

Cumberland Coal Fire

On Friday, June 5th, Enumclaw Fire Department was made aware of a smoldering, underground fire involving $\leq 10,000$ cubic yards of coal tailings at the sight of the retired 1923 Navy Mine. Enumclaw Fire has had multiple calls to the 35400 block of Cumberland Way for a “smoke investigation” by concerned citizens since. The parcel that the old mine resides on is protected by Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

At this time, it appears the fire is smoldering within the coal tailings and has not extended, underground, into the mine itself nor is producing active flames. The current concerns are the noxious smoke that is being generated, its potential for health complications and the containment for fire spread as we enter into our dry season. As of now, the cause of the fire is unknown. This is a complex and lengthy fire incident with no simple or quick solution.

DNR is the lead jurisdiction with support being brought in from multiple other agencies. The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) has been mobilized and will be arriving, on sight, today with a specialized team that is experienced with these types of fires. The 10th Civil Support Team from the US ARMY has been requested and arrived today to set up a local air monitoring system. They are setting up air monitoring systems in four locations in Cumberland to sample air quality for toxins. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been contacted to partner with us to help provide information on the potential health effects that the smoke presents. We also have received valuable input from Bill Kombol from Palmer Coking Coal, an expert in local coal mining.

DNR is currently, on sight, working on suppressing the fire with foam applications. A contingency plan is being put into place to establish a fire line around the immediate fire area to ensure containment and prevent extension into the surrounding brush and timber due to the upcoming warm and dry weather that is forecasted.

Enumclaw Fire Department’s goal is to keep informed and up-to-date as this incident evolves and provide information and safety to our citizens through social media and our website. www.enumclawfire.org . DNR is also in the process of posting physical information in Cumberland for local residents.

