



NEWS



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Old Water fire forces evacuations in north San Bernardino

Alma Fausto, Orange County Register/Daily Bulletin

Posted: October 24, 2019, 7:09 am



A wildfire that started early Thursday, Oct. 24 prompted the evacuation of about 80 homes and had burned 75 acres in San Bernardino as of 6 a.m. (San Bernardino County Fire District)

A wind-whipped wildfire that broke out early Thursday morning, Oct. 24, along Highway 18 in Waterman Canyon has forced evacuations in areas of north San Bernardino.

The Old Water Fire, which began at about 2 a.m., has led to about 80 homes under evacuation orders and the closure of at least one school. It was burning near the Old Waterman Canyon Road and Highway 18, according to San Bernardino National Forest officials.

The blaze had churned through 75 acres by 7 a.m. with no containment reported.

The cause of the fire was under investigation.

Mandatory evacuation orders were in place in the section of north San Bernardino near Arrowhead Road, Mariposa Drive and Davids Way.

In addition, there were also voluntary evacuations in San Bernardino, for all homes north of Foothill Drive between Del Rosa Avenue and Manzanita Drive.

The blaze was moving south and northeast into the Coldwater Canyon area, officials said.

Officials said wind gusts were up to 50 miles per hour on the ridge tops. National Forest officials said there was a “potential for large growth” as the Santa Ana winds pick up as expected.

“We are making some good progress,” said Zach Behrens of the San Bernardino National Forest.

“The only flank of concern right now is the northeast flank. While Santa Ana winds push toward the ocean, they do mix it up a bit in the canyons.”

There was an air attack by helicopter overnight, but Behrens said that had to stop for a bit before sunrise because of the winds.

Winds predawn were 50 mph on ridgetops, pretty much zero below those elevations, but it was picking up throughout the area after sunrise, he said.

Southern California Edison warned Tuesday that more than 300,000 customers could have their power shut down because of high winds and the risk of fires as strong Santa Ana winds move into the area.

Cal State San Bernardino announced late Wednesday that campus would be closed Thursday because of concerns about high winds and the possibility that power could be shut down. No decision had been made about whether classes would resume Friday.

A red-flag warning is also in place for the area where the Old Water fire is burning. Much of Southern California is under the red-flag warning through 5 p.m. Friday evening.

A Red Cross evacuation center has been set up at San Geronimo High School, at 2299 Pacific St. in San Bernardino.

The fast-moving blaze also forced the closure of Highway 18 in San Bernardino between 40th Street and Highway 138 in Crestline, officials said.

Other closures include:

40th Street and Harrison Avenue

40th Street and Valencia Avenue

40th Street and Waterman Avenue

48th Street and Waterman Avenue

All lanes, both directions of of Lower Waterman Canyon

This is a developing story, check back for the latest.

<https://www.dailybulletin.com/2019/10/24/brush-fire-in-san-bernardino-prompts-evacuations-and-threatens-homes/>

Wildfire in Old Waterman Canyon Update 3 – 8:16 a.m.

Michael P. Neufeld and Susan A. Neufeld

Posted: October 24, 2019



Update 3 – Thursday, October 24, 2019 – 8:16 a.m.

Highway 18 is closed from 40th to Lake Gregory Drive. Currently no percentage of containment.

Update 2 – Thursday, October 24, 2019 – 7:24 a.m.

Currently the fire is currently 75 acres with zero percent containment. On scene there are 46 engines, 5 crews, 2 dozers, 3 water-tenders and air support; more resources are continuing to arrive.

Currently there are mandatory evacuations in place for residents on Arrowhead Road, David Way north of 40th street and all connecting streets including Mariposa Drive.

Update 1 – Thursday, October 24, 2019 7:04 a.m.

San Bernardino County fire has 2 dozers, hand crews, four engines and 2 Chief officers on scene.

Original Story

San Bernardino, CA – The Old Water fire erupted about 2:00 a.m. Thursday, October 24, 2019 in Old Waterman Canyon . About 50 to 100 ares have burned at this time. Mandatory evacuation orders are in place. An evacuation enter has been set up at San Gorgonio High School 2299 Pacific Street, San Bernardino.

Forest Service and San Bernardino Fire are on the scene.

