



NEWS



News Headlines 6/22/2017

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Holcomb Fire holds at 1,540 acres overnight, still at 10 percent containment

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: June 22, 2017, 7:59 AM

BIG BEAR — For the third straight night crews were able to halt the growth of the Holcomb Fire, but increasing containment of the stubborn blaze remains a struggle.

Firefighters managed to hold the acreage count at 1,540 acres Wednesday night while maintaining 10 percent containment of the fire that was first reported Monday in the Holcomb Valley area, northeast of Big Bear.

More than 1,200 firefighters have been assigned to help battle the blaze, with personnel from the Big Bear Fire Department, the Big Bear Fire Authority, Cal Fire San Bernardino, San Bernardino National Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** all responding to the area.

On Wednesday, authorities asked for the public's help in establishing the cause of the Holcomb Fire.

The U.S. Forest Service said investigators decided to turn to the public since they've been unable to determine what started the blaze, which has already prompted temporary mandatory evacuations and forced a number of road closures..

U.S. Forest Service fire investigators are urging anyone who may have been in or around the area of the Pacific Crest Trail, near Holcomb Valley Road north of Highway 18, or the Doble Trail Camp between 6 p.m. Saturday and 3:05 p.m. Monday to call 909-382-2699. All calls can remain confidential.

While the mandatory evacuations ordered Tuesday afternoon for homes northeast of Holcomb Valley Road and Highway 18 were lifted just a few hours later, residents in the area have been advised to remain on alert "in the event of another wind shift."

In addition, rolling blackouts have been taking place in the Big Bear Valley area due to the fire, according to the Big Bear Sheriff's Station.

The Doble Trail and Tanglewood Group campgrounds remain closed, according to officials, along with the Pacific Crest Trail west of Highway 18, to Van Dusen Road, in the fire area.

The Sheriff's Department announced that Holcomb Valley Road was closed from Highway 18 northwest to the end of the road. Highway 18 from Delta Avenue to the Mitsubishi Cement Plant, south of Lucerne Valley, was also closed, officials said. Highway 18 has been reopened between Paradise Road and Baldwin Lake Road.

The duration of the closures remains unknown, with Beyer mentioning the road could remain closed for "a few more days."

The Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) issued a smoke advisory for the High Desert region on Monday evening due to smoke from the blaze moving toward the region and extended that on Wednesday due the ongoing blaze.

Air quality may reach unhealthy levels due to the smoke, and residents were urged to avoid any vigorous outdoor or indoor exertion and take other precautions. The advisory will remain in effect until further notice, MDAQMD said.

Information will be updated on the Holcomb Fire on the Inciweb website at inciweb.nwccg.gov/incident/5256/.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170622/holcomb-fire-holds-at-1540-acres-overnight-still-at-10-percent-containment>

Wildfires Trigger Rapid Response

Mike Harris, Mountain News

Posted: June 22, 2017, 10:00 AM



A huge column of smoke from the Holcomb Fire can be seen rising northeast of Baldwin Lake. Photo courtesy of Elaine Lee

Two wildfires, one a major ongoing event northeast of Big Bear and one to the west along Highway 138 near Vista Point quickly limited to just five acres, reminded residents that fire season has started early this year.

Forest Service Investigators are asking for the public's assistance to aid in establishing the cause of the Holcomb Fire. Anyone who may have been in or around the area of the Pacific Crest Trail near Holcomb Valley Road, north of Highway 18, or the Doble Trail Camp between 6 p.m. on June 17 and 3:05 p.m. on June 19 should call (909) 382-2699. All calls can remain confidential, the Forest Service indicated.

The Holcomb Fire began Monday afternoon and, by Wednesday, had quickly grown to 1,200 acres, with just 10 percent containment, but firefighters appeared to be holding the fire's growth in check.

More than 1,000 firefighters have been assigned to fight the wildfire, including 66 engines, six water tenders, 24 hand-crews, six dozers, four air tankers, including the four-engine DC-10 tanker 911 (VLAT), two air attack units and nine helicopters. Additional resources continued to arrive as of Wednesday afternoon.

A small area north of Baldwin Lake Road was briefly evacuated Tuesday afternoon when fire activity increased, pushing the fire closer to homes north of Highway 18; however, no residences or structures were damaged during this period of increased fire activity.

No structures have been reported damaged or destroyed as of Wednesday afternoon.

Highway 18 was closed and, as of Wednesday, remained closed between the Mitsubishi Cement Plant and Delta Avenue near Baldwin Lake. Several forest roads, including Van Dusen Canyon (3N09) and Holcomb Valley Road East (3N16) are closed, as well as a section of the popular Pacific Crest Trail between Highway 18 and Van Dusen Canyon Road.

Additionally, the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) at Highway 18 to Van Dusen Road was closed as well as Doble Trail and Tanglewood Group campgrounds.

A heat advisory was issued for the San Bernardino County Mountains, including the Mountain Top and Front Country Ranger Districts of the San Bernardino National Forest, that remained in effect until 9 p.m. Wednesday. Temperatures Wednesday ranged between 95 and 105 degrees for elevations below 5,000 feet.

