



# BUTTE LIGHTNING COMPLEX

## Fact Sheet

Sunday, July 6, 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:** 39 **Number of Active Fires:** 12 **Number of Contained Fires:** 14

**Total Acres for all fires:** 26,000 Acres **Cause:** Lightning

**% Containment:** 50% **Estimated Containment:** \*07/14/08\*

**Fatalities:** 0 **Injuries:** 9 minor injuries to firefighters

**Structures Destroyed:** 2

**Structures Damaged:** None determined **Structures Threatened:** 50 residences, 10 outbuildings

**Resources:** Hand Crews 48 Dozers 61 Engines 267 Helicopters 13 Tankers 0

Water Tenders 64 Overhead Personnel 328 Total Personnel: 2,600

The Butte Lightning Complex currently consists of 39 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. The Butte Complex, Canyon Complex, the Plumas National Forest and the Lassen National Forest conference daily on coordination of firefighting efforts. 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.

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

### Concow Branch / Stirling 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, 90% 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 mopping up hot spots along the West Branch of the Feather River. There was some interior fire activity during the day yesterday. Two structures were destroyed in the Old Utah Mine Area in the early days of the fire. Areas of indirect line are continuously being monitored.

- **Breakneck (210 acres, 90% contained)** – The fire is burning in an area north and east of Stirling City. Helicopters continue to work hot spots along the line in conjunction with the ground resources. Containment is projected on Monday.
- **Smokey (1,451 acres, 90% contained)** – This fire is burning west of Hwy 32 in Tehama County, south of Soda Springs. The fire is being held on the east and south sides with active burning still occurring within the northeast corner of the fire. Containment is projected for Monday. The precautionary evacuations that were in place in Jonesville, Butte Meadows and at the Camp Lassen Boy Scout Camp were lifted at 3:00 PM. on July 5<sup>th</sup>.

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

- **Camp Fire (9,600 acres, 5% contained)** – 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 for the next several days. Firing operations will take place if weather conditions and fire behavior are favorable. The firing operations will be used to remove fuel between indirect line and the main fire. A significant threat exists to the transmission lines, hydroelectric plants, the railroad infrastructure and Highway 70 throughout the Feather River.

**Pit Branch:**

- **Pit Fire** –(2200 acres) 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 could join together.

**Belden Branch:**

- **Belden Fire** – (150 acres) The Belden Fire is burning near the town of Belden off of Hwy. 70. The Butte Complex has been delegated command of the Belden Fire. Coordination of resources will continue with the Canyon Complex. Crews will be working to secure the community and to continue containment lines on this fire. The fire has burned down to Highway 70 in various locations. The Plumas County Sheriffs Department issued a “Voluntary Evacuation” for the Belden area on July 2, 2008. The evacuation is still in place.

**\*\* Belden residents may encounter changing locations of road closures near their community as the fire progresses \*\***

**Long Branch: (Long, Lynch, Little North and Campbell)**

- Long Fire - Firing operations will take place throughout the day if weather and fire condition are favorable.
- Lynch Fire – Continues to actively burn to the northeast towards the Pit Fire. The fire has crossed Rock Creek near Tobin Ridge but was held at the drainage.

**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 Caribou. No civilian traffic will be permitted from Caribou 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 and Hwy 32
- 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)

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 has taken 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 continues to exist to the transmission lines, hydroelectric plants, roadways and the railroad infrastructure throughout the Feather River Canyon.

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 of the area will not be allowed past the Caribou area on Hwy 70. There may be closures at any time between Rush Creek and Caribou due to fire progression.

Several fires burning on the Lassen National Forest and the Butte Lightning Complex still pose a potential threat to communities. Progress continued throughout yesterday on the fire lines. Today’s weather will continue to be warmer and dryer reaching the triple digits in the next few days. The inversion layer is predicted to remain in place till this afternoon and lift up to 10,000 ft. Up canyon winds will be significant starting late this morning. Down canyon winds will increase after midnight in the Feather River Drainage. Weather conditions will potentially cause fire activity to increase throughout the region. Aircraft will be utilized as weather and visibility allow.

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.

As the need for equipment lessens on the Butte Lightning Complex, resources are starting to be released and sent to other areas of need throughout the State of California.

## **General:**

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

**Fire officials are asking that during the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend 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.**

The Butte Lightning Complex would like to thank the residents for their continued cooperation and preparedness during this ever changing natural disaster. Several fires are actively burning in the region and residents should continue to monitor the situation. In addition, incident personnel continue to be overwhelmed by the communities’ continuing support of the firefighting efforts. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve the citizens of Butte County.