



NEWS



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Fast-moving brush fire burns in San Bernardino Mountains

Shelby Grad and Matt Hamilton, LA Times

Posted: August 7, 2016, 11:00 PM



Pilot fire burning above Silverwood Lake. (San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department)

A fast-moving brush fire burned more than 1,500 acres Sunday near Silverwood Lake in San Bernardino County, triggering evacuations and road closures, authorities said.

The Pilot fire was first reported about 12 p.m. and quickly spread amid dry brush and timber, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

About 400 firefighters were battling the blaze by air and on the ground, according to the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** and U.S. Forest Service. Eight air tankers were deployed to help control the flames, fire officials said.

There is no containment at this time. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

The fire could be seen in a wide area of the mountains and surrounding communities, and evacuations were ordered for those in the Summit Valley area east of Cedar Springs Dam, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

The American Red Cross opened an evacuation center at Ranchero Middle School in Hesperia. Pet owners can bring animals to the San Bernardino County Fairground, located in the 14800 block of 7th Street in Victorville.

A portion of Highway 138 was closed, and officials urged motorists to avoid the area. Highway 173 was also closed between Highway 138 and Arrowhead Lake Road.

The fire prompted the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District to issue a smoke advisory for Victor Valley and nearby communities, warning those with lung or heart disease as well as older adults and children to limit the amount of time spent outside.

Residents in the Central San Bernardino Mountains were also under a smoke advisory issued by the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

UPDATES:

11 p.m.: This article was updated with more information about fire acreage and evacuations.

4:35 p.m.: This article was updated with details on the growth of the fire.

3:30 p.m.: This article was updated with additional details.

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-silverwood-fire-20160807-snap-story.html>

UPDATE 34: Vegetation Fire Near Silverwood Lake – 6,963 Acres – Morning Briefing

Michael P. Neufeld, Rim of the World News

Posted: August 7, 2016, 12:22 PM



Fire units on Highway 173 in Lake Arrowhead ready to provide structure protection, if necessary. (Photo by Phyllis Anania-Ross for ROTWNEWS.com)



The Pilot Fire's day shift briefing just before firefighters headed out to battle the 6,963-acre fire. The firefighter in the back of the briefing is from Alaska State Forestry. (Photo by Marc Peebles/San Bernardino County Fire)



The Pilot Fire from the Arrowhead Fish & Game Conservation Club on Highway 173. (Photo by Raymond Ray/RimFire)



Running Springs BE 51 working structure protection off Highway 173 in Lake Arrowhead. (Photo by Running Springs Fire department)

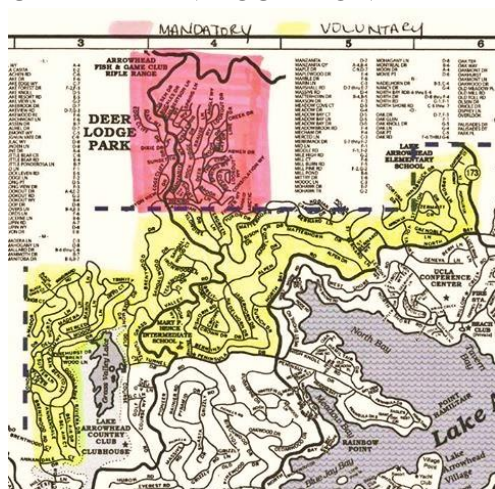


Fire units staged along Highway 173 in Lake Arrowhead. (Photo by Raymond Ray/RimFire)



A Sheriff's Department helicopter is extracting water from Lake Gregory and heading out to make drops on the Pilot Fire. (Photo by ROTWNEWS.com)

UPDATED EVACUATION MAP



This is the latest evacuation map with mandatory evacuations in pink and voluntary in yellow. (Photo by Twin Peaks Sheriff's Station)



A Sheriff's Department helicopter draws water from Silverwood Lake during Pilot Fire operations. The fire remains at about 4,500 acres. (Photo by San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department)



Drift smoke from the Pilot Fire near Silverwood Lake has been observed in several mountain locations. (Photo by San Bernardino County Fire)



Tanker 910 makes a drop on the Pilot Fire near Silverwood Lake. The fire was last reported at 4,500 acres and 5 percent contained. (Photo by Jimmy Frazee/RimFire)



Firefighters worked overnight on the Pilot Fire which has been remapped at 4,500 acres with 5 percent containment. (Photo by San Bernardino County Fire)



Structure protection is just one element of firefighting efforts on the Pilot Fire near Silverwood Lake. (Photo by San Bernardino County Fire)

UPDATE 34: Tuesday, August 9 – 8:11 a.m.

Silverwood Lake – Here is what the day shift firefighters heard during the morning briefing:

The Pilot Fire is burning between Pilot Rock Ridge and State Highway 173 in Hesperia. Fire line has been constructed in the Summit Valley area. The fire crossed Hwy 173 in the Los Flores Ranch area. Firing operations were conducted along Hwy 173 near Deep Creek and progressed southeast toward the Hwy 173 closure gate near Burnt Flats.

Crews are constructing dozer line from Pilot Rock to the Lake Arrowhead Community Services District Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Aircraft is being used to the extent possible, but visibility is a limiting factor.

Today's high temperature will reach 83 degrees, with a minimum humidity at 15 percent. Ridgetop winds will be from the south at 20 mph with afternoon gusts reaching 25 mph. Potential for spotting exists from all areas of the fire.

UPDATE 33: Tuesday, August 9 – 7:11 a.m.

Silverwood Lake, CA – U. S. Forest Service spokesperson Bob Poole told ROTWNEWS.com that a night flight survey now has the Pilot Fire's total acreage at 6,963 with 6 percent containment.

