



CANYON COMPLEX FIRE UPDATE



Location: Plumas National Forest **Start Date:** June 22, 2008 **Update:** July 6, 2008
California Incident Management Team # 3 (Incident Commander – Jeanne Pincha-Tulley)
Acres: 18,863 **Resources:** 1,239 personnel **Containment:** 68%

Current Situation: Today is the 14th day of this incident, one of 72 large fires in the nation, with a ranking of 8th in priority. Yesterday, good progress was made to mop-up numerous fires and close the gap on priority fires on the Canyon Complex. The Cold Fire in eastern Plumas County, recently the highest priority in this Complex, has been heavily mopped up and patrolled for the past few days and is 95% contained. Twenty-two fires are now contained on the Canyon Complex, with seven uncontained.

The Canyon and Butte Lightning Complex Fire Teams are working closely on the high priority, 200-acre Belden Fire. The Belden Fire moved slowly downhill yesterday toward Highway 70, providing a new opportunity to manage the south end of the fire. Yesterday, line preparation along the 26N26 road above Gansner Bar included 6 dozers, as efforts continue for a planned burnout operation. Firefighters are contending with very steep terrain, challenging places to build effective fireline, and many dangerous standing snag trees from the Storrie Fire of 2000. Visibility due to the smoke inversion may hinder helicopter activity today, challenging the opportunity to begin the planned burnout operation. The goal is to reduce fuels and quickly re-open Highway 70. This strategy involves a slow burnout, starting near Gansner Bar above Highway 70 and then extending west along Highway 70. This strategy is safer for firefighters, allows for better control of rate-of-spread and fire intensity, takes active wildfire away from Highway 70 and the community of Belden, and eases issues related to transmission lines and other infrastructure in the North Fork Feather River canyon. Two additional hotshot crews arrived yesterday to add support to the operation. Structure protection engines continue to be in place at Belden. A precautionary evacuation, issued by the Plumas County Sheriff, remains in place for the west end of Belden in the vicinity of Indian Creek RV Park and the immediate area surrounding Maggie's Mapleleaf. A Sheriff's advisement is in place for the Belden community south of Highway 70.

Helicopters made numerous water drops yesterday on the South-Frey and Little Fires, before losing visibility in the afternoon due to smoke. Crews continued last night with a lengthy, multi-day operation on the South-Frey Fire using existing roads. Clearing fuel that can feed a wildfire, under controlled conditions, is the objective of this operation.

Never to be forgotten, today at the morning briefing the 14 firefighters who perished on this day in 1994 on the South Canyon Fire in Colorado were remembered. As these friends, family and coworkers of the professional firefighting services were remembered, firefighters again prepared to manage numerous wildfires on the Canyon Complex safely and efficiently.

Highway 70 remains closed to the public, but open to residents from the junction of Highways 89/70 (Greenville Y) **to the Caribou Road** (east of Belden). This change was made in order to position fire equipment and hose lines, and does not reflect any additional threat to communities in the canyon. No through traffic is permitted from the Greenville Y to Big Bend road. For information on State road closures, call CalTrans information: 1-800-427-7623. Road conditions are subject to change at any time.

Closures: Closure orders are issued in areas of active fire to protect Forest visitors. The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) is now closed from the Plumas National Forest northern boundary to the LaPorte -Quincy Hwy (to the NE of Little Grass Valley Reservoir). A Forest Order has also closed road 22N94 at its intersections with 22N27 (west of Little Grass Valley Reservoir). An area closure covers public land, including trails, generally bounded by: (1) the North and Middle Forks of the Feather River toward the Pacific Crest Trail, the Bucks Lake Wilderness; and (2) areas surrounding the Cold Fire in eastern Plumas County. Specific campgrounds closures include: Milsap Bar, Little North Fork, Rogers Cow Camp, Feather Falls, and Hartman Bar. Please refer to maps and descriptions posted on the Forest website <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas/>.

Weather: The smoke that drifted into various parts of Plumas County yesterday likely came from Friday's burnout operations on the South-Frey Fire. This situation, caused by a stable atmosphere, could continue for another few days as crews work hard to complete as much solid fireline as possible before the arrival of forecasted hot temperatures. For an update of local air quality conditions, visit www.countyofplumas.com, for Butte County: www.bcaqmd.org.

Events: Private businesses and resorts in forest communities, including facilities around Bucks Lake, remain open. With the Sierra Music Festival in Quincy ending this evening, travelers should expect heavy traffic on highways tonight and tomorrow.

Fire information: internet www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas; phone (530) 283-7882, 7883, or 7884. **Fire Information Center hours are 7am to 7pm.** **Fire protection information:** <http://plumasfiresafe.org>; **Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) Information:** www.pcta.org

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