

FEMA Authorizes Federal Grant Funds to Help Fight Three Major Washington Fires

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BOTHELL, Wash. – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has authorized the use of federal funds to help with firefighting costs for three fires burning in central Washington: the Hawk Fire in Yakima County and the Yakama Nation, the Cougar Creek Fire in Chelan County and the Grass Valley Fire in Douglas and Grant counties.

FEMA Region 10 Administrator Mike O'Hare determined that each of the fires threatened such destruction as would constitute a major disaster, and approved the state of Washington's separate requests for federal [Fire Management Assistance Grants](#) (FMAGs) on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Photo of a helicopter dropping water and retardant on a wildfire near the Mexican border, to stop

The Hawk Fire started on Friday and had burned in excess of 1,500 acres of tribal lands under the jurisdiction of the Yakama Nation Fire and Yakima County Fire District 5. At the time of the request, the fire was threatening approximately 175 homes in and around the community of White Swan, as well as an area high school, Yakama Nation power utilities and health clinic, multiple roads and bridges, and Yakama Nation cultural resources. Mandatory evacuations were issued for residents in the area.



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The Cougar Creek Fire in Chelan County started July 28 but had spread by Saturday as a result of gusting winds, threatening homes in and around the communities of Ardenvoir, Plain and Entiat. Also threatened at the time of the state's request were Chelan Public Utility District power lines, Chelan Public Works Staging Station and multiple roads. Mandatory evacuations had been issued.

Early Sunday morning FEMA granted the state's request for an FMAG to help with firefighting costs for the Grass Valley Fire burning in Douglas and Grant counties. At the time of the request, the fire was threatening homes in and around the communities of Grand Coulee, Coulee Dam and Electric City. The fire was also threatening power utilities and resources as well multiple roads and bridges that provide access to the communities. The fire started on Saturday and had burned in excess of 60,000 acres of federal and private land. Mandatory evacuations had been issued.

FMAGs are provided through the President's Disaster Relief Fund and are made available by FEMA to assist in fighting fires that threaten to cause a major disaster. Eligible items can include expenses for field camps; equipment use, repair and replacement; mobilization and demobilization activities; and tools, materials and supplies.

In addition to reimbursement funding for fighting the fires, an additional \$566,667 in assistance will be available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) as a result of each FMAG. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 authorized FEMA to provide HMGP Post-Fire funds to eligible states and territories that receive Fire Management Assistance declarations and federally recognized tribes that have land burned within a declared area.

FEMA encourages HMGP Post-Fire funds be used for the mitigation of wildfire and related hazards, such as flood or erosion. However, HMGP is available for



risk reduction of any hazard.

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