

News Release

Umatilla National Forest

Washington Department of Natural Resources

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Public Meeting about the School Fire Tonight in Pomeroy

August 8, 2005 3:00 p.m.

Pendleton, Oregon: The School Fire, a wildfire located 16 miles south and west of Pomeroy, WA. has burned over 34,000 acres and continues to burn actively in steep terrain. A public meeting to provide information on the fire is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. tonight at the High School in Pomeroy, WA., by the Incident Management Team.

Due to the active nature of the fire, public and employee safety is the number one priority. The public is asked to honor all current road and area closures. Evacuations were made over the weekend in the Stentz Springs, Rose Springs, Rose Springs, Baker's Pond, and Lynnville Gulch Road areas. Both Columbia and Garfield Counties requested structural protection assistance through the State Mobilization Act. The loss of 35 residences structures has been confirmed and over 100 structures are still threatened at this time.

Heart-to-Heart for Families has set up a drop-off center for families who have lost their homes. Clothes, household items, and non-perishable food items are being accepted at 718 Main Street in Pomeroy. Monetary donations can be taken at any branch of Sterling Savings or U.S. Bank. Please specify that donations be made to Heart-to-Heart for Families. For further donation information contact Lisa Lund at 509-843-6084 or Sandi Dixon at 509-843-6043.

Dense smoke held down by an inversion has limited visibility in the area of the fire and as far east as the Lewiston, Id. area. The fire has burned actively in the afternoons when the inversion layer lifts. Yesterday, the fire was most active within the interior perimeter of the fire and along the northwest flank of the fire overnight. Additional firefighting resources arrived last night and are hoping to make progress on the firelines today.

Because of the complexity of the fire, a Type I Incident Management Team has taken over management of the fire. The fire was initially reported to the Pendleton Interagency Communications Center late Friday afternoon and is burning on private lands protected by the Washington Department of Natural Resources and the Umatilla National Forest lands.

Emergency closures in effect include:

Forest Road 47 (Tucannon River Road)
Forest Road 4625 (Maloney Mountain Road)
Mountain Road at Lynnville 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