

NEWS Release BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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BLM
Lakeview District Office

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT -- LV-09-01
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First Phase of Fire Retardant Cleanup Accomplished

Lakeview, OR – The first phase of the emergency response to a Phos-Check[®] fire retardant spill at the Lakeview Interagency Air Base was successfully completed on January 3, 2009. The Lakeview Interagency Air Base facility is jointly managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service.

The spill was reported to the Bureau of Land Management's Lakeview District on December 22, 2008. Fire and hazmat personnel immediately responded to the incident. Upon arrival at the scene they discovered that a pipe on an above ground storage tank had ruptured, spilling 7,000 gallons of non-hazardous fire retardant. The fluid had breached the tank's secondary containment structure, spread across the tarmac and entered an adjacent drainage ditch. After assessing site conditions, fire and hazmat personnel worked quickly to contain the spilled material.

Phos-Check[®] is the trade name for the fire retardant commonly dropped by aircraft to suppress wildland fires. While it is not considered a hazardous material, high concentration of this substance has the potential to harm fish populations. To prevent the fire retardant from reaching surrounding fishbearing bodies of water, arrangements were made for SMAF Environmental of Prineville, Oregon to conduct the first phase of the site cleanup. This effort, initiated on December 23, 2008, utilized equipment and crews to vacuum slurry from the drainage ditch, remove and replace contaminated soil, clean drains and pipes, and pressure wash and vacuum the Air Base tarmac. This successfully prevented the fire retardant from reaching Thomas Creek, the home of several threatened and endangered fish species.

The second phase of the cleanup effort is pending, while awaiting further direction from the State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. The specific cause of the Phos-Check[®] spill remains under investigation. Once known, action will be taken to prevent future occurrences.

For more information about this environmental cleanup effort, please call Tom Cottingham at (541) 883-6916.

About the BLM

The BLM manages more land – 256 million acres – than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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