



NEWS



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Containment of Sheep Fire grows but evacuation orders remain in place

By Nouran Salahieh, KTLA.COM

Posted: June 13, 2022



A brush fire that ignited near Wrightwood and forced evacuations has grown to 990 acres Monday, but fire crews made marked progress on expanding containment throughout the day.

The blaze, dubbed the Sheep Fire, broke out in the area of Highway 2 and Sheep Creek Road Saturday night.

Fanned by erratic winds and fueled by dry brush, the fire exploded to consume hundreds of acres by the next day.

It was 5% contained Monday morning, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. By 9 p.m. Monday evening, containment had expanded to 27%.

About 50 homes were affected by evacuation orders as of Monday morning, **San Bernardino County Fire** Battalion Chief Mike McClintock said.

Evacuation orders were issued for Desert Front Road and Wild Horse Canyon, as well as Highway 2 south to Lone Pine Canyon Road, and Wright Mountain Road to Sheep Creek Drive.

The rest of the community of Wrightwood was under an evacuation warning.

It's still unknown what sparked the blaze, which broke out as Southern California was experiencing a heat wave with triple-digit temperatures and amid a drought that experts warn will make for yet another long, dangerous fire season.

"We had really strong, erratic winds that were pushing the fire around and into really dry, receptive fuels that haven't burned for a while," McClintock said.

The strong winds complicated firefighting efforts, temporarily forcing the Fire Department's fixed wing air tankers out of the air due to safety concerns.

There are 673 firefighters currently assigned on the blaze attacking the flames from the ground and air.

"A lot of our units were going on 24 hours straight of working," McClintock said.

Firefighters were aided by sheriff's deputies, who were going door to door, evacuating residents from their homes. Approximately 300 residents have been evacuated.

An evacuation center was set up at Serrano High School at 9292 Sheep Creek Road in Phelan.

Evacuated animals, including pets and livestock, can be taken to Devore Animal Shelter at 19777 Shelter Way in San Bernardino.

Highway 2 remains shut down from Highway 138 to the Sheep Creek area, fire officials said. Another closure is in place on Highway 138 to Lone Pine Canyon Road.

<https://ktla.com/news/local-news/sheep-fire-grows-to-939-acres-with-evacuation-orders-still-in-place/>

Smoke harms air quality as Sheep fire near Wrightwood swells to 990 acres

By Hayley Smith, LATIMES.COM

Posted: June 13, 2022



A plane drops fire retardant on the Sheep fire in the Angeles National Forest. (Robert Gauthier / Los Angeles Times)

WRIGHTWOOD, Calif. (KABC) -- Firefighters on Monday continued to battle a wildfire in the Wrightwood area that burned nearly 1,000 acres over the weekend and forced some people from their homes.

The fire, dubbed the Sheep Fire, broke out Saturday amid scorching temperatures and bone-dry brush, and strong winds continued to fuel the flames. By Sunday afternoon, the fire had grown to at least 990 acres and was only 5% contained.

Mandatory evacuations were issued for Desert Front Road, Wild Horse Canyon Road and the community of Wrightwood -- the evacuation order is for Highway 2 to Mesquite Street, from Highway 138 to Sand Canyon, and from Wright Mountain Road to Lone Pine Canyon Road. Crews on Monday were making progress against a 990-acre wildfire burning in the Angeles National Forest, officials said.

The blaze, dubbed the Sheep fire, sparked Saturday evening near Wrightwood in heavy dry vegetation and prompted evacuation orders in San Bernardino County.

It was 18% contained Monday afternoon, according to Angeles National Forest spokeswoman Dana Dierkes. Nearly 700 personnel were attacking the fire from the air and ground.

"We're facing a challenging battle with heavy fuels, high and erratic winds and dry vegetation," Dierkes said. "Our goal is to try to decrease the spread of the fire in multiple directions."