Poole reported that there are now 934 firefighters from a host of agencies fighting the fire with a unified command of the U. S. Forest Service, CalFire and **San Bernardino County Fire**.

The aerial support is being provided by 6 air tankers, two VLAT's (Very Large Air Tankers) and 7 water-dropping helicopters.

UPDATE 32: Tuesday, August 9 – 4 a.m.

Silverwood Lake – There are currently 842 firefighters assigned to the Pilot Fire, including 91 engines, 15 water tenders, 14 crews, 11 dozers, 8 helicopters, 8 air tankers, including the VLAT (Very Large Air Tanker) assigned.

The night flight helicopter is assisting firefighters overnight.

Additional firefighters have been ordered and will be responding to the fire.

EVACUATIONS

At the present time, there are two areas are under mandatory evacuation: the Deer Lodge Park area of Lake Arrowhead, and a slice of Hesperia south of Ranchero Road between Santa Fe East and Arrowhead Lake Road (Highway 173).

Highway 173 remains closed.

UPDATE 31: Monday, August 8 – 7:25 p.m.

Silverwood Lake – The Pilot Fire is now 6 percent contained and the latest acreage stands at 6,298, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

The Pilot Fire is being fought by 843 firefighters.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Poor air quality concerns have forced the Apple Valley and Hesperia Unified School Districts to cancel classes on Tuesday, August 9. The Topaz Prep Academy will also be closed.

Classes in the Rim of the World Unified School District don't start until August 16.

UPDATE 30: Monday, August 8 – 5:30 p.m.

Lake Arrowhead, CA – About 4,700 homes in the Lake Arrowhead/Deer Lodge Park area are either under mandatory or voluntary evacuation orders at this time, according to scanner information.

UPDATE 29: Monday, August 8 – 3:35 p.m.

Lake Arrowhead, CA – The evacuation areas in the Lake Arrowhead region have been expanded.

Voluntary evacuations are in place north of Peninsula, west of North Bay, south of 173, and west of Golf Course Road.

UPDATE 28: Monday, August 8 – 3:16 p.m.

Lake Arrowhead, CA – An American Red Cross Reception and Care Center has been established at Rim of the World High School located at 27400 Highway 18 in Lake Arrowhead (Blue Jay).

Large and small animal evacuations will go to the Devore Animal Shelter at 19777 Shelter Way in San Bernardino. Mountain residents do not have to drive down to Victorville to the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds for their animal evacuations.

UPDATE 27: Monday, August 8 – 2:47 p.m.

Crestline, CA – Helicopters are extracting water from Lake Gregory and heading to the Deer Lodge Park area of Lake Arrowhead where mandatory evacuations are now in place.

UPDATE 26: Monday, August 8 – 2:47 p.m.

Lake Arrowhead, CA – The Twin Peaks Sheriff's Station is advising that Deer Lodge Park is under Mandatory Evacuation Order.

Officials are going door to door and anyone not willing to leave, officers will take their name and address, just in case anything happens.

UPDATE 25: Monday, August 8 – 2:30 p.m.

Lake Arrowhead, CA – A Voluntary Evacuation Order is in place for Deer Lodge Park area of Lake Arrowhead.

The Twin Peaks Sheriff's Station told ROTWNEWS.com that an evaluation is underway to determine if that order is to become mandatory.

UPDATE 24: Monday, August 8 – 1:28 p.m.

Silverwood Lake – Additional aerial support has been requested by the Incident Commander on the Pilot Fire including three VLAT's (Very Large Air Tankers) for structure protection and *"firefighter life safety."*

A request has also been made for two Type 1 helitankers for work in the Powerline Ridge area.

The cause of the Pilot Fire is still being investigated.

UPDATE 23: Monday, August 8 – 10:54 a.m.

Silverwood Lake – Despite some weather complications at various Southern California Air Tanker Bases, several of the tankers have resumed flying missions over the Pilot Fire near Silverwood Lake.

The VLAT (Very Large Air Tanker) — Air Tanker 910 — has already made runs on the fire.

Fog was reported in Ramona earlier today preventing at least one tanker from taking off.

TANKER 910

Tanker 910 is a turboprop powered aircraft that carries up to 12,000 gallons of fire retardant in an exterior belly mounted tank.

The contents of the three center-lined belly tanks can be released in roughly 8 seconds.

And, the tanks can be loaded in about 8 minutes.

FIRE UPDATE

U. S. Forest Service spokesperson Bob Poole told ROTWNEWS.com the Pilot Fire remains at 4,500 acres with 5 percent containment.

UPDATE 22: Monday, August 8 – 8:12 a.m.

Silverwood Lake – U. S. Forest Service spokesperson Bob Poole told ROTWNEWS.com that the 4,500 acre Pilot Fire died down overnight but is expected to become more active during the day, Monday when temperatures rise and winds pick up.

The number of people evacuated since the fire began Sunday afternoon near Silverwood Lake had not been released as of 7 a.m. Monday morning.

No injuries to firefighters or civilians have been reported.

<http://rotnwnews.com/2016/08/07/vegetation-fire-reported-near-silverwood-lake/>

Pilot Fire: Evacuations Ordered As 1,500-Acre Wildfire Erupts Near Silverwood Lake

ABC7 Eyewitness News

Posted: August 8, 2016, 12:07 AM

SILVERWOOD LAKE, Calif. (KABC) –

A 1,500-acre wildfire raged near Pilot Rock Conservation Camp above Silverwood Lake on Sunday, fire officials said.

