



News Release

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Cliff Creek Fire Update **Bondurant evacuations lifted; Granite Creek evacuees allowed home briefly**

- *U.S. 189/191 remains closed.*
- *Community Meeting today at 6 p.m. at Hoback Fire Station.*

Jackson, Wyo. – July 21, 2016 – Cliff Creek Fire evacuations for homes in Bondurant in Sublette County were lifted this morning. Meanwhile, Granite Creek area fire evacuees in Teton County were able to make brief, escorted trips to their homes this morning to collect valuables and perishables.

Cliff Creek Fire managers and Teton County Sheriff's Office officials met with Jack Pine Summer Homes residents and other evacuees to allow them to access to the Granite Creek Road at 8 a.m. today for no longer than two hours. About 40 people took advantage of the temporary access, according to Cpl. Brett Bommer of the Teton County Sheriff's Office and Cliff Creek Fire Incident Command Team. The entry was to allow residents to gather perishables stored in refrigerators or freezers. Lower Valley Energy disconnected power to the Granite Creek area Wednesday as a safety precaution for firefighters and to prevent additional fires.

The Cliff Creek Fire had expanded to 10,118 acres and was 5 percent contained, Incident Command Team Public Information Officer Julie Thomas reported this morning (July 21). There are 464 fire personnel working to confine and contain the fire, and to prevent damage to structures. Potential remains for the fire to impact the Granite Creek drainage, Thomas said.

Despite hot, dry weather and gusty winds yesterday, a change in wind direction and fire suppression efforts helped prevent the fire from reaching the Granite Creek drainage on Wednesday. On Tuesday, fire crews had observed flames on the ridgetop between Shoal Creek and Granite Creek, said Kathy Clay, Jackson Hole Fire/EMS Fire Marshal and Firefighting Coordinator Battalion Chief. Clay said the threat of fire descending into Granite Creek pushed crews to work diligently over the past two days on fire protection efforts around the area's approximately 30 structures, including the Jack Pine Summer Homes.

“Yesterday’s Red Flag Warning intensified the urgency to complete the structure protection so crews can relocate,” Clay said in reference to the National Weather Service’s Wednesday warning about weather that was conducive to fire growth. “Firefighter safety is paramount to the success of the fire operation.”

Clay said that crews successfully set up a perimeter sprinkler system around the summer homes complex and examined each cabin to eliminate fuels that could be moved away from buildings or stored inside. Materials that crews moved to lower the risk of fire starts included wood piles, lawn furniture, grills and cloth umbrellas.

Clay noted that some members of the structure protection crews recently completed a three-day course presented by wildfire specialist Jack Cohen in Teton County in May. The course, offered by the National Fire Protection Association, focused on reducing ignition hazards in the area of homes. Crew members are putting many of the course’s learning points to good use up Granite Creek, Clay said.

While structure protection crews were creating defensible space, wildland firefighters were also attacking the fire itself via crews on the ground, seven helicopters and two “super scooper” planes, which were dropping water from the air.

The Cliff Creek Fire began from a lightning strike and was detected at about 2:30 p.m. Sunday, July 17, about 5 miles north of Bondurant in Sublette County. Campers at the U.S. Forest Service’s Cozy Creek Campground and residences south along U.S. Highway 189/191 and in the northern part of Bondurant were evacuated in the early hours of the fire.

On Monday afternoon, an estimated 70 people living, camping, studying, swimming and recreating up the popular Granite Creek area in Teton County were asked to evacuate. Teton County Emergency Management issued the evacuation order at 2:45 p.m. on Monday when the fire spread north across neighboring Shoal Creek toward Granite Creek. Areas evacuated included the Jack Pines summer homes, Granite Creek Campground, the Granite Hot Springs pool, and Safari Club International Foundation’s American Wilderness Leadership School.

Public meetings:

The Cliff Creek Fire Incident Command team, led by Great Basin Team 7, will hold a Community Meeting at 6 p.m. today at the Hoback Fire Station in Hoback Junction. Last night’s Community Meeting in Bondurant was standing room only and attended by an estimated 150 people or more, Thomas said. A third Community Meeting will take place in Pinedale on Friday, July 22, at the Pinedale Administration Building.

More information:

- Those interested in receiving Teton County-specific updates on the Cliff Creek Fire can sign up by texting the word TETONCLIFFCR to 888777 to register. Users can also sign up for those or other community notices online at www.Nixle.com.
- For Sublette County-specific updates, sign up here: <http://public.alertsense.com/SignUp/?regionID=1075>

- For general Cliff Creek Fire management information, InciWeb provides the latest updates from the U.S. Forest Service: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4865/>.
- The American Red Cross of Wyoming is available to assist those ordered to evacuate with shelter or other needs in Teton County. Evacuees who would like to register with the Red Cross, may call (307) 222-8272.

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