

Subject: Chute Fire Update

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(36-2026)

All,

I wanted to provide an update on the Chute Fire for everyone, sorry for the delay. As you are probably aware we did have a fire the morning of 7/13. The fire was detected by YCSO while conducting a search for 2 missing hikers in the Bullards Bar Dam area.

Multiple units (CalFire, DOHFD, and Foothill Fire) responded to the initial dispatch. Locating the exact location of this incident was the first of several challenges. We had our Yuba County CalFire BC (2306) on our side of the canyon and Nevada County CalFire BC on the North San Juan side coordinating efforts to pin down an exact location. Ultimately Air Attack was requested to pin down the location and assist in developing a plan of attack. Once the location was determined staging was moved to Bullards Bar, Emerald Cove parking lot. I was assigned staging area manager, track resources and report to IC/Operations, all incoming resources. A large resource order was requested and units from multiple counties responded. All in all we had 6 overhead positions, 6 dozers, 4-5 handcrews, 12 engines, 10 water tenders and multiple air resources. Air resources quickly established a fire retardant box around the fire and maintained a visual of the operation from the air giving updates as needed to IC and ground crews.

The fire was located in steep hard to access terrain near the bottom of the canyon. 1 Cal Fire employee was injured, head injury from a rock, requiring to be lifted out by helicopter. Good news was the injury was not life threatening and he was transported to Ride Out Hospital by ground ambulance. The two missing hikers made it out, they came walking out once the fire's location was determined. These individuals were arrested after being medically evaluated, not aware of what charges are being filed.

Ultimately the dozers and hand crews were utilized to mark the way in and make access to the fire. The dozers then turned the trails into roads and wide areas, parking, allowing for the engine crews to access the area, park and start plumbing in hose lines so water could be utilized. 6492 operated by Captain Garner stayed the night on the fire pumping the incident, while not an exciting assignment a very vital part of the operation.

Timeline (all times are estimated from memory and are not exact):

0820 - Dispatched

1030 - fire located and staging established

1100- Dozers and hand crews assigned directly to the fire
1400- Engine crews assigned to the fire from staging
1800 - Water tenders assigned to the fire from staging

As you can tell this was a slow, long process requiring many resources. I believe once determined only 4-5 water tenders were utilized and the remaining were released back to their home agency.

As of yesterday (7/16) the fire was considered only 20% contained, this is out of caution because of the terrain and heat we continue to have. They did fly the fire with IR technology and no heat signatures were detected. I would expect full containment announced soon if it has not already been done. When I spoke with Cal Fire BC 2306, he said Cal Fire would continue to patrol the fire until containment was determined.

DOH resources day of incident:

6491 - Stensler - FC-33 (Equipment and Personnel reimbursement applicable)
6492 - Garner - FC-33 (Equipment and Personnel reimbursement applicable)
6461 - A. Young - released @ 1400

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me,
Greg Stensler, 6402