

Pine Valley Ranger District Suppressing Three Lightning Caused Fires

ST. GEORGE, UTAH –The Pine Valley Ranger District of the Dixie National Forest is suppressing three lightning caused fires. The Saddle Fire in the Pine Valley Wilderness Area, the Pine Canyon Fire and the Aspen Fire.

Storms and lightning passed through Southern Utah between Saturday, June 11th and Sunday, June 12th, 2016. “It is common for lightning caused fires to show up days later, these are called holdover lightning fires. The higher relative humidity and moisture often associated with thunderstorms can cause fire behavior to be so minimal that smoke is not visible above tree tops until fire behavior picks up with wind, higher temperatures and dry weather patterns,” explains Joe Rechsteiner, Pine Valley District Ranger.

The Aspen Fire was reported around 3:00 A.M. on June 15, 2016. High winds and hot temperatures increased the fire to approximately 371 acres. Twenty scattered structures, including homes and outbuildings, are currently threatened. Ground crews are working to enhance fuel breaks by clearing vegetation near structures. Two crews are working to secure anchor points. Aerial operations are active this morning and will continue as long as weather permits.

Local resources on the scene are 2 engines from Forest Service, 1 engine from the Bureau of Land Management and Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands Fuels Module, 1 engine from Zion National Park, 1 engine from Cedar City Fire Department, 2 Dozer, 1 Grader, Bonneville Hotshot crew, Color Country Type 2 crew, 2 Aerial Supervision aircraft (Air Attack), 4 Single engine air tankers (SEATS), one Type 3 Helicopter, 3 Heavy Air Tanker and a Color Country Type 3 team. 2 Utah handcrews and 3 Idaho handcrews are expected to arrive this afternoon.

The Color Country Type 3 Incident management team continues to take all opportunity to utilize ground and aerial resources while reevaluating the fire to gain situational awareness to best plan the next actions and ensure success through the incident. The number one priority will be for firefighter and public safety when making management decisions.

Cooperation and collaboration with other federal agencies; state, county and local agencies, are critical to safe and effective wildfire response. Thank you to each agency that has been assisting with our efforts and to the public for your continued support.

One firefighter injury with medical evacuation. Patient had a head injury due to a fall. Patient is stable and good condition to hospital.

Temporary flight restrictions in place within a 7 mile radius of the fire. “If you fly, we can’t.”

No evacuations have been ordered. There is one road closure Bumblebee Ridge Road. To receive alerts for emergencies and other important community messages by signing up for the Citizen Alert System for Iron County, Utah and surrounding cities.

<https://www.ironcounty.net/.../emergency-manag.../citizen-alert/>

This notification system enables Iron County and the cities within the county to provide you with critical information quickly in a variety of situations, such as unexpected road closures, missing persons, and evacuation of buildings or neighborhoods.

The second fire, the Pine Canyon Fire was reported yesterday afternoon, June 15, and is now at 60 acres with one crew on the ground. It is approximately 2 miles south of the Aspen Fire.

The third fire, the Saddle Fire was reported on Monday, June 13, 2016 and has burned approximately 103 acres. It is approximately 2.5 miles southwest from the town of Pine Valley. No area or road closures are in place at this time. Aerial resources will be utilized. No crews have been placed on the ground due to inaccessible steep terrain.

Stay connected, visit the Dixie National Forest website at www.fs.usda.gov/dixie , like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/usfsdnf> , and follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/usfsdnf for the latest information.

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For more information on fires in Utah visit www.utahfireinfo.gov.