

(Pole Cabin Fire)

... Two miles up the Seven Devils grade we came across a couple government vehicles and a couple government employees setting up a poster-board about the fire, area closures, etc. I was anxious to keep moving – and get `around' any areas they might deem closed, but I also wanted to chat a bit, and find out about the fire. The Forest Service employee I spoke with was obviously not from the area, probably not even the state, as I could point out locations on *his* map far faster than he could. (He had the wrong accent – someone who was probably from the East, stationed in Oregon for a while, and is now somewhere else – now brought here for the fire.) “The fire had just crossed into Sheep Creek (pause, as he looks for Sheep Creek) ...“ He was nice enough – I’m happy for him. Starched uniform, gets to travel around wherever there are fires. He describes how the fire is advancing south, and will soon be in the wilderness. I wanted to say, “Well aren’t you trying to stop it?” ... but I also was trying to be a gentleman. I mean, what could he say? “Yes, of course,” (and be lying). Or he could say, “Not really,” (and be telling the truth). (*So, then, why are you here?*) I got this feeling from the way he said what he said that once in the Wilderness they would desist from trying to stop it entirely.

So we proceeded on up the road. The area north of our jump-off point was closed – but we could still go south, where we wanted. And though things may get real *smoky* – we would be up in solid granite. I pondered these things ... the new, clean government vehicles with I-D markings for the particular operation, the helicopter descending to the strip at Slate Creek – no doubt dropping off government officials or observers, the Incident Center on the other side of the road that I at first thought was the Idaho County Fair, complete with grandstands, tents, trucks, and large staging arena (for supplies).

No, fighting fires these days isn’t an emergency, it’s not a mission, it’s a f-g *INDUSTRY*.

Whatever happened to the days when fires started and people (like my Dad) jumped out of planes and put them out?