



# Rich and Belden Fires

## Fire Information Update

[www.inciweb.org](http://www.inciweb.org)

[www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas/)

[www.pnw2.com](http://www.pnw2.com)

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

**Wednesday, August 6, 2008 – 8 am PDT Update**

Fire	Acres	% Contained	Cost	Total Personnel
Rich	6,096	57% *	\$ 7,380,256	1,107
Belden	474	70% *		

\*Expected containment date is August 10, 2008.

### News & Events:

- Structural engines will provide initial attack for any new potential starts.
- Air support and other resources are being released as suppression objectives are met.
- Plumas County Sheriff's Office lifted the mandatory evacuations for the Feather River Canyon area of Rush Creek Road (Brush Creek, Virgilia/Twelve Mile Bar), with restrictions, yesterday. Only residents with proper identification will be given access. All other voluntary and precautionary evacuation orders have been lifted, with no restrictions, including Hwy 70 from Rock Creek Dam to Rich Bar, Hwy 70 from Virgilia to Woody's Hot Springs, Seneca and the south portion of Butt Lake.
- 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).

### RICH FIRE STATUS:

Firefighters are making excellent progress with mop up efforts on the Rich Fire. Yesterday, helicopters made some water bucket drops on the Belden Fire.

**Yesterday:** Crews completed constructing direct and indirect hand lines and completed burnout operations on the western perimeter. Some torching continued on unburned pockets of fuel within the perimeter of the fire. The 26N22, 26N18, and 27N17 roads were graded. An infrared flight on the northwest corner identified remaining hot spots.

**Today's operations:** Crews and equipment will continue with mop up efforts on all sides of the fire, working to achieve a mop up standard that extends 300' into the fire area from the fire line. Rehabilitation has begun and structural protection engines will remain in and around structures in the Rich Gulch, Rush Creek and Virgilia areas, unless asked to respond to potential new starts.

**Tonight's operations:** Night operations will be staffed with engines and continue with mop up and patrol.

**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 and cooled with water bucket drops as needed.

**Mandatory & Voluntary Evacuations:** Mandatory evacuations for the Feather River Canyon area of Rush Creek Road (Brush Creek, Virgilia/Twelve Mile Bar) were lifted, with restrictions, at 10 am yesterday. Only residents with proper identification will be given access. All other voluntary and precautionary evacuation orders have been lifted with no restrictions, including Hwy 70 from Rock Creek Dam to Rich Bar, 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](http://www.countyofplumas.com) for additional information.

**Hwy 70 Status and Forest Closures:** Highway 70 been has 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/](http://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:** 25 hand crews, 4 helicopters, 56 engines, 9 dozers, 25 water tenders, 1,107 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. Eleven 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, storm-generated winds that may rekindle hot spots or cause snags to fall and potential slick conditions on roads during wetting rains.

**RESOURCE CONCERNS:** Protection of wilderness values, water quality in wild and scenic rivers, sensitive species habitat and scenic/road less 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 chance of thunderstorms with a possibility for isolated lightning and a wetting rain this afternoon. Firefighters will be available for initial attack on any potential new starts. Temperatures will be warm today; below 4000 ft: 88-98F; above 4000 ft: 82-89F. Humidity's below 4000 ft: 10-20%; above 4000 ft: 15-25%. Ridge top 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 Thursday the potential for thunderstorms diminishes. Extended forecast Friday through Sunday is for mostly clear skies with cooler temps and higher humidity's.

**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](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, Cal Trans Plumas and other resources.