



Caples Fire Update

October 25, 2019 / 11 AM

Information: (530) 622-5061 (8:00 AM-4:30 PM).

INCIDENT FACTS		
Incident Start Date: 10/10/2019		Location: 4 miles NW of Kirkwood Ski Resort, Caples Creek drainage
Incident Type: Wildfire		Cause: Prescribed Fire conversion
Agency: US Forest Service		
Size: 3,434 acres	Containment: 80%	Expected Full Containment: 10/31/2019
Structures threatened: 0		
Civilian Injuries: 0		Firefighter Injuries: 7 (illnesses, wrist, finger, shin)
Civilian Fatalities: 0		Firefighter Fatalities: 0

Engines: 2 **Crews:** 2 **Water Tenders:** 1 **Helicopters:** 0 **Dozers:** 0 **Total Personnel:** 65

Friday: Some fire activity in the interior as the fire cleans up some of the islands of vegetation. There is a line around the fire. Crews continue suppression repair, cleanup, and patrolling activities. The containment will be re-evaluated after this weekend’s wind event. *A new map will only be created if a change in the perimeter occurs.* The Caples Fire is being managed by a Type 4 organization.

Weather Forecast: A strong cold front will move through Saturday evening with strong northeast winds Sunday into Monday morning for the west side.

Smoke: Smoke is expected to be light as interior fire continues to smolder and burn down or until a season ending precipitation occurs.

Trail Closures: The road closure has been reduced to a Trail Closure (forest order 03-19-12). For public safety the following trails will continue to be closed. The interior of the fire area still has pockets of smoldering fire and stump holes burning underground and is not safe for public use.

- Forest Trails: 17E15 Cody Meadows, 17E20 Silver Fork, 17E22 from Highway 88 north to end, 17E49 Strawberry Creek, 17E51 Caples Creek, 17E53 Kirkwood Lake Loop, 17E63 Forgotten Flat, 17E71 Old Silver Lake Trail, 17E73 Strawberry 4WD Trail, and 17E74 Spur Bee 4WD Trail.

Background: The prescribed burn project began on September 30 as pile burning under favorable conditions following rain and snowstorms. The prescribed fire was within prescription and achieving the goals of the project of reducing fuels loading and create vegetation conditions that allow fires to burn with lower intensities and create defensible space. Once the red flag warning for the wind event was forecasted fire managers began

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building fire line and conducting firing operations to secure and strengthen the fire perimeter before the wind arrived. The containment lines held well through the wind event into Thursday morning when the winds changed direction pushing the fire farther to the south and west and increasing the fire activity. This activity increase took the project out of prescription as the project objectives were no longer being met. On October 10, the Caples fire was converted to a wildfire from a prescribed fire allowing managers to obtain additional resources not normally available to for a prescribed fire. The Caples Fire is being managed for full suppression.

Caples Ecological Restoration Project: The Caples Ecological Restoration Project is restoring fire to the Caples Creek watershed where naturally occurring wildfires started by lightning have been suppressed since 1908. The project is intended to improve forest health, fire resiliency and increase public safety. Prescribed fire treatments reduce fuel loadings, maintain vegetation conditions that allow fires to burn with lower intensities and create defensible space. The goal of this project is to promote a healthy resilient forest by reintroducing fire to the landscape.

The Caples Ecological Restoration Project is a collaborative effort between the Eldorado National Forest, El Dorado Irrigation District and Sierra Nevada Conservancy to restore fire to the Caples Creek watershed where naturally occurring wildfires started by lightning have been suppressed since 1908. The project provides a strategic landscape-wide fuel treatment that will reduce fuel to pre-settlement conditions that will protect the chief water supply to El Dorado County, improve wildlife habitat and create defensible space to nearby communities.

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