**South Steens Complex News Release**

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**Update: September 17, 2014, 2:00 PM**

**Incident:** South Steens Complex Wildfire
**Released:** 9/17/2014

September 17, 2014, 2:00 p.m.*Hines, Ore.* Erratic, gusty winds and severely dry fuel conditions proved too much for firefighters from the Burns Interagency Fire Zone this afternoon. The Bone Creek Basin fire on the east side of Steens Mountain pushed significantly to the north and east during the heat of the day, forcing suppression resources away from the fire line and into direct structure protection around properties near the sparse settlement of Andrews. At last report, no structures were lost or damaged. The East Steens Road is closed from Andrews south to Fields, however, travelers are encouraged to avoid use on the *entire* East Steens Road until further notice. The Harney County Sheriff’s office is on scene supporting traffic control as needed.

The Blitzen fire also showed significant activity today, crossing the Steens Mountain Loop Road to the north and east near the Weaver Place. South Steens Campground and Riddle Brothers Ranch were vacated yesterday and remain closed. Visitors are discouraged from using the southern portion of the Steens Mountain Loop Road, from its intersection at Hwy 205 to the "turkey foot" junction near the East Rim Overlook until further notice.

A Type 2 Incident Management Team from Central Oregon will assume control of the Blitzen and Bone Creek Basin fires on Thursday, September 18. These incidents will be grouped by name into the “South Steens Complex.” Incident Base Camp will be on private property on the east side of Steens Mountain and will remain in place until conditions improve.

The Glass Butte fire - a prescribed burn on the Northern Great Basin Experimental Range west of Burns that escaped control efforts – was less active today, though quite a bit of smoke remains in the vicinity.

Fire danger is VERY HIGH and public use restrictions are in effect across Harney County. The Industrial Fire Precaution Level is a level three, which prohibits all personal woodcutting on public land. Use extreme caution when traveling through and recreating in the outdoors this time of year.

To report a wildfire, call 541-573-1000541-573-1000. For fire information, call 541-573-4519541-573-451