

Trails affected by American Fire being rehabbed

U.S. Forest Service personnel are working on the trails affected by the American Fire.

The Western States Trail between Michigan Bluff and Deadwood Cemetery is open, and Loop 6 is open west of Deadwood Ridge Road.

The entire fire area, including all roads and trails, is closed until May 1, 2014. Therefore, the WST and Loop 6 within the fire area east of Deadwood Ridge Road remain closed. These trails will be returned to acceptable standards before being considered safe for recreationists.

The American Fire affected approximately 25 miles of the WST. To date, roughly 18 of those miles have undergone rehabilitation through fire suppression and/or burned area emergency rehabilitation efforts.

Efforts are under way to winterize the remaining seven-mile segment to minimize erosion and stabilize trail tread. This segment is on the National Register of Historic Places between Last Chance and Deadwood and crosses the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the American River canyon.

Two fire-damaged trail bridges lie within the canyon. The smaller bridge, near Last Chance, has burned timber needing replacement. The larger swinging bridge that crosses the river needs further structural assessments before determining if it can be repaired.

Although winterization activities have started on the approximately three miles of Loop 6 affected by the fire, further work is needed before the trail will be useable.

In the coming months, Tahoe National Forest officials will work with the Western States Trail and the Western States Endurance Run foundations and other interested individuals and groups to repair and maintain the fire-impacted trails. In the meantime, the area remains closed in the interest of public safety.

Officials welcome anyone who is interested in helping with trail work. Potential volunteers may call (530) 367.2224 between 8am-4:30pm weekdays.