

For Immediate Release

EOC Contact: Deputy State Fire Marshal Bob Jones, (252) 912-4932

Local Contact:

August 21, 2009, 9:30 a.m.

Fire Mobilization Ordered for the Grant County Complex Fire

State fire assistance has been mobilized to support local firefighters working to contain several wildfires currently burning near Ephrata in Grant County.

Washington State Patrol Deputy Chief Dave Karnitz authorized the mobilization of state firefighting resources on August 21, 2009 at 03:30 at the request of Assistant Fire Chief Terry Leasher of Grant County Fire District # 7.

Mobilization specialists from the Fire Protection Bureau have ordered 10 Wildland Strike Teams (5 wildland engines, 1 water tender and a Strike Team Leader), 4 20-person handcrews and a helicopter.

According to local officials, there are three large fires actively burning within this complex:

- High Hill Fire – 1,200 acres 0% containment
- SR17 Fire (outside of Ephrata) 400+ acres 20% containment – This fire is burning within 2 miles of the Ephrata Airport.
- B.5 350+ acres 20% containment – This fire is threatening approximately 50 homes a local fish hatchery

The fires are burning in light brush and grass in the northern half of Grant County. Evacuations at this time are voluntary.

The lightning storm that started these fires also started wildland fires in Klickitat, Benton, Yakima, Douglas, and Spokane Counties.

Grant County will be opening an information center. For media inquiries call Kyle Foreman at 509-771-0875.

The State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Camp Murray has been activated to Phase II, to coordinate state assistance for the Grant County Complex. Personnel from the Office of the State Fire Marshal will be enroute to the scene of the fire to coordinate dispatch of resources, while other personnel are staffing the State EOC at Camp Murray.

Under the mobilization plan, the Fire Protection Bureau will be coordinating the initial dispatch of firefighters, engines, water tenders, and helicopters. The Washington State Fire Services Mobilization Plan is implemented to provide personnel, equipment and other resources from around the state when wildfires exceed the firefighting capacity of local jurisdictions. More information about the Washington State Fire Services Mobilization Plan is available at: <http://wsp.wa.gov/fire/wildfire.htm>.

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