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News Release

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Smoke activity in the Happy Camp Complex

Happy Camp, CA, June 23, 2015—For Immediate Release. Hot spots have rekindled in a few areas within the Happy Camp Complex fire. With the coming of triple digit temperatures later this week, it is expected that more smoke will be seen over the 2014 wildfire.

“With a fire this size and the lack of snowpack from last winter, seeing a few smokes within the fire perimeter is not a big surprise,” commented Happy Camp/Oak Knoll District Ranger Tom Mutz. “We have firefighters assigned to monitor the fire and take action when needed. It is likely we will be dealing with isolated smokes and hotspots until we receive significant rainfall.”

Three “holdover” hotspots have been reported recently, burning in single snags deep within control lines. Each time a smoke is detected, it is evaluated by the incident commander and appropriate action is taken. One recent detection – a one hundred foot tall, five foot diameter dead Ponderosa Pine with smoke coming out of the top – was burning 400 feet below a road in an area of high severity burn from 2014. This snag was surrounded by a continuous landscape of dead, burned trees. Firefighters evaluated the risk of the fire moving from the single tree. Due to little or no ground fuels to carry fire in the area, coupled with significant risks to firefighter safety from falling snags, the decision was made to monitor the snag until it burns itself out.

While the weather is forecast to be very hot in the coming days, fire managers do not expect to have challenges from holdover hot spots. Control lines have been “mopped up” to over 300 feet and fire leaving the footprint of the 2014 burn is extremely unlikely. Firefighters are patrolling the fire area daily.

Forest visitors are cautioned that hazards in the burned area still exist. These include but are not limited to increased potential for falling trees, trail damage and mudslides or rockslides.

Careful trip planning is important to have a safe day in the woods. Please consider weather and road conditions when planning your route. Always let someone know where you are expecting to travel and when you are expected to return. Remember there are areas that do not have cell phone coverage.

Visitors are advised to avoid camping near dead or burned trees and use extra caution when traveling in burned areas. Conditions in a burned forest change constantly.

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