



# BUTTE LIGHTNING COMPLEX

## Fact Sheet

Friday, July 4, 2008 8:00 a.m.

[www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)



**Information Line: 530-538-7826**

**Incident Name:** Butte Lightning Complex **Incident Number:** CABTU007660

**Location:** Butte County

**Command Team:** CAL FIRE Incident Command Team #9

**Lightning Complex Start Date:** June 21, 2008

**Incident Type:** Wildland Fire Complex

**Number of Fires:** 36 **Number of Active Fires:** 9 (15 have merged) **Number of Contained Fires:** 12

**Total Acres for all fires:** 18,982 Acres **Cause:** Lightning

**% Containment:** 40% **Estimated Containment:** \*07/14/08\*

**Fatalities:** 0 **Injuries:** 7 minor injuries to firefighters

**Structures Destroyed:** 2

**Structures Damaged:** None determined **Structures Threatened:** 1,200 residences

**Resources:** Hand Crews 41 Dozers 55 Engines 251 Helicopters 12 Tankers 0

Water Tenders 63 Overhead Personnel 297 **Total Personnel:** 2,408

The Butte Lightning Complex currently consists of 37 fires divided into geographical branches to allow for coordination, management, and accountability of resources. The current branches are listed below and only fires that currently pose the highest potential threat are identified by name. The fires are evaluated daily to determine risk potential. Daily coordination has been taking place between the Plumas National Forest, the Lassen National Forest and CAL FIRE regarding fires near or adjacent to the Butte Complex Fires. Every effort is being used to coordinate incidents occurring in geographical areas to insure firefighter safety and to make the best use of resources, personnel and logistical support. This morning the Belden Fire on the Plumas National Forest was transitioned and is now under command of the Butte Lightning Complex.

\*\*acreage is estimated and will be updated as verified data is received.

### Concow Branch:

- **Rim Fire (1,800 acres, 100% Contained)** – Residents of Concow are still on a precautionary evacuation. Even though the Rim fire has been contained the local residents should remain vigilant and alert to fire conditions and equipment operating in the area.  
**Mop up continues on this contained fire.**
- **Empire Fire / West Fire (5200 acres, 45% contained)** – The fire is still holding on the east side of the West Branch of the Feather River drainage and north of Hog Ranch Rd. at the northern end of Concow Reservoir. The focus for fire crews is to continue securing the south/west corner of this fire and to continue mopping up hot spots along the West Branch of the Feather River. Two structures were destroyed in the Old Utah Mine Area in the early days of the fire.

### **Stirling Branch:**

- **Breakneck (210 acres, 90% contained)** – The fire is burning in an area north and east of Stirling City. The fire continues to flare up along the line. Helicopters continue to work hot spots along the line in conjunction with the ground resources.
- **Smokey (1,451 acres, 85% contained)** – This fire is burning west of Hwy 32 in Tehama County, south of Soda Springs, and is a threat to Butte Meadows and Jonesville. The fire is being held on the east and south sides with active burning still occurring within the northeast corner of the fire. Due to increased winds and active fire behavior, a few spot fires occurred and were quickly contained.

### **Camp Branch: (Camp, Lackerman Granite Springs)**

- **Camp Fire (9,600 acres)** – The fire is actively burning on both sides of Hwy. 70 near the Plumas National Forest boundary. Crews will continue preparing indirect line and prepping critical infrastructure for planned firing operations the next several days. A firing operation may be initiated this evening if weather conditions and fire behavior are favorable. A significant threat exists to the transmission lines, Hydroelectric Plants, and the railroad infrastructure throughout the Feather River.

### **Pit Branch:**

- **Pit Fire** – Dozers worked on the north, west and east side of the fire yesterday and continue to make good progress. Today crews, dozers and aircraft will continue working to keep the fire west of Hwy.70, south of Ben Lomond Trail. Additional fires near the Pit continue to burn and may join together.

### **Belden Branch: (Plumas County/Plumas National Forest)**

- **Belden Fire** – (150 acres) The Belden Fire is burning near the town of Belden off of Hwy. 70. Crews will be working to secure the community and to continue containment lines on this fire. The Plumas County Sheriffs Department issued a “Voluntary Evacuation” for the Belden area on July 2, 2008. The evacuation is still in place.

