



# NEWS



## News Headlines 08/30/2016

- A 130-Foot Hoist Rescue in Closed Section Near Big Falls
- Update 2: Dive Team To Resume Search For Man In Grass Valley Lake Tuesday Morning
- Here's why Southern California brush has turned region into a wildfire tinderbox

## A 130-Foot Hoist Rescue in Closed Section Near Big Falls

Michael P. Neufeld, Rim of the World News

Posted: August 29, 2016, 12:45 PM



San Bernardino County Aviation has successfully completed another hoist rescue from the closed section of the Big Falls area near Forest Falls. (Filo Photo)

Forest Falls, CA – Once again an injured hiker had to be hoisted from a rocky area in the Big Falls area by the Sheriff's Aviation Division after falling about 30-feet.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department identified the hiker as 35-year-old Lea Hernandez from Banning.

### THE INCIDENT

Hernandez and other hikers entered the closed area Saturday about 6 p.m. and began climbing in the area known as Big Falls, according to a media release from the Sheriff's Department.

The area contains large waterfalls and was closed by the U. S. Forest Service in October 2015 due to numerous hikers becoming injured after falling from the waterfalls.

The press advisory reports that Hernandez fell from a waterfall to the rocks below suffering major injuries. **San Bernardino County Fire Department** personnel were dispatched to the scene at about 5:36 p.m. Based on the initial reports, Sheriff's Air Rescue 06 was also dispatched.

The crew arrived as medical personnel hiked up to the falls. They determined Hernandez was suffering from major injuries and requested the crew of Air Rescue 06 perform a hoist rescue.

### HOIST RESCUE

Air Rescue 06's crew positioned the helicopter over the location, which is a narrow canyon with tall trees. Crew Chief Deputy Steve Miller lowered Air Medic Nurse Stacey Price 130-feet to the ground. Hernandez was placed into a litter and hoisted into the helicopter, followed by Air Medic Price.

Hernandez was flown to a nearby trauma center for treatment.

Helicopter rescues are not only costly — between \$1,500 and \$2,200 per hour — but pose heightened danger for the helicopter crew and first responders trying to reach and eventually extract injured hikers.

### THE CONSEQUENCES

By the U. S. Forest Service establishing the closure, rescue agencies are allowed by law to pursue reimbursement for expenses involved in rescuing a hiker.

“A violation of this prohibition,” San Bernardino National Forest Supervisor Judy Noiron stated in her October 2015 closure notice, “is punishable by a fine of not more than \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.”

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/08/29/a-130-foot-hoist-rescue-in-closed-section-near-big-falls/>

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## Update 2: Dive Team To Resume Search For Man In Grass Valley Lake Tuesday Morning

Michael P. Neufeld, Rim of the World News

Posted: August 29, 2016, 6:52 PM



Divers will resume the search Tuesday in Grass Valley Lake in Lake Arrowhead for a possible drowning victim. (Photo by San Bernardino County Fire)

UPDATE 2: Monday, August 29 – 8:45 p.m.

Lake Arrowhead, CA – The Grass Valley Lake incident has transitioned to recovery operation. Efforts to resume in the morning according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

UPDATE: Monday, August 29 – 7:35 p.m.

Lake Arrowhead, CA – Multiple units from the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** and San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department remain on scene on Golf Course Road related to a possible drowning in Grass Valley Lake.

A Sheriff's Aviation unit joined the search a short time ago.

The incident first began about 5:30 p.m.

### ORIGINAL STORY

Lake Arrowhead, CA – The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Dive Team began a search for a possible drowning victim about 6:35 p.m. Monday in Grass Valley Lake adjacent to the Lake Arrowhead Country Club.

Details of the Grass Valley Incident will be released as they become available.

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/08/29/dive-team-searching-grass-valley-lake-for-possible-drowning-victim/>

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## Here's why Southern California brush has turned region into a wildfire tinderbox

*Low moisture in chaparral shrubs increases Southern California wildfire risk and intensity.*

David Danelski, Press Enterprise

Posted: Aug. 29, 2016



Firefighters battle the Blue Cut fire on Cajon Boulevard on Wednesday, Aug. 17, 2016. Five years of drought have turned the state's wildlands into a tinderbox. Noah Berger, AP

As the Blue Cut fire raged out of control in the San Bernardino Mountains one fire commander described the chaparral brush fueling the blaze as a kind of living dead.

“It was green vegetation, but it burned like it was dead,” said **San Bernardino County Fire** Chief Mark Hartwig.

Pushed by moderate prevailing winds, the fire's front Aug. 17 rapidly expanded to about a mile wide. Firefighters soon found themselves dividing their limited resources to protect homes and other structures at not one, not two, but five locations.

More than a hundred homes burned before firefighters gained control.

The last time the fire chief saw a wildfire move so fast was in 2003, when the deadly Old and Grand Prix fires devastated much of San Bernardino Mountains. But those fires were fanned by much stronger Santa Ana winds, he said.

A big factor in the latest fire is what the chief described as critically low moisture levels in the manzanita bushes and other woody shrubs in the chaparral habitat that grows in the foothills of Southern California's mountains.

Usually the brush isn't this dry for another two months. This situation helped spark this year's early start to the season, which began June with two fires northwest of Azusa. And, in the case of Blue Cut fire, a rapid rate of expansion.

And now Southern California firefighters are on heightened alert for more.

### DROUGHT IMPACT

Experts blame today's parched chaparral on five years of drought exacerbated by a warming planet. The sun-loving manazitas and other shrubs normally soak up the cool-season rains and spring snow melts, and thrive with new growth until the hot and dry days of summer arrive.

Then, to save water, they go dormant, a state not much different than animals in hibernation.

Pores on their leaves close. Their rate of respiration and photosynthesis drops, and they hang until the next rainy season. The cycle has gone on for eons, explained Jon E. Keeley, a research ecologist with the U.S. Geological Survey.

As the summer progresses, the water content in these shrubs drops, usually making early fall the most risky time for chaparral fires.

But things are different this year.

The water content in the Southern California chaparral already has dropped to fall levels, thanks five years of drought, said Tom Rolinski, a Riverside-based meteorologist for the U.S. Forest Service.

While several rain storms hit California last fall and winter, most of the storms swung north, denying the Southern California chaparral a much-needed soaking. Instead, our region got another year of below normal rainfall, Rolinski said.

Not only is the living plant tissue drier, but the shrubs also are carrying more dead wood, added Ileene Anderson, a wildlife biologist with the Center for Biological Diversity who has expertise in Southern California native plants.

The years of drought also have caused the chaparral to expand to areas where parched pine trees are dying off because of drought and bark beetle infestations, Anderson said.

“The chaparral is moving up slopes and more northward,” she said.

## GLOBAL WARMING

Climate change appears to be making this fire hazard worse.

Earlier this month, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration reported that July’s average worldwide temperatures made it the hottest month since people began recording temperatures. The picture was a bit different in Southern California, where the hottest July on record was logged in 2006, according to National Weather Service data.

Ben Cook, a climate scientist at NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York, said by telephone that Southern California, like the rest of the world, is on a warming trend.

He acknowledged that California went through periods of drought before climate change. But warming means our droughts will start earlier, be more severe, and last longer, he said.

“As long as there is fuel to burn, an increase in temperatures will mean more wildfires,” Cook said.

He added, “As long as we keep pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, we are going to see continued warming in the future.”

<http://www.pe.com/articles/california-811873-chaparral-southern.html?page=2>