

California fire rapidly reaches state's top 10 biggest ever

July 28 2024



Cal Fire said 20 structures were confirmed destroyed by the Park Fire, lowering an earlier estimate of 134.

A fire raging out of control in northern California has rapidly become among the biggest ever in the western US state, authorities said Saturday.

The so-called Park Fire burned more than 350,000 acres (142,000 hectares) as of Saturday evening, making it the seventh-largest ever recorded in California history, the state agency Cal Fire said.

The [fire](#), which prompted orders for more than 4,000 people to flee their homes, was burning through a largely rural, mountainous area near the city of Chico, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) north of state capital Sacramento.

"Extreme fire conditions continue to challenge firefighters," Cal Fire said in a post on X.

The fire was just 10 percent controlled, despite the efforts of more than 3,700 personnel with over a dozen helicopters and several planes, according to an agency update.

"Numerous firefighting air tankers from throughout the State are flying fire suppression missions as conditions allow," it said.

"Lower temperatures and higher humidity have reduced [fire activity](#)," the agency said, while adding that fire was still spreading.

The Park Fire started Wednesday near Chico, in Butte County, and within hours had devastated a wide area there and in neighboring Tehama County.



The fire, which prompted orders for more than 4,000 people to flee their homes, was burning through a largely rural, mountainous area near the city of Chico.

Cal Fire's latest update said 20 structures were confirmed destroyed by the fire, lowering an earlier estimate of 134.

The agency said the numbers were expected to fluctuate as officials assess the damage on the ground.

The blaze has generated an enormous column of dense gray smoke which has also been blown over nearby states.

On Thursday, police detained a 42-year-old man on suspicion of having started the fire by pushing a burning car into a ravine.

Chico is only about 15 miles from Paradise, a city devastated by a 2018 fire that ranked as California's most deadly ever, claiming 85 lives.

The explosive growth of the Park Fire has again placed Paradise under evacuation warning, unleashing painful memories for its residents.

Ava Elsner, who lived through the 2018 fire, told CNN she worries about her neighbors as the Park Fire blazes.



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"I don't want anyone else to experience this. It's the most traumatizing, terrifying, and saddening thing to have a whole community go up in flames," she told the broadcaster.

Experts say [climate change](#), accelerated by human action, is leading to more [extreme weather events](#).

In Oregon, the Durkee Fire, which started earlier this month, has consumed nearly 290,000 acres and was about 50 percent contained, the state's wildfire response and recovery agency said.

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