently under investigation.

"The rapid movement of the fire is due to extremely dry fuels, high temperatures, and strong winds," said Steve Jennison, Fire Information Officer for the Incident Command Team. "The fire was pushed up drainage on multiple fronts. Spot fires were observed up to a 1/2-mile from the main fire in some areas." *Due to the active nature of the fire, public and employee safety is the number one priority.*

Evacuations have been made in the Stentz Springs, Rose Springs, Baker's Pond, and Lynnvile Gulch Road areas. Both Columbia and Garfield Counties requested structural protection assistance through the State Mobilization Act. The loss of three structures has been confirmed and over 100 structures are threatened at this time.

Because of the complexity of this fire, a Type I Incident Management Team has been ordered and will take over management of the fire this afternoon. The fire was initially reported to the Pendleton Interagency Communications Center late Friday afternoon and will be managed jointly by the Washington Department of Natural Resources and the Umatilla National Forest.

Emergency closures include:

Forest Road 47 (Tucannon River Road)
Forest Road 4625 (Maloney Mountain Road)
Mountain Road at Lynnvile Road
Pataha Creek at Columbia Junction
Forest Road 41 east of 4206

Misery Springs
Wooten Game Range Head Quarters
Forest Road 46 and 4610 Junction
Maloney Mountain Road and Skyline Road
North Patit Road and Hartsock Road
Forest Road 42 at Forest Boundary