Evacuations were underway in the Summit Valley area east of Cedar Springs Dam.

According to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, mandatory evacuations were ordered for Arrowhead Lake Road, south of Hesperia Lakes to Highway 173.

Highway 173 was closed between State Route-138 and Arrowhead Lake Road. Highway 138 was closed from Old Mill Road to Highway 173, but has since reopened.

Smoke advisories were issued by health officials for the Mojave Desert area.

What started as a 30-acre brush fire quickly grew to nearly 1,500 acres by Sunday evening, according to the San Bernardino National Forest.

San Bernardino County fire officials said the blaze, dubbed the Pilot Fire, was burning north with southwest winds.

Forest fire officials said about 400 personnel were assigned in the fire fight.

It was not immediately clear what sparked the blaze.

Those with questions regarding the Pilot Fire were urged to call the San Bernardino Fire Information Center at (909)383-5688.

The American Red Cross moved its evacuation center from Ranchero Middle School to Oak Hills High School, located at 7625 Cataba Rd.

Those with large and animals can take them to Devore Animal Shelter, located at 19777 Shelter Way in San Bernardino.

<http://abc7.com/news/brush-fire-breaks-out-above-silverwood-lake/1460531/>

UPDATE: Blaze spreads to nearly 6,300 acres, 6 percent contained

500 Hesperia homes under mandatory evacuation orders

Victor Valley Daily Press

Posted: August 8, 2016, 6:42 AM



The 910 Tanker drops retardant near a hot spot while battling the Pilot fire in Hesperia on Monday. James Quigg, Daily Press

HESPERIA — The Pilot Fire raged out of control Monday, growing to nearly 6,300 acres, forcing the evacuation of 500 homes in southeast Hesperia and threatening large parts of that city as well as nearby Lake Arrowhead, authorities said.

After calming as humidity rose and temperatures dipped into the 60s overnight Sunday, the stubborn blaze roared back to life on Monday as winds picked up in the afternoon. It was only 6 percent contained and a night flight helicopter was expected to continue making water drops overnight Monday.

By mid-afternoon Monday, authorities were concerned enough about the flames advancing toward the mesa section of Hesperia to order mandatory evacuations for residents living east of Santa Fe Avenue and south of Ranchero Road, a sizable chunk of the city.

That added hundreds to the growing list of residents forced from their homes since the Pilot Fire started just after noon on Sunday near Silverwood Lake. The total evacuation count, including voluntary evacuations, stood at 5,200 homes, with 4,700 of those in the San Bernardino Mountain communities of Crestline, Lake Gregory and Lake Arrowhead, authorities said.

"I was out today with the sheriff and (Fire) Chief (Mark) Hartwig," 1st District Supervisor Robert Lovingood said. "All resources have been dedicated to eliminating risk. That goes to the evacuations.

"Protecting human life is the action you have to take. Because you don't get a second chance. Hopefully we can get control (of the fire)."

The U.S. Forest Service reported a mandatory evacuation order was in place for the Deer Lodge Park area near Lake Arrowhead. Those evacuations were called for a little after 3 p.m. and a Red Cross center was set up at Rim of the World High School at 27400 Highway 18 in Twin Peaks.

When the wind picked up early Monday afternoon, it blew heavy smoke and ash all over the Victor Valley. The dry vegetation coupled with gusting winds spelled trouble for firefighters. By Monday night, 843 personnel were involved in the firefighting effort, double the number involved when the day started.

"We know our spot weather forecast from our briefing in the morning was to expect a southwest wind pattern with winds at 15 to 20 mph, with gusts up to 30 mph, which isn't surprising to anybody from the High

Desert,” Hartwig said. “These prevailing afternoon winds are typical for the area. These winds are keeping these men and women here on the frontlines busy, some of whom haven’t left the front lines since they came on at noon yesterday. They are doing a great job; we haven’t been able to get them off the lines yet because of flares within the blackened areas and keeping sure we are protecting the structures in the area.”

Fire crews continued to battle flames on the Summit Valley hills just off Highway 173 with water drops and bulldozers to create new fire lines. However, the flames jumped Highway 173 and into the lowlands just before 1 p.m. and continued to grow.

Firefighters battled the fire with heavy ground and air assaults from helicopters and air tankers. The jets dropped bright pink fire retardant on the blackened hills, filling the air with ash and thick, black smoke.

"We're hitting it hard with the aircraft right now trying to get that retardant in there, allowing our dozers to get in there and increase those lines," **County Fire** spokesman Eric Sherwin said. "The helicopters are knocking the heat out of the fires. We do have hand crews working in some areas that are more hazardous and more difficult to access."

The amount of smoke drifting over the Victor Valley worsened as the day progressed. Just after noon from the Main Street Bridge in Hesperia, you could see five or six significant pockets of flame on the hillsides, stretching over quite a distance.

Ash fell heavily in Hesperia, Apple Valley and even parts of Victorville. Most of the smoke, a smelly mix of brown and gray, was east of Hesperia Road.

Deep Creek Road at Rock Springs Road remained open, but a Sheriff's Citizens Patrol car was stationed at the south entrance with lights flashing and traffic cones placed. Voluntary evacuations were in place for the Deep Creek area south of Rock Springs Road.

Crews from various agencies — including Anaheim, Big Sur and Redlands — were on scene fighting the blaze.

“This is something we prepare for and plan for every year,” Hartwig said. “We hope this doesn’t happen but when it does we are prepared for it. This is a huge team effort. We have Cal Fire, the Forest Service and we have the all the other agencies that have responded. The men and women on the frontlines yesterday made some great stops on about 25 structures in this area. We gelled them and put engines here to protect them as the flames advance.”

