

Hundreds Evacuated near Sisters Black Crater Fire

by Bend Weekly News Sources

FEMA authorizes funds, Fire declared conflagrationThe U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) last night authorized the use of federal funds to help Oregon fight the Black Crater Fire, burning in the Deschutes National Forest near Sisters, Oregon.

Federal Emergency Management Agency Director R. David Paulison said the state's request for federal fire management assistance was approved after it was confirmed that the fire was threatening more than 204 homes, and from 350 to 400 businesses. The Black Creek Fire triggered mandatory evacuations of 496 residents, with 1,033 more under standby evacuation at the time of the grant request (July 27, 10:29 p.m. ET).

"It's critical that the men and women who selflessly battle wildfires know they will continue to have the support of the federal government," said Paulison. "This declaration is one demonstration of that support."

The authorization makes FEMA funding available to pay 75 percent of the state's eligible firefighting costs under an approved grant for managing, mitigating and controlling designated fires.

Last night, Governor Kulongoski declared the Black Crater fire the second conflagration in one week.

By invoking Oregon's Conflagration Act the Governor allows State Fire Marshal Nancy Orr to mobilize firefighters and equipment to assist local resources battling the fire. The request to invoke the Oregon Conflagration Act came from Deschutes County Fire Defense Board Chief Taylor Robertson.

lightning-caused fire began on July 23 burning 350 acres in steep terrain and shows high growth potential as it threatens residences west of Sisters. The fire is visible from Highway 20 though road and area closures prohibit public access on approximately 70,000 acres around the incident in order to protect the public and fire fighters. There are no reports of injuries or structures lost. Four task forces consisting of 73 structural firefighters and their associated equipment from Clackamas, Linn, Lane, and Benton counties have deployed to the scene to assist firefighting crews. Updated fire information is available at OSFM website: <http://egov.oregon.gov/OOHS/SFM>.

Hundreds Evacuated near Sisters Black Crater Fire by Bend Weekly News Sources