

Media Release

Portland Water Bureau

For Immediate Release

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For more information, contact Public Information at 503-823-8064.

Portland Water Bureau monitoring spread of Camp Creek Fire

Portland's drinking water remains safe

The Portland Water Bureau continues to monitor the spread of the Camp Creek Fire burning in the Bull Run Watershed, which is estimated to be 1,607 acres and zero percent contained as of the evening of August 27. The fire is approximately 1.3 miles from Reservoir 1 and approximately 2.1 miles from the Water Bureau's Headworks treatment facility.

Weather forecasts predict stable conditions that are expected to keep fire growth manageable. However, fire in the watershed always poses a risk to our water supply, and weather conditions can change quickly. We continue to work closely with fire agencies to monitor the threat levels to our staff and infrastructure. We're developing multiple contingency plans, so we are prepared in the event we are forced to evacuate staff from the watershed.

"The Bull Run watershed is the backbone of the Portland Metro Area water supply, and the Camp Creek Fire is distressing to all of us," said Gabriel Solmer, Water Bureau Director. "We're so grateful for the fire responders and our partners around the region. Our water supply is currently safe. If the fire were to put the supply at risk, we may need to rely only on our limited groundwater, which can't meet all our current summer demand. Should we get to that position, we will ask for the help of all water users to reduce their water use."

The Portland Water Bureau (PWB) continues to monitor water quality and has yet to see any fire-related impacts in our drinking water.

Fire retardants were used in limited areas during the initial attack on Friday, August 25, to support fire suppression efforts and protect the Bull Run Watershed. Fire retardants may be used again to support firefighting efforts. Retardant will not be used in defined exclusion zones that drain into the Bull Run Reservoirs to protect water quality. The Portland Water Bureau will continue to monitor for potential impacts to water quality.

The Portland Water Bureau has been working closely with the agencies in charge of fighting these fires since first alerted to the blaze. The U.S. Forest Service, Oregon

Department of Forestry (ODF), and local fire response agencies are on the scene and have activated a ground crew and aerial resources, including helicopters and water-scooper aircraft, to combat the fire. The Portland Water Bureau does not have a direct firefighting role but provides critical information about the watershed, PWB facilities and operations to support the Forest Service in their response in the area.

“We take our responsibilities to deliver safe drinking water to our community and protect our staff very seriously,” said Solmer. “We are vigorously monitoring the situation with our regional partners, and we are preparing for a variety of possible outcomes, including in a scenario in which we need to evacuate the watershed for employee safety.”

The Water Bureau will continue to make periodic updates to keep the public informed.

What you can do

No water restrictions are in place currently. If we need to reduce water use, we will ask that all Portland Water Bureau users and customers limit outdoor water uses, especially for watering lawns and gardens, and reduce indoor water use when possible. To ensure you get information quickly to get emergency messages from public safety officials, sign up to get email updates from PublicAlerts at publicalerts.org/signup.

While the fire does not immediately threaten Portland’s water supply, it is important to stay informed, be prepared for emergencies and stay clear of the area to ensure access for emergency responders.

Follow the Water Bureau on [X \(Twitter\)](#) and [Facebook](#), and visit our website, [Portland.gov/water](https://portland.gov/water), for the latest information about water quality and supply, updates related to this incident and other Water-related news. Information about emergency water storage is available in multiple languages on the [Regional Water Providers Consortium website](#).

Water Bureau will continue to rely on two water sources

[On Thursday, Aug. 24, we activated our groundwater supply](#) to augment the Bull Run during this extended hot and dry summer. At this time, the bureau will continue to rely on a blend of water from the Bull Run Watershed and our groundwater source, the Columbia South Shore Well Field.

About the Portland Water Bureau

The Portland Water Bureau serves water to almost a million people in the Portland area. Portland’s water system includes two great water sources, 53 tanks and reservoirs, and 2,200 miles of pipes. With 600 employees working on everything from water treatment to customer service, the Water Bureau is committed to serving excellent water every minute of every day.