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News Release

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Pony Fire Update: Tuesday, June 14, 2016

Happy Camp, CA -- The Pony Fire is burning on the Klamath National Forest, about 15 miles southwest of Happy Camp and west of Highway 96. The fire is now 2,296 acres and 20 percent contained.

Cooler temperatures and higher winds are predicted as an upper level trough moves into the area. Scattered rain began this morning, and more rain is expected Wednesday, lingering through Friday. A return of hot, dry temperatures is predicted next weekend.

Today, crews will take advantage of the cooler weather to scout and construct containment lines closer to the fire's edge. On the east side, they will work to construct direct line northeast from Pony Peak Ridge to Swillup Creek, following the fire's edge, attempting to stop northern advance of the fire as well as protect the Crawford project area, a 1,600 acre forest health and fuels reduction project.

The fire is still holding at Swillup Creek, and crews will work today to construct direct line along the creek to hold the fire there. Steep terrain presents challenges to firefighters, with high potential for burning material to roll downhill, igniting the vegetation below and burning back uphill. Crews will also look for opportunities to begin construction of direct line northwest of Highway 96, working to keep the fire from reaching the road and residences. Crews are continuing to work on a contingency line on the northwest side of the fire from Elbow Springs west to Dillon Creek.

Crews continue to assess the three slop over areas (200 to 300 acres total) that occurred on the westerly control line last Saturday evening because of significant northeast wind. Subsequent change of wind direction to the southwest has mitigated movement of the slop over. However,

steep terrain and rolling burning material is expected to carry the fire downhill farther into the Dillon Creek drainage.

The Pony Fire is located within the perimeter of the 2001 Swillup Fire. Abundant dead snags and down logs from the Swillup Fire continue to drive much of the fire activity in the Pony Fire.

Over 1,000 firefighters are currently assigned to the fire. An injury was reported on Monday; a firefighter with difficulty breathing, was transported to the hospital via helicopter. Due to rapid response by incident staff and availability of aircraft transport, he is recovering and out of danger.

Crews continue to monitor the Dillon Fire, which is 100% contained. No activity has been detected on the Dillon Fire for several days.

To ensure the safety of firefighters and the public, a Forest Closure Order is in effect for the Pony Fire area. The closure includes Pony Peak Road (14N39), Pony Peak Ridge Road (15N30), Dry Lake Road (15N28) and Bear Peak Road (15N19) from its intersection with Douglas Creek Road (15N24) westward to its end.

More information and maps of closed roads are available at the Klamath National Forest website (www.fs.usda.gov/klamath/). Information, maps, and closures are also posted on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4769/>



Caption: Operations Section Chief Trainee Terry "Walt" Walters on the Pony Fire, taken from a recon flight. Photo taken at approximately 4:30pm on June 13, 2016.