

UPDATE: Battle continues against Walker Fire, National Forest blazes

Contributed by Elizabeth Larson
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5:50 p.m. update

LAKE COUNTY – Firefighters continue to try to contain the Walker Fire near the Double Eagle Ranch, as well as fires caused by lightning in the Mendocino National Forest.

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The Walker Fire continues to burn in remote wildlands east of Clearlake Oaks, Cal Fire reported Tuesday afternoon.

The estimated size of the fire – which a Cal Fire official told Lake County News Monday was 10,000 acres Monday night – was rolled back to about 9,000 acres. It is 5-percent contained.

The incident command was moved from the Oasis road house to Konocti Conservation Camp, where a total of 134 personnel – including 62 from Cal Fire – were staging, Cal Fire reported.

On scene are a total of 17 engines, a helicopter and 10 bulldozers, including local and state resources, according to Cal Fire.

Cal Fire reported that voluntary evacuations remained in place on Double Eagle Ranch, Bear Valley ranch land and Wilbur Hot Springs.

The California Highway Patrol's Ukiah Dispatch Center said Tuesday afternoon that Highway 20 remained open. Fire officials have warned that a shift in the winds could carry the fire toward the highway and necessitate a closure.

In the Mendocino National Forest, a report from spokesperson Phebe Brown there have been a total of 57 fires burning 2,800 acres in Lake, Mendocino and Tehama counties. Twenty-one of the fires are contained.

Brown reported that 389 firefighters – including nine fire crews – are on scene. Smoke jumpers also have been ordered.

“We have three large fires that we’re trying to gain the upper hand on,” said Brown.

They include the Back (southwest of Lake Pillsbury, 1,800 acres, 40-percent contained); Big (west of Lake Pillsbury, 850 acres, 0-percent contained); Monkey Rock (in the Yuki Wilderness, 50 acres, has a low rate of spread).

On Tuesday the county Department of Public Works reported that Elk Mountain Road, between Bear Creek Road and Soda Creek, had been closed to all traffic except emergency personnel.

Still closed is Walker Ridge Road, and Bartlett Springs Road is open on an “enter at your own risk” condition, according to Public Works.

Cal Fire said there are currently 842 fires burning around California, many of which are believed to have been caused by lightning strikes last weekend.

For information on the fire the public may call Cal Fire at 707-967-1456.

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