

Evacuations remain in place as firefighters battle 900-acre Grove fire in Southern California for second day

July 26 2024, by Karen Kucher, The San Diego Union-Tribune



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A brush fire that ignited during the afternoon of July 24 from a lightning strike, burning hundreds of acres north of Palomar Mountain and

triggering evacuations, is expected to last several days, a fire official said.

The blaze, dubbed the Grove [fire](#), charred 900 acres and was reported to be 10% contained, Cal Fire reported shortly before 1 p.m. July 25 on X, formerly known as Twitter. Firefighters are battling flames under hot and humid weather conditions in [steep terrain](#), Cal Fire Capt. Mike Cornette said.

The fire was reported around 1:15 p.m. July 24 in the area of Dodge Valley near the rural community of Sunshine Summit, and it spread quickly. It is located east of Oak Grove and burning to the southwest, Cornette said.

Around 5:25 p.m. that evening, officials announced evacuation orders for the areas around Chihuahua Valley Road, east of state Route 79 and south of the San Diego-Riverside county line. Evacuation warnings were issued in the area of Stone Ridge Estates.

"All the evacuation orders and warnings are still in place," Cornette said. "The fire is threatening homes off of Chihuahua Valley Road."

Cornette said firefighters are working in challenging conditions as they climb steep hills to try to put down containment lines. More than 230 [firefighters](#) have been assigned, along with 35 engines, eight water tenders, six helicopters and six dozers. Several air tankers also were expected to make fire retardant drops on the fire, Cornette said.

Officials planned to get firefighting aircraft in the air early to get a better view of the fire's size.

"Last night the fire activity died down, so we were able to get some good work in there around the fire," he said. "This morning, we will have our

aircraft out early to strengthen the control lines so we can try to button this thing up."

He said officials expect the fire to last "several days."

"The weather is hot again," he said. "It is going to be humid ... They are expecting less rain today, so that's going to increase the fire activity."

Forecasters said they expect to see fewer thunderstorms in the area on Thursday.

A temporary [evacuation](#) point was set up at the Warner Springs Community Resource Center, 30950 Highway 79 in Warner Springs. Small animals are welcome at that location. On Wednesday it was at Warner Spring High School.

Anyone fleeing the fire with [large animals](#) is being directed to Ramona High School, 1401 Hanson Lane in Ramona.

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