Helena-Fork Fire Update

September 10, 2017 9 a.m.

Fire Information: 530-628-0039  8am to 8pm / helenafireinfo@gmail.com


@ShastaTrinityNF and  @CALFIRESHU  USFSShastaTrinityNF

The Helena Fire, managed under unified command with CAL FIRE and California Interagency Incident Management Team 3 (CIMT3), continues to burn near Junction City and Weaverville, CA. The Fork Fire located north of Monument Peak and southwest of East Fork Lakes in the Trinity Alps Wilderness is being managed by CIMT3 with support of state and local resources.

Helena Fire - Date/Time Reported:  August 30, 2017  Size: 17,038  Containment: 42%  Cause: Human - under investigation

Fork Fire - Date/Time Reported:  August 7, 2017  Size: 3,417 acres  Containment: 0%  Cause: Lightning


Status: Rising temperatures over the next few days may result in increased fire activity. Primary fire spread will likely be the result of rollout of smoldering logs and snags on steep slopes, which may create the possibility of short upslope runs. Firefighters will continue to monitor contained portions of firelines for hotspots. Structure protection measures are complete in the Canyon Creek area and along the 401 Road in the event the fire edge extends to the road. Hand crews and dozers continue to construct fireline in the southwest portion of the fire near Hayfork Divide, and down to the Trinity River. Crews laid nearly 11,000 feet of hoseline in this area. Fireline construction continues to progress on the east side of the fire north of Bear Gulch and crews are directly attacking the fire where feasible. Helicopters assisted hand crews in various locations with bucket drops throughout the day Saturday. On the Fork fire, a hotshot crew and a six-person helitack module have made progress with line construction along the southeast corner of the fire; they have also worked to secure mining structures east of Grasshopper Flats. The crew remained on site overnight so they could continue construction beginning early this morning. Engine resources removed over three miles of hoseline in the Junction City area. Where possible, resource advisors initiated repair assessment and restoration of areas impacted by fireline suppression work.

Weather and Smoke:  Warm and dry conditions will continue through Monday. An offshore trough will bring a chance of showers and thunderstorms Tuesday and Wednesday. Smoke from other fires in northern California and southern Oregon continue to create unhealthy air conditions. Visit ncuaqmd.org for air quality information and hours and locations of clean air shelters.

Forest Closure Order:  A Forest Closure Order is in effect for National Forest Lands impacted by the Helena and Fork Fires on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. This order is to protect firefighter and public safety and will remain in effect until the Helena and Fork Fires are declared out. The forest closure orders also apply to hunters.

Wilderness/Recreation Access:  The BLM Junction City Campground and Bagdad River Access on Highway 299, Pigeon Campground, and the Grapevine Swimming Hole on East Fork Road are closed. A complete list of roads and trails affected by the forest closure is available on https://inciweb.nwcg.gov. The Shasta-Trinity National Forest website lists all recreation sites on the Forest to provide alternative recreational opportunities.

The fire situation is dynamic and residents are urged to monitor fire information on InciWeb and on bulletin boards. Every year thousands of wildfires burn millions of acres across the United States. It’s not if, but when the next wildfire will threaten your community. The Fire Adapted Communities website offers information and specific actions you can take, no matter what your role, to reduce your risk to the next wildfire. Let’s work together to protect our communities, please visit

http://www.fireadapted.org
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State Route 299: California Highway Patrol may re-open Highway 299 to ALL traffic at some point today. The exact time is not known, but will be posted on social media. For now, traffic will continue to be escorted at the following times: 5:30 am, 9:00 am, 2:00 pm, 5:30 pm, and 9:30 pm. Eastbound and westbound traffic in line at the designated times will be allowed through the area under traffic control, depending on fire activity and suppression operations. Highway closures are currently between Junction City Campground to approximately one mile west of the Helena Bridge. Officials are estimating 40 minutes to travel through the area at opening times. **Motorists are advised to use extreme caution when traveling the 299 corridor between Junction City and Big Flat due to potential for rock slides.**

Utilities: Trinity Power and Utility District work is mostly complete with the exception of Canyon Creek Road. Frontier Communications is working to restore phone service to all affected areas. Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) has completed pole replacement and will begin re-energizing power lines in the 299 corridor area Sunday morning. Once it is determined the lines are safe, the California Highway Patrol may re-open the 299 to ALL traffic. All other road closures will remain in effect.

Schools: The Trinity Alps Unified School District (TAUSD) and Junction City and Douglas City schools will begin classes on Monday, September 11, 2017. Updates are available on the web at [www.tausd.org](http://www.tausd.org) and [https://www.facebook.com/douglastycityschool](https://www.facebook.com/douglastycityschool).

Trinity County Roads: The following roads remain closed: Canyon Creek Road, Upper Road, Lower Road, Valdor Road, and Powerhouse Road. The Sheriff’s office will continue to patrol the area, and road blocks that prevent people from entering the evacuated areas. County roads will be repaired and hazard trees will be removed in the near future.

Trinity County Sheriff’s Office: TCSO is providing public safety within the fire area, making contacts with residents who remain behind, providing evacuation security with roaming patrols, and working with Cal OES in running the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). TCSO has created a telephone line for the public to call when requesting welfare checks on residents who remained in the fire area. That number is (530) 623-8126.

Evacuations: Evacuation orders in parts of the Junction City area have been lifted for RESIDENTS ONLY! Residents need to be aware of the continued fire suppression operations in the area, and the dangers associated with increased traffic. All other evacuation orders remain in effect, including upper Canyon Creek Road, Upper Road, Lower Road, Valdor Road and Powerhouse Road. The Red Cross evacuation center located at the First Baptist Church in Weaverville remains open. The shelter for large animals is at the Trinity High School. Dogs and cats can be taken to the Trinity County Animal Shelter. A distribution center for tools (shovels and rakes) for residents impacted by the fire is open from noon-7:00 pm today, and 10:00 am to 7:00 pm Monday at Nugget Lane and Glenn Road near the four-way stop in Weaverville. Case work will also begin for those who have lost their homes.

Trinity Transit: For the Willow Creek Line: AFTERNOON SERVICE ONLY! Westbound (from Weaverville towards Willow Creek) will run ONE HOUR EARLIER THAN REGULARLY SCHEDULED TIMES. Eastbound (from Willow Creek to Weaverville) will run on the regularly scheduled times. (No a.m. service.) This can change at the last minute. Visit the Trinity Transit Website or call 530-623-1365 before you travel. Regular service will resume on Monday, September 11, 2017.

Trinity County Environmental Health: Has been actively assessing imminent public health and safety hazards in the affected burn areas. Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) debris must be removed immediately. A health emergency grants state and local government permission to enter properties that have been assessed as significantly damaged or destroyed with the specific duty to remove HHW debris from the property to protect the community. HHW must be handled separately from other burn debris and cannot be brought to local landfills. **Residents are strongly encouraged to leave all HHW in place** – and to not remove any HHW or damaged containers of HHW from their properties. Full details are available at [@TrinityDOT](https://twitter.com/TrinityDOT).