Highway 18 is closed at 40th and 138 Crestline

Will update as more information becomes available.

<https://rotwnnews.com/2019/10/24/wildfire-in-old-waterman-canyon/>

Mandatory evacuations in San Bernardino due to fast-moving vegetation fire

Staff Writer, Victor Valley News

Posted: October 24, 2019

UPDATE @10 AM – Firefighters are making good progress around all areas of concern. Containment of the 75-acre blaze, however, remains at 0% as we enter into increased red flag conditions with the day becoming hotter, windier and drier. Personnel is currently 400 personnel, 1 helo, 1 air attack, 50 eng, 1 dozer, 3 WT, 5 hand crews.

SAN BERNARDINO, California. — Fire crews are busy fighting a wind driven brush fire that's prompted mandatory evacuations and threatening homes in San Bernardino.

According to the US Forrest Service, the fire dubbed the "Old Water Fire" began around 2:00 a.m. near Old Waterman Canyon off Highway 18 in the north San Bernardino area on Thursday, October 24, 2019.

According to a US Forrest Service tweet, Mandatory evacuations on the #OldWaterFire are under way for a portion of north San Bernardino near Mariposa Dr. and David Way.

Here's the latest:

Closures: Highway 18 is closed between 40th Street in San Bernardino and Highway 138 in Crestline (a closure is also in place near Lake Gregory Dr).

Structure protection is in place for 20-30 homes in the Mariposa Dr/David Way area of north San Bernardino. There are no evacuations at this time.

The fire is estimated to be 50-100 acres in size with 0% containment,

The cause is under investigation.

The Forest Service is in unified command with **San Bernardino County Fire** and San Bernardino Police Department. Assisting agencies include CAL FIRE San Bernardino/Inyo/Mono Unit and Cal OES.

<https://www.vvng.com/mandatory-evacuations-in-san-bernardino-due-to-fast-moving-vegetation-fire/>

YUCCA VALLEY STRIKE TEAM SENT TO OLD WATER FIRE

Staff Writer, Z107.7 FM News

Posted: October 24, 2019

A strike team from Yucca Valley was dispatched this morning to a wind-driven brush fire along Highway 18 and Old Waterman Canyon Road above the city of San Bernardino. Dubbed the Old Water Fire, mandatory evacuation orders have been issued for about residents in the immediate area. Spurred on by high winds, the vegetation fire has burned more than 75 acres as of about 6 a.m. Fire Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle told Z107.7 FM News the fire is 0% contained as of this morning.

<http://z1077fm.com/yucca-valley-strike-team-sent-to-old-water-fire/>

San Bernardino brush fire prompts mandatory evacuations; at least 75 acres burned

Marc Cota-Robles, ABC 7 News

Posted: October 24, 2019

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (KABC) -- A wind-driven vegetation fire erupted along Highway 18 in San Bernardino, prompting mandatory evacuations as the blaze burned at least 75 acres early Thursday morning, officials said.

The fire, dubbed the Old Water Fire, started near Old Waterman Canyon Road and Highway 18, according to **San Bernardino County Fire**. Officials said the fire had burned 75 acres and was 0% contained.

Structure protection was in place by crews as mandatory evacuation orders were underway for Arrowhead Road and a portion of north San Bernardino near Mariposa Drive and David Way, according to the San Bernardino National Forest. About 80 homes were under evacuation.

"We got woken up at 2 a.m. and got told we were possibly going to have to evacuate," said Jessica Fischer. "I'm nervous. I'm not used to this situation, it's a little concerning. My family is still up there. They haven't left the house yet, so I'm waiting for them to come up the hill."

An evacuation center was set up at San Geronimo High School at 2299 Pacific Street.

Officials said around 4 a.m. the fire was moving southward and to the northeast in the Coldwater Canyon area and "had potential for large growth" as Santa Ana winds intensify.

It was not immediately known how the fire started. California Highway Patrol officers responded to the area following reports of possible fireworks or a type of explosion, but officials said the cause remained under investigation.

The blaze was burning approximately five miles from the Cal State San Bernardino campus, which is closed Thursday.

Firefighters were on scene as early as 2:20 a.m. battling the blaze, which officials said was burning at rapid rate of spread. San Bernardino firefighters had two bulldozers, hand crews, four engines and two chief officers respond to the scene.