Smoke from the fire was affecting air quality in some surrounding areas, the South Coast Air Quality Management District said.

Evacuation orders remained in place for multiple areas near the fire, including Highway 2 south to Lone Pine Canyon Road; Wright Mountain Road to Sheep Creek Drive; Desert Front Road and Wild Horse Canyon; and Highway 138 to Sand Canyon.

The rest of the community of Wrightwood was under an evacuation warning, the San Bernardino Sheriff's Department said. Cellphone outages have also been reported in the area, and residents are being asked to limit calls.

An evacuation center has been set up at Serrano High School in Phelan. Animals can be taken to the Victorville Fairgrounds or the Devore Animal Shelter.

Dierkes said more than 300 people had been evacuated from the area.

"Our primary goal is to limit the rapid rates of spread into the north and into the desert communities," she said. "And obviously, just in general, trying to limit the movement of the fire or fire perimeter."

The fire ignited only days after Southern California fire officials warned residents that drought and extreme heat were creating conditions for a potentially treacherous fire season this year. A triple-digit heat wave blanketed much of California over the weekend.

“Given the fuel conditions, the fire conditions that we’re here talking about, I foresee a very tough four, five, six months in front of us,” Orange County Fire Authority Chief Brian Fennessy said Thursday.

Vegetation in some parts of the region is 40% drier than normal for the date, officials said.

News video of the Sheep fire showed intense fire activity, including towering flame lengths and thick clouds of swirling smoke as it ripped through dry brush.

Crews on Monday were in for a potentially challenging firefight as winds of up to 20 mph had developed in the area throughout the day, according to Mark Moede, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in San Diego.

“The fire creates its own weather and its own wind,” Moede said, “and the winds typically get a lot stronger in and around the fires, which makes it very difficult for firefighters to attack.”

However, as the day unfolded, crews benefited from some cooler temperatures and favorable conditions that allowed them to make progress on the flames, officials said in a video update.

Alison Hesterly, a public information officer with Cal Fire San Bernardino, described it as a “rapidly expanding incident” and said fixed and rotary-wing aircraft were attacking the fire from above while crews on the ground worked to lay containment lines.

“The terrain is very steep — it’s a bad area,” Hesterly said. She said the majority of the fuel, or vegetation, on the western side of Highway 2 doesn’t have any recent fire history, “so we’re talking about areas that haven’t burned in 20-plus years.”

The fire was burning primarily on Forest Service land, she said, and was moving in a northwesterly direction.

“They’re really focusing hard on the edges on the northwest side and the south end to secure those edges, to hope that the wind won’t blow the fire out of the containment lines,” she said. “That’s a huge focus for today — securing those high-risk areas with hose lines and hand lines.”

Meanwhile, crews on Monday contained another fire that ignited over the weekend, the Fish fire near Duarte. That blaze ignited Sunday at Brookridge and Mel Canyon roads.

It was fully contained by Monday afternoon, according to the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-06-13/sheep-fire-in-angeles-national-forest-balloons-past-900-acres-prompting-evacuations>

Public safety officials warn Fontana residents about illegal fireworks

By Staff Writer, FONTANAHERALDNEWS.COM

Posted: June 13, 2022



These are some of the illegal fireworks seized by the Fontana Police Department in 2019. (Contributed photo by Fontana Police Department)

As the Fourth of July approaches, public safety officials are reminding local residents about Fontana's zero-tolerance policy regarding illegal fireworks.

Fines for possession and use of illegal fireworks range from \$2,500 to \$10,000, according to a news release issued by the City of Fontana, in collaboration with the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

Residents are urged to purchase "Safe and Sane" fireworks when they become available in order to avoid fines, potential injury and property damage.

Safe and Sane fireworks are less likely to cause injury and generally do not explode or fly. These fireworks are identified by a State of California or State Fire Marshall registered logo.

"Beware of individuals selling fireworks from homes or cars that only say 'Safe and Sane.' If a firework does not have the Safe and Sane logo, it is illegal," the news release said.

