

# The Latest: Wildfire in Gold Country destroys 86 homes

13 September 2015



Firefighters watch as the flames of the Butte Fire approach a containment line near San Andreas, Calif., Friday, Sept. 11, 2015. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli)

The latest on wildfires in Northern California (all times local):

7:45 p.m.

Authorities say a wildfire burning for a fourth day in California's Gold Country has destroyed 86 homes.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said Saturday that the blaze southeast of Sacramento has burned 101 square miles.

Officials reported slight progress in battling the [fire](#), saying it was 15 percent contained despite a thick layer of smoke that grounded air tankers and helicopters from flying all day.

In addition to the 86 homes destroyed, a damage-assessment team found that the fire burned 51 outbuildings and was threatening another 6,400.

Meanwhile, another fire that broke out Saturday afternoon in Lake County, about 100 miles north of San Francisco, exploded to 15 square miles (or

10,000 acres) in just a few hours.

Four firefighters suffered second-degree burns during the initial attack. They were hospitalized in stable condition.

6:55 p.m.

A wildfire that broke out in Northern California is burning out of control, sending four firefighters to the hospital with burn injuries and forcing hundreds to flee.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection says the fire began Saturday afternoon in Lake County, about 100 miles north of San Francisco, and exploded to about 15 square miles (or 10,000 acres) in a just few hours.

The fire initially prompted residents of Cobb, a town of roughly 1800, to flee.

Cal Fire spokesman Daniel Berlant says the evacuation order has expanded to include Middletown, a town of 1300 about 8 miles southeast of Cobb, as well as residents along State Route 29 from Clear Lake to Calistoga.

Four firefighters suffered burn injuries during the initial attack on the fire. They were rushed to a hospital burn unit for treatment; their conditions have not been released.

4:35 p.m.



Flames from the Butte Fire consume trees as it burns near San Andreas, Calif., Friday Sept. 11, 2015. (AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli)

Authorities say four firefighters have suffered burn injuries while battling a fast-moving wildfire that broke out in Northern California and forced the evacuation of a town.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection says the fire began around 1:30 p.m. Saturday in Lake County and quickly spread to at least 400 acres.

Mandatory evacuations were ordered for Cobb, a town of roughly 1800 residents, as well as guests of the Harbin Hot Springs retreat.

Cal Fire spokesman Daniel Berlant says the injured firefighters were members of a helicopter crew based in Lake County. They were airlifted to a hospital burn unit for treatment; their conditions have not been released.

3:40 p.m.

California fire officials say a fire in Lake County quickly spread to 400 acres prompting the mandatory evacuation of the town of Cobb.

Cal Fire says mandatory evacuations have also been ordered for High Valley Road, Bottle Rock Road, Harbor Hot Springs and Big Canyon Road.

It says the blaze is burning through oak grass woodland and threatening several structures.

11:22 a.m.

Authorities say helicopters and air tankers are ready to fight a massive blaze threatening Northern California mountain towns but a thick layer of smoke has kept them on the ground.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection spokesman Mike Mohler says high temperatures and low humidity have complicated the firefight southeast of Sacramento. He says crews will again face temperatures in the 100s and little humidity Saturday.

Erratic winds also are driving spot fires ahead of the blaze, which has grown to more than 100 square miles since Wednesday and chased people from their homes. Fifteen structures have been destroyed, and about 6,400 others are in danger.

Mohler says crews hope the cooler weather expected later Saturday can help them tame abnormal behavior by the flames.

10:15 a.m.

While firefighters battled an explosive wildfire threatening homes in Northern California mountain communities, Michelle Griffiths checked on livestock.

On Saturday, she was in Angels Camp, a quaint town made famous by a Mark Twain story, after spending much of the night rescuing her neighbors' four horses and several cats from their home in Mountain Ranch in the foothills southeast of Sacramento.

Griffiths says "people were running for their lives two nights ago," which is when her neighbors left their house and livestock for a motel. She says her and her neighbors' homes are still standing.

The fire has grown to more than 100 square miles since Wednesday and chased people into evacuation centers. Fifteen structures have been destroyed, and about 6,400 others are in danger.

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9:23 a.m.

Crews gained a bit of ground against a wildfire in Northern California that destroyed 15 structures and was threatening at least 6,400 others in mountain towns southeast of Sacramento.

Authorities say containment of the 101-square-mile fire increased to 10 percent Saturday morning. It started Wednesday and quickly exploded in size, chasing hundreds of people from their homes and into evacuation centers.

There are 3,000 firefighters assigned to the blaze and more expected to arrive throughout the day.

At Angels Camp, a quaint town made famous by Mark Twain's "The Celebrated Tale of the Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," incident commanders huddled behind a pickup truck loaded with maps assessing the fire's progress as a line of horse trailers lined up near a corral with about two dozen horses.

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