



NEWS



News Headlines 08/23/2019

- Burned Remains Found In Upland Neighborhood
- Firebug may have set San Bernardino fires
- Man arrested on suspicion of arson in San Bernardino
- Man Accused of Setting Fire to Brush in San Bernardino, Investigated in Connection With Previous Fires
- Man pulled from Silverwood Lake declared dead
- Preparing for the fire next time

Burned Remains Found In Upland Neighborhood

Staff Writer, CBS 2/KCAL 9 News

Posted: August 23, 2019, 6:53 AM



UPLAND (CBSLA) – Firefighters responding to a report of a vegetation fire discovered burned remains in Upland in the early morning hours Friday.

San Bernardino County Fire crews made the discovery in the San Antonio Heights neighborhood at around 3:30 a.m.

Firefighters were responding to a vegetation fire the area of Euclid and North Mountain avenues when they found burning remains. It's unclear if the remains belong to a person or an animal.

The investigation has been turned over to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and CAL Fire.

<https://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2019/08/23/burned-remains-found-in-upland-neighborhood/>

Firebug may have set San Bernardino fires

Staff Writer, Inland News Today

Posted: August 23, 2019

SAN BERNARDINO – (INT) – Arson investigators may have solved a series of recent fires in the city with the arrest of a transient.

Jason Alphonse Morrisett, 35, was allegedly seen Thursday evening collecting debris and setting it on fire. Flames spread to nearby dry grass and weeds near West Rialto Avenue and South G Street.

The fire was quickly extinguished without damage to nearby buildings. There were no injuries.

Morrisett's arrest stemmed from a surveillance operation initiated by the **County Office of the Fire Marshal**.

<http://www.inlandnewstoday.com/story.php?s=55908>

Man arrested on suspicion of arson in San Bernardino

Staff Writer, ABC 7 News

Posted: August 23, 2019, 3:20 AM

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (KABC) -- A man suspected of arson was arrested in San Bernardino after investigators said they caught him attempting to start a brush fire Thursday.

San Bernardino County Fire said in a statement that the suspect, 35-year-old Jason Morrisett, was observed attempting to start a fire near West Rialto Avenue and South G Street before 7:30 p.m.

Fire officials said the suspect had been wanted in connection with a number of small fires in the area.

He is said to be a transient and had been arrested before for several warrants.

Fire officials said an investigation will continue to determine if Morrisett is connected to other fires in the area.

Morrisett has been booked on felony arson charges.

<https://abc7.com/man-arrested-on-suspicion-of-arson-in-san-bernardino-/5487683/>

Man Accused of Setting Fire to Brush in San Bernardino, Investigated in Connection With Previous Fires

Staff Writer, KTLA 5 News

Posted: August 22, 2019, 11:35 PM

Investigators arrested a transient Thursday on suspicion of lighting a brush fire in San Bernardino, and were also looking into the suspect's possible connection to other recent wildfires, authorities said.

Jason Alphonse Morrisett was booked on suspicion of arson on forest or grassland, according to **San Bernardino County Fire** Department officials and county booking records.

Fire investigators had been conducting a surveillance operation as a result of "a number of recent suspicious fires in the area," the fire department said in a written statement. The operation paid off just after 7:30 p.m.

"An adult male was observed by investigators to be collecting debris and ultimately using it to ignite a section of dry vegetation near West Rialto Avenue and South G Street," according to the statement. Arson investigators took the suspect, later identified as Morrisett, into custody without a struggle.

Morrisett's possible involvement in any of the other recent fires remained under investigation, officials said. His bail was set at \$100,000 pending his initial court appearance, scheduled on Monday, booking records show.

Anyone with information was urged to contact the Office of the Fire Marshal at 909-386-8400. Anyone who sees suspicious fire activity is urged to call 911 immediately.

<https://ktla.com/2019/08/22/man-accused-of-setting-fire-to-brush-in-san-bernardino-investigated-in-connection-with-previous-fires/>

Man pulled from Silverwood Lake declared dead

Rene Ray De La Cruz, Victorville Daily Press

Posted: August 22, 2019, 5:48 PM



Fishermen earlier this month at Silverwood Lake. First responders arrived at the lake Thursday after receiving a call that a young man had gone missing while swimming. [JAMES QUIGG, DAILY PRESS]

SILVERWOOD LAKE — An unidentified male in his early 20's was pronounced dead at Desert Valley Hospital after an incident at Silverwood Lake, a California Department of Parks and Recreation official told the Daily Press.

