



Rich and Belden Fires

Fire Information Update

www.inciweb.org

www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas/

www.pnw2.com

Contact: Public Information Office (530) 283-7882 or 7883

Tuesday, August 5, 2008 – 8 am PDT Update

Fire	Acres	% Contained	Cost	Total Personnel
Rich	6,043	53% *	\$ 6,116,591	1,176
Belden	474	70% *		

*Expected containment date is August 10, 2008.

News & Events:

- Mandatory evacuations for the Feather River Canyon area of Rush Creek Road (Brush Creek, Virgilia/Twelve Mile Bar) have been lifted, with restrictions, at 10 a.m. today. Only residents with proper identification will be given access. All other voluntary and precautionary evacuation orders have been lifted, with no restrictions, including Caribou, Hwy 70 from Rock Creek Dam to Rich Bar, and Hwy 70 from Virgilia to Woody's Hot Springs, Seneca and the south portion of Butt Lake.
- Crews made significant progress on the southern perimeter and the majority of the fire's perimeter is now in mop up mode. Crews continue to secure direct and indirect hand line on the eastern perimeter.
- Cal Trans continues to provide 1-way traffic control with pilot car escort (during daylight hours only due to helicopter activity) on Highway 70 from 2 miles east of the town of Rich Bar to 6.5 miles west of the Jct. of SR 89 (Plumas County).

RICH FIRE STATUS:

Excellent progress continues to be made on the Rich Fire; firefighters have nearly completed perimeter control lines and are starting to focus on mop up efforts, in addition to small burnout operations planned for today.

Yesterday: Crews were highly successful constructing direct and indirect hand line and completing burnout operations on the eastern perimeter. Some torching continued on unburned pockets of fuel within the perimeter of the fire.

Today's operations: Crews and equipment will continue with mop up efforts on all sides of the fire, working to achieve a 300 foot mop up standard. Rehabilitation needs will begin to be assessed and the 26N22, 26N18, and 27N17 roads will be graded. Structural protection will remain in and around structures in the Rich Gulch, Rush Creek and Virgilia areas.

Tonight's operations: Mop up will continue on all divisions, with both hand crews and engines working to mop up 300 feet inside the perimeter. After tonight, night operations will be staffed only with engines and will move into patrol status.

BELDEN FIRE STATUS: The Belden Fire, at 474 acres, is 70% contained. Due to the high number of snags posing a threat to firefighter safety, this fire will continue to be monitored by air with air support available as needed.

Mandatory & Voluntary Evacuations: Mandatory evacuations for the Feather River Canyon area of Rush Creek Road (Brush Creek, Virgilia/Twelve Mile Bar) have been lifted, with restrictions, at 10 am today. Only residents with proper identification will be given access. All other voluntary and precautionary evacuation orders have been lifted with no restrictions, including Caribou, Hwy 70 from Rock Creek Dam to Rich Bar, and Hwy 70 from Virgilia to Woody's Hot Springs, Seneca and the South portion of Butt Lake.

Evacuation Shelter: Veterans' Hall on Lawrence Street in Quincy. For 24-hour evacuation status information, contact 530-283-6102 or visit the Plumas County website at www.countyofplumas.com for additional information.

Hwy 70 Status and Forest Closures: Highway 70 has been re-opened to public access; Cal Trans is providing 1-way traffic control with pilot car escort (**during daylight hours only due to helicopter activity**) on Highway 70 from 2 miles east of the town of Rich Bar to 6.5 miles west of the Jct. of SR 89 (Plumas County). Three emergency closure areas on the Plumas National Forest were signed into effect on July 31 by Forest Supervisor Alice Carlton, also for public safety purposes. The Pacific Crest Trail and Bucks Lake Trail are impacted by this closure order. Go to www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas/ for more information Order No. 08-08 (Rich Fire) or forest closure Order No. 07-08 (Canyon Complex). The closures remain in effect at this time.

FIRE FACTS: Started: July 29, 2008; **Cause:** Under investigation; **Location:** 20 miles West of Quincy, CA; **Resources:** 27 hand crews, 6 helicopters, 57 engines, 11 dozers, 24 water tenders, 1,176 total personnel.

Under an existing mutual aid agreement between the United States, New Zealand and Australia, 44 fire managers and line supervisors who work for government agencies and private forestry companies have been dispatched to California for a 35-day work assignment to assist with the fires. Ten of the 44 are currently assigned to the Rich Fire.

Five members of the National Capital Region Incident Management Team continue to “shadow” members of the Pacific Northwest Team 2. The team is comprised of members from all disciplines from the Washington, D.C. region.

SAFETY CONCERNS: Multiple air resources, numerous historic mining sites, firefighter fatigue and steep, rocky terrain with numerous standing dead trees (snags) and rolling material, and storm-generated winds that may rekindle hot spots or cause snags to fall.

RESOURCE CONCERNS: Protection of wilderness values, water quality in wild and scenic rivers, sensitive species habitat and scenic/roadless areas by utilizing minimum disturbance practices.

VALUES AT RISK: CA State Highway 70, Feather National Scenic Byway, railroad corridor, communications site on Red Hill, power lines servicing the community of Quincy, structures to the NW and Bucks Lake Wilderness, sensitive species, high value timber and archaeological sites.

WEATHER: Monsoonal moisture is expected to move into the area today, bringing a slight chance of thunderstorms with a possibility for isolated dry lightning this afternoon. Firefighters will be available for initial attack on any potential new starts. Temperatures will be warm today; below 4000 ft: 92-100F; above 4000 ft: 84-92F. Humidities below 4000 ft: 6-15%; above 4000 ft: 14-24%. Ridgetop winds NE to E 4-8 mph becoming S to SW 8-14 mph by afternoon with gusts to around 25 mph. Downslope/downvalley winds 4-8 mph becoming upslope/upvalley 8-14 mph with gusts to 25 mph this afternoon. For Wednesday: the potential for additional thunderstorms exists Wednesday; however, wetting rains are expected to accompany this system on Wednesday. Extended forecast Thursday through Saturday is for mostly clear skies with cooler temps and higher humidities.

FIRE BEHAVIOR: Winds generated by predicted storms may increase fire activity in pockets of unburned fuels.

For Air Quality and Defensible Space Info: Plumas County Air Quality Info: http://www.countyofplumas.com/air_quality_08_01_08.pdf; Plumas County Fire Safe Council: <http://plumasfiresafe.org/>.

COOPERATING AGENCIES & PARTNERS: Plumas County Sheriff, California Highway Patrol and Cal Trans Plumas and other resources.