An incident command center was set up at the High Desert Event Center in Victorville and personnel said they expected to remain there for several days.

According to County Fire's incident update, 14 crews, 91 engines, 11 dozers, 15 water tenders, eight helicopters and eight air tankers were involved in the firefight. Sherwin said many firefighters worked on the fire for over 18 hours straight.

Oak Hills High School was set up as an evacuation center, but a Red Cross official said no residents stayed at the school overnight. Voluntary evacuations were in effect for approximately 150 homes from the Mojave River east to Kiowa Road and the spillway north to Rock Springs Road, according to a Sheriff's Department news release.

A smoke advisory was issued for the Victor Valley and surrounding communities Sunday afternoon until further notice.

High Desert schools which are back in session for the 2016-17 school year, including Hesperia and Apple Valley unified school districts and Riverside Preparatory in Oro Grande, took precautions, cancelling or moving outdoor school activities to indoor facilities on Monday.

But both AVUSD and Hesperia Unified announced Monday afternoon that all schools, programs and offices would be closed Tuesday.

"As the day progressed (Monday), wind patterns shifted and the local air quality deteriorated," AVUSD spokeswoman Kristin Hernandez said. "After assessing the current conditions and the likelihood of similar wind patterns for (Tuesday), AVUSD has made the decision to close all schools and offices."

AVYSD expects to reopen Wednesday and asks families to check www.avusd.org for updates.

"We know that this may pose a hardship to many families, however in the interest of the health of our students and staff, school will be closed tomorrow," Hernandez said. "We encourage everyone to stay indoors and we thank you for your patience as we work together to ensure the safety of our students."

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/article/20160808/NEWS/160809775/0/SEARCH>

PILOT FIRE UPDATE: Voluntary evacuations near Lake Arrowhead at Deer Lodge Park

Desert Dispatch

Posted: August 8, 2016, 10:39 AM



The 910 Tanker drops retardant near a hot spot while battling the Pilot fire in Hesperia on Monday. James Quigg, Daily Press

HESPERIA — The U.S. Forest Service reported at 2:15 p.m. Monday that a voluntary evacuation order is in place for the Deer Lodge Park area near Lake Arrowhead as the stubborn Pilot Fire continues to rage.

There have been no new estimates of total acreage burned since **San Bernardino County Fire Department** spokesman Eric Sherwin talked to the Daily Press around noon. At that time, he said 4,500 acres had burned and only 5 percent of the blaze had been contained.

Winds picked up early Monday afternoon, hampering firefighting efforts and blowing heavy smoke and ash over the Victor Valley.

Fire crews continued to battle flames on the Summit Valley hills just off Highway 173 with water drops and bulldozers.

"We're hitting it hard with the aircraft right now trying to get that retardant in there, allowing our dozers to get in there and increase those lines," Sherwin said. "The helicopters are knocking the heat out of the fires. We're trying to do the most work we can before we get the high temperatures, low humidity of the afternoon and the south winds present themselves. We do have hand crews working in some areas that are more hazardous and more difficult to access."

Although the acreage estimate hasn't changed for several hours, the amount of smoke drifting over the Victor Valley was significantly worse at 2:30 p.m. Monday than it had been on Monday morning. From the Main Street Bridge in Hesperia, you could see five or six significant pockets of flame on the hillsides, stretching over quite a distance.

Ash was falling heavily in Hesperia, Apple Valley and even parts of Victorville. Most of the smoke, a smelly mix of brown and gray, was east of Hesperia Road. Deep Creek Road at Rock Springs Road remained open, but a Sheriff's Citizens Patrol car was stationed at the south entrance with lights flashing and traffic cones placed. Voluntary evacuations were in place for the Deep Creek area south of Rock Springs Road. An estimated 175 homes are under mandatory or voluntary evacuation orders, authorities said.

Crews from various agencies — including Anaheim, Big Sur and Redlands — were on scene.

The last update on Sunday night reported 1,500 acres burned and that firefighters did not have any containment of the fire.

Sherwin said fire activity decreased as the temperatures dropped, and the wind decreased late Sunday night and early Monday morning.

"The fire just calmed down on its own," Engineer Chris Perry told the Daily Press shortly before 6 a.m. Monday as his engine was stopped for water at a hydrant outside Hesperia Liquor and Deli on Arrowhead Lake Road in Hesperia. "We got a lot of humidity.

"They're doing a burn, a backfire, along Highway 173 now, so if it gets a head of steam, it doesn't have anywhere to go."

Perry said the fire, which started at about 12:10 p.m. Sunday in the Miller Canyon OHV area off Highway 138 near Silverwood Lake, had been burning only on the west side of Highway 173 so far. He said he didn't think Hesperia was in jeopardy Monday morning.

"We've got some pretty good lines," he said. "The dozers are out there working and we've got a lot of air support."

Sherwin correctly predicted the fire to pick up Monday afternoon as temperatures and wind increased and humidity decreased.

According to County Fire's incident update at 2:30 p.m., 400 firefighters have been battling the blaze, along with 36 engines, eight crews, five bulldozers, eight helicopters and eight air tankers. Sherwin said the firefighters have worked on the fire for over 18 hours and a morning crew was expected to take over following a briefing that was ongoing as of 7 a.m.

Residents in Summit Valley and in Hesperia along Highway 173 south of Hesperia Lake were evacuated on Sunday. County Fire placed the number of homes evacuated at 25 as of Monday afternoon.

