Black Crater Fire 100 Percent, Maxwell Fire Nearly Contained As Lightning Sparked Other Blazes

by K_Guice

The Black Crater fire is now 100 percent contained and the Maxwell fire is 95 percent contained. Meanwhile, more than 100 additional fires have been reported around Central Oregon after the lightning storms on August 6.

The 9,400-acre Black Crater fire burning southwest of Sisters that started on July 23 was fully contained as of Wednesday at 6 p.m.

Black Crater Fire is now 100 Percent Contained. Photos by Brent McGregor â€œThings are looking really good,â€• said Cindy Glick, a fire information officer for the Black Crater fire. â€œWe have transitioned to a type three team, which is a much smaller team,â€• she added.

Tuesday, five, 20-person crews, an Oregon Department of Forestry Strike team, five engines and one helicopter worked on the fire and mop-up operations.

â€œWe had thunderstorms on Monday eveningâ€¦ we had some good winds,â€• Glick said. The storm did not cause any additional fires. Despite the new rash of lighting strikes and wind, the storm actually helped; dropping one inch of rain in the fire zone.

Firefighters received some additional relief Monday night. â€œMembers of the community held a pie and ice cream social at sister community church and invited all of the fire fighters to come over,â€• Glick said.

Every time a firefighter walked in they were welcomed with a huge round of applause.

The Maxwell Fire burning approximately six miles southwest of Mitchell, started by lighting on July 24, is also 95 percent contained.

There are 961 fire personnel still working to fully contain the 6,900-acre fire.

â€œThey are continuing to mop up and are available if the need comes up for initial attacks,â€• said Pam Fichting, an information officer at the Maxwell fire.

The Burned Area Emergency Response Team from the local Forest Service Region has begun work to develop a plan for the fire area rehabilitation.

The team has been developing a plan to provide recommendations for erosion control and resource.

Roads 450, 2630 and 150 remain closed. In addition, Allen Creek Horse Camp and Scott Camp are also closed until further notice.

As both of those fires are being brought under control, fire crews across Central Oregon have been working steadily the past week to put out over 100 reported fires caused by lighting strikes from the thunderstorms that began passing through the area on August 6.

Since Tuesday, August 8, Central Oregon Dispatch Center recorded an additional 27 fire starts, with more than 100 incidents being reported since Monday.

â€œInitial attack resources engines have been going out,â€• said Jean Nelson-Dean, a fire information officer with the Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center.

â€œA lot of them are small like a tree struck by lightning or less than a tenth of acre,â€• she said.

Most of the fires were along the Cascade Range in the Deschutes National Forest and on the northern portion of the Ochoco National Forest, according to dispatch records.

The Three Horse fire, burning on federal land five miles southeast of Clarno in Southwestern Wheeler County is the largest fire reported since Monday.

On Wednesday, fire crews were using six engines and a helicopter to contain the blaze that is estimated to have burned between 500 and 800 acres.

The Rock Springs fire, located five miles northwest of the John Day Fossil Beds, is approximately 400 acres in size and threatening three structures including a house and two outbuildings, according to the Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center.

Structural protection for the home and outbuildings has been put in place and five engines are working to contain the fire.

The final fire of note is the Little Deschutes fire. It was burning in steep terrain in Manzanita brush and stands of ponderosa pine trees about 10 miles southwest of Crescent.

â€œThat fire has been contained,â€• said Grant Kemp, the emergency operations mangers for the Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center.

The blaze was about seven acres and burned on the Crescent Ranger District of the Deschutes National Forest. Wednesday, crews were mopping up the scene, according to Kemp.

Firefighters anticipate finding additional â€œholdoverâ€• fires into the weekâ€™s end. Additional lightning is expected Friday.

According to the Northwest Interagency Coordination Center, over 13,000 lightning strikes were recorded across Oregon and Washington during Monday and Tuesdayâ€™s thunderstorms.

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