



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

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News Release

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Release No.: 160720

CREWS MAKING PROGRESS IN BLOWDOWN AREAS OF THE WASHBURN RANGER DISTRICT

WASHBURN, Wis. (July 24, 2016) – The Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest’s Type 3 Incident Management Team (Grant IMT) is a group of trained officers that coordinate emergency response activities during times of crisis.

The Type 3 IMT, led by Incident Commander Jim Grant, responded to the blowdown on the Washburn Ranger District Thursday morning immediately following the storm.

Locally, the Forest Service immediately responded to the storm by working in the pre-dawn light to gain access to Birch Grove Campground where injuries were reported. Washburn District personnel along with Washburn EMS, Wisconsin DNR and Washburn Volunteer Fire Department combined efforts to clear a half mile of road to access to the campground

In addition to Birch Grove Campground, several other recreation areas had campers unable to exit due to fallen trees blocking access roads. Forest Service personnel focused their initial efforts on clearing trees and debris from recreation sites and creating access for emergency services. Once recreation areas were cleared, personnel focused their efforts on clearing the main Forest Roads.

“Thanks to the hard work of saw teams and heavy equipment operators, we have ensured that all main roads in the area are passable,” said Jim Grant, Incident Commander. “Several hundred miles of secondary roads still need to be assessed and/or cleared, so in the interest of safety we ask for patience from the public while that work continues.”

Numerous fallen, weakened and leaning trees present a significant safety hazard, and the presence of road clearing personnel and equipment make it unsafe for the general public at this time.

Today the team is transitioning the incident back to the local district, and work on the storm damage will continue under the leadership of the Washburn District Ranger, Michelle

Davalos. Trail assessment will be a focus in the coming weeks. Twelve miles of trail have already been cleared with the assistance of the Trails North ATV Club.

“There is still a lot of work to be done,” said Grant. “But the initial emergency response has now passed and the longer-term response efforts have been turned over to the Washburn Ranger District.

The closure order remains in place and includes all Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest system lands on the Washburn Ranger District north of Highway 2 including all roads, trails and recreation areas. One exception to the closure order is that Long Lake Day Use Area is now open, with access from the east only (off FR 251/Wannebo Road).

To read the closure order please visit our website at www.fs.usda.gov/CNNF/ and click on Thunderstorms Damage Washburn Ranger District. You may also call the Washburn Ranger District at 715-373-2667.

In addition to the storm event July 21, portions of the Washburn and Great Divide Ranger Districts were damaged by thunderstorms and flash flooding on July 11. For the most current information on closures from that event please visit our website at www.fs.usda.gov/CNNF/ and click on Flash Flooding Affects Forest.

For more information about the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest please visit our website at www.fs.usda.gov/CNNF or follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/CNNF002> or like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CNNF002>.

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Photo Caption: *Shane Staudenmaier, Presale Forester, on the Medford-Park Falls Ranger District, works to clear blowdown from a road on the Washburn Ranger District of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.*

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