

Lake George Fire Now 1,600 Acres, Additional Areas Closed

by Cheryl McDermott

The Lake George fire grew by about 600 acres to an estimated 1,600 acres Sunday, pushing deeper into the Mt. Washington Wilderness. According to a news release from the Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center, the lightning-caused fire that began August 7 approximately 13 miles west of Sisters in the Mt. Washington Wilderness is now about 10 percent contained.

A plane drops fire-retardant on the George Lake Fire Sunday, August 13. Heavy "down and dead" fuel causes heavy concentration smoke at George Lake Fire. Photos by John Heckman, Fire Behavior Analyst Projected fire movement suggests continued active surface spread to west with flanking spread to the south and east. Forecasted wind shift to the northwest in the afternoon with increasing wind speeds will support rapid spread to the east with short duration and frequent torching, or the burning of a tree's crown, possible. Down wind spotting, where small fires caused by wind-carried burning material form beyond the main fire edge, is possible up to ½ mile.

On Sunday, crews made progress in building and wet-mopping the north flank fire-line. Work continued to extend and plumb the dozer contingency line to Dugout Lake and progress was made in efforts to establish a second dozer line outside of the wilderness.

Due to a shift in wind direction from a cold front moving into the area this afternoon, the east side of the fire will be tested for several hours. Crews will be on increased alert to changing weather patterns and fire conditions. Crews will continue to mop up and improve existing lines and make efforts to extend new line into areas of lava rock.

Portions of the Washington Wilderness Area and the Pacific Crest Trail in the Mt. Washington Wilderness between Hwy 242 and Big Lake are closed, with the exception of a portion of the 2060 road which remains

open to allow access to Black Butte Ranch for residents.

Two new areas north of the fire around Meadow and Link Lakes were closed Sunday to allow for safe access to water sources for suppression aircraft.

The Black Crater and Lake George Fires are being managed by Pacific Northwest Incident Management Team 3 (PNW3) under a joint delegation from the Deschutes National Forest and Oregon Department of Forestry. Currently PNW3 consists of 554 personnel with eight helicopters, two fixed wing-retardant aircraft, 12 engines, eight dozers and seven water tenders.

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