

JOLLY MOUNTAIN FIRE



EARLY ESTIMATES INDICATE the Jolly Mountain Wildfire may have consumed some 9,000 of the 50,000 acres that comprise the Team-away Community Forest.

Photo courtesy of Jolly Mtn. Incident Command

Information and Updates

- **Washington Air Quality Advisory (WAQA)**
<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/enviwa>
- **Washington Smoke Blog**
<http://wasmoke.blogspot.com>
- **Puget Sound Clean Air's Graphing Tool**
<http://airgraphing.pscleanair.org>
- **National Weather Service**, <http://www.weather.gov>
- **Washington State Dept. of Health, Wildfire Smoke**
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/AirQuality/SmokeFromFires/WildfireSmoke>

Jolly Mountain Incident Command Post

CALL Incident Command: 505-303-0057

EMAIL jollymountainfireinfo@gmail.com

ONLINE <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5496>

Kittitas County Emergency Ops Center

CALL the Kittitas County Emergency Operations Center in Ellensburg: 509-933-8305

FACEBOOK Kittitas County Emergency Operations Center: Kittitas-County-Sheriff

EVACUATION maps, notices and more can be viewed with a visit to: <http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us>

TCF managers grapple with a challenging setback

TEANAWAY – According to a report compiled by the Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) in Ellensburg before the Jolly Mountain Wildfire ignited, last year and through July this year scientists and volunteers had been busy in the Team-away Community Forest (TCF). Monday, with the wildfire at 40% containment, forest managers regrouped to plan for rehabilitation initiatives, though it was too early to determine how the blaze impacted projects in the Community Forest completed or started in 2016 and 2017.

Said DNR's **Larry Leach**, "Now that the fire is wrapping up we have to start thinking about our next steps. We have to think about how and when to re-open the forest and campgrounds, and what it takes to make it safe. We have to look at potential salvage of damaged timber, habitat impacts and road maintenance. There's lots to do."

Here below is a short review of what's been happening in the Community Forest before the wildfire ignited.

Timeframe: July-December 2016

- Scientists and volunteers collected data to document stream flows and temperatures with equipment purchased by WDFW.
- Forest managers launched road surveys and assessments to determine which would be retained, decommissioned, abandoned or improved. An emphasis was placed on identifying roads for forest management.
- Stakeholders in the floodplain and wetland restoration effort held discussions to prioritize future projects and began planning, permitting and funding top priorities. Some of the work started last winter.
- Scientists gathered data to determine where roads, trails and infrastructure have reduced the ability of wetlands

to hold, filter and release water. Some work associated with that project completed last winter.

- Several fish barriers were removed, and sediment reduction projects were completed. Early estimates indicated that work would result in the reduction of 77 tons of sediment reaching streams per year.

- An initiative to create a long-term grazing schedule and plan moved forward with the location and mapping of fences and water troughs. That work led to the creation of an interagency, interdisciplinary team, including cattlemen. The team finalized a rangeland and riparian adaptive management program with a component to monitor impacts.

- Work crews thinned 250 acres and scheduled the construction of a fuel break for 2017.

- Forest managers began a "coarse assessment" for what will become a long-term forest management activity and harvest schedule to provide habitat for diverse species and restore the forest.

- A fire risk assessment was initiated, but by the end of the year little more than that had been accomplished. However, an emergency fire response plan was completed.

- Volunteers were organized to begin trail restoration and maintenance projects. Eventually networks of volunteers will be charged to educate recreationists and police the forest. Opportunities for the community to engage in forest management initiatives were identified after a subcommittee developed a series of proposals.

- Meetings were held to discuss the development of maps, handouts and other educational material for recreationists.

- The first steps were taken to collect data on spotted owl habitat, critical wildlife areas, existing and potential dry pine and Douglas fir habitats, upland meadows, noxious weeds, fish spawning

areas, big game overwintering areas, and den and nesting sites of threatened or endangered species.

Timeframe: April-July 2017

- DNR finalized a \$200,000 grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology to erect ten miles of lay-down wire fencing and create a water crossing and troughs. That work began in May.
- DNR and the Yakama Nation conducted surveys aimed to identify historical and cultural artifacts left behind by Native Americans and homesteaders.
- An Advisory Committee-led stewardship group started identifying volunteer groups and other sources of outside support.

- Two road gates were replaced at Jungle/Rye Creek and Indian Creek.

- Shaded fuel breaks were completed on Cle Elum Ridge behind the Master-son property and near Lick Creek.

- Aquatic restoration projects kicked off on the following creeks: Indian, Jungle, Middle and First.

- American Rivers and Trout Unlimited committed volunteers to help monitor stream temperatures where restoration projects had been targeted.

- Kittitas County and the Washington State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife purchased a 220-acre farm off Teanaway Road. The property eliminates the checkerboard effect and connects the Teanaway Community Forest with the Teanaway River.