



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Forest Service • National Incident Management Organization – Atlanta

Klamath National Forest

1312 Fairlane Road, Yreka, CA 96097 • Voice (530) 842-6131 • Web: www.fs.fed.us/r5/klamath

Shasta-Trinity National Forest

3644 Avtech Parkway, Redding, CA 96002 • Voice (530) 226-2500 • Web: www.fs.fed.us/r5/shastatrinity

Six Rivers National Forest

1330 Bayshore Way, Eureka, CA 95501 • Voice (707) 442-1721 • Web: www.fs.fed.us/r5/sixrivers

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Fire Information: 530-629-2816

Email: backbone.fire.info@gmail.com

www.inciweb.org/incident/1716/

Backbone Fire Officials Discuss Future Air Monitoring

WILLOW CREEK, Calif. – As the Backbone and Red Spot fires wine down, fire officials are exploring ways to improve coordination with local and state air boards for the greatest efficiency and clarity so when a fire occurs again, all agencies will be poised to work together.

The Six Rivers, Shasta-Trinity and Klamath National Forests experienced multiple wildfires in 2006, 2007 and 2008. These wildfires produced prolonged periods of heavy smoke in nearby communities. Public concern with related health impacts was a key issue during off-season reviews. The in-briefing given to the Atlanta National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) team by the three forests stressed the need to be mindful of smoke impacts.

Fortunately, the Backbone Fire resulted in little smoke impact to surrounding areas because the weather conditions cooperated and it was only one fire as opposed to hundreds throughout the North State. The team engaged early with local air officials to discuss areas where monitoring might be needed. The incident meteorologist used predictive weather data and smoke modeling tools to provide insight on where the greatest areas of impact would be three days in advance, so if and when smoke monitors were needed they could deploy them appropriately rather than impacting local resources. Areas such as Cecilville, Forks of the Salmon, and Scott Valley were originally touted as key locations where they might be needed. However, most of the fire-shifting winds kept those areas smoke free, making monitoring unnecessary.

“Advances in observational technology really allowed us to pinpoint the greatest areas of concerns,” said Incident Meteorologist Jeff Tonkin. “Providing the data to local air quality officials gives us all a chance to coordinate and plan where we need to be monitoring and the most likely areas to experience smoke days in advance allowing for deployment of monitors quickly.”

The fire proved to be a good exercise in identifying key information needed by the various parties and how the requesting of mobile air monitoring systems work. As an after-action review NIMO coordinated with the California Air Resource Board, North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District, Siskiyou County Air Pollution Control District and regional US Forest Service air quality representatives to identify and refine these processes so they could be used and executed even more efficiently in the future.

“Typically it’s difficult to build processes such as these during a fire, but with limited fire spread on the Backbone, it gave us all a chance to discuss what really works and what doesn’t so when multiple fires occur in the future we are all ready to respond quickly,” said Tonkin.

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BACKBONE FIRE FACTS

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Current Status	The lines on the Backbone and Red Spot Fires are holding so the fire is no longer growing. Fire crews continue to strengthen lines in areas and are conducting suppression repair and mop-up on lines where there is no longer any heat. The most challenging area with active pockets of fire is on the southeast portion of the fire in a drainage.
Size	6,324 Acres: 4,534 Shasta-Trinity National Forest; 1,783 Six Rivers National Forest; 7 Klamath National Forest. Backbone Total: 5,195 and Red Spot 1,129
Location	12 miles northeast of Willow Creek in Trinity Alps Wilderness
Cause & Date Started	Lightning strikes in the Trinity Alps Wilderness on July 1, 2009
Containment	80 percent
Resources	<p>Type 1 Crews: 6 Type 2 Crews: 3 Helicopters: (3) Type 3; (3) Type 2, (1) Type I Engines: 3 Water Tenders: 9 Total Personnel: 514</p>
Closures	<p>Six Rivers National Forest Order No. 10-09-01: The Big Rock River Access and Day Use area has been closed. There is a “No Stop Zone” from the mouth of Willow Creek to one mile downriver; visitors are asked to float through with caution, due to the helibase location.</p> <p>Horse Ridge National Recreation Trail, Salmon Summit National Scenic Trail, Mill Creek, Tish Tang, and Red Cap Trails, Bear Hole, and Grizzly Camp areas.</p> <p>Six Rivers National Forest Order No. 10-09-01: Extensive area closure in and around the Backbone and Red Spot wildfires. Refer to Six Rivers National web site or Inciweb for details text and map.</p> <p>Shasta –Trinity National Forest Order No. 14-09-03: Virgin Creek Trail, Soldier Creek Trail, Lipps Camp Trail, Devils Backbone Trail, Salmon Summit Trail from its intersection with the Devils Backbone Trail, then east to its intersection with the Battle Creek Trail.</p> <p>Klamath National Forest: Forest Road 10N04 has been closed to public use in order to secure the helicopter accident site for the ongoing accident investigation.</p>