



Chips Fire Update

August 31 -- 8:00 A.M.



Location: Plumas and Lassen National Forests

Date started: July 29, 2012

Cause: Under investigation

Size: 75,217 acres

Containment: 100%

Personnel: 1,207 (Crews: 5 Type 1, 18 Type 2; Helicopters: 2 Type 1, 2 Type 2, 1 Type 3; Engines: 71; Dozers: 13; Water Tenders: 42)

Management: California Interagency Incident Management Team 4

Fire Status: With full containment reached on the Chips Fire, the incident will be transitioning to a Type 2 Incident Management Team effective 6:00 a.m. tomorrow. The new team, NorCal Team 2, will shadow the current team today before assuming command the morning of September 1.

Incident Commander Rocky Opliger addressed day shift firefighters at the morning briefing, "From the critical burnout, to night operations; all the support we've gotten from air resources, to the guys spiking out on the line-you've all done a heck of a job on this fire," commended Opliger. "But there's still a lot of work to do and not all of it is done on the fire line. It's about relationships, the community and the cooperators. Now as we transition to the NorCal Team, you're all in great hands. And on behalf of our team, thank you."

Work continues on fire lines around the perimeter with crews continuing to mop-up. Mopping-up at least 300 feet into the interior of the burn will secure fire lines and reduce opportunities for embers to escape containment lines and create spot fires. Where mop-up objectives are met, firefighters will patrol lines, remove equipment and rehabilitate ground disturbances associated with fire suppression efforts.

Last night crews in Seneca secured and strengthened the fire line around the forest community after a successful burnout operation Wednesday. Helicopter resources will continue to assist firefighting efforts on the ground by performing water drops to keep fire intensity low.

Additionally, the US Forest Service has assembled a team of specialists called a Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team to address soil stabilization issues and reduce post-fire erosion. The US Forest Service will also evaluate the dead and dying trees in the burn area for potential harvesting to contribute to society's need for wood products, as well as provide for increased employment opportunities. Local US Forest Service personnel will also identify some portions of the burned areas that will intentionally be left to recover naturally to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife and plant species, and to recognize the role that fire plays in a functioning ecosystem.

Evacuations and Closures: There is a Mandatory Evacuation for Seneca still in effect. All other Evacuations have been lifted.

All US Forest Service recreation facilities at Lake Almanor have been reopened. However, the Plumas and Lassen National Forests continue to maintain area Closures 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

Community Meeting: A community meeting will be held tonight, August 31 at 6:00 p.m. at the Chester Memorial Hall, 225 Gay Street, Chester, California.

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.

