

Big Sur Fire Round Up Report – July 2018

Well it didn't take long; one day after the "official" opening of the highway we had our first call south of Mud Ck. The call came in as a person with an injured ankle in his car 10 minutes north of Salmon Ck. This then changed to 10 miles north of Salmon Ck. to Redwood Gulch. Cambria ambulance arrived on scene first and reported the patient was 10 minutes up the trail. We then paged out additional BSF units to help with the "carry out". Once we arrived on scene it was determined the "carry out" was really a full rope rescue over a canyon for an almost 300 pound male. Hours later the "simple medical" mission was complete with the patient being transported to Twin Cities.

Since the road opened the traffic has been crazy. On Sunday the 22nd (after a long day doing fire training) we had a 5-vehicle collision by the entrance to Sycamore canyon. Fortunately only minor injuries and no one needed to be transported to the hospital. We had traffic control in place as the NB lane was blocked and we were able to move a large truck hauling a trailer that was carrying golf carts out of the road. This took about 10 minutes and then we were able to open the highway. The number of cars that came through after the short closure was incredible! Solid traffic both north and south for at least 20 minutes! Our calls have definitely picked up, summer is here!!

We actually had another cat in the tree "rescue" too. This one was not quite as simple as the last one several months ago and it required climbing gear and ropes, Fabian, Trey, and Marcus did a great job getting the cat from one tree into the other, and then safely in its cage, in the end after being up the tree for almost 24 hours the cat was one happy camper to be rescued!

In the middle of the night on August 12th we got paged out by CHP to remove a tree that was completely blocking both lanes of the highway just north of Ripplewood, we had 6 BSF members show up with their chain saws and make short work of it, never a dull moment! Medicals, cats, trees, accidents, rescues, fires.... We are truly a multi-talented Fire Department!

This next report was emailed out via the CC and CPOA but as not everyone gets those emails I have included it in my report.

On August 14th shortly before 9:00PM the power went off with such a definitive "bang" we knew that something like a vehicle accident had probably just occurred. Sure enough a short time later I got a call from Jim Gray reporting a glow out by El Sur Ranch. That report was followed up in short order by State Parks calling on the radio confirming a fire on the East side of Highway one just north of Molera. Just as I was about to call Fire Comm we got the page for a vegetation fire on the El Sur Ranch.

As with all fires that have electrical lines involved each unit responding must acknowledge that they have copied the radio transmission that a possible "life hazard" is involved in the incident. Big Sur Fire responded with 2 engines, 1 patrol, 2 water tenders, my command vehicle and numerous POVs. We had a total of 15 BSF members on scene, an excellent turn out!

The conditions, while breezy, were not the usual high winds associated with that area which helped us out. No structures were threatened and the prevailing winds were blowing the fire south west.

We have had a change in BSF with the new appointment of Matt Harris to Deputy Chief, Chief 7801, and before I could get an email out announcing his new Chief number it already got put into use! Matt initially arrived on scene and did an excellent job in size up and deploying the engines. Congratulations Matt!! We were able to get the majority of the fire under control prior to Cal Fires arrival. Cal Fire responded initially with a full wildland response, which was later downgraded with 2 engines, a BC, an investigator and 2 hand crews of 18 people each from Ben Lomond on scene.

We had had an 8-hour auto extrication class the same day, but in spite of the long day BSF members had a quick response and did a great job. We had about 4 of

our new recruits respond as well and it was an excellent real life fire training experience for them.

Thank you to State Parks who had 2 units at the incident which was very helpful. The fire ended up being almost 3 acres and was caused by a down electrical line. Our last unit was released at 01:05 with Cal Fire remaining on scene.

In other news we have a new Board member joining us; James Hill has agreed to fill the remaining term left vacant by Dick Ravich's resignation.

You can follow us on our BSF face book in addition to our web site!

Today we were delighted to be invited to lunch at Nepenthe along with representatives from Mid Coast Fire and the Health Center and each of us was presented with a very generous check from the Big Sur relief fund Community Foundation for Monterey County. Big Sur Fire received a check for \$25,000.00! Thank you so very much!

Drive safely, it's a jungle out there!!!!

Martha Karstens
Chief