

Storm Impact Update – July 25, 2016, 2:00 pm

Response to this emergency has been an interagency effort. The Superior National Forest is grateful for the partnerships of both the Lake County and St. Louis County Emergency Management organizations. Many people have stepped up and helped in many ways. Special thanks to Morse/Fall Lake First Responders, St. Louis County Sheriff's Office and Rescue Squad, Lake County Sheriff's Office and Search and Rescue Team, Ontario's MNR, OPP, and Quetico Park offices, Ely Ambulance, Life Link Helicopter, LaTourell's Outfitters, Voyageur Outward Bound, and the Forest Service seaplane base and Tanker Base staff.

At this time, all major roads and recreation sites have been cleared on Laurentian and LaCroix Ranger Districts. Most roads are passable with some downed trees on the Tofte, and Gunflint Ranger Districts. The Gunflint Trail is clear.

The Kawishiwi Ranger District was the hardest hit part of the Forest with an impact area covering approximately 3 miles wide by 10 miles long. The western boundary runs as a curved line from Hook Lake, west through Cummings and Crab Lake, and south to include the Van Vac Road south of Burntside Lake. The eastern boundary runs from Ima Lake south to Hudson Lake. Lakes, portages, and campsites outside this area are also affected by scattered fallen trees. Affected lakes include: Fall, Wood, Wind, Snowbank, Disappointment, Thomas, Moose, Pipestone and Back Bay of Basswood, Crab, Burntside, and Mudro Lakes. Roads heavily impacted include the North Grassy Road, Cloquet Line, Snowbank Lake Road, and the Fernberg Trail. The Cloquet Line has only been partially cleared and will require equipment and time to clear to the end. Caution is advised when driving through the impacted area. Many roads and trails are narrow, down to one lane in some places, and may be littered with debris. Watch for crews working both inside and outside the wilderness to open portages, trails, and recreation sites. Please drive slowly and defensively.

HEADS UP! While there are no emergency closures on the Superior National Forest at this time, Forest managers urge visitors to be aware that there are still many leaning trees and hanging branches that can easily fall. Saturated soils make otherwise stable trees prone to falling over. Consider these hazards and prevailing southwest winds when choosing a parking, picnic, or camping site.

Additional information for the Kawishiwi Ranger District

- **Snowbank Area:** Portages from Snowbank into Disappointment, Disappointment to Parent, and Parent to Snowbank are now passable. The portage into Grub is clear. Portages have been cleared as far as Ahsb. The condition of portages to the north are either very rough, impassable or unknown at this time. Heavy impacts are believed to be as far east as Thomas and Frasier.
- **Lake One Area:** Portages into Lake Two are passable. Conditions beyond are believed to be mostly passable.
- Access into **Ojibway:** Passable but may be one lane. A crew will be working on the portage from Triangle into the North Kawishiwi River today.

- **Farm Lake, Birch, and White Iron** roads and campsites are south of the largest impacts but had scattered damage. Roads are mostly passable. The South Kawishiwi and Birch Lake Campgrounds had little damage and are open.
- **Mudro** entry point: The North Grassy Road is mostly open shoulder to shoulder now but crews continue work there this morning plus logging traffic will continue. The road is narrow and shoulders are now full of cut trees. Power is not yet restored on much of the Echo Trail so power company trucks and workers may be on the roads. Please drive slowly! Mudro to Lower Basswood Falls through Horse is passable. Horse to Fourtown is passable. Conditions on portages to the west and north of Fourtown are unknown.
- The **Fenske Lake** Campground was impacted and remains open. Portages on the **Circle Route** are clear into Grassy Lake. Camping is not recommended on Bass, High, Dry, and Low Lakes at this time. Hiking the **Bass Lake Trail** may be hazardous. Crews will be working on the hiking trail today. The portage into Bass Lake is passable.
- **Burntside/Crab Lake**: The Van Vac access was hard hit but is now passable. Downed power lines were repaired. The Passi Road was impacted but is now passable. The Crab Lake portage was made passable yesterday. Campers report portages to the west and to the north of Crab Lake as rough but passable. Slim and Little Rice Lakes were impacted. The **North Arm and Slim Lake** Access roads were impacted and are now passable. The portages into Slim, Rice, Hook and Kenue Lakes were made passable yesterday.
- **Fall and west Basswood**: Newton and Pipestone portages are passable. Campsites on the western end of Basswood are being checked today for storm damage. Crews made the portage from Back Bay to Frog Bay passable yesterday. The Fourmile Portage is being cleared into Ella Hall today.
- **Moose Lake Road, eastern Basswood**: The Moose Lake Road is passable but there are still low power lines across the road. Power company trucks and Forest Service crews are working on the road. Basswood and Moose Chain Campsites have not been assessed yet for hazardous trees. Prairie Portage is passable. Portages into Sucker, Birch, and Ensign may be difficult but are passable. Portages farther east seem to have been less affected.

We ask returning BWCAW visitors who have updated information, to please email or call the Kawishiwi Ranger District Office. If you called us concerning people who were out in the woods during the storm, please call when you have heard from them. Kawishiwi Ranger District Office: 218-365-7600

Some safety tips:

- ✓ Be prepared!
- ✓ Understand that search and rescue takes longer in the backcountry and wilderness than in an urban setting. Also, cell phones do not work in many parts of the BWCAW and other areas on the Forest.
- ✓ Leave a trip itinerary outlining your travel plans with someone at home and remember to check in with them when you return safely. The Forest Service does not automatically initiate searches if a group doesn't leave as planned. If someone is concerned because you are late returning from your trip, they should contact the county sheriff's office.
- ✓ Keep up-to-date with the latest weather forecast.