

Bench Fire



**Agency
Administrator**

Mariah Rawlins

**Incident
Commander**

Ian Yocum



**Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners
Jefferson County Fire & EMS
Warm Springs Agency**

Executive Summary

**The Department of State Fire Marshal
Red Team**

July 26, 2026 – August 1, 2026



Vital Statistics

****NOTE:** Statistics below are reflective of apparatus and evacuations at the peak of the incident, unless otherwise noted.**

Conflagration invoked on July 26, 2026

Apparatus

Type 1 Engine.....	10
Type 3 Engine.....	21
Type 6 Engine.....	16
Water Tender.....	11
Total Strike Team/Task Forces.....	11
• TF#21 – Clackamas County	
• TF#22 – Linn/Lincoln County	
• TF#23 – Linn County	
• TF#32 – Lincoln County	
• TF#33 – Polk/Marion County	
• ST#09 – Tillamook/Lane County	
• ST#10 – Multnomah County	
California EMAC Resources.....	4
• TF2800 – Region 2	
• TF2802 – Region 2	
• ST6841 – Region 6	
• TF2801 – Region 2	

Structures & Evacuations

Assessments Completed.....	23
Structures Threatened.....	1,674
Level 3 Evacuations.....	308
Level 2 Evacuations.....	1,792
Level 1 Evacuations.....	163

Structure Type	Damaged	Destroyed
Single Residences	0	6
Comm. Property	0	0
Infrastructure	0	0
Outbuildings	0	7
Vehicles	0	0

Containment & Cost

As of August 1, 2026

Total Acres Burned:	67,229
Percent Contained:	46%
Total Reported Injuries (OSFM):	0
Total Personnel (OSFM only):	196
Total Cost (OSFM only):	\$2,153,615

Incident Overview

The Bench Fire ignited on July 23, 2026, approximately four miles southwest of Warm Springs, Oregon, on and near the Warm Springs Reservation in Jefferson County. Burning in grass, shrub, and timber fuels under extremely dry conditions, the fire exhibited rapid and aggressive growth driven by high temperatures, low humidity, and shifting winds.

The incident escalated quickly when the fire crossed the Deschutes River and expanded toward populated areas, prompting widespread evacuation orders across the Warm Springs Reservation and surrounding communities. This threat prompted the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Red Team to send resources from the nearby Akawa Butte Fire on Saturday, July 25th to assist with local responders with structure protection. The nearby Beachcomb Fire ultimately merged with the Bench Fire, significantly increasing the overall fire footprint and complexity of suppression operations. Level 3 "Go Now" evacuations were issued for much of the reservation, affecting thousands of residents and resulting in major transportation disruptions, including closures along U.S. Highway 26.

Due to the immediate threat to lives, homes, critical infrastructure, and tribal resources, the Emergency Conflagration Act was invoked, mobilizing state and interstate structural protection resources to support tribal, local, state, and federal firefighting agencies. The Red Team engaged in Unified Command with Southwest Area Incident Management Team 4 after signing a Delegation of Authority with County Commissioners from Jefferson County, Jefferson County Fire & EMS, and the Warm Springs Agency. The signing of this delegation officially transfers authority, responsibility, accountability, and operational command to the incident management team; the Red Team assumed command of the incident at 6:00 pm.

The fire caused significant impacts to the Warm Springs community, placing a substantial portion of the reservation's population under evacuation orders. Tribal leadership initiated recovery and support efforts for displaced residents while emergency responders continued structure protection, perimeter control, and containment operations.

Due to the complexity of the incident, observed fire behavior, and increased evacuation levels, additional task forces and strike teams from Oregon and California were requested. These resources were deployed to protect homes and critical infrastructure within the threatened communities.

Despite challenging weather conditions and periods of active fire growth, collaborative efforts of local, regional, state, and interstate emergency personnel were instrumental in safeguarding the communities impacted by fire. The coordinated and timely actions of assigned personnel significantly mitigated potential damage and offered critical reassurance to residents amid extreme and evolving fire conditions.

Incident Timeline

July 25th

- Mobilized one (1) structural task force from the Akawa Butte Fire to assist local responders.

July 26th

- Attended a formal in-brief in Madras from Central West Zone Incident Management Team.
- Signed a Delegation of Authority with Jefferson County, Jefferson County Fire & EMS, and the Warm Springs Agency.
- Unified Command of the Southwest Area Incident Management Team 4 at 6:00 pm.

July 29th

- The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office upgraded evacuation zones in the Camp Sherman Basin and Lake Billy Chinook.
- Structural resources defended homes in the Pelton Dam and Seekseequa areas.

July 30th

- The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs held a community meeting for tribal members at the Warm Springs Community Center.
- Evacuation orders downgraded from Level 3 to Level 2 for portions of the Warm Springs Agency District.

August 1, 2026

- Close-out with all agencies holding a Delegation of Authority.
- All assigned resources either demobilized to their home agencies or mobilized to other local fires.

Notable Events

- Of the 55 agencies that responded to this incident, 24 were able to send personnel while maintaining staff at their home fire stations due to the OSFM 2026 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant.
- Strong integration with the local community, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, Warm Springs Agency, Jefferson County Fire & EMS, Southwest Area Incident Management Team 4, and the Oregon State Fire Marshal.
- The tribal community meeting was attended by 78 members in person and viewed online by 106 individuals.
- Bench Fire's Facebook page received 80,730 views and 731 followers.
- At the peak of the incident, nine (9) task forces and three (3) strike teams were assigned to the incident.

Agencies Represented

Albany Fire Department	Knappa Fire District
Applegate Fire District	Lake County Sheriff's Office
Aurora Rural FPD	Lake Oswego Fire Dept.
Banks Fire District 13	Lebanon Fire District
Brownsville RFPD	Lewis & Clark Rural FPD
California OES	Marion County Fire Dist. #1
Canby Fire District 62	Medford Fire Department
Cannon Beach RFPD	Mist-Birkenfeld Rural FPD
Central Oregon Coast F&R	Molalla Rural Fire District
Clackamas County FD #1	Mt. Angel Fire District
Clatskanie Rural FPD	Nestucca Rural FPD
Colton Rural FPD	Netarts-Oceanside Rural FPD
Cornelius Fire Department	Newport Fire Department
Dallas Fire Department	North Lincoln F&R District 1
Depoe Bay RFPD	Polk County Fire District #1
Dexter RFPD	Port of Portland
Douglas County	Portland Fire & Rescue
Dundee Fire & Rescue	Seaside Fire & Rescue
Falls City Fire District	Silverton Fire District
Forest Grove Fire & Rescue	State Fire Marshal
Gaston Rural FPD	Sweet Home Fire & Amb. Dist
Gearhart Volunteer FD	Tangent Fire District
Grande Ronde Tribal	Tillamook Fire District
Gresham Fire Department	Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue
Halsey-Shedd RFPD	Vernonia Rural FPD
Harrisburg Fire & Rescue	Yachats Rural FPD
Hillsboro Fire & Rescue	
Illinois Valley Fire District	
Keizer Fire District	



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Contact List

If any significant change in fire conditions occur or there are incident needs, please contact the following individuals:

Name	Position	Cell Number	Email Address
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Dennis Lee	Emergency Response Unit Manager	541-213-3989	dennis.lee@osfm.oregon.gov

The following members of the Red Incident Management Team are available if needed for incident specific information:

Name	Position	Cell Number	Email Address
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