

News Release

CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TEMPORARY ROAD AND CAMPGROUND CLOSURES CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST

San Diego, CA –May 11, 2009...To protect public health and safety, the Cleveland National Forest (Cleveland NF) has closed some roads and a campsite. The Fred Fire on the Descanso Ranger District of the Cleveland National Forest (Cleveland NF) is approximately five acres in size and has been 90 percent contained. The fire began on the evening of Tuesday, May 5, approximately six miles east of Pine Valley, when dry vegetation was ignited by the crash of a Marine AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopter. Two marines were killed in the helicopter crash.

Munitions that had been carried by the attack helicopter and were scattered as a result of the crash have made it unsafe for firefighters to fight the blaze from the ground, so suppression activity has occurred via helicopter. Military explosive/ordnance specialists are scheduled to detonate the remaining munitions in the area on May 12. Residents within 10 miles of the site may hear explosions when the munitions are detonated. Clean-up of remaining debris will continue. The Cleveland NF will have adequate fire resources near the site to fight any additional fire starts.

Military explosive/ordnance specialists are inspecting the area to make sure it is safe before allowing firefighters to enter and extinguish the flames. The wreckage was discovered about two miles north of Interstate 8 near Kitchen Creek Road, near a road accessible only by four-wheel-drive vehicles. The cause of the crash remains under investigation.

Descanso Ranger District

The Cibbetts Flat Campground is closed until further notice.

Kitchen Creek Road - Road closed from south entrance at Interstate 8. Road accessible from Sunrise Highway for 1.5 miles. Road closed at this point.

Thing Valley Road is closed at Sunrise Highway at north entrance and from the south off Old Highway 80.

The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) has been closed in the area of Kitchen Creek. PCT traffic will be re-directed to follow Kitchen Creek Road to Mt. Laguna.

The closures may remain in effect until further notice.

Individuals or organizations holding special use permits for sanctioned activities within the Cleveland NF should contact their local ranger district office for access information.

Check before you go for updated information.

- o Forest offices are open Monday - Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- o For the Cleveland National Forest Supervisor's Office dial (858) 673-6180.
- o For Alpine, Descanso, and Laguna Mountain Area contact the Descanso Ranger District at (619) 445-6235.
- o For Palomar Mountain, Henshaw, Ramona and Oak Grove areas contact the Palomar Ranger District at (760) 788-0250.
- o For the Ortega Hwy area, San Mateo and Corona area, contact the Trabuco Ranger District at (951) 736-1811.

www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland.