

**Cleanup Action - January 12, 2010**

The first phase of the clean-up consisted of removing the 3 illegal occupants. This phase was conducted with respect; law enforcement officers were armed, as they are at all times while on duty. They did not go in with guns drawn. One law enforcement officer acted as a lookout to ensure officer safety and he did have a rifle. The other law enforcement officers helped the occupants pack their belongings and hook up their camper/trailer which took about an hour and a half. The Forest Service also provided the occupants information on social services and housing in Sierra and Nevada Counties. Both the Forest Service and Sierra County officers made sure that the occupants all had means of transportation.

The second phase of the clean-up involved the removal of the structures, equipment and hazardous materials associated with the claim. Since it was determined to be a hazmat site under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act, as a time critical removal action, no public comment beforehand was required and none occurred.

The clean-up work was contracted with a company fully certified to remove hazardous materials and to dispose of them in the appropriate depository for hazardous waste. The property of the present or past occupants that they had not removed was carefully packed and stored in large containers for future claim by the owners. The hazardous materials were removed, packed and transported. The buildings were taken down and properly disposed of. Some of the equipment and scrap metal remains on site and will be removed when the weather dries out. Soil samples will also be taken later this spring to determine if the soil has been contaminated. Any contaminated soil will be removed. The clean-up action proceeded on schedule and was mostly wrapped up on Monday, January 18, 2010.

**Communication with Sierra County**

I understand that many in Sierra County are disturbed about this event and about not being notified of it prior to initiation. Due to the sensitivity of the law enforcement action of removing the occupants, information was only officially shared with the County Sheriff. I did, however, make an effort to contact Tim Beals, Public Works Director, the week before to update him on this and other issues. Unfortunately Tim and I failed to link up. Once I found out that the Board of Supervisors were concerned about not being notified of the timing of the clean-up, I immediately sent an email apologizing for the oversight and met with County Supervisor Peter Heubner. I assured Peter that in the future we will improve our communication, with the understanding that employee safety will not be compromised. The news release with basic information about the site and an explanation as to why the clean-up was being conducted was shared with the media and the County Board as the clean-up was occurring. It is important that you know that there are many in Sierra County who have expressed appreciation for our efforts at cleaning up the site.

**Importance of Working Together with Sierra County**

It is very important that the Forest Service work closely with all of the communities within the boundary of the Tahoe National Forest. I am committed to improving communication with Sierra County and have urged all Tahoe National Forest employees to do the same. We need to work together, share resources, and jointly provide protection for the public, local residents and the natural resources we all treasure.

Sincerely,



TOM QUINN  
Forest Supervisor