

Western wildfires: California blaze crosses into Nevada

July 22 2021, by Haven Daley



In this photo provided by the Bootleg Fire Incident Command, a tanker drops retardant over the Mitchell Monument area at the Bootleg Fire in southern Oregon on Saturday, July 17, 2021. The 569-square-mile (1,474 square kilometers) Bootleg Fire is burning 300 miles (483 kilometers) southeast of Portland in and around the Fremont-Winema National Forest, a vast expanse of old-growth forest, lakes and wildlife refuges. Credit: Bootleg Fire Incident Command via AP

A Northern California wildfire crossed into Nevada, prompting new evacuations, but better weather has been helping crews battling the nation's largest blaze in southern Oregon.

The Tamarack Fire south of Lake Tahoe had burned more than 68 square miles (176 square kilometers) of timber and head-high chaparral in national forest land. It erupted July 4 and was one of nearly two dozen blazes sparked by lightning strikes.

More than 1,200 firefighters were battling the Alpine County blaze, which has destroyed at least 10 buildings, forced evacuations in several communities and had closed parts of U.S. 395 in [Nevada](#) and [California](#). Fire officials expected active or extreme fire behavior on Thursday, which could see 14 mph (23 kph) winds and temperatures approaching 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 Celsius).

A request for voluntary evacuations was also issued for portions of Douglas County, Nevada. An evacuation center was set up at a community center in Gardnerville, Nevada.

Evacuee Morgana-Le-Fae Veatch said she already had boxed up most of her belongings because she is starting community college next week but her parents lost their house in a 1987 blaze.

"So this has been really, really stressing to them," she said.



In this photo provided by the Bootleg Fire Incident Command, a bear cub clings to a tree after being spotted by a safety officer at the Bootleg Fire in southern Oregon, Sunday, July 18, 2021. As more fire personnel moved into the area, the cub scurried down the tree trunk and later left after being offered water. Credit: Bryan Daniels/Bootleg Fire Incident Command via AP

To the northwest, the summer fun of boating and bathing came to an abrupt end for vacationers at Lake Almanor as the Dixie Fire spread up the west flank of the Sierra Nevada, expanding to more than 162 square miles. The west shore of the resort lake and many other small communities were under evacuation orders.

Meanwhile, Oregon on Wednesday banned all campfires on state-managed lands and in state campgrounds east of Interstate 5, the major

highway that is commonly considered the dividing line between the wet western part of the state and the dry eastern half.

The nation's largest wildfire, Oregon's Bootleg Fire, grew to 624 square miles (1,616 square kilometers)—just over half the size of Rhode Island.

However, authorities said lower winds and temperatures allowed crews to improve fire lines. The fire also was approaching an area burned by a previous fire on its active southeastern flank, raising hopes that lack of fuel could reduce its spread.



In this photo provided by the Bootleg Fire Incident Command, a handcrew walks to engage the Bootleg Fire in southern Oregon on Monday, July 19, 2021. The Oregon fire has ravaged the southern part of the state and has been expanding by up to 4 miles (6 kilometers) a day, pushed by gusting winds and critically dry

