

News from Camp Silver Fir, 2020

Last year, we received news and reports about the devastation and loss caused by the Creek Fire in the Sierra National Forest. Representatives on our Camp Silver Fir operations committee were in contact with representatives from the Huntington Lake Fire Department who provided information approved for general distribution by the United States Forest Service.

The northern wall of the fire turned east and aggressively started burning through the Kaiser Wilderness and immediately below. This wall of fire moved through the tracts of cabins and camps on the north side of Huntington Lake, and intensified as it approached the Upper Line Creek Tract where our Silver Fir High Adventure Base Camp is located.

The Camp sustained significant damage to the infrastructure and the forest. Three of the four structures at camp were destroyed. Miraculously, our primary program facility (and newest structure) Robert Hersh Lodge, appears to have survived intact. Our immediate losses as follows:

1. Caretaker's residence (800 square feet)
2. Maintenance Building (600 square feet)
3. Combination, Multi-Stall Restroom, Shower & Laundry facility (1000 square feet)
4. Damaged Utility Infrastructure (Electrical & Telecommunications)
5. Damaged Utility Infrastructure (LPG, water and sewage)
6. Tools, equipment, furnishings, durable supplies, non-durable supplies (operations)
7. Equipment, durable supplies, non-durable supplies (program)

No value has been placed on the losses yet and we anticipate having a better handle on the total losses by the October.

The Silver Fir Operations Committee will develop plans for securing the camp facility, and to deal with the aftermath of the fire. These plans will involve securing Hersh Lodge for the winter, closing off the potable water system until such time as it can be reconnected to the Upper Line Creek water utility, sealing off propane lines to damaged buildings, sealing off the sanitary sewer system where it connected to the destroyed structures, and de-energizing the camp electrical system.

Following these efforts, the forest Service will require that we abate the hazards and building debris from the property, including removal of all fire-damaged trees.

As of now, we do not anticipate being able to conduct a summer program at the facility in 2021, due to the lack of restroom facilities. However, if FEMA acts promptly, we could have the facility back in operation by summer 2022 as a base camp and for limited troop camping.

Sam Engel, Jr.
Vice President of Camping, 2020