

NEWS Release

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Spokane District Office
BLM

BLM Managing Several Fires near Tri Cities Area

Kennewick, WA – A multi-agency Type III Incident Management Team is actively managing several fires that began Saturday, June 27, south east of Kennewick, Washington. Five engine strike teams are assigned to the complex along with a 20-person hand crew and air support.

The South East Benton County Complex is made up of the Les Blair Fire which is approximately 1800 acres in size and the Berrian Fire, approximately 500 acres. The fires are approximately 50% contained as of late Sunday afternoon. Both fires are burning in steep terrain along the Columbia River in grass and sage habitat. The fires are approximately six miles apart from each other. There are no current evacuation orders for the area.

Firefighters continue to make progress on the fires however, the steep terrain and extreme temperatures coupled with the potential for evening thunderstorms present challenges. The Les Blair Fire appears to be human-caused while the Berrian Fire was started by lightning.

With the upcoming Fourth of July weekend and the extreme temperatures the Region is experiencing, fire managers encourage the public to be extra cautious in the outdoors. As a reminder, fireworks and exploding targets are banned on all BLM-managed lands from mid-May through mid-October. While lightning can certainly cause wildfires, most wildfires are actually caused by careless acts of people.

-BLM-

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use sustained yield. In Fiscal Year 2013, the BLM generated \$4.7 billion in receipts from public lands.

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