No fireworks of any kind are permitted in the unincorporated county area of Fontana.

For more information about the use of fireworks, visit www.fontana.org/fireworks or call the Fireworks Information Line at (909) 356 - 7101.

https://www.fontana Heraldnews.com/news/public-safety-officials-warn-fontana-residents-about-illegal-fireworks/article_2a3ff824-eb72-11ec-b8a3-3365a486108e.html

Woman killed, man critically injured by hit-and-run driver in Hesperia

By Rene Ray De La Cruz, VVDAILYPRESS.COM

Posted: June 13, 2022



A 29-year-old woman was killed, and a 32-year-old man critically injured after the pedestrians were struck by a hit and run driver along Cottonwood Avenue in Hesperia.

A woman was killed and a man critically injured after the pedestrians were struck by a hit-and-run driver along Cottonwood Avenue in Hesperia.

Hesperia Sheriff's Station officials reported that at approximately 4:15 a.m. on Sunday, deputies and the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** responded to a traffic collision on Cottonwood Avenue, north of Sycamore Street.

The scene of the collision is a residential area just south of Bear Valley Road.

Upon arrival, deputies discovered that an unknown driver was traveling south on Cottonwood Avenue when a 29-year-old woman had fallen onto the roadway.

During that time, a 32-year-old man attempted to assist the woman when they were both struck by the vehicle in the southbound lane of Cottonwood Avenue, sheriff's officials reported.

After the collision, the driver fled the scene and was last seen traveling southbound on Cottonwood Avenue.

Despite life-saving measures, the woman was pronounced deceased at the scene by emergency personnel. Identification of the woman is pending notification of next of kin.

The male pedestrian was transported to a trauma center where he remains in critical condition.

At this time, it has not been determined if drugs and/or alcohol were a factor.

Cottonwood Avenue, from Sycamore Street to Sequoia Street, was closed for several hours while deputies from the Hesperia Major Accident Investigation Team processed the scene.

The type of vehicle involved in the collision was not identified.

Anyone with information, or anyone who may have witnessed the collision is asked by the Sheriff's Department to contact Deputy F. Zavala or Sergeant Brendan Motley at the Hesperia Sheriff's Station. Those wishing to remain anonymous may call We-Tip at 1-800-78-crime or online at www.wetip.com.

<https://www.vvdailypress.com/story/news/2022/06/13/woman-killed-man-critically-injured-hit-and-run-driver-hesperia/7611546001/>

Vital emergency alerts can find your phone — if you help

By Brian Rokos, SBSUN.COM

Posted: June 13, 2022



An example of the emergency phone alert system in Southern California. (Photo Illustration by Leonard Ortiz, Orange County Register/SCNG)

As the highest temperatures of the year bake already dry brush and trees, increasing the year-round threat of wildfires spreading out of control, authorities in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties are encouraging Southern California residents to sign up for alerts that instantly send emergency messages to their phones.

Officials count on the alerts as the most effective way to reach our nose-in-the-phone culture with timely information about not just wildfires, but also earthquakes, floods and other disasters.

“Alerting is an evolving art. As people have changed the way they communicate, we are having to evolve,” said Shane Reichardt, a spokesman for the Riverside County Emergency Management Department.

Some of the messages are automatically zipped to targeted locations by bouncing them off selected cell towers. Other messages must be signed up for, and that’s when things can get complicated and alerts can be missed, underscoring the need, officials say, to register online for multiple systems.

Holly McMillan, who with husband Scott has lived in Norco for 10 years, is attuned to the importance of the alert systems better than most.

She created a Facebook page, Norco Emergency Information Only, after the April 2015 fire at Prado Dam that prompted authorities to order several neighborhoods to evacuate. McMillan posts information on current emergencies, how to prevent and prepare for disasters and other public service announcements.

