



NEWS



News Headlines 3/28/2018

- Suspected Arson Leaves Joshua Tree Landmark Oasis of Mara Charred in Twentynine Palms
- Signs Point to Arson in Fire That Damaged Joshua Tree National Park Landmark
- Arson suspected in blaze at Joshua Tree landmark, Oasis of Mara
- Man injured in Tuesday night rollover crash on Bear Valley Road
- Man airlifted after vehicle hits electric wheelchair on Hesperia Road

Suspected Arson Leaves Joshua Tree Landmark Oasis of Mara Charred in Twentynine Palms

Erika Martin, KTLA 5

Posted: March 27, 2018

A natural oasis near the Joshua Tree Oasis Visitor Center was damaged in a fire that is being investigated as arson, officials said Tuesday.

The blaze was spotted around 9:15 p.m. Monday night at the Oasis of Mara, just behind the Joshua Tree National Park Headquarters, the National Park Service said in a news release.

The fire, reported at about 2.5 acres, was put out by crews from the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department and Bureau of Land Management. Park rangers and San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies also responded to the scene.

Park officials are still working to assess the damage but said a preliminary survey indicates several natural resources were impacted, including palms and other wildlife and plants. Some "archaeological resources" were likely damaged as well.

The visitor center and park headquarters were not impacted and remain open to the public, but the Oasis of Mara will be closed until further notice.

Fire crews were still working to mop up the flames Tuesday morning, and arson investigators from NPS, BLM and San Bernardino County were responding.

The oasis, given its name by the indigenous Serrano people, settled at the small spring and planted 29 palm trees during their first year of settlement for each boy born in the community during that time, according to NPS. The town of Twentynine Palms was later established, encompassing the site, and the oasis was donated to NPS in 1950.

The landmark, which includes a nature trail, draws more than 140,000 visitors each year, officials said.

<http://ktla.com/2018/03/27/suspected-arson-blaze-chars-joshua-tree-landmark-oasis-of-mara-in-twentynine-palms/>

Signs Point to Arson in Fire That Damaged Joshua Tree National Park Landmark

Posted: March 27, 2018

Staff Writer, KMIR NBC News

Joshua Tree National Park -A suspected arson fire at Joshua Tree National Park has damaged a historical landmark.

The fire that broke out late Monday damaged the Oasis of Mara, a site settled by Native Americans who planted the 29 palm trees that inspired the name of the nearby city Twentynine Palms, according to the National Park Service.

Strong winds stoked the rapid spread of the fire, which was contained at less than a square mile, Eric Sherwin said, a spokesman for the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department.

Photos show multiple trees ablaze as firefighters fought to snuff out the flames in less than an hour.

The fire is being investigated as an arson, the National Park Service said. No arrests have been made.

Initial assessments show damage to vegetation and wildlife and potential impact to archaeological resources, the agency said.

The agency did not describe the extent of the damage, saying that a full assessment still needed to be conducted.

Steve Raines, a longtime Twentynine Palms resident and a professional photographer, was in the area when a friend texted him that the Oasis of Mara was on fire.

Raines raced to the scene to take photos.

"It's significant damage," Raines said. "And it looks like it's going to be damaged for a long time."

The Serrano people settled the oasis, naming it Mara, "the place of little springs and much grass." Located near Joshua Tree's headquarters and a bustling visitor's center, the oasis is among the first sites for the millions who visit the park every year.

Raines said it was tough to watch the oasis burning.

"It's a piece of history," he said. "It's always heartbreaking seeing something like that go up in flames."

<http://www.kmir.com/story/37823303/signs-point-to-arson-in-fire-that-damaged-joshua-tree-national-park-landmark>

Arson suspected in blaze at Joshua Tree landmark, Oasis of Mara

Beatriz E. Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: March 27, 2018



A firefighter on scene during the Oasis of Mara fire March 26. (Steve Raines/Courtesy National Park Services)

Authorities are investigating whether someone intentionally set a 2.5 acre fire Monday night, which significantly damaged the Oasis of Mara, an historic desert landmark, directly behind the Joshua Tree Oasis Visitor Center and Joshua Tree National Park Headquarters, officials said.