Oak Hills High School was set up as an evacuation center, but a Red Cross official said no residents stayed at the school overnight. Voluntary evacuations were in effect for approximately 150 homes on Monday from the Mojave River east to Kiowa Road and the spillway north to Rock Springs Road, according to a Sheriff's Department news release.

Red Cross spokeswoman Georgia Duncan said the center would remain open for residents affected by the evacuations as long as needed.

Duncan said the Red Cross is always looking for volunteers. Those interested in volunteering can visit the Red Cross' website to start the process.

A smoke advisory was issued for the Victor Valley and surrounding communities Sunday afternoon until further notice.

High Desert schools which are back in session for the 2016-17 school year, including Hesperia and Apple Valley unified school districts and Riverside Preparatory in Oro Grande, have also taken precautions due to the fire, cancelling or moving outdoor school activities to indoor facilities.

"We have issued restrictions on activities, particularly those outside," Hesperia Unified School District Assistant Superintendent David Olney said. "We are restricting any outside activities and practices today, and will continue to monitor AQMD. In addition, we are preparing for any possible flare-ups if the winds pick up this afternoon."

AVUSD spokeswoman Kristin Hernandez said all sports and outdoor activities have been cancelled and the district is "continuing to monitor air quality at each of our campuses and will make additional adjustments if needed.

"We have instructed all schools to limit time spent outdoors and to have indoor areas available to students during all breaks," Hernandez said.

<http://www.desertdispatch.com/news/20160808/pilot-fire-update-voluntary-evacuations-near-lake-arrowhead-at-deer-lodge-park>

Pilot Fire Burns 7 Square Miles in San Bernardino Mountains

Jessica Rice, NBC 4 News

Posted: August 8, 2016, 1:05 PM

A brush fire burned more than 7 square miles Monday, tripling in size overnight, near Pilot Rock Ridge above Silverwood Lake in the San Bernardino National Forest.

Fire officials evacuated areas around Highway 138 and Old Mill Road, and around Highway 138 and State Route 173. Additional evacuations were ordered at 5 p.m. in the Summit Valley area east of Cedar Springs Dam.

More than 300 San Bernardino County Firefighters were battling the blaze, which began Sunday, along with seven air tankers. Firefighters battled overnight and containment reached 5 percent.

"The biggest threat is that we're working with very dry vegetation that hasn't burned in a long time," said Eric Sherwin, of the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**. "We've seen that all through the day, yesterday, and during the overnight hours."

California is in its fifth straight year of drought, leaving hillsides and other areas covered in brush primed for wildfires. Firefighters said the state could be facing one of its worst fire seasons on record.

The Pilot fire also caused air quality problems throughout the region.

Smoke plumes roiled from ridges of the San Bernardino Mountains and blew all the way across the Mojave Desert to Las Vegas. Across the Mojave, officials in southern Nevada issued an air quality advisory because of smoke from the fire more than 200 miles away. The Clark County Department of Air Quality said air was

unhealthy for sensitive groups, including young children, senior citizens and people with respiratory problems and cardiac disease.

Like some of the state's other fires this summer, the blaze burned near a popular recreation area. But Silverwood Lake's waters had been closed to swimming, fishing and boating since Aug. 4 because of an algae bloom.

Another 12 engines, two crews, two tenders, one dozer and three chief officers had also been dedicated to the efforts.

Road closures were in place between Highway 138 and State Route 173.

A Red Cross evacuation center was set up at Ranchero Middle School at 17607 Ranchero Rd. Large animals could be taken to the San Bernardino Fairgrounds at 14800 7th St. in Victorville.

<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Pilot-Fire-Burns-near-Lake-Silverwood-389421881.html>

Pilot Fire has burned 4500 acres with 5% containment; firefighters and helicopters working around the clock

Highland News

Posted: August 8, 2016, 2:14 PM

The fire has burned 4,500 acres with 5% containment. USFS, **San Bernardino County Fire**, #SBCSD and CalFire are in unified command, dedicating every possible resource to the containment of this fire. Firefighters have been working around the clock, along with two #SBCSD water-dropping helicopters to contain the fire.

EVACUATIONS:

MANDATORY: Highway 173 from 138 to Arrowhead Lake Road and Arrowhead Lake Road from 173 to Hesperia Lake (25 homes)

VOLUNTARY: Mojave River east to Kiowa Road. Spillway north to Rock Springs Road (150 homes)

ROAD CLOSURES:

Hwy 173 is closed between SR-138 and Arrowhead Lake Road

Forest roads 2N33, 2N17X, 2N36 and 2N37 are closed

Miller Canyon OHV Area is closed

SHELTERS:

An American Red Cross human shelter is open at Oak Hills High School, 7625 Catapa Road, Oak Hills

A County Animal Care and Control large and small animal shelter is open at the Devore Animal Shelter, 19777 Shelter Way, San Bernardino

Large and small animals are also being accepted at Victorville Fairgrounds, 14800 7th St Victorville. Dogs and cats require owners to provide a crate.

Follow San Bernardino County Fire, CAL FIRE San Bernardino/Inyo/Mono Unit on social media for more updates.

http://www.highlandnews.net/news/crime_and_fire/pilot-fire-has-burned-acres-with-containment-firefighters-and-helicopters/article_0fb5a6b0-5dad-11e6-97f7-5775e792c606.html

At fairgrounds, a command post for Pilot Fire emerges

Trailer offices, mobile kitchen, showers, bunks, 'everything you can think of'

Shea Johnson, Victor Valley Daily Press

Posted: August 8, 2016, 3:18 PM



A trailer in the south parking lot at the High Desert Event Center, where authorities are establishing a command post, has a cardboard sign that reads “lunches” on Monday. Shea Johnson, Daily Press

VICTORVILLE — The High Desert Event Center’s transformation into a full-fledged command post for the Pilot Fire began late Monday morning.