A portion of Highway 18, between 40th Street in San Bernardino and Highway 138 in Crestline, was closed.

Forest Service firefighters were tackling the blaze, alongside county firefighters.

<https://abc7.com/san-bernardino-brush-fire-prompts-mandatory-evacuations/5643118/>

Mandatory Evacuations in Place After Wind-Driven Old Water Fire Breaks Out in San Bernardino

ANTHONY KURZWEIL AND ERIN MYERS, KTLA 5 NEWS

Posted: October 24, 2019, 4:45 am

Mandatory evacuations were ordered Thursday morning for a portion of north San Bernardino after a wind-driven brush fire broke out early Wednesday morning.

The fire, dubbed the Old Water Fire, began just after 2 a.m. near Old Waterman Canyon Road and Highway 18, San Bernardino National Forest spokesperson Zach Behrens said.

The blaze was 0% contained and had burned about 75 acres, the Forest Service stated in an update around 6 a.m.

Mandatory evacuations were ordered for the following areas:

- Mariposa Drive and David Way near 40th Street.
- Arrowhead Road off of Waterman Canyon
- About 80 homes were under the evacuation orders.

A voluntary evacuation order was also in place for residents north of Foothill Drive between Del Rosa Avenue and Manzanita Drive.

Residents were being directed to an evacuation center opened at San Gorgonio High School, located at 2299 Pacific Street.

Highway 18 was closed between 40th Street in San Bernardino and Highway 138 in Crestline.

“Thursday and Friday are supposed to be very, very windy,” Behrens said. Red flag warnings are in place through 5 p.m. Friday in San Bernardino County.

Winds were gusting up to 50 mph on the ridge tops, the National Forest tweeted in an update before 6 a.m.

The Forest Service was teaming up with the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department, Cal Fire and local agencies in battling the Old Water Fire, Behrens said.

An air attack arrived about 4:45 a.m. to help in the firefight, he said.

An information call center has been opened at 909-383-5688 for the public to ask questions.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

<https://ktla.com/2019/10/24/mandatory-evacuations-ordered-in-old-water-fire-burning-in-san-bernardino/>

About 80 Homes Evacuated in Overnight Fire Near San Bernardino Neighborhood

Briana Trujillo, NBC 4 News

Posted: October 24, 2019

Mandatory evacuations were underway for a portion of north San Bernardino as a brush fire consumed about 70 acres and forced road closures early Thursday, according to the San Bernardino National Forest Service.

Evacuations were ordered for about 80 homes near Mariposa Drive and David Way, as well as Arrowhead Road. An evacuation center was still being determined during the early stages of the fire, so some evacuees -- including a family with two dogs and a chicken -- gathered at a TJ Maxx parking lot in San Bernardino

"The area behind us was flaming," Gilbert Yglesias said. "I didn't think much of it, until I took a look and saw the brush was pretty much taken over. Then police started evacuating."

Highway 18 is closed between 40th Street in San Bernardino and Highway 138 in Crestline.

Containment is currently at 0% and winds on the ridge tops were gusting at 50 mph, according to the Forest Service.

The blaze was moving south and northeast in the Coldwater Canyon area as of 3:52 a.m. and was showing potential for large growth, according to the Forest Service. Santa Ana winds, which have fanned many of California's worst wildfires, were picking up while the fire burned in the San Bernardino National Forest.

The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department first tweeted about the Old Water Fire at 2:19 a.m., saying it showed a rapid rate of spread.

San Bernardino County Fire Department responded to the blaze with two dozers, multiple hand crews, four engines, and two chief officers.

A total of five departments were at work fighting the fire. The Forest Service, the San Bernardino County Fire Department and the San Bernardino Police Department were in unified command, with the CAL FIRE San Bernardino Unit and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services assisting.

The cause of the blaze under investigation.

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Vegetation-Fire-Burns-San-Bernardino-563766721.html>

500,000 Californians in the dark, more outages likely as fires rage in Sonoma, San Bernardino counties

John Bacon, USA TODAY

Posted: October 24, 2019, 6:20 am

Almost 200,000 homes and businesses across California were without power Thursday and utilities warned that hundreds of thousands more could be in the dark soon as high winds and brittle conditions fueled fast-growing wildfires.

