

**NEWS RELEASE
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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, VALE DISTRICT OFFICE, 100 OREGON STREET, VALE, OREGON 97918

Happy Valley Fire exceeds 40,000 acres in southeast Oregon

Vale, Oregon – The Happy Valley fire which began around midnight on Saturday 18 miles north of Burns Junction is now estimated at 41,837 acres, according to the Bureau of Land Management Vale District Office. A joint Type 3 High Desert Team of firefighters from Burns and Vale took command of the fire this morning.

Quite a few air resources were applied to the blaze Sunday to assist in suppressing the fire, which spread along a long narrow ridge fanned by high winds in the afternoon, said Todd Gregory, yesterday's incident commander. "It is mostly shrub and grass," said Gregory, "and the winds really caused it to spread."

Gregory cautions the public to avoid the area north of County Road 790 to Cedar Mountain. Although there is no immediate threat to roads or structures, it could be dangerous for people to seek access to the lands in that area. "Safety is our number one concern," said Gregory.

Resources currently assigned to the fire include several engines, water tankers, a bulldozer, an at least two air tankers. The BLM is closely monitoring progress of the situation and arranging for additional resources to supplement those already on scene.

The fire began amidst thousands of lightening strikes that hit southeast Oregon over the weekend. More lightning is expected this afternoon, and extreme caution is advised in this area.

For additional information, contact the Vale District Office at (541) 473-3144.

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