

# NEWS



**Forest Service**

*United States  
Department of  
Agriculture*

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**Inyo  
National Forest**

*Date: July 18, 2009  
**8:00 PM***

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## **Forks Fire Causes Evacuations in Bishop Creek Canyon**

As of 8:00 PM on Saturday July 18<sup>th</sup> a total of 21 wildland fires have been sparked within the Inyo National Forest in the Eastern Sierra region of Inyo and Mono Counties. Most fires have remained small but one incident 12 miles west of Bishop has grown to 300 acres and has forced the evacuation of several popular campgrounds in the Bishop Creek drainage.

The Forks Fire was started by a lightning strike at about 2:30 PM near Intake II, a small lake alongside State Route 168, 12 miles west of Bishop. As of 8:00 PM the fire had burned about 300 acres with no containment at this time. A total of 9 air tankers has been ordered to help suppress the Forks Fire, in addition to numerous other local, county, state and federal fire fighting resources.

The evacuation of nearly 100 campers went smoothly, according to Inyo County Sheriff Bill Lutze, in part due to an early voluntary evacuation request shortly after the fire began. At about 5:30 PM a mandatory evacuation order was issued for four Forest Service campgrounds in the vicinity of the fire. Those campgrounds are the Forks, Big Trees, Intake and the Bishop Park Campground.

Also at about 5:30 PM the fire crossed the state highway closing the road to traffic. Law enforcement units escorted evacuees out of the area as the fire started to move north. Voluntary evacuation orders are still in place at numerous other Forest Service campgrounds in the area around Lake Sabrina, South Lake and North Lake. Local law enforcement officers remain in the communities of Aspendell, South Lake and Starlite to monitor the fire, however none of the residents of these communities are being considered for evacuation at this time.

As fire conditions permit, evacuees may be able to return to their campsites to retrieve their camping equipment. Evacuees may check at the highway road closure on State Route 168 for information on road opening possibilities.

Additional information may be obtained from the Inyo National Forest at 873-2503 beginning at 8:00 AM Sunday July 19<sup>th</sup>.

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