Those fears were being realized in Sonoma County, 75 miles north of San Francisco. The fast-growing Kincade Fire flared up early Thursday and within hours covered more than 15 square miles. The National

Weather Service reported wind gusts of up to 70 mph, and evacuations were underway in several communities.

"Leave immediately if you are in these locations," the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office warned, citing an "extraordinary threat to life or property."

Cal Fire said two buildings had been damaged, and that structures and powerlines were threatened by the blaze. More than 300 firefighters were on the scene, backed by more than 50 engines and three bulldozers.

Cal Fire spokesperson Jonathan Cox told KTVU-TV that the fire was growing at a "critical rate." He blamed dry conditions and the high winds. "We are in the heart of the fire season right now," Cox said.

The bulk of the power outages, affecting at least 500,000 people, were in northern and central California, where Pacific Gas & Electric has been warning for days that high winds forecast for the state could result in preemptive power shutoffs. Residents should be ready to be without power for 48 hours or more, the company warned.

"Once the weather subsides and it is safe to do so, PG&E crews will begin patrolling power lines, repairing damaged equipment and restoring customers," PG&E said.

That respite might not last long — the company said that strong winds forecast for Sunday and Monday could lead to more preemptive outages.

The latest wave of outages come two weeks after gusty winds, high temperatures and parched conditions forced PG&E to shut off power to 2 million people, many for several days. That preemptive outage, or Public Safety Power Shutoff, fueled outrage from many residents, but PG&E defends the outages as crucial to the safety of its customers.

Southern California: Fire in San Bernardino County

Southern California was not immune to the outages, the fire conditions or the fires Thursday. Southern California Edison had cut power to about 15,000 customers early in the day and warned that almost 300,000 more could see preemptive outages.

A fire in San Bernardino County, about 60 miles west of Los Angeles, was only about 100 acres, but evacuations were being ordered early Thursday. Citing the outages and fire, California State University, San Bernardino canceled classes Thursday.

The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department warned the blaze had "potential for large growth."

California experienced the deadliest and most destructive wildfires in its history in 2017 and 2018. Fueled by drought, an unprecedented buildup of dry vegetation and extreme winds, the size and intensity of these wildfires caused the loss of more than 100 lives, destroyed thousands of homes and exposed millions to unhealthy air.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/10/24/kincade-san-bernardino-fires-shutoff-power-california-evacuations/2452820001/>

Power shutoffs could affect over 300,000 Southern California Edison customers amid increased fire danger

Marc Cota-Robles, Leticia Juarez and Josh Haskell, ABC 7 News
Thursday, October 24, 2019 12:11AM

Tens of thousands of Southern California Edison customers could see their service temporarily shut off as part of a "public safety power shutoff" aimed at reducing the risk of fire amid windy and arid conditions, the utility said.

According to Edison's website, 308,046 customers were under consideration for shutoffs as of Wednesday afternoon.

Los Angeles and Ventura counties could see the most outages, with over 66,000 and over 94,000 customers affected, respectively.

The shutoffs are planned as the region expects to see a high potential for fire danger, with powerful Santa Ana winds and hot, dry conditions.

Cal State San Bernardino has announced that its campus will be closed Thursday in light of the high winds, fire danger and possible power outage.

Campus officials will decide Thursday whether to remain closed Friday, when similar conditions are expected. The latest campus alerts can be found [here](#).

In San Bernardino County, over 63,000 customers could be left in the dark. The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department moved resources and personnel into position across the region, with several strike teams ready to respond should a fire break out.

Residents across the region were gearing up for those potential power outages. Thomas Scott prepared his Rialto home for the worst by clearing his roof of pine needles to decrease the chances of wind-blown embers setting it on fire. He also has an evacuation plan.

SoCal is expected to see a return of strong Santa Ana winds which, combined with low humidity, can lead to a quick spread of brush fires.

"We're looking at a recipe for an explosive fire. Should we get a fire that starts with wind on it to carry it from those ground fuels... into those now heavier fuels that are now dry and ready to burn," said the department's Eric Sherwin.