Trailers were hauled in to be temporary administrative offices, portable cell towers were likely next and a mobile kitchen staffed by inmate fire crews would serve firefighters the right amount of calories for proper nutrition.

There’s a shower unit, a formula for how many toilets are appropriate (one toilet for every 10 people), climate-controlled trailers with bunks, large tents, extra fire hoses and sufficient paper for officer-related work. “They literally establish a miniature city,” **San Bernardino County Fire** spokesman Eric Sherwin said, adding that this facility will ultimately boast “everything you can think of.”

As more than 560 firefighters — a figure still growing Monday afternoon — battled an expanding blaze wreaking havoc east of Silverwood Lake in the San Bernardino National Forest, the hub of operational activity was being established about 25 miles north at the fairgrounds. It’s a place typically reserved for fairs and concerts, but a location that is also ideal for authorities in that it provides ample space.

Agency vehicles were quickly becoming more visible in the south parking lot. Sheriff’s command post trailers were parked parallel to the south gate. A bulldozer towed by a trailer sat closer to the entrance.

Here, several dozen people will handle operations, planning, logistics and financing (every expense is tracked). Also here, firefighters on 12-hour rotations will come for staging, awaiting their assignments, food, bathing and rest. Some will sleep here, Sherwin said, while others will stay at hotels.

“Our mission in logistics is to take care of the firefighters,” said retired U.S. Forest Service official Jack Van Lear, the command post’s logistics chief. “That’s our sole mission.”

The logistics team preorders what they’ll need from contract companies. Working closely with operations teams, they’ll adapt to meet new requirements as the situation evolves. Briefings will be frequent during two planning cycles each day. The cycles, in 12-hour increments, begin at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

The recurrent briefings also will assess the progress toward knocking down the fire, factoring in firefighter fatigue, said Liz Brown, spokeswoman for CalFire in San Bernardino.

On early Monday afternoon, firefighters were continuing efforts to reinforce containment lines, taking advantage of the lesser winds and humidity, officials said.

Brown said wind-blown embers were the biggest threat, hinting at their ability to pose an invisible peril, a juxtaposition to the visible flames that most would consider a signal of danger.

It’s because of embers that fires will continue to smoke for days and weeks after they’re declared contained. As he provided a tour of the nascent command post, Sherwin said the Pilot Fire will likely not be declared out until the wetting rains in December.

Later, teams will plant vegetation and rehabilitate affected areas to aid future fire prevention.

“We put the fire out,” Sherwin said, “and up to a year-plus after the firefighters have left, the area is still being managed in some fashion or another.”

U.S. Forest Service spokesman John Miller said the last few years have brought “erratic fire behavior” with “very unpredictable and dangerous conditions” due to the ongoing drought. He said Monday it was far too early to diagnose how long the battle to control the Pilot Fire would take or how long the command post would be up and running.

He also sought to preemptively raise the issue of drones impacting firefighting efforts, although he said there had not been any such reports during the Pilot Fire.

“If you sense that there’s an emergency ... land your drone,” he said. “Land your drone and put it away, because if you’re out flying, we can’t.”

Meanwhile, a unified command of the U.S. Forest Service, CalFire, County Fire and Sheriff’s Department were leading the fight Monday.

Agencies can engage into unified command and then disengage into a support role dependent on how they’re being impacted by the fire.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/article/20160808/NEWS/160809757/0/SEARCH>

More than 5,300 people told to evacuate as Pilot fire grows

Pilot fire only 6 percent contained by Tuesday morning. Firefighters work to keep flames away from houses, but they expect to be battling the blaze for at least a week.

Richard Brooks, Press Enterprise

Posted: August 8, 2016



A helicopter drops water on a portion of the Pilot Fire in Summit Valley, Ca. on Monday, August 8, 2016. The fire started around noon on Sunday, August 7, and is currently at 5% containment. Sarah Alvarado, Contributing Photographer

UPDATE (Tuesday, Aug. 9): Nearly 7,000 acres consumed in Pilot fire:

At 10 square miles and growing, the first major Inland wildfire of the season is sweeping through the western San Bernardino Mountains, where 5,300 mountain and desert residents have been told to flee.

Crews had been able to contain only 6 percent of the fire by sunrise Tuesday.

As night fell, a glow could be seen for miles. One aircraft using Night Vision was expected to work through the night.

“I’m sure we’ll be here at least a week or 10 days, depending on what the fire does,” said Battalion Chief Marc Peebles of the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

He stopped short of predicting when evacuees would be able to return home.

“Any time people are evacuated from their homes during a large wildfire, they should plan to be out of their homes for several days, minimum,” Peebles said.

The blaze began at 12:10 p.m. Sunday near the Miller Canyon Off-Highway Vehicle Area, just off the 138. Because it began near the Pilot Rock Conservation Camp, it was named the Pilot fire.

The flames initially burned north and uphill, then continued slowly downhill toward the desert.

For the first two days, firefighters were hampered by high winds, high temperatures and dry fuels.

On Monday, flames spread in all directions, fire officials said.

“We have had some eastward growth (toward Lake Arrowhead), but the dominant growth is northward toward Hesperia,” public information officer Eric Sherwin said about 9 p.m. Monday.

Upward of 843 federal, state and local firefighters were swarming the fire. And more were on the way. No one has been hurt, and no buildings have burned.

Two areas are under mandatory evacuation: the Deer Lodge Park area of Lake Arrowhead, and a section of Hesperia south of Ranchero Road between Santa Fe East and Arrowhead Lake Road.

