

Cascade Crest Complex Fire Grows to Nearly 19,000 Acres

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Newest Puzzle Fire near Mt. Jefferson tops 4,100 Acres

Comprised of the Black Crater, Lake George, and Puzzle fires, the Cascade Crest Complex Wildland Fire has burned just short of 19,000 acres and is estimated at 30 percent containment.

The newest fire, dubbed "The Puzzle Fire" because of its proximity to the Puzzle Creek Drainage, started August 19 from unknown causes. It has now grown to 4,126 acres with zero containment. The Puzzle Fire is burning two miles east of Marion Forks and about a dozen miles north of the Lake George Fire.

Photo by Matt Gomes The lightning-caused Black Crater fire has burned 9,400 acres and is considered 100 percent contained. Five miles west of Sisters, the Lake George fire is now at 5,472 acres and is 70 percent contained.

Over 1,000 fire personnel including 28 crews and two spike camps continue their efforts. Divisions are now being combined on the Lake George Fire as mop up continues in the interior in preparation for aerial mop up. One spike camp has been pulled from the line. Crews have completed direct line construction on the northwest perimeter up to Mt. Washington from the lava flow. Crews are also mopping up spot fires and looking for additional spots in the area.

The Black Crater Fire is being patrolled and all nuisance smokes have been mopped up. Some engines, tenders and crews remain.

Crews have now been able to reach the Puzzle Fire on the Willamette National Forest, and dozer lines are being constructed outside the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness using old roads and fire-lines from the B & B Fire in 2003. Crews began constructing hand fire-line near Marion Lake, from an old B & B fuel break to the Pacific Crest Trail.

Temperatures in the mid to upper 70s, and humidity in 25-30 percent range are expected today when fire behavior is expected to become more active.

Highway 242 opened this morning to all traffic, and forest closures are in place. Because of the Puzzle Fire, most of the Mt. Jefferson Wilderness area and surrounding forest lands are closed until further notice.

The closed area is bounded by Highway 22 on the west, Whitewater Creek on the north, the Warm Springs reservation on the northeast, Forest Roads 1230 and 1234 on the east and Highway 20/126 from Santiam Pass to Santiam Junction on the South. Marion and Pamela Lakes are contained within the closure area.

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