



# NEWS



## News Headlines 09/22/2020

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**San Bernardino County, CA: Head-on crash involving two vehicles along southbound U.S. Route 95 just south of the Nevada state line.**

Staff Writer, Zach News

Posted: September 22, 2020

San Bernardino County, California: Crash involving two vehicles has occurred along U.S. Route 95 south of Nevada state line.

Firefighters from San Bernardino County Fire Department's Station 32 are responding and requesting assistance from Clark County Fire Department.

Scanner reports that parties in both vehicles are trapped.

Please drive with caution through this area, and prepare for any possible lane or road closures.

<https://zachnews.net/2020/09/22/breaking-news-san-bernardino-county-ca-head-on-crash-involving-two-vehicles-along-southbound-u-s-route-95-just-south-of-the-nevada-state-line/>

## CA Wildfire Threatening More Than 1,000 Homes

Christopher Weber, Associated Press

Posted: September 22, 2020



1)Members of the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department keep an eye on a flareup from the Bobcat Fire on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020, in Valyermo, Calif. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

San Bernardino County, California: Crash involving two vehicles has occurred along U.S. Route 95 south of Nevada state line.

2)A San Bernardino County Fire Department member hoses down hot spots from the Bobcat Fire on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020, in Valyermo, Calif. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A wildfire scorching its way through brush and timber from the mountains to the desert northeast of Los Angeles threatened more than 1,000 homes on Tuesday as crews across the West battled dozens of other major blazes.

The Bobcat Fire was advancing at a mile or two an hour at times and continued to threaten the Mojave Desert town of Pearblossom after burning into the Antelope Valley foothill area, on the other side of the San Gabriel Mountains from Los Angeles.

The blaze that began Sept. 6 destroyed or damaged at least 29 homes and other buildings, including some in the Juniper Hills area, with the toll rising to perhaps 85 when damage assessment teams can complete their work this week, authorities said.

### RELATED

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[Firefighter Goes Viral Debunking Wildfire Conspiracies](#)

[Firefighter Killed Battling CA Wildfire Sparked by Gender Reveal](#)

Firefighters also battled flareups near Mount Wilson, which overlooks greater Los Angeles and has a historic observatory founded more than a century ago and numerous broadcast antennas serving Southern California.

The fire was fueled by vegetation that hadn't burned in decades and pushed by erratic winds over the weekend, although they had died down by Monday, and were expected to remain light through Tuesday.

Near Mount Wilson, firefighters set more than a mile of fires designed to burn out the blaze's fuel and act as a brake on its advance.

However, with the fire only about 15% contained, firefighters weren't taking anything for granted.

“We’ve got a fire here that is bigger than the city of Denver, and it did it in two weeks,” said Sky Cornell with the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

About 1,100 homes and some 4,000 residents remained under evacuation orders, fire officials said Monday evening.

Evacuation warnings — meaning residents should be prepared to flee if ordered — remained in effect for the L.A. suburb of Pasadena, home of the Rose Bowl and the annual Rose Parade, and Wrightwood, a mountain community near several San Bernardino County ski resorts.

The blaze was one of more than two dozen major wildfires burning across California, including five of the largest in state history.

More than 5,600 square miles (14,500 square kilometers) have been charred, an area larger than the state of Connecticut, and at least 23,00 people remain evacuated statewide, Gov. Gavin Newsom said.

Early estimates are that 6,400 buildings have been destroyed across the state, but Newsom said “by no stretch of the imagination do we think this tells the entire story.” Damage assessments are ongoing, he said.

Numerous studies in recent years have linked bigger U.S. wildfires to global warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas, especially because climate change has made California much drier. A drier California means plants are more flammable.

Nearly 19,000 firefighters in California are currently battling 27 major blazes, Newsom said. At least 7,900 wildfires have erupted in the state this year, many during a mid-August barrage of dry lightning that ignited parched vegetation.

Twenty-six people have been killed. Officials were investigating the death of a firefighter at another Southern California wildfire that erupted earlier this month from a smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used by a couple to reveal their baby’s gender.

