

80% containment in fire near Cascade Lake



The Emerald Fire burns on Cascade Ridge Friday morning just before daybreak. Photo/Taylor Flynn/Tahoe Mountain News

Updated 7:10pm:

By Susan Wood

CAMP RICHARDSON — The Emerald Fire burning near Cascade Lake is 80 percent contained. It has burned more than 200 acres.

According to Kit Bailey, U.S. Forest Service local fire chief, “We have stopped the forward progress.”

The fire, though, is unpredictable. At one point the flames were going toward Lake Tahoe even though the wind was pushing

it in the other direction, Bailey told *Lake Tahoe News*.

It started near Highway 89 at Spring Creek tract about 1:30am Oct. 14 and ran hard toward Lake Tahoe. Flames reached Lake Tahoe on a beach north of Camp Richardson, according to CalFire. However, the fire as of 10:20am was only burning on the mountain side.



A firefighter keeps a watchful eye on the blaze along a fire line near Highway 89 north of Spring Creek tract on Oct. 14. Photo/Taylor Flynn/Tahoe Mountain News

It is burning west of Spring Creek near Cathedral Road. Evacuations have been ordered for Spring Creek, Cathedral, Fallen Leaf Lake's west shore, Cascade Properties and Cascade Lake. Five hundred people are on mandatory evacuation orders, while another 500 have voluntary orders. While an evacuation center has been set up at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center, people are being told to drive north on Highway 89

toward Tahoe City. Rideout Community Center located at 740 Timberland Lane in Tahoe City has been opened for evacuees.

Highway 89 is closed from Fallen Leaf Road to Bayview Campground, and the evacuation area north of Bayview has been released. The highway will remain closed until hazardous trees can be cleared, this could be a day or two.



From the vantage point of Baldwin Beach, hot spots continued on the western and eastern sides of Cascade Ridge, though large flare ups appeared to be diminishing as rainfall continued about 7:30am. Photo/Taylor Flynn/Tahoe Mountain News

One of the big issues with suppression is that no aircraft can fly because of the strong winds. Visibility is also a concern because the rain, smoke and low clouds are a problem.

Fire officials have been hoping the rain will give them the relief they need to help put this out. Right now they are

building a line around the fire.

"The rain has been extremely helpful and has stopped it significantly," South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Fire trucks are parked at the residences of Cascade Lake. No houses have been threatened.

"There was a lot of big firefighting going on last night," Lake Valley Fire Chief Tim Alameda told *Lake Tahoe News*. However, he added, what isn't helping is "there is no shortage of dead trees." Ironically, that is what the Lake Valley board discussed at its meeting Thursday night.

Lee Webber of Antioch, who was celebrating his birthday by camping at Camp Rich with his family, was on standby to decide whether they would evacuate. "Last night the wind was rough," he told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

While this fire was going, South Lake crews got called at about 3:30am Oct. 14 to a brush fire Meeks Lumber. It is another one of the "suspicious" fires that has been confounding firefighters.

– Kathryn Reed contributed to this story.