

# Wildfires torch homes, land across 10 states in US West

July 13 2021, by John Antczak and Christopher Weber

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Wildland firefighters watch and take video with their cellphones as a plane drops fire retardant on Harlow Ridge above the Lick Creek Fire, southwest of Asotin, Wash., Monday, July 12, 2021. The fire, which started last Wednesday, has now burned over 50,000 acres of land between Asotin County and Garfield County in southeast Washington state. Credit: Pete Caster/Lewiston Tribune via AP

Wildfires that torched homes and forced thousands to evacuate burned across 10 parched Western states on Tuesday, and the largest, in Oregon, threatened a portion of California's power supply.

Nearly 60 wildfires tore through bone-dry timber and brush from Alaska to Wyoming, according to the [National Interagency Fire Center](#). Arizona, Idaho and Montana accounted for more than half of the large active fires.

The fires erupted as the West was in the grip of the second bout of dangerously high temperatures in just a few weeks. A climate change-fueled megadrought also is contributing to conditions that make fires even more dangerous, scientists say.

The National Weather Service said the heat wave had peaked in many areas, and remaining excessive heat warnings were expected to expire by Tuesday night.

"While we are eagerly anticipating a cooling trend over the next few days, we still have another hot day to get through," the Medford, Oregon, weather office said.

The largest fire in the United States was burning in rural southwestern Oregon. The Bootleg Fire—which has ravaged about 316 square miles (818 square kilometers), an area more than twice the size of Portland—threatened some 2,000 homes, state fire officials said. It had burned about 21 homes as well as other minor structures, fire spokesman Daniel Omdal said Tuesday.



Plumes of smoke from the Bootleg Fire rise over a playground, Monday, July 12, 2021, near Bly, Ore. Credit: AP Photo/Nathan Howard

Firefighters were struggling to build containment lines and hadn't managed to surround any of the fire burning in the Fremont-Winema National Forest, near the Klamath County town of Sprague River.

"We are under extreme weather conditions. The humidity is low, the fuels are highly flammable and all those provide conditions for significant fire activity," Omdal said.

The fire disrupted service on three transmission lines providing up to 5,500 megawatts of electricity to California, and that state's power grid operator asked for voluntary power conservation Monday evening. The

operator reported that more than 44,500 megawatts were available Tuesday.

In Northern California, a combined pair of lightning-ignited blazes dubbed the Beckwourth Complex was 26% surrounded after days of battling flames in windy, hot and dry weather that sapped moisture from vegetation. Evacuation orders were in place for more than 3,000 residents of remote northern areas and neighboring Nevada.



Shane Durant watches the Bootleg Fire smoke plume while walking his dog, Monday, July 12, 2021, near Bly, Ore. Credit: AP Photo/Nathan Howard





Shane Durant watches the Bootleg Fire smoke plume while walking his dog, Monday, July 12, 2021, near Bly, Ore. Credit: AP Photo/Nathan Howard



This photo provided by the Oregon Department of Forestry shows a firefighting tanker making a retardant drop over the Grandview Fire near Sisters, Ore., Sunday, July 11, 2021. The wildfire doubled in size to 6.2 square miles (16 square kilometers) Monday, forcing evacuations in the area, while the state's biggest fire continued to burn out of control, with containment not expected until November. Credit: Oregon Department of Forestry via AP



The Bootleg Fire smoke plume rises over power lines, Monday, July 12, 2021, near Klamath Falls, Ore. Credit: AP Photo/Nathan Howard





A Klamath County Sheriff's vehicle drives toward smoke from the Bootleg Fire, Monday, July 12, 2021, near Klamath Falls, Ore. Credit: AP Photo/Nathan Howard





A firefighting helicopter lands at a fire staging area near the Bootleg Fire, Monday, July 12, 2021, in Chiloquin, Ore. Credit: AP Photo/Nathan Howard



A sign thanking firefighters and first responders hangs near the Bootleg Fire, Monday, July 12, 2021, in Chiloquin, Ore. Credit: AP Photo/Nathan Howard





This photo provided by the Oregon Department of Forestry shows active fire along a ridge at the Grandview Fire near Sisters, Ore., Sunday, July 11, 2021. The wildfire doubled in size to 6.2 square miles (16 square kilometers) Monday, forcing evacuations in the area, while the state's biggest fire continued to burn out of control, with containment not expected until November. Credit: Oregon Department of Forestry via AP





After lighting a fire line to burn up fuel for the Lick Creek Fire, a crew of wildland firefighters begin to put out the flames, Monday, July 12, 2021, south of Asotin, Wash. Credit: Pete Caster/Lewiston Tribune via AP



Wildland firefighters spray water onto a tree that caught fire as they were building a fire line for the Lick Creek Fire, Monday, July 12, 2021, south of Asotin, Wash. Credit: Pete Caster/Lewiston Tribune via AP



A scoop plane drops water onto a burning ridge where a fire line had been created by crews of wildland firefighters, Monday, July 12, 2021, at the Lick Creek Fire, south of Asotin, Wash. Credit: Pete Caster/Lewiston Tribune via AP





A wildland fire crew looks on after setting a fire line on Harlow Ridge above the Lick Creek Fire, Monday, July 12, 2021, south of Asotin, Wash. Credit: Pete Caster/Lewiston Tribune via AP

There were reports of burned homes, but damage was still being tallied. The blaze had scorched more than 145 square miles (375 square kilometers) of land, including in Plumas National Forest, and containment jumped to 46%.

A fire that began Sunday in the Sierra Nevada south of Yosemite National Park grew to nearly 15 square miles (39 square kilometers) but containment increased to 15%. Four unspecified buildings were destroyed.

Elsewhere, a forest fire started during lightning storms in southeast Washington grew to 86 square miles (223 square kilometers). It was 20% contained Monday.

Another fire west of Winthrop closed the scenic North Cascades Highway, the most northern route through the Cascade Range. The road provides access to North Cascades National Park and the Ross Lake National Recreation Area.

In Idaho, Gov. Brad Little mobilized the National Guard to help fight twin lightning-sparked fires that have together charred nearly 24 square miles (62 square kilometers) of dry timber in the remote, drought-stricken region.

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