“Our yard, it looked like it had snowed, with the ash. I didn’t know how to get my horses to safety, and I said ‘I’ll never be in that position again,’ ” said McMillan, 52, who lives in the bluffs area of Horsetown USA.

McMillan, beyond signing up for alerts from her city and the countywide Alert RivCo, is registered with systems in Corona and Eastvale, and Orange and LA counties.

“Fires don’t respect lines,” she said.

The alert platform in San Bernardino County is called Telephone Emergency Notification System. The county also has an app, Ready San Bernardino County, that provides some of the same information. Alert LA County offers mass notification, as does NotifyLA, which is operated by the city of Los Angeles.

The alert systems basically work like this, with some variations:

If an incident commander wants to evacuate an area, he can provide the names of the bordering streets to an emergency management department. The information will be sent to the cell towers within that area, and the signal — as long as it is strong enough — will reach all cell phones physically present in that area, regardless of whether the owner has registered the phone. The signal delivers a voice message and text message to cell phones. Separately, a voice message is sent to landlines in that area regardless of whether they are registered.

Some people who live just outside the evacuation area might also receive that alert. But a person who lives in Corona but is away working in Hemet would not, unless they had registered a work phone number there and email address with Alert RivCo, Reichardt said.

“The biggest thing is that people don’t realize they are not signed up” because they are used to automatically receiving Amber alerts and weather bulletins, Reichardt said.

There are seven cities in Riverside County that have their own alert systems: Banning, Corona, Hemet, Riverside, Temecula, Moreno Valley and Palm Springs. There are links to those cities’ alert sign-ups on the individual city websites as well as the Alert RivCo website. But a person signed up only with Alert RivCo will not automatically receive those cities’ messages. The system in Orange County is a bit different. Most cities that want to immediately send emergency messages piggyback off the [countywide AlertOC](#), making it vital to register for that system as well, said Carrie Braun, a spokeswoman for the Orange County Sheriff’s Department.

“We’re so on the go these days that signing up for AlertOC gives you the ability to get that emergency alert no matter where you are,” she said.

But the [Coastal fire in Laguna Niguel in May](#), in which 20 homes were destroyed and another 11 damaged, raised questions about AlertOC.

Stephanie Oddo, a Laguna Niguel City Council candidate, told county supervisors at their May 24 meeting that a couple who had been evacuated complained to her that they did not receive orders to leave from AlertOC despite having registered. “I don’t have to explain to you why it is important for our AlertOC system to work when there’s an actual emergency,” Oddo said. “I’d like to ask you to review the system.”

Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, whose district includes Laguna Niguel, promised Oddo that the county would.

Bartlett, in an interview on Friday, June 10, said some residents — it was unclear whether they were the same with whom Oddo spoke — told her they didn’t receive evacuation orders, either. It turned out that those people live just outside the neighborhoods targeted by AlertOC in that alert.

“You can see how complicated it gets,” Bartlett said. “You can sign up for a number of the alerts in the OC system but you could be out of one of those zones. ... Fires can spread very quickly in densely populated areas, so we need to consider redrawing those evacuation zones.”

Alerts should take into account the few evacuation routes in the Laguna Niguel area, Bartlett said, and help residents navigate the potential traffic congestion.

Bartlett said she is encouraging cities, counties and police and fire departments to discuss how to reach the most people efficiently and accurately. She also wondered if there was a way to connect Orange County alert systems to the statewide 211 system, which helps people find food, mental health, housing and job-training services, to eliminate the need to sign up for several platforms.

“People don’t just live, work and play in a particular area of the county and we need to be able to get in touch with those individuals in the event of an emergency,” she said. “Are we comfortable with the procedures we have in place?”

But emergency management officials are wary of sending alerts that might not be relevant to some people. “We’re very aware of alert fatigue,” Riverside County’s Reichardt said.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2022/06/13/vital-emergency-alerts-can-find-your-phone-if-you-help/>