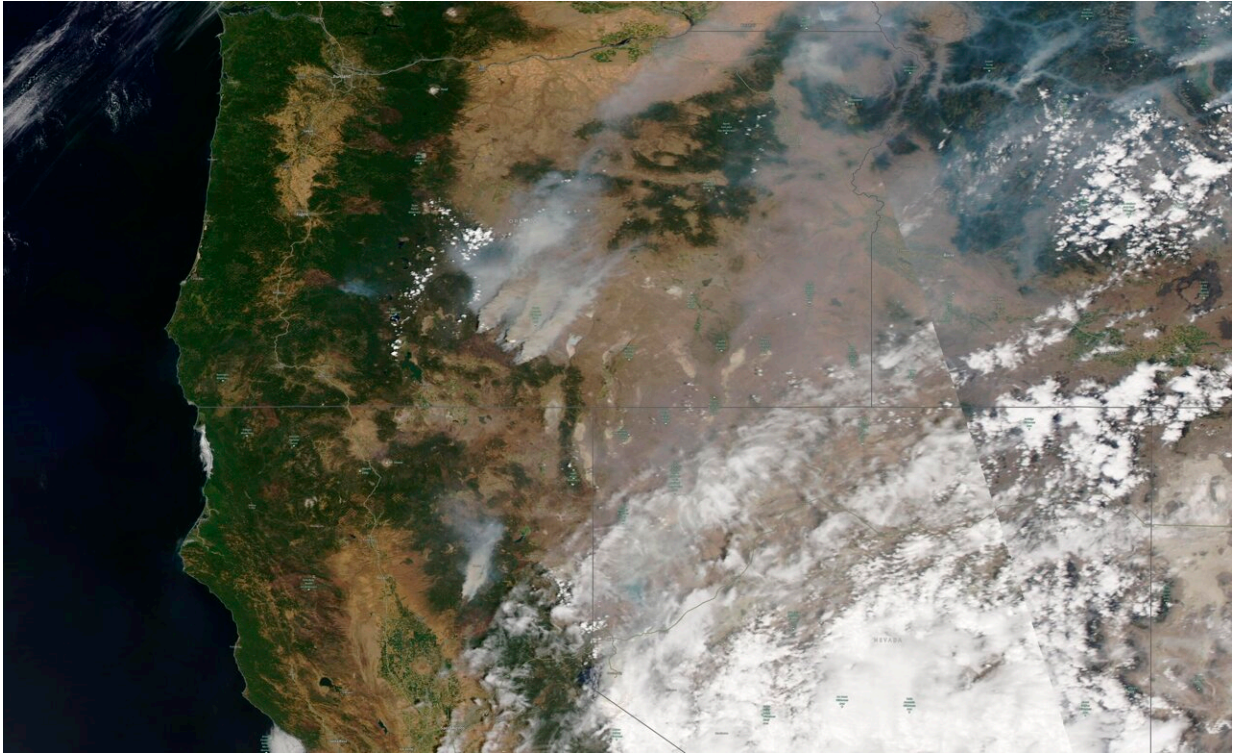
weather that's turned trees and undergrowth into a tinderbox. Credit: Bootleg Fire Incident Command via AP



A thick haze hangs over Manhattan, Tuesday, July 20, 2021, in New York. Wildfires in the American West, including one burning in Oregon that's currently the largest in the U.S., are creating hazy skies as far away as New York as the massive infernos spew smoke and ash into the air in columns up to six miles high. Credit: AP Photo/Julie Jacobson



Smoke blocks the view looking toward Manhattan from Yankee Stadium before the Philadelphia Phillies played the New York Yankees in a baseball game Tuesday, July 20, 2021, in New York. Credit: AP Photo/Adam Hunger



This satellite image provided by Satellite image ©2021 Maxar Technologies shows overview of wildfires from Oregon, Idaho, and Northern California on Sunday, July 18, 2021. Extremely dry conditions and heat waves tied to climate change have made wildfires harder to fight. Climate change has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive. Credit: Satellite image ©2021 Maxar Technologies via AP

The Oregon fire, which was sparked by lightning, has ravaged the sparsely populated southern part of the state and had been expanding by up to 4 miles (6 kilometers) a day, pushed by strong winds and critically dry weather that turned trees and undergrowth into a tinderbox.

Fire crews have had to retreat from the flames for 10 consecutive days as fireballs jump from treetop to treetop, trees explode, embers fly

ahead of the fire to start new blazes and, in some cases, the inferno's heat [creates its own weather](#) of shifting winds and dry lightning. Monstrous clouds of smoke and ash have risen up to 6 miles (10 kilometers) into the sky and are visible for more than 100 air miles (161 kilometers).

The blaze, which is being fought by more than 2,200 people, is more than one-third contained.

At least 2,000 homes were ordered evacuated at some point during the fire and an additional 5,000 were threatened. At least 70 homes and more than 100 outbuildings have burned, but no one is known to have died.

Extremely dry conditions and recent heat waves tied to climate change have made wildfires harder to fight. Climate change has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive.

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