

Health warnings issued as smoke from Bobcat fire chokes L.A. air quality

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With the Bobcat fire in the Angeles National Forest at nearly 32,000 acres Sunday, smoke from the blaze continues to create poor air quality across the Los Angeles Basin.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District forecast moderate-to-unhealthy air for a large swath of the region, including central Los Angeles and the San Gabriel and San Fernando valleys. Conditions will be somewhat better along the coast and in Orange County.

Although that forecast marks an improvement in some areas, officials said the smoke was still a major concern.

The Los Angeles Zoo announced Saturday that it would not open Sunday or Monday because of the unhealthy air quality but hoped to reopen Tuesday. A statement from the zoo said that anyone who had tickets or a reservation for a closed date could request a refund or reschedule.

Poor air quality also contributed to the closure of eight parks in L.A. County: Eaton Canyon, Devil's Punchbowl, Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park, Lario Staging Area, Marshall Canyon, Peck Road Water Conservation Park, San Dimas Canyon Natural Area and Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health warned residents to stay indoors as much as possible and limit physical exertion, indoors or out.

"If you can see smoke, soot or ash, or you can smell smoke, pay attention to your immediate environment and take precautions to safeguard your health," said county Health Officer Dr. Muntu Davis. "These precautions are particularly important for children, older adults, and people with heart or lung diseases."

Davis also advised day camps in smoke-affected areas to suspend outside activities, such as hiking or picnics.

The Bobcat fire remained only 6% contained as of Sunday morning. It

continues burning largely in the forest. But some evacuation warnings remain in foothill communities.

Fire officials said Sunday the fire was "active throughout the night, continuing to burn downhill toward Monrovia and north toward Route 2 in the Buckhorn Flat area. Significant western growth toward Mt Wilson."

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