

1:12 PM

Tamarron Owners & Residents,

I apologize for not having included long-term renters on the previous e-mails. I'll try to rectify that in the future.

Updates on the fire: Unfortunately, there isn't too much to report. One correction I would like to make regarding the attachment I sent last night. I attached the wrong file; the correct one (from 6 PM yesterday) is attached here.

I visited the information center here at Purgatory and learned that the fire was actually a total of 2900+ acres now, which is different from the total we had last night. So far, there are no active spots east of 550; any that had gotten started, and there were a few, were quickly extinguished. Containment remains at around 10%. There are firefighters on site from as far away as Idaho, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Virginia.

It's warm and dry again today. Temps in the 80's, with winds from the southwest. Relative humidity is around 10 - 15%.

It was very clear at Purgatory last night and first thing this morning. However, around 9 AM today, smoke had started to move into the valley between Purg and the Needles.

The plan is to open 550 again today to through traffic, escorted by law enforcement, from 8 AM to 6 PM. That may very well change depending on conditions. Access to Tamarron is limited to a few minutes only in order to pick up essential items (medications, etc.). I elicited a few chuckles on the phone yesterday when I referred to this as an "escort service". Oh, the way some minds work.

I spoke with several officials, all of whom had a common thread to their description of this fire; it's weird, in that while it hasn't grown substantially in size, it remains a very active fire. There are a variety of reasons for this; the two most commonly cited are the topography, which in most cases is steeper even than Missionary Ridge (for those who remember that fire in '02) and the shifting wind conditions. The Hermosa Cliffs, running basically north-south, are cut by a number of roughly east-west trending draws. In combination with the shifting winds, this makes the fire move in differing directions, which in turn makes it more difficult to anticipate and contain. Complete containment isn't anticipated until around June 30th.

Some subjective observations:

Every time I have asked fire officials about when we might be able to return to Tamarron, I've been met with shrugged shoulders. When I've pressed a couple of them for an estimate (day, week, or month) and promised not to quote them, they generally say 3 days or so, immediately followed with the caveat "depending....."

Along those lines, no one official source seems to have all the latest information. This may be frustrating, but it's to be expected in such a fluid situation. My best advice is to take anything you hear with a grain of salt, hope for the best, plan for the worst, and leave some room to be pleasantly surprised.

Also along those lines, a short story:

I once worked for an environmental consulting firm which specialized in oceanographic work for oil companies. In the summer of 1978, we were on a long job off the west coast of Australia in the Indian Ocean, setting strings of current meter moorings in 5,000 feet of water. On our second two-week cruise, the weather got particularly bad (24 foot seas in an 88 foot converted shrimp trawler), and we had to cruise back and forth over our deployment sites for several days before we could safely do our work. I was young and stupid at the time (as opposed to now, when I'm just older), and I would ask Al Davison, the head of our crew, several times a day what the weather forecast was. Al was a Navy veteran, with a long career in marine engineering, and every time I asked, he would give me a blank look and say, "Hot and dusty." (Remember that we were in the middle of the ocean.) I found this extremely exasperating, but that's where the "young and stupid" part comes in. It wasn't until some time later that I realized this was Al's way of saying, "Look, it's going to be what it's going to be, and there's not a damn thing you can do about it. Deal with it." Personally (in a less curt way), I look on this as our "hot and dusty" moment.

A couple of shout-outs:

The staff here at Purgatory has been fantastic. I want to especially thank Zach Sheldon, who tends bar at Paradise Pizza and lives in Highpoint 606, for not only putting up with us at the bar, but also for the splash of OJ in my vodka tonics.

Taaren (front desk), Jayne Cook, and a few others in our group had a great experience with Steve at the front desk here. He worked two seventeen hour days handling the influx of people with all of the attendant chaos with calm, poise and professionalism.

Jeni and Sean at the information trailer at the command center down in the parking lot here at Purg have been fantastic. They have answered every one of our questions with incredible patience, even though we were probably the 187th person to ask the same question in the last 30 minutes.

Paul, the owner of The Divide Golf Course in Ridgeway: Yes, Mark and I saved our golf clubs, and to fend of the terminal boredom that was setting in, we went to Ridgeway yesterday to play golf. It turns out that after an hour and a half in the car, they were closed (nothing noted on their website or outgoing voice message). The owner, Paul (didn't get his last name) was in the pro shop and invited us in. We explained the situation and showed him our Rapid Tag passes so he didn't think we were feeding him a line. He let us play at the twilight rate with no cart fees, pointed out the beer in a cooler, and when I explained further that our golf attire consisted of jeans and sneakers, he said that wouldn't be a problem. While the course was in rough shape in some places, I would go back there in a heartbeat just to support him. By the way, you could see, feel, smell, and even hear the dryness there. He has already used his annual allotment of water, and now has to purchase water from the valley and pump it up 1,000 feet to the top of the mesa to irrigate the course. This seems to be the case everywhere in southwest Colorado.

Lastly,

A large number of owners who are not in town have sent along their best wishes for all of us who have had to evacuate. Some of these I haven't been able to respond to in a timely fashion, and that's mostly because of the amount of time I've already been spending on the computer. So on behalf of all of us waiting for the time we can get back home, thank you for your thoughts and support.

More this evening

Gary

9:12 PM

Tamarron Owners, Residents, and Friends,

There isn't a great deal to report this evening, so I've attached an article from the Durango Herald from earlier today. One of the problems we're having is that, while the people at the information trailer here at Purg have been very good about giving information, all of the official online sources have been spotty at best. There were a couple of informational meetings at the Animas Valley School earlier this evening, but from what I understand, they weren't particularly "informational". I will try to get more tomorrow morning.

I've also attached 2 photos looking out at the Needles from the condo we're staying in, one from 3:00 this afternoon and one from 7:00 this evening. You can get an idea of how different it is when the wind dies down.

Tomorrow.

Gary