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News Release

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Forest to support Type 1 Helicopter based at Placerville Airport

PLACERVILLE, Calif. - In preparation for increasing fire activity, the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region has placed a Type 1 helicopter at the Placerville Airport due to the central location and the ability of the Eldorado National Forest to provide a helicopter manager. Type 1 helicopters are the largest and fastest flying helicopters used on wildland fires. This Sikorsky UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter is a national fire suppression resource that will be used for water drops, often assisting in areas where ground crews are working. It is equipped to carry up to 900 gallons of water, can fly for up to 2 ½ hours, and will be available on a “call when needed” basis for large wildfires throughout the United States.



The helicopter manager from the Eldorado National Forest assigned to this helicopter will be the Forest Service representative who will oversee inspections, dispatching this resource to assignments, daily diaries, and coordination with the pilots, the mechanic, and a fuel truck driver. The helicopter manager travels by ground to the incidents the helicopter is assigned to.

“Over the years, the Eldorado has hosted many resources including helicopters, engines, hotshot crews, fire prevention patrols, and water tenders. These resources supplement the forest’s initial attack capability and support large wildfires nationally,” said Forest Fire Management Officer Nickie Johnny.

Fire activity is currently highest in the southwest area of the country. Above normal significant fire potential is forecast to increase across northern California from May into July, with rising potential likely along portions of the Sierra Front. The Eldorado National Forest has been filling fire positions, and completing fire readiness training in anticipation of another busy fire year.