Two heat-related injuries were reported on Monday.

On the west side, what was being called the Vista Fire started along Highway 138 at Vista Point at approximately 2:36 p.m.

According to Cal Fire Capt. Liz Brown, multiple reports from the public dispatched a full response of firefighters, with support from **County Fire** and the Forest Service.

Air attack units were quickly summoned and “We threw everything at it,” Brown exclaimed.

Highway 138 was closed for a time from Crestline to Highway 173 but was reopened to the public at 9 p.m., Brown stated.

The wildfire burned from the road bed up into the hillside. A Cal Fire engine remained by the fire all night to take care of any flareups. None were reported. No injuries were reported, Brown added.

The cause of both fires remains under investigation.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_038418a4-56db-11e7-8476-df9bddee0e1b.html

RAAM team makes local connection with fire department

Gale Rose, Pratt Tribune

Posted: June 22, 2017, 8:32 AM



Travis Grapes, Team Fire Velo/Norton Strong member, makes his way through Pratt on June 21 as the team participates in the cross county bicycle race, Race Across America. The team crew support vehicles were guests of the Pratt Fire Department while they made a change over in crews.

A Race Across America team of firefighters from California gets some special treatment from local firefighters.

A Race Across America support team made a special connection in Pratt as their riders made their way across Kansas June 21.

Team Fire Velo/Norton Strong, based out of San Bernardino County in southern California and made up of professional firefighters from Local 935, were welcomed at the Pratt Fire Station as they took a break from the 3,000 mile cross county bicycle race. Pratt is a time station on the race and many solo riders and teams have been passing through Pratt since June 17.

Pratt Fire Chief David Kramer said Team Fire Velo/Norton Strong forward support members contacted the fire department several months ago asking if they could use the fire station facilities for the support crew and riders when they passed through Pratt.

The 15 member support team and three of the four team riders were able to stop at the station to use their show facilities, wash up some dishes and in general take a little time to relax before continuing on down the road, Kramer said.

Ryan Beckers, Team Fire Velo/Norton Strong public information officer said one member of the team is always riding so team member Travis Grapes was taking his turn on the bike when the team passed through Pratt. The other team riders are Tim Goforth, Sean Jackson and Ricky Arnold.

Beckers said Team Fire Velo/Norton Strong is a first time team in RAAM and the riders and crew decided to do the 3,000 mile race because it is the challenge of a life time.

The enormity of their task hit this novice crew about 48 hours into the race. They had encountered 113 degrees in Borrego Springs, Calif. At 3 a.m. the first day it kind of the team members.

“I can’t believe were doing this,” Beckers said.

The toughest part for most of the riders is getting their bodies adjusted to the riding schedule. Getting into a rhythm and having to deal with the extreme heat. Also having to deal with temperature extremes when it was 48 degrees at top of the continental divide and they were on their way down with that cold temperature and body sweat.

The new demands can take their toll. Rider Travis Grapes admitted that he dozed off while he was riding.

Riders have to consume a lot of calories and drink gallons of water a day, Beckers said.

Rider Ricky Arnold is a triathlete so he is conditioned for the long hours and high heat. For him, the hardest part of this adventure is being away from his family for two weeks. He said he really misses his children, ages 4 and 1, and his wife. He said that is tougher for him than dealing with the environment.

As for the race, it took him a little time to adjust to knowing whether he needed to eat more or less and drinking enough fluids. He has adjusted to the winds on the great plains and dodging thunderstorms.

Now that they have been traveling five days, they are getting their logistics down and are developing a sense of pride in their operation. The crew, made up of firefighters and the sons and fathers of firefighters, are coming together. This is not a group of professional riders but the entire team has come together and are meeting their time goals.

Team Fire Velo/Norton Strong got its name because of a dual purpose. Fire Velo is the name of their cycling club in California and Norton Strong refers to their colleges Cory Norton and Jose Cruz that are both battling cancer.

Besides providing their facilities, the Pratt Firefighters also donated \$350 to Team Fire Velo/Norton Strong in support of their fight against cancer.

Part of the team goal is to raise cancer awareness. Because for smoke and other chemicals firefighters encounter, they have a high cancer diagnosis rate. The team races to help remind firefighters to always wear their protective gear and the importance of cleaning their bunker gear and face respirators to reduce the risk of cancer, Beckers said.

“Cleaning your gear and wearing respirators at all times makes a difference,” Beckers said.

<http://www.pratttribune.com/news/20170622/raam-team-makes-local-connection-with-fire-department>

Stay away from illegal fireworks, safety leaders say during press conference in Fontana

Fontana Herald News

Posted: June 22, 2017, 10:34 AM



San Bernardino County Fire Department Division Chief Jeff Birchfield speaks at a press conference in Fontana regarding the dangers of illegal fireworks. Examples of the illegal fireworks were displayed during the event. (Herald News photo by Alejandro Cano)

The **San Bernardino County Fire Department**, Fontana Police Department, Kaiser Permanente Fontana, and Arrowhead Regional Medical Center warned residents of the potential dangers of fireworks and illegal explosives during a press conference on June 20 at Fire Station 79 in Fontana.