An area of Hesperia from Rock Springs Road south to the Deep Creek Spillway on the Mojave River is under voluntary evacuation. The east-west boundaries are between Kiowa Road and the Mojave River.

<http://www.pe.com/articles/ignited-810068-monday-bernardino.html>

Southern California fire grows to nearly 6K acres as crews fight for containment

Andrew V. Pestano, Doug G. Ware and Shawn Price, UPI News

Posted: August 9, 2016, 12:05 AM



Firefighters battle the Pilot Wildfire in San Bernardino County, Calif., on Monday, which is one of several fires burning across the state. Officials said Monday that the cause of the fire is unknown and no injuries have been reported. Photo courtesy **San Bernardino Fire Department**

SAN BERNARDINO , Calif., Aug. 8 (UPI) -- An aggressive wildfire in Southern California has quickly scorched more than 6,300 acres and has prompted authorities to order mandatory and voluntary evacuations of thousands of homes, fire officials said Monday.

The evacuations were ordered for the Summit Valley area in San Bernardino County -- about 75 miles northeast of downtown Los Angeles. The blaze, called the Pilot Fire, has so far burned more than 6,300 acres with only 6 percent containment, officials said Monday.

The fire began about noon Sunday east of Highway 138 and Silverwood Lake, and smoke advisories were issued for the Mojave Desert area. Officials said 840 firefighters with bulldozers, helicopters and tankers has been deployed to combat the flames.

Despite the fire's large size and expanding danger, no injuries and no structural damage has so far been reported.

"Because of the aggressive attack by our firefighters, we were able to protect homes," said Bob Poole, U.S. Forest Service spokesman. "These guys — they're highly trained, they're highly motivated and they're doing an incredible job in difficult conditions."

There have been, however, a few close calls. Officials said Monday that firefighters worked through the night to keep one home away from the flames near Highway 173, the San Bernardino Sun reported.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group warned residents to avoid using hobby drones, as they "pose a major safety threat to firefighting pilots and firefighters."

"When a hobby drone is flown into a fire area, incident commanders have no choice but to suspend air operations and ground aircraft until the drone is removed from the area," the NWCG said in a statement. "A collision could easily result in major damage to our aircraft, injuries to the pilot and crew on board as well as firefighters below, and worse, a midair collision."

The fire died down a bit overnight, officials said, but picked back up after dawn due to hot temperatures and wind gusts in the San Bernardino Mountain region.

The cause of the fire is not yet known.

The Pilot fire is just one of several burning in the Golden State. The Soberanes Fire in Northern California has destroyed more than 60,000 acres and is at just 45 percent containment, officials said Monday. It has destroyed nearly 70 structures, killed one person and injured three.

The Soberanes fire was sparked by an illegal campfire.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2016/08/08/Pilot-Fire-in-San-Bernardino-County-burns-1500-acres-mandatory-evacuations-ordered/4011470652963/

Fire officials say fire activity starting to 'pick up'

Spokesman admits math error, says blaze just under 7,000 acres

Victor Valley Daily Press

Posted: August 9, 2016, 6:54 AM



Flames from the Pilot Fire rage in Summit Valley on Monday. James Quigg, Daily Press

HESPERIA — Fire officials said at 8 a.m. they are already seeing the blaze pick up after calming down overnight due to low winds and temperatures that dipped into the low 60s.

San Bernardino County Fire spokesman Eric Sherwin said fire crews are expecting another morning of low humidity and strong winds to pick up by noon.

Sherwin admitted a math mistake when telling the Daily Press that the blaze had grown to 7,522 acres following a staff briefing a little after 6:30 a.m.

Sherwin said the correct figures for the blaze Tuesday morning are 6,963 acres and 6 percent containment.

“Today we will have aircraft back on the fire working in conjunction with ground assets,” Sherwin said. “We currently have 934 personnel assigned to the incident. We will have six air wing tankers, two very large air tankers and seven helicopters supporting ground ops.

Residents awoke Tuesday morning to a much clearer sky, as smoke from the Pilot Fire appeared greatly reduced from the previous two days.

The blaze grew from 4,500 acres to nearly 6,300 acres on Monday, causing authorities to evacuate 500 homes in southeast Hesperia, along with other evacuations, including a mandatory evacuations in Lake Arrowhead also. Monday’s total of mandatory and voluntary evacuations due to the fire was 4,700.

An update on any additional evacuations was not available Tuesday morning.

“The dominant direction of the blaze is to north-northeast,” Sherwin said. “However, we did experience growth of the fire on all sides.”

Neighborhoods in the evacuation zone east of Santa Fe Avenue and south of Ranchero Road were quiet, but it was easy to see by the number of cars in driveways that many residents had elected to disregard the mandatory evacuation order that authorities implemented Monday afternoon.

Although Damon Road and Paisley Avenue south of Hesperia had been closed with police tape strung across lanes, many other streets south of Ranchero were open and residents were leaving for work.

Hesperia and Apple Valley schools are closed today, and a smoke advisory remains in effect for the entire Victor Valley.

At 6:50 a.m. there was no update to the incident command report on the massive fire, which began moving swiftly toward Lake Arrowhead, Crestline and Hesperia on Monday afternoon.

More than 840 personnel and 91 engines are battling the blaze, along with eight helicopters, eight air tankers and 14 fire crews.