### **Road Closures:**

- Hwy 70 is closed from the Greenville “Y” (Hwy 89 and Hwy 70) on the east to 3 miles west of Pulga on the west (near the Plumas Forest boundary). Hwy 70 will be open to residents only from the Greenville “Y” to Belden. No civilian traffic will be permitted from Belden to Pulga.
- Concow Rd. at the end of the pavement
- Jordan Hill Rd.@ Coutolenc Rd. (6 miles in)
- Hupp-Coutolenc Rd. between Skyway and Coutolenc Rd. (open to residents only)
- Coutolenc Rd. between Lower Skyway and Upper Skyway (open to residents only)
- Hwy 32 (Tehama Co.) Closed 13 miles east of Forest Ranch to junction of Hwy 36
- Andy Mountain Rd. ½ mile up from Hwy. 70 (residents only)/ All of Rim Rd.
- Bardee’s Bar Rd.@ Big Bend Rd.
- French Creek Rd. @ Oro-Quincy Hwy
- 4 Mile Ridge Rd. (Forest Service road) @ Oro-Quincy Hwy
- Oro-Quincy Hwy (open to thru traffic ONLY from Mt. House Rd. to Bucks Lake)
- Jordan Hill Rd. at Hoffman Rd.

**Immediate Threat Evacuation Advisories:**

None are in place.

**Precautionary Evacuation Advisories:**

Concow

Coutolenc Road from Skyway to Hupp-Coutolenc Road and all cross streets

Jarbo Gap (west side)

Jonesville

Butte Meadows (including the Lassen Boy Scout Camp)

Big Bend Road and cross streets which also includes Dark Canyon Road and Paiute

**Evacuation Centers: None Open**

**Animal Evacuation Centers: For additional information on the Animal Evacuation Shelters contact the Butte County EOC at 530-538-2739.**

Small Animals: none currently open

Large Animals: Chico State Farm ( Hagen Lane between Park Ave. and Dayton Rd. in Chico (Open from 8am-5pm)

\*Residents on a Precautionary Evacuation are advised to keep large animals at the shelter (or with family and friends) away from the affected area until all evacuation orders have been lifted.

**Current Situation:**

In an effort to continually coordinate fires in the Feather River Canyon Area the Butte Lightning Complex will take over command of the Belden Fire on the Plumas National Forest. The Belden Fire is just north of the Pit Fire near the community of Belden. Safely and efficiently managing the fires in the Feather River Canyon requires continued evaluation of incidents and cooperation and coordination with both the Plumas and Lassen National Forests. A significant threat exists to the transmission lines, Hydroelectric Plants, roadways and the railroad infrastructure throughout the Feather River.

Hwy. 70 remains closed 3 miles west of Pulga to Hwy. 89 at the Greenville “Y”. The highway is closed due to significant “rolling” material from the fire areas. The rolling materials consist of large and small boulders, tree stumps, tree branches, trees, dirt, and other debris. In addition, tree crews will be removing trees along the roadway in the fire area that create a hazard to motorists. A serious threat to the public and motorists exists along the highway. No through traffic will be allowed in the fire area. Residents living in Belden will be permitted access to and from their homes.

Today firefighters will enhance an existing a shaded fuel break around the community of Jonesville providing additional Defensible Space. Several fires burning on the Lassen National Forest and the Butte Lightning Complex still pose a potential threat to the community. This line will be done as a precaution to provide additional clearance around the community.

Progress continued throughout yesterday on most of the fires. Today’s weather will continue to be warmer and dryer with the inversion predicted to lift again by mid-morning. The predicted weather for the next few days will be hotter and dryer reaching the triple digits. Down Canyon winds may increase after midnight in the Feather River Drainage. Weather conditions will potentially cause fire activity to increase throughout the region. Aircraft will be used as weather and visibility increase.

It is important to reiterate that all residents who live in or near the affected areas should continue to maintain a heightened state of awareness as this fire complex is still actively burning. Large fires continue to burn adjacent to this complex. Officials are encouraging residents to monitor the fire situation in and around their area via the local radio, television and other media outlets as well as CAL FIRE at [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov) and the Butte County website at [www.buttecounty.net](http://www.buttecounty.net). If conditions change, fire and law enforcement officials will make immediate notification to keep the public informed.

**General:**

**To report illegal Fireworks activity call 911.**

**Fire officials are asking that as July 4<sup>th</sup> approaches citizens exercise extra caution to prevent new fires. All fireworks used by the public can potentially cause a threatening fire. Citizens should be aware of the fireworks restrictions and regulations in their area. There will be zero tolerance when it comes to illegal fireworks. We strongly encourage the public to enjoy the holiday by attending a professional fireworks display with their family.**

The Butte Lightning Complex would like to thank the residents for their continued cooperation and preparedness during this natural disaster. Residents should remain aware of the situation. In addition, incident personnel continue to be overwhelmed by the communities' continuing support of the firefighting efforts.

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