Charles Morton, 39, died on Sept. 17 while battling the El Dorado Fire in San Bernardino National Forest about 75 miles (120 kilometers) east of Los Angeles.

Morton, was a 14-year veteran of the U.S. Forest Service and a squad boss with the Big Bear Interagency Hotshot Crew of the San Bernardino National Forest.

“Charlie was a well-respected leader who was always there for his squad and his crew at the toughest times,” said U.S. Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen.

“Charlie is survived by his wife and daughter, his parents, two brothers, cousins, and friends. He’s loved and will be missed. May he rest easy in heaven with his baby boy,” Morton’s family said in a statement.

In Wyoming, officials warned that “a high probability for fire growth” exists for a blaze burning toward cabins and an important water supply reservoir that’s a major source of water for the state’s capital city, Cheyenne. The Mullen Fire in the Medicine Bow National Forest is burning in heavily forested, rugged terrain that would usually be busy now with hunters at the start of elk hunting season.

And in Colorado, one of the state's largest wildfires continued to grow slowly, with firefighters benefiting as the flames spread into flatter ground Monday. Still, the Cameron Peak Fire near Red Feather Lakes had covered 162.7 square miles (421.39 square kilometers) and was just 15% contained. At higher elevations, it devoured many lodgepole pine trees killed by a beetle infestation.

More than 9,000 firefighters continue to battle large wildfires across Oregon and Washington, where thousands of residences have been destroyed, the Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service said.

<https://www.fireengineering.com/2020/09/22/493976/ca-wildfire-threatening-more-than-1000-homes/#gref>

## Why the West is burning

Mike Szydlowski, Columbia Tribune

Posted: September 22, 2020 at 10:19AM



Jesse Vasquez, of the **San Bernardino County Fire Dept**, hoses down hot spots from the Bobcat Fire Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020, in Valyermo, Calif. AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez

Already this year, more than two million acres of California forests have burned and the fires are not close to being contained.

Even with many more acres to burn, this is already a record for California. Why is this such a bad fire year? Why does it always seem to be the Western United States? What can be done about it?

Those are complex questions, but fire is well understood by scientists. Therefore, these questions can be answered with a fairly high degree of certainty.

### The chemistry of fire

Have you ever really thought about fire? It's something we take for granted, but it's really a very strange thing. You combine fuel and oxygen and it makes a glowing and very hot gas that then makes more things burn. That's really strange.

Here is what is happening. When matter gets hot enough, it turns to a gas. That gas combines with oxygen molecules. This combination emits blue light and a lot of energy. This is why a flame is blue and very hot. But most of a flame is yellow or orange. Why?

Fire needs a lot of oxygen. When it uses up the oxygen right around it, the fire becomes less efficient and starts making tiny carbon particles, or soot. The soot particles absorb a lot of the blue flame's heat and they start glowing. The yellow flames you see are caused by the millions of glowing soot particles. The soot particles then get far enough away from the fuel and cool down and stop glowing. But they continue traveling as cooled soot particles, or smoke.

### Preventing fires made bigger fires

Ironically, our past behavior of stopping every fire has led to bigger fires. Fires have occurred naturally for millions of years. The spark of natural fires is lightning. The fires burned until they naturally went out thanks to rain or running out of fuel. By having periodic fires, fuel on the forest floor did not continue to stack up and the fires were smaller.

By stopping most fires, forest floors have accumulated a lot of fuel. So when a fire does occur, there will be plenty of fuel to burn a much larger fire. Not stopping fires is easier said than done. When fires burned naturally, there were no homes and businesses in the way. It's not easy to say it's best to let a fire burn when homes get destroyed.

## Why the West often burns

The Western United States burns most often mostly because of its dry air. Unlike many other parts of the United States, California does not have high humidity. Humidity is water vapor in the air.

When the air is dry, it will suck the moisture from anywhere it can find it. Think of it like this: If you put a wet towel outside, would it dry faster on a very humid day or a very dry day? Clearly, the answer is a dry day. That dry air takes the water molecules out of the towel quickly. This is what is happening to the fallen trees in the forest. The dry California air is making those trees burnable very quickly.