Photos from the scene showed several palm trees consumed by flames, lighting up the darkened sky Monday, March 26.

The fire is being investigated as an arson by the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and San Bernardino Fire, according to a statement from the NPS.

Several agencies, including **San Bernardino County Fire**, National Park Service/Bureau of Land Management Fire, NPS rangers and San Bernardino County Sheriff personnel, were called to the scene of the fire after 9 p.m., officials said.

“The response and investigation represent an outstanding coordinated effort by all agencies involved,” said Chief Ranger Karyl Yeston in a statement.

A preliminary assessment of the damages indicates the fire may have affected multiple natural resources, including palms and other vegetation and native wildlife. The fire may have also impacted archaeological resources, officials said.

“The Oasis of Mara will be reopened to the public at a later date,” the NPS statement said. An arrest has not been made, officials said.

The oasis was first settled by the Serrano people who called it Mara, meaning “the place of little springs and much grass,” according to the NPS website.

The native people were drawn to the oasis because a medicine man told them it would be a good place to live and to raise “many boy babies,” the statement said.

“The medicine man instructed them to plant a palm tree each time a boy was born,” according to the NPS. That first year, the Serrano planted 29 palm trees at the oasis. Nearby Twentynine Palms is named after the site.

Early American survey parties first took notice of the Oasis of Mara in the 1850s, officials said, and since then the area has attracted miners, cattlemen and even World War I veterans looking for relief from the effects of gas inhalation.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2018/03/27/arson-suspected-in-blaze-at-joshua-tree-landmark-oasis-of-mara/>

Man injured in Tuesday night rollover crash on Bear Valley Road

Staff Writer, VVNG

Posted: March 27, 2018



(Photo by Terra Nelson)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) — One person was injured in a Tuesday night rollover crash on Bear Valley Road in Victorville.

At about 9:50 pm, **San Bernardino County Fire**, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Deputies, and American Medical Response were dispatched to a single-vehicle rollover crash near Topaz Road in Victorville

Immediately after the crash, several motorists stopped and ran over to the silver-colored sedan that landed on its roof in the roadway. Good Samaritans helped pull the driver, a 22-year-old male from the vehicle.

The male was transported by ground ambulance to a local hospital for treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

Prior to the crash, several witnesses at the scene said they called 911 and reported seeing the flipped over vehicle driving at speeds of 80+mph on Bear Valley Road. A second vehicle possibly involved in the crash left the scene before deputies arrived.

The cause of the accident is currently under investigation by the Victorville police station. Anyone who might have witnessed the crash is asked to call (760)241-2911.

<http://www.vvng.com/man-injured-in-tuesday-night-rollover-crash-on-bear-valley-road/>

Man airlifted after vehicle hits electric wheelchair on Hesperia Road

Staff Writer, VVNG

Posted: March 27, 2018



(Submitted Photo)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) — A man in a motorized wheelchair was flown to a trauma center after he was struck by a vehicle Tuesday evening.

It happened at about 6:20 pm, in the 12200 block of Hesperia Road, just south of Jasmine Street in Victorville.

San Bernardino County Fire and SB County Sheriff's responded to the scene and found a man down in the roadway next to his electric scooter located in the center turn lane of the four lane road.

Paramedics transported the male to Desert Valley Hospital where he was airlifted to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. An update on his condition was not available.

Based on preliminary reports it appears the wheelchair was traveling in the roadway when it was struck by a passing auto. The driver of the vehicle remained at the scene and cooperated with authorities.

The cause of the crash is currently under investigation by the Victorville Police Department. Information will be updated as it becomes available.

<http://www.vvng.com/man-airlifted-after-vehicle-hits-electric-wheelchair-on-hesperia-road/>