



Another message from your Fire Chief regarding the Timber Fire;

The Timber Fire is going well. The latest map shows the fire has grown to more than 4000 acres. My direction to everyone involved, since the very beginning, was and still is to NOT lose any structures. The Incident Management Team agrees and is working towards that goal.

As with any major incident, challenges do arise. Due to the complexity of our region; jurisdictional boundaries; competing public and agency priorities; communication issues and more, the Timber Fire is no different. We have definitely had our share this time around and are working through them as a team and community. As crews continue to funnel in to help, the biggest challenge has been our ability to logistically support them with food, water, showers, shelter etc. The Incident Management Team is acutely aware and actively improving the situation.

The other issue that I have made the Team aware of is the dire need to get incident information out to all of you regarding the progress that's been made, road closure and evacuation information and much more. I have also voiced the need for a community meeting as soon as possible. A date, time and location will be announced very soon.

One of the biggest requests from the Incident Management Team is to fully understand the evacuation areas and what they mean. When an evacuation warning is issued, which we have, you are put on notice to prepare to leave but you don't need to unless the incident escalates. When an evacuation order is issued, which we have, it means exactly that; there is a threat to lives and property and you need to leave. We understand you have a right to stay on your property but that's it, not traverse between properties and access in and out of the evacuation area. You are electing to be self-sufficient and for an unknown duration of time. One cannot expect to be provided food, gas, water, medicine or anything inside the evacuation area..

When a road closure location is selected, it's for strategic reasons to manage both the responders travelling in and out of the fire area and control public access in an evacuation area. Keep in mind, the vast majority of the crews helping us have never driven this highway or up our roads. We have a strict communication plan and utilize radios to coordinate travel up and down them and encountering a vehicle unexpectedly hampers our ability to work efficiently and can even present a dangerous situation. This is going to be a long duration incident and I am urging all of you to remain patient and trust the Incident Management Team and I are working together to achieve our collective goals.

Big Sur Fire will remain involved for the duration of the incident staffing 2 water tenders along with the Hand Crew. Thank you for the outpouring of support with food, drinks and other supplies for the firefighters who are all so grateful. Once we have a community meeting and find our stride, I truly believe that things will improve. Until then, please check our website bigsurfire.org or apps like Watch Duty or Wildfire Intel for more information.

Thank you all for your continued support, patience and trust of Big Sur Fire.
Sincerely,

Matt Harris
Fire Chief