

NASA image: Dry conditions and lightning strikes make for a long California fire season

September 16 2014



NASA's Aqua satellite collected this natural-color image with the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer, MODIS, instrument on Sept. 15, 2014. Actively burning areas, detected by MODIS's thermal bands, are outlined in red. Credit: Jeff Schmaltz LANCE/EOSDIS MODIS Rapid Response Team, GSFC.

The fire season in California has been anything but cooperative this year. Hot conditions combined with a state-wide drought and dry lightning makes for unpleasant conditions and leads to an abundance of forest fires.

On August 12, lightning struck and started the [fire](#) that grew into the Happy Camp Complex. Currently over 113,000 acres have been affected and the fire is only 55% contained as of today. Strong winds tested fire lines yesterday (8/15), and are expected to do so again today. Despite the high winds, existing fire lines held with no spotting or expansion outside current containment lines. The south end of the fire continued backing slowly toward Elk Creek in the Marble Mountain Wilderness. The Man Fire joined with the Happy Camp Complex yesterday and will be managed by California Interagency Incident Management Team 4 as of 6:00am on Wednesday, September 17, 2014.

Nearby the Happy Camp Complex, near Mt. Shasta and the town of Weed, another fire erupted that fire officials said quickly damaged or destroyed 100 structures Monday (8/15). Hundreds of firefighters were trying to contain that fire. A California Fire spokesman said more than 300 [acres](#) were scorched and more than 100 structures damaged or destroyed in just a few hours. The blaze, dubbed the Boles Fire, also led to the closure of Interstate 5 and U.S. 97. Weed is in Siskiyou County, about 50 miles south of the California-Oregon border. With strong winds, the fire was able to rage into the community before firefighters could get equipment to the blaze. About 1,500 to 2,000 residents were being evacuated to the Siskiyou County fairgrounds. An evacuation center was set up at the county fairgrounds in Yreka.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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