



NEWS RELEASE

Date: August 2, 2007

Release: Immediately

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(Tualatin Brush Fire Burns Two Acres)

A brush fire in the back section of a sand and gravel operation in Tualatin burned approximately two acres Thursday. The fire was reported at about 11:00 am by workers of Stacey and Wilbeck Construction, the firm improving the nearby railroad tracks for the new Wilsonville-Beaverton Commuter Rail. The first arriving firefighters from Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue found flames moving through heavy brush in the southeast corner of Tigard Sand and Gravel, 21455 SW 120th Street, Tualatin. The incident commander requested additional resources bringing a total of six engine companies and two rescue companies to battle the fire that was burning through heavy brush (4-7 feet tall) and some small trees. They made an aggressive attack on the fire with small, mobile 4-wheel drive fire engines but were hampered by rugged terrain and difficult access.

“We were fortunate to get the cooperation of Tigard Sand and Gravel, who offered us two of their heavy bulldozers to assist in cutting a road to the fire and digging a fire line around it,” said Battalion Chief Jeff Cooper, the incident commander. “Without those two bulldozers, we would have tied up additional firefighters in cutting that road by hand.”

Twenty-one firefighters brought the fire under control in about 45-minutes. They continued working for another two hours mopping up hot spots. A Tualatin neighborhood located about 200-yards away were not threatened by the fire. The residential area was separated from the fire by a pond and the railroad tracks.

Fire investigators were able to interview witnesses and examine evidence at the scene. That evidence included remnants of a campfire and makeshift shelters which led investigators to believe the area was a campground frequented by transients. The only damaged reported was heavy charring to a telephone pole that carried a single phone wire.

The burned area is next to land the Fire District has identified as Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Hazard Zone. When a fire breaks out in the "interface" it can challenge fire fighting operations and response. The following tips can help firefighters protect a home and/or extinguish a wildfire:

- Plant low growing, fire resistant plants (groundcover, perennials and annuals) near your home.
- Remove the lower branches of trees at least 10 feet from the ground and cut back limbs that hang over your roof.
- Remove leaves, dry grass, and brush from underneath decks and crawlspaces.
- Remove leaves and other vegetation from your gutters and roof.
- Keep landscaping well pruned and watered.
- Store firewood and other combustibles away from your home.
- Ensure driveways are wide enough for fire vehicles
- Replace wood shake roofing with non-combustible material.

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