## Climate change

There is very strong scientific evidence that our changing climate is making the wildfires far worse. Warm air can hold a lot more moisture than cool air. Therefore, the warming climate is taking moisture from downed trees much quicker than it used to. This is letting very dry, burnable wood accumulate quicker than it used to.

The warming climate also has caused less snow to fall in the California mountains. California gets most of its water from winter mountain snows. The snow took months to melt, and this provided moisture well into early summer before things started to dry out. Climate change is now causing the snow to disappear in spring, leaving much more time for things to dry out in the summer.

As you can see, the cause of the increasing wildfires is understood quite well. Unfortunately, fixing the problem is far more complex and will take quite a bit of change in how we live.

<https://www.columbiatribune.com/story/news/2020/09/22/why-west-is-burning/42678447/>

## El Dorado fire lines holding, containment increases to 68%

Richard K. De Atley and Eric Licas, the Press Enterprise

Posted: September 22, 2020 at 9:44AM



Helicopters took water from nearby Jenks Lenk and dropped it on the fireline, as seen from Middle Meadow at Camp Tahquitz on Sept. 17. (Joseph Ellis/Contributing Photographer)

Evacuation warnings for the Big Bear area were lifted Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 22, after firefighters limited the El Dorado fire growth along Highway 38, holding the blaze to 22,597 acres burned with 68% containment.

Progress was evident in the containment percentage, which was up from 60 on Monday night. The fire grew just 9 acres from Monday night to Tuesday night.

Highway 38 remained closed from Bryant Avenue to Lake Williams Drive in Big Bear City.

MAP: Where the El Dorado fire is burning in the San Bernardino Mountains

“We had a really good day yesterday and a great night last night,” said Bob Evans, a spokesman for the emergency management team. “As you notice, you probably see a lot less smoke output from our incident.”

The El Dorado fire started Sept. 5 during a gender reveal photo shoot, with a smoke bomb touching off dry grass in a Yucaipa park, investigators said, and has since spread into the San Bernardino National Forest, leading to the evacuation of thousands of residents in mountain communities. A firefighter also died while fighting the fire.

Wind, rockslides and burning debris rolling down slopes toward the roadway are among the threats for spreading the fire past the line firefighters are building and defending. The fire has managed to reach the highway in some spots, including south of the evacuated community of Angelus Oaks, but has been kept in check, firefighters said.

“Moving up into the Angelus Oaks area, everything is looking really well and holding, Evans said. “Highway 38 is holding there.”

Although fire activity was mild in the area, most communities along Highway 38 from Angelus Oaks to Onyx Summit remained under evacuation orders Tuesday.

Mountain Home Village and Forest Falls residents were being allowed access to their communities with proper identification, according to a statement from the multi-agency team handling the wildfire.

**San Bernardino County Fire** Chief Dan Munsey said the fire loosened soil in the area, causing “boulders the size of basketballs all the way up to refrigerators” to come crashing down onto Highway 38.



Shifting winds may also potentially lead to new flareups, Munsey said.

Crews camped Monday night at 10,000 Foot Ridge, south of Fish Creek, and continued firefighting efforts when they woke up, Evans said. More teams were dealing with spot fires throughout the day, near Jenks Lake Road West. Flames were also active near Forest Falls, but firefighters flown into nearby Wilshire Peak made good progress overnight and “things are looking really well,” Evans said at about 3:30 p.m.

Late Monday, the U.S. Forest Service identified the firefighter who died Thursday while battling the blaze.

Charles Edward Morton, 39, was a crew boss with the Big Bear Hotshots. He had worked as a firefighter for 18 years, 14 with the U.S. Forest Service. A procession from San Bernardino to Orange took place Tuesday morning.

Thirteen people have been injured in the fire. Five homes have been destroyed and four others damaged.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2020/09/22/el-dorado-fire-staying-inside-containment-lines-some-evacuations-remain-in-place/>