The press conference was held in an attempt to combat the increase of illegal firework activity prior to the Fourth of July holiday.

"San Bernardino County is a super highway for trafficking illegal and dangerous fireworks around July 4th," Fire Marshal Mike Horton said. "In just two weeks of operations, we have stopped and seized 27,000 pounds of dangerous fireworks for entering into the county."

Representatives from the Fontana P.D. and the Fire Department discussed fireworks safety and enforcement, and urged residents to report illegal fireworks to local law enforcement or the WeTip hotline at 1-800-47-ARSON.

Fines for possessing, selling or displaying illegal fireworks range from \$2,500 to \$10,000 within the city limits of Fontana, and all fireworks are banned in the unincorporated county areas of Fontana.

"There is zero tolerance for illegal fireworks," Fontana Police Chief Bob Ramsey said. "We will have our Special Operations Team fully staffed to patrol the streets and enforce fireworks violations."

Fontana is among a handful of cities in San Bernardino County that allow the sale of "Safe and Sane" fireworks. Safe and Sane fireworks are labeled with the State Fire Marshal seal on the outside of the packaging.

Residents must comply with the city's regulations and use Safe and Sane fireworks only from June 28 to July 5 between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m.

During the press conference, physicians from Kaiser Permanente Fontana and the Burn Center at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center discussed safety tips and drew attention to the severe personal injuries such as third degree burns that fireworks can cause if used incorrectly.

"The risk of fireworks injury is highest for children between the ages of 5 and 19 years old," said Dr. Alp Arkun, chief of service at the Kaiser Emergency Department. "Sparklers account for 25 percent of firework-related injuries seen in emergency rooms."

Dr. John Culhane, director of the Edward G. Hirschman Burn Center at ARMC, spoke to the burn injuries fireworks cause each year.

"The best way to stay out of the burn center is to follow the law. Every year we see burns from fireworks. You have to respect the ability of the fireworks to inflict a serious and life changing injury," Culhane said.

----- OFFICIALS suggested following these safety guidelines if using Safe and Sane fireworks:

- Always use Safe and Sane fireworks with an adult present.
- Only use Safe and Sane fireworks approved with State Fire Marshal seal.
- Always read and follow the directions on the label.
- Use Safe and Sane fireworks outdoors only, away from dry grass and flammable materials.
- Do not give fireworks to young children under any circumstances; even a sparkler burns at 1,200 °F, hot enough to cause third degree burns.
- Light Safe and Sane fireworks one at a time.
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Never alter, take apart, attempt to fix, or relight malfunctioning fireworks.
- Always have a bucket of water or fire extinguisher on hand for emergencies and for dousing misfired fireworks.

Fontana officials also encouraged residents to attend the city's fireworks show on Tuesday, July 4. Information about the Fourth of July Celebration, as well as information on fireworks laws, can be found at Fontana.org.

http://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/stay-away-from-illegal-fireworks-safety-leaders-say-during-press/article_099f63b0-5771-11e7-8cc4-5b5a79555c25.html

All Fireworks of Any Kind Are Illegal in The Morongo Basin

Z107.7 News

Posted: June 22, 2017

Illegal fireworks are a concern especially around the Independence Day holiday. Reporter Mike Lipsitz has more on the potential risk and costs associated with using illegal fireworks...

Possession of fireworks is illegal throughout Morongo Basin. This includes so called "safe and sane" fireworks, and any fireworks that explode, shoot in the air or move along the ground. With the threat of wildfire nearing peak season, **San Bernardino County Fire** has stepped up enforcement of state and county fireworks laws. Fire officials will be issuing citations for the illegal use of fireworks, with possibility of arrest and fines of more than \$1,250 for the first offense. Property owners may be cited if they allow fireworks to be possessed, stored or used on their property. According to the National Fire Protection Association, on a typical July 4th, fireworks cause more fires in the U.S. than all other causes combined. Basin residents are encouraged to watch fireworks at community celebrations rather than risking the death, blindness, and maiming injuries that children and adults suffer every year.

<http://z1077fm.com/all-fireworks-of-any-kind-are-illegal-in-the-morongo-basin/>

Fire Crews Respond To Brush Fire in Joshua Tree National Park

Z107.7 News

Posted: June 22, 2017



Photo courtesy Joshua Tree National Park.

On June 21, at 10:27 am , a fire was reported in the Quail Springs area of Joshua Tree National Park. Fire crews from CAL FIRE, **San Bernardino County**, BLM and National Park Service responded to a brush fire approximately 100 yards off the road near mile marker #21. The fire burned an area of approximately one and a half acres. It was fueled primarily by dried grasses with no significant damage to living Joshua Trees. Quick action by fire crews and the lack of driving winds minimized the area affected. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

<http://z1077fm.com/fire-crews-respond-to-brush-fire-in-joshua-tree-national-park/>