"Turning off our customers' power is not something we take lightly, but PSPS events are one of the ways we can better ensure the safety of the public, our customers, and our employees," Edison said in a statement.

According to the National Weather Service, a red flag warning is scheduled to begin at 1 a.m. Thursday and last until 10 p.m. Friday amid expected 20-40 mph winds across much of Los Angeles and Ventura counties.

Temperatures will climb as high as 93 degrees as relative humidity drops to between 2 to 9 percent.

<https://abc7.com/power-shutoffs-could-affect-over-300k-edison-customers-amid-fire-danger/5640812/>

Mandatory evacuations issued in wind-driven Old Water Fire burning in San Bernardino

Kelli Johnson, FOX 11 News

Posted: October 24, 2019

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. - Mandatory evacuations were issued after a brush fire ignited on Highway 18 and threatened homes in San Bernardino early Thursday morning.

The fire that is being called the Old Water Fire was reported near Old Waterman Canyon Road at Highway 18 around 2:15 a.m., **San Bernardino County Fire** said. Arriving fire officials estimated the wind-driven was 30-35 acres and quickly ballooned to 75 acres with the potential for more growth as Santa Ana winds picked up. Containment was at 0 percent and the fire was moving southward.

San Bernardino National Forest estimated 80 homes were under mandatory evacuation orders as winds gusted up to 50 mph on the hilltops.

Mandatory evacuation orders were given to residents on Arrowhead Road and the area of Mariposa Drive and David Way.

Highway 18 was closed between 40th Street in San Bernardino and Highway 168 in Crestline.

EVACUATION CENTER

An evacuation center was opened at San Geronimo High School at 2299 Pacific Street, San Bernardino, CA 92404.

The cause of the fire was under investigation.

<https://www.foxla.com/news/mandatory-evacuations-issued-in-wind-driven-old-water-fire-burning-in-san-bernardino>

‘Extremely critical’ fire danger: Wildfires erupt in California

Matthew Cappucci and Andrew Freedman, Washington Post

Posted: October 24, 2019, 12:00 PM

Rapidly spreading wildfires have erupted amid “extremely critical” fire danger in parts of California, with conditions likely to escalate risks to Southern California, including the Los Angeles area, through Friday.

In Northern California, the Kincade Fire in Sonoma County, about 75 miles north of San Francisco, rapidly expanded in size early Thursday morning, torching 10,000 acres just four hours after it was first reported. A red-flag warning is in effect for much of the San Francisco Bay area through 4 p.m. Thursday as high offshore winds of up to 60 mph in some locations, combined with extremely dry air, create ideal conditions for rapidly spreading wildfires. The offshore winds in Northern California are forecast to slacken as the day goes on, potentially giving firefighters a window to make gains on that blaze and any others that erupt during the day.

However, relative humidity is not expected to recover much overnight, which could make wildfires more difficult to contain.

Tinderbox conditions

The wildfire threat in Southern California will ramp up throughout the day Thursday, with the National Weather Service forecast office in Los Angeles warning of “an environment ripe for large and dangerous fire growth, especially Thursday and Friday.” Forecasters are warning of “extreme fire behavior” for any blazes that erupt through Friday.

The NWS is predicting “isolated gusts to 75 mph below passes and canyons” with relative humidities “around 5 percent” in parts of Ventura and Los Angeles Counties through Friday.

“This has all the ingredients of a dangerous fire weather scenario,” wrote the office, calling it “similar to or worse than the recent Oct. 10-11 event that produced the Saddleridge Fire.” They urged extreme caution, mentioning that actions as simple as “dragging towing chains” can create the sparks that metastasize into a wildfire.

The dry air is also allowing the ground to bake and temperatures to skyrocket. Los Angeles could hit 95 degrees Thursday, encouraging the evaporation of any remaining moisture in the plants, leading to more dried-out vegetation and littering the ground with fuel to nourish the next big blaze.

Ominously, forecasters and firefighters are eyeing a second round of “even stronger” offshore Santa Ana winds is set to plague much of California this weekend, with “pockets of critical fire weather” likely per the National Weather Service.

The Kincade Fire

The Kincade Fire, which remains at zero percent contained, first broke out around 12:30 a.m. Thursday in Sonoma County. It’s quickly swallowed surrounding areas in flames, expanding at an average rate of a football field every two seconds — or 30 football fields each minute during a four-hour period early Thursday. Winds in the vicinity of the fire gusted as high as 76 mph, propelling the flames and spreading embers far ahead of the fire front.

