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(Neb.)-Update On Ash Creek Fire, New Fire West Of Fort Robinson

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 07/23/2012 12:04 PM

(CHADRON/CRAWFORD)-The Ash Creek Fire is now under the supervision of the U.S. Forest Service. This is the latest report from them.

Volunteer Fire Departments and others were busy Sunday responding to several fires started by Saturday's late night lightning activity. As of Monday morning, there were four fires at various stages of containment in the Dawes county area, with a fifth new fire reported west of Fort Robinson State Park in the Soldier Creek Wilderness Area.

"Intense lightning Saturday night, the extreme drought and intense hot weather conditions provided serious consequences for local volunteer fire fighters," said Steve Lenzo, Acting Forest Supervisor for the Nebraska National Forests & Grasslands. "We're fortunate to have excellent support from area Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs), including Chadron, Crawford, Hemingford and the Pine Ridge Job Corp's Soldier Creek hand crews," he said. "Our immediate goals are to bring in more federal resources to contain the Ash Creek Fire and to relieve our VFD partners who have been working hard since the first ignition and initial attack. We ask that everyone join us in thanking these dedicated men and women," said Lenzo.

The largest and least contained fire is the Ash Creek fire reported Sunday morning. It is approximately 3 ½ miles south of Bethel Church, southwest of Chadron in the Pine Ridge National Recreation Area. The Ash Creek fire has burned 150 acres on public land. East Ash Creek Road is closed, but no evacuations have been ordered. A Type 3 Incident Management Team arrived Monday morning and will be transitioning with local forces today. More engines and hand crews have been ordered. Three other fires burning in the area are mostly contained, including the Ponderosa Wildlife Management Area of approximately 40 acres, southwest of Chadron; The Pasture 22 Fire of approximately five acres, located three miles southwest of the Pine Ridge Job Corps; And the Belmont Fire of approximately 10 acres southeast of Crawford. Earlier Monday crews responded to a fire reported near Middle Fork in the Soldier Creek Wilderness Area, approximately five miles west of Fort Robinson State Park. Forest Fire Management Officer Tristian Fluharty reported late morning that it was knocked down and crews were mopping up.

The entire Nebraska National Forests & Grasslands remains under Stage II Fire Restriction Orders, including no fire, campfire or grills; no smoking, unless in a building, trailer or closed vehicle; no welding or open flames; and no use of internal combustion engines, including chainsaws, generators, or ATVs, without a spark arresting device properly installed, maintained and in effective working order. Visitors are also not allowed to possess or use motor vehicles off established roads, motorized trails or established parking areas.