



KENNEWICK FIRE DEPARTMENT

Dedicated to providing excellent public service and ensuring the safety and well-being of our community and one another. We live, act, and serve our community with the utmost integrity.

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: June 30, 2023
Contact: Chad Michael, Fire Chief
Phone: 509-820-0460
KFD# 23-06654

[Kennewick, WA] On Friday, June 30, 2023, at 5:08 p.m., fire crews from the Kennewick Fire Department were dispatched to a reported small brush fire in the area of Bob Olson Parkway and Sherman St. When crews arrived on-scene, they observed a wildfire that was quickly spreading on the south side of Bob Olson Parkway between Colorado St. and Delaware St. The fire was extending to the south at a rapid rate of speed towards Interstate 82. The initial arriving on duty Kennewick Fire Department Battalion Chief requested several strike teams of brush fire apparatus and a bulldozer to help mitigate the incident.

Although there were no structures close by that were immediately threatened, there was a large pile of dead trees and natural vegetation (approximately 2-stories high and 100-feet wide) near the head of the fire that crews were working to keep the fire out of. Unfortunately, a dust-devil caused the fire to throw burning material into the pile, which started the pile on fire. There were also power lines located extremely close to the burning pile of dead trees and vegetation that were threatened by the fire. As a precaution, Benton County PUD was contacted to disconnect power to the lines in order to ensure the area would be safe for firefighting crews to extinguish the fire if the power lines dropped to the ground as a result of damage.

The fire was considered to be contained and under control at 8:00 p.m. The size of the fire when extinguished was estimated to be approximately 45-55 acres. A total of 17 wildland units, and a bulldozer, were required to extinguish the fire. These resources were staffed by 51 personnel from the Kennewick Fire Department, Richland Fire & Emergency Services, the Pasco Fire Department, Franklin County Fire District 5, Franklin County Fire District 4, Walla Walla County Fire District 5, and Benton County Fire District 2. All crews with the exception of one were released from the scene around 9:30 pm. A single crew remained on scene throughout the evening to ensure the fire remained within the established control lines.

This morning, it was determined that the pile of dead trees and natural vegetation also contained construction debris including metal, concrete, and other miscellaneous materials. The property owner was contacted by the fire department, and directed to make arrangements with a private contractor to develop a fire extinguishment plan for the burning debris using privately contracted resources. Smoke from the burning pile continues to be visible from Interstate 82, and will likely be visible throughout the day. Kennewick Fire Department personnel will monitor the area to ensure there is no active fire outside of the fire containment area.

The cause of the fire is currently under investigation. Anyone with information on how the fire may have started is encouraged to contact the Kennewick Fire Department.

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The Kennewick Fire Department would like to remind everyone that our region is presently in "Very High Fire Danger." The National Weather Service has forecasted winds in our region to be 20-25 miles per hour this afternoon, with potential gusts up to 35 mph. The Kennewick Fire Department encourages everyone to be extremely careful over this holiday weekend, and refrain from engaging in any activities that could result in a fire.

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