

Forest Service News Release

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Klamath National Forest Lightning Fires August 16, 2023

Type 1 Incident Management Team In-briefed this Evening

YREKA, Calif., August 16, 2023— A series of thunderstorms moved across the Klamath National Forest Monday night, bringing abundant lightning and igniting roughly 20 fires over the western side of the forest. Scattered precipitation was received with these storms. More lightning is forecasted throughout the week, and additional new fires are anticipated due to the volume of lightning received.

The most active of these fires is the Head Fire, which is burning at the confluence of the Klamath and Scott rivers. The fire was fanned by strong winds from thunderstorms that developed in the area and burned actively throughout Tuesday afternoon, growing to 3,500 acres by nightfall. Firefighters worked through the night, focusing on point protection of residences in the area. Fire behavior moderated overnight but increased with the heat of the day.

Evacuation Orders and Warnings are in effect for the area and road closures are in place for on CA Highway-96 and the Scott River Road. Current information on evacuation status can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/SiskiyouCountySheriff> and through alerts issued by CodeRED.

Happy Camp/Oak Knoll Ranger District

The Happy Camp/Oak Knoll Ranger District has reported 11 fires. The largest of these is the 50-acre Elliott Fire, which is burning on both sides of Elliott Creek near Dillon Creek Campground. It is zero percent contained. The Malone Fire is 20 acres and located up Elk Creek. Resources are on scene. The 15-acre Titus Fire south of Norcross Campground received significant moisture overnight and has minimal fire behavior. Four fires - the Swillup, Brown, Dutch, and Intersections - are all less than an acre and are contained. Four additional fires have been reported, all of which are less than one acre - the Berry Fire near Huckleberry Mountain, the Indy Fire near Independence Creek and near the border of the Marble Mountain Wilderness, the Three Creeks Fire and the Canyon Fire are both near the Elliott Fire.

Salmon/Scott River Ranger District

On the Salmon/Scott River Ranger District there are eight fires. The Scott Fire is roughly 16 acres and is located near the Scott Bar Lookout with crews on scene working to contain it. Two fires - the Boulder Fire near Indian Scotty Campground and the Hossick Fire near Scott Bar- are contained. Two fires are burning in the Sky High Lakes area of the Marble Mountain Wilderness. The Shadow and Lake Fires are staffed with helitack and smokejumpers, respectively. Both are less than 2 acres. The Townsend Fire is 5 acres with difficult access up Townsend Gulch off of the Lake Mountain Lookout Road. The Block Fire is near the Townsend Fire; no size has been reported and both Townsend Gulch and Block Fires are unstaffed. The most recently reported fire on the Salmon/Scott District is the Gold Fire, which is across the drainage from the Scott Fire. It is not yet staffed.

More lightning is in the forecast for today with Red Flag Warnings in effect for abundant lightning on dry fuels. Thunderstorms also have the potential to emit strong down draft winds which can cause existing fires to increase fire behavior significantly.

Multiple aircraft and other additional resources have been ordered for these fires. CAL FIRE's Siskiyou Unit is also providing assistance. Additional resources have been requested to support suppression operations.

Forest Supervisor, Rachel Smith adds, "We are proud and appreciative of all our emergency responders and are very concerned about ongoing conditions for large fire development. If you are asked to leave your house, please evacuate immediately."

A Type 1 Incident Management Team (Mueller's California Interagency Incident Management Team 5), in-briefed at 6:00 p.m. tonight.

Evacuation Orders and Warnings remain in effect. Fire activity picked up in the afternoon when the inversion lifted. Highway 96 and the Scott River Road have hard closures. Please continue to monitor CodeRED and the @SiskiyouCountySheriff for current information.

The Pacific Crest Trail is closed from Etna Summit to the Oregon border. Hikers and backpackers are asked to stay off the trails in that area.

The public can help support firefighters by preventing human-caused fires. Practice extreme vigilance with anything that can start a wildfire. Fire restrictions are in effect on the Klamath National Forest, which prohibits all campfires outside of developed campgrounds.

Remember, one less spark equals one less wildfire.

Additional information on Klamath National Forest lightning fires can be viewed on Inciweb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/caknf-2023-klamath-national-forest-august-lightning-fires>

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The Klamath National Forest covers 1,700,000 acres located in Siskiyou County, California and Jackson County, Oregon. The forest is headquartered in Yreka, CA, and maintains ranger stations in the California communities of Macdoel, Happy Camp, and Fort Jones. More information is available at www.fs.usda.gov/klamath.

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