This story will be updated throughout the day as more information becomes available.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20160809/fire-officials-say-fire-activity-starting-to-pick-up>

Pilot fire fight could be hampered by weather, containment stalls at 6 percent

Anne Millerbernd, The Press-Enterprise
and Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun
Posted: August 9, 8:13 AM



Firefighters work to save a half-dozen homes along Highway 173 that are threatened Monday, Aug. 8, 2016, by the Pilot fire in Summit Valley near Silverwood Lake. (Photo by Will Lester/Inland Valley Daily Bulletin)

The flames chewing at vegetation in the San Bernardino Mountains have grown to cover 6,963 acres as of Tuesday morning, and firefighters say the blaze remains about 6 percent contained.

Nobody has been injured, and no structures have been lost in the Pilot fire, said **San Bernardino County Fire Battalion Chief Marc Peebles**.

The number of firefighters at the blaze has also grown from 843 Monday night to 934, Peebles said.

As of Tuesday morning, about 5,300 people were told to evacuate, he said. No new areas were evacuated.

Both Hesperia and Apple Valley school districts have called off classes for Tuesday because of the fire.

Officials put Deer Lodge Park under mandatory evacuation Tuesday morning. Peebles said that area had not burned since the Pinnacles fire in 2006.

The Silverwood Lake area, where the Pilot Fire ignited Sunday afternoon, has seen even less fire activity through the years, he said.

“The area where the fire started -- that doesn’t have a strong burn history,” he said.

That part of the mountains hasn’t been aflame in anywhere from 50 to 75 years, said U.S. Forest Service spokesman John Miller.

That means the thick buildup of drought-dried vegetation in that area will burn hotter and spread flames faster.

Tuesday’s forecast for the area could be problematic. Temperatures are expected to reach as high as 90 southeast of Hesperia, the National Weather Service reports. The high temperatures will be accompanied by low humidity levels and wind gusts potentially reaching 30 mph.

Peebles said the fire died down overnight, which is common as temperatures lower and humidity increases, but officials expect the flames to become more active once again as the day goes on.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20160809/pilot-fire-fight-could-be-hampered-by-weather-containment-stalls-at-6-percent>

Pilot Fire Grows, More Evacuations Ordered

Z107.7 News

Posted: August 9, 2016



Photos courtesy Morongo Valley Fire Department

At nearly 7,000 acres and growing, the “Pilot” fire continues to burn through the nearby western San Bernardino Mountains, 4,700 mountain and desert residents have been told to evacuate. Crews had contained 6 percent of the fire by sunset Monday. On Monday, flames spread in all directions, fire officials said. “We have had some eastward growth (toward Lake Arrowhead), but the dominant growth is northward toward Hesperia,” public information officer **Eric Sherwin** said about 9 p.m. Monday. Upward of 843 federal, state

and local firefighters were swarming the fire, and more are on the way. No one has been hurt, and no buildings have burned. Two areas are under mandatory evacuation: The Deer Lodge Park area of Lake Arrowhead, and a section of Hesperia south of Ranchero Road between Santa Fe East and Arrowhead Lake Road. An area of Hesperia from Rock Springs Road south to the Deep Creek Spillway on the Mojave River is under voluntary evacuation. The east-west boundaries are between Kiowa Road and the Mojave River. Rim of the World High School in Twin Peaks has been turned into an evacuation center, in addition to Oak Hills High School just outside Hesperia. Animals—small and large—can be taken to the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds in Victorville. Cat and dog owners need to provide their own crates. All Hesperia and Apple Valley schools are closed today because of air quality, officials said late Monday.

<http://z1077fm.com/pilot-fire-grows-more-evacuations-ordered/>

Pilot Fire reminds us desert at risk

Opinion, Victor Valley Daily Press

Posted: August 9, 2016

The Pilot Fire that started Sunday afternoon near Silverwood Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains provided a very timely reminder that even parts of the High Desert are not immune from wildfires.

Anyone who has lived here for any length of time recalls other wildfires that have burned in the desert.

The North Fire that started in the Cajon Pass on July 17, 2015 burned cars on Interstate 15 before moving north into the Oak Hills and Baldy Mesa communities, where it burned a few homes, as well as more cars and other property.

The Old Fire on Oct. 25, 2003 started near Highway 18 in the San Bernardino Mountains and burned north all the way to Hesperia, forcing residents on the mesa to evacuate and covering the southeast part of the city in thick smoke and ash. For a while, it was feared it could burn all the way to Main Street.

Fanned by Santa Ana winds, the Old Fire burned more than 91,000 acres, destroyed 993 homes and resulted in six deaths.

Longtime Hesperia residents will never forget two fires in the city that merged into one on June 14, 1979. Still called the worst fire in Victor Valley history, it consumed 1,600 acres in Hesperia, destroyed 17 homes and resulted in one death. The blaze burned some areas north of Main Street, though it was largely contained at Main Street.

So though the brush in many of our communities may not look like much, it can burn quickly and spread fire rapidly. That's why it is so important for residents to maintain good brush clearance around their homes and to ensure you have a good defensible space.

It's always good to keep your important documents and pictures together somewhere you can easily find them in case you have to leave quickly, and carriers for pets certainly come in handy anytime you might have to evacuate.

But the best reminder is that your life is worth much more than any possessions or property you have to leave behind. If firefighters or Sheriff's deputies tell you to leave, do so immediately and don't stay behind to try to save your home. Let the firefighters handle that.

As we've seen with the Pilot Fire and numerous others, the men and women who fight wildfires do a tremendous job and deserve our thanks for putting their lives on the line to save our homes and property.

But the best reminder is that your life is worth much more than any possessions or property you have to leave behind. If firefighters or Sheriff's deputies tell you to leave, do so immediately and don't stay behind to try to save your home. Let the firefighters handle that.

[\(Print Edition Only\)](#)