



Chips Fire Update

August 29 -- 8:00 A.M.



Location: Plumas and Lassen National Forests

Date started: July 29, 2012

Cause: Under investigation

Size: 74,125 acres

Containment: 87%

Personnel: 1,527 (Crews: 10 Type 1, 17 Type 2; Helicopters: 2 Type 1, 3 Type 2, 1 Type 3; Engines: 97; Dozers: 14; Water Tenders: 42)

Management: California Interagency Incident Management Team 4

Fire Status: "This has been a tough fire," said Incident Commander Rocky Opliger in a morning briefing to firefighters. "It takes a lot of work to get to 100% containment on a fire this large and it really is about mop-up now. We appreciate the great work and let's continue to be diligent."

Firefighters continue patrolling for spot fires and mopping-up containment lines 300 feet into the interior of the fire. Crews will be cold trailing miles of fire line and cooling off hot spots in areas that continue to hold heat like stumps, roots and rocks. With this fire spreading by throwing embers and creating spot fires, this buffer around the perimeter will be critical in securing the line.

While structure protection crews have worked in the area of Seneca, covering buildings with fire-retardant gel and leaving sprinklers on historical buildings, a more aggressive approach will be taken today. Crews will be constructing hand lines around Seneca in preparation for a backfire that will be executed during the night shift. This will reduce fuels around the community and offer more security to buildings in the active fire area.

A power pole on the Caribou-Plumas line was consumed in the fire yesterday. Firefighters worked closely with PG&E to address the issue and escorted a team of linemen into the active fire area to replace the pole. The PG&E crew arrived on site at 1:00 a.m. and had a new pole in place and on line by 3:00 a.m. to minimize the impact on area residents.

The repair and recovery unit continues to work on fire suppression repair. Brush and saplings along roadsides are chipped and spread onto the forest floor. Crews also rehabilitate bulldozer lines by putting in waterbars to reduce erosion. The team will continue removing hazard trees within the burn area that have the potential to hit roads, trails or infrastructure.

The US Forest Service will be evaluating options for addressing dead and dying trees in the burn area. This will include mid-term and long-term risks that burned trees pose to public safety while also include consideration for post-fire salvage options to help supply local jobs to local communities as well as the development of estimates of lands requiring reforestation.

Evacuations and Closures: The Plumas County Sheriff's Department has issued an update to area evacuations effective at 10:00 a.m. August 29, 2012. The Advisement for Prattville will be lifted. The Mandatory Evacuation Order for Rocky Point Campground, Big Meadows, Almanor Boat Ramp, Almanor Day Use Area, Camp Connery and Canyon Dam will be lifted to Advisory. The Voluntary Evacuation Notification for Rush Creek will be lifted. Seneca remains under Mandatory evacuation.

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

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.