Evacuations have been ordered in parts of Sonoma County, including the community of Geyserville.

The fire is surging south, and has reportedly crossed Highway 128. Some of the smoke could cloud Bay Area skies on Thursday afternoon.

The Kincade Fire comes two years after the deadly Tubbs Fire devastated nearby Santa Rosa. At least 22 people died, and more than 5,600 homes and buildings were destroyed in that blaze, which occurred in similar weather conditions.

The Old Water Fire

Meanwhile, another fire is burning in Southern California, just north of San Bernardino. The Old Water Fire, which was burning in a primarily rural area Thursday morning, has charred 50 to 100 acres — but the **San Bernardino County Fire** District warns of the “potential for [large] growth as Santa Ana winds pick up.”

Following a brief improvement late Friday into Saturday, a renewed threat of high fire danger is in the cards Saturday evening through Monday. The National Weather Service is referring to this as an “even stronger

wind event,” with drier air as well, and the risk could encompass everywhere from the forests of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the urban sprawl of Southern California.

Wind gusts in excess of 60 mph are possible in the higher terrain and foothills throughout much of Northern and Central California, with relative humidity dropping as low as 3 percent.

Preemptive blackouts and a changing climate

Meanwhile, California’s electrical providers have instituted the second round of “public safety power shutoffs” in two weeks to reduce the risk of sparking a blaze when dangerous fire weather is present. Pacific Gas and Electric cut service to more than 182,000 customers, beginning Wednesday in the Sierra foothills and North Bay and early Thursday morning in San Mateo and Kern Counties. “For planning purposes, we suggest customers prepare for multiple-day outages,” PG&E wrote on its website. Southern California Edison, the state’s other major provider of electricity to more than 14 million people, has shut off power to 15,000 so far. Another 286,000 are “under [public safety power shutoff] consideration.”

Additional shutoffs may become warranted with the second event over the weekend.

California’s preemptive power cuts are a new and extreme way of adapting to an environment that scientists say is more conducive to large wildfires and longer fire seasons. This is largely due to a combination of climate change and land use shifts.

The ongoing wildfires come on the heels of the devastating 2017 and 2018 California fire seasons, which featured the largest, most destructive, and deadliest blazes on record. The Camp Fire, for example, occurred nearly one year ago, killing 88 and destroying much of the town of Paradise. An investigation concluded that the fire began from a spark generated by a Pacific Gas & Electric power line.

It’s part of a clear pattern toward larger, more frequent and destructive blazes. And, according to CalFire, “climate change is considered a key driver of this trend.” Population growth and the increase in homes and businesses located near lands that typically burn, known as the wildland-urban interface, are also escalating the risk of and damage from wildfires in the Golden State.

“Warmer spring and summer temperatures, reduced snowpack, and earlier spring snowmelt create longer and more intense dry seasons that increase moisture stress on vegetation and make forests more susceptible to severe wildfire,” the agency wrote. “The length of fire season is estimated to have increased by 75 days across the Sierras and seems to correspond with an increase in the extent of forest fires across the state.”

Partly because of its experience with wildfires, California has established the most ambitious climate policy targets in the country, but the consequences of global warming are already here, and increasingly obvious.

One of the most robust conclusions of climate change research is that wildfires are becoming increasingly frequent and severe in large parts of the American West as the climate warms, particularly in California. This is taking place as summers become hotter and drier and precipitation becomes more variable in the winter, with jarring shifts from drought to flood and back again becoming the norm.

For example, the National Climate Assessment, an authoritative report published by the Trump administration in 2017, showed that the cumulative forest area burned by wildfires in the Southwest between 1984 and 2015 doubled because of climate-change-related factors.

In an indication that an uptick in large wildfires is already occurring in California, 15 of the top 20 largest wildfires in state history have occurred since the year 2000.

Computer model projections show huge increases in wildfire frequency and size in California as well as other parts of the Southwest if greenhouse gas emissions continue largely unabated.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2019/10/24/extremely-critical-fire-danger-wildfires-erupt-california/>