



Chips Fire Update

August 27 -- 8:00 A.M.



Location: Plumas and Lassen National Forests

Date started: July 29, 2012

Cause: Under investigation

Size: 68,582 acres

Containment: 65%

Personnel: 1,502 (Crews: 19 Type 1, 11 Type 2; Helicopters: 4 Type 1, 3 Type 2, 2 Type 3; Engines: 140; Dozers: 15; Water Tenders: 42)

Management: California Interagency Incident Management Team 4

Fire Status: No new spots were identified on the fire last night. Firefighters continued to patrol containment lines around the fire perimeter while crews mopped-up control lines up to 200 feet into the interior of the burn area.

Winds will moderate in the fire area today back to seasonal averages, between 5-10 miles per hour with gusts up to 25 miles per hour on ridge tops. Firefighters will continue mopping-up into the burn area, cold trailing control lines up to 300 feet into the interior. "Cold trailing" is the process of working within the fire area and feeling the ground for hot spots, which will continue to smolder and burn until cooled down with dirt or water. This is a time consuming process of walking and crawling around the fire area to feel for heat in stumps, roots and rocks until all areas are cold. Because this fire has spread by throwing embers and igniting spot fires up to a mile away, the mop-up phase will be a critical component of securing control lines.

Aerial resources will be working the fire area again after having been grounded yesterday due to the gusting winds. Helicopters and air tankers will support suppression efforts on the ground by dumping water on spot fires, accessing areas that are unsafe for firefighters to work in, and blanketing retardant around containment lines to limit spot fires. Helicopters have aided in control efforts on the west flank of the fire as crews continue the painstaking work of constructing hand line in difficult terrain while also mopping-up control lines.

A new unit of firefighters has been formed and will be entirely dedicated to rehabilitating bulldozer lines and other ground disturbances that resulted from fire suppression efforts. This group will continue efforts until containment of the fire is reached.

Smoke: Smoke will continue to be present in the fire area and surrounding communities. With several large fires in the area contributing to lower air quality, residents can experience eye irritation, respiratory issues and aggravated heart and lung health problems. These can impact children and older adults more severely. Residents are encouraged to get more information on air quality in their area by visiting: http://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.local_state&stateid=5&tab=0

Community Meeting: A community meeting will be held tonight, August 27, at 6:00 p.m. at the Hamilton Branch Fire Station, 6791 Big Springs Road, Westwood, California.

Evacuations and Closures: No changes have occurred to evacuations at this time. The Plumas County Sheriff's Department continues to enforce Mandatory Evacuations for the communities of Canyon Dam and the Big Meadows area. A Voluntary Evacuation is in place for Rush Creek, and an Advisory is in effect for Prattville residents for the potential threat of the fire to the area.

The Plumas and Lassen National Forests continue to maintain area Closures within and surrounding the Chips fire area. This includes the following area of the Pacific Crest Trail: The PCT is officially closed from Three Lakes (in the Bucks Lake Wilderness) on the Plumas National Forest northbound to the Cold Spring trailhead at the Humbug Road (Plumas County Road 307) on the Lassen National Forest. Additionally, using the Caribou Road (Forest Route 27N26) is prohibited, as the area is also officially closed.

Hikers and equestrians are advised to avoid travel on the portion of the PCT from Bucks Summit, north to Hwy 36. In order to re-route themselves most expeditiously, at Bucks Summit, northbound trail users may travel on Plumas County Road 414 east to Quincy, pick up Highway 70/89 to Chester and then Highway 36 west to resume the trail. Southbound travelers may reverse the process.

Hikers may also use Plumas County Transit between Quincy and Chester, available weekdays only. The transit schedule can be found at http://www.plumastransit.com/qcy_to_chester_23.html

For complete closure information, including a map of the Plumas National Forest Closure, please go to: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/plumas/alerts-notice?aid=13861>

For complete closure information, including a map of the Lassen National Forest Closure, please go to: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/lassen/alerts-notice>

Additional Fire Information: <http://www.inciweb.org/incident/3052/> or call (530) 283-3593 and (530) 283-3288 between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 8 p.m.