Just after 11 a.m. Thursday, deputies with the Twin Peaks Sheriff's Station responded to the report of a possible drowning at Silverwood Lake, said San Bernardino County Sheriff's spokeswoman Cindy Bachman.

Deputies assisted officials with **SB County Fire** and the state agency after a female caller reported that her adult son was swimming and she had lost sight of him.

State lifeguards quickly located the male in the water and found him to be unresponsive. First responders began lifesaving measures before he was transported by ambulance to DVH in Victorville where he was pronounced dead on arrival, State Park Ranger Superintendent Ryan Gill told the Daily Press.

"The young man in his early 20s possibly jumped off a courtesy boat dock in the Cleghorn dock area, where hand-launched boats are put into the water," Gill said. "We were told that after he jumped in, he did not come up."

The Sheriff's Coroner Department will determine the cause of death, Gill said.

<https://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20190822/man-pulled-from-silverwood-lake-declared-dead>

Preparing for the fire next time

Alejandro Cano, Highland Community News

Posted: August 22, 2019



Highland and Redlands firefighters make their way down to a brush fire in Plunge Creek just east of Boulder Avenue Monday afternoon. Hector Hernandez Jr.

In September 2017, a raging wildfire started by fireworks in the Beaumont area threatened entire Redlands neighborhoods.

In a four-day period, the Palmer Fire devoured more than 3,800 acres, causing the evacuation of about 450 residents.

A combination of factors — weather conditions and the brave response by more than 475 firefighters — stopped the fire from spreading further, saving hundreds of structures and thousands of people.

Other areas in California have not been so fortunate. Last November, the Camp Fire — the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history — caused at least 86 civilians fatalities and destroyed 18,804 structures, with most of the damage occurring within the first four hours.

In May, Cal Fire announced that electrical transmission lines owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electricity Co. caused the Camp Fire, the deadliest wildfire in the nation since the Cloquet Fire in 1918 and one of the deadliest in the world.

A spark from a hammer, a fire pit not properly put out, human error or intentional and natural causes could start a fire in the wild and in grasslands at any moment and the impact could be devastating.

With the “right” combination, the flames could travel as fast as 6.7 miles per hour in the forest and 14 mph in grasslands, destroying everything in its path.

Ready, set, go

With one-third of the city of Redlands identified as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, authorities have one question for the community: Do you know what to do in case of a wildfire?

In an attempt to inform the public about what to do and not to do during a wildfire, Redlands Fire Chief Nathan Cooke and members of the department discussed last week the ways residents can prepare during two town hall meetings.

The meetings at the Grace Mullen Auditorium at Redlands High School attracted dozens of concerned residents.

“One-third of Redlands is at very high risk of a major wildfire, which means more than 23,000 people are in the danger zone,” said Cooke. “We can’t prevent fires 100 percent of the time, but what we can do is be ready to act. That’s why we are here, to educate the public and to minimize the risks.”

The chief recommended people to be fire-adapted and ready. Residents should prepare long before the threat of a wildland fire so that homes are safe. He recommended creating a defensible space clear of brush.

Chief Cooke also advised residents to create an emergency kit and to know how to receive and stay aware of the latest news. For that, local authorities offer the Redlands 311 app and the Redlands Emergency Notification System, which advises people of evacuation and possible routes.

“People should also use logic,” Cooke said. “If you see smoke, don’t go to that zone. Stay away. Evacuate when told. Don’t be on our way.”

If an evacuation is necessary, residents should quickly gather the already-prepared emergency kit, cover-up to protect against flying debris, and leave the area in the specified route.

Longtime resident Ema Shea, a certified resident on disaster and emergency preparedness, knows exactly what to do in case of a wildfire.

“During an earthquake, I’m staying put, but during a wildfire, you ain’t stopping me,” she said. “I hope residents, specially the youth, take this serious because during an emergency you have to know what to do. Life is too precious.”

Deadly and costly

In recent years, wildfires have devastated communities throughout California. Risks increase in areas surrounded by vegetation. Last year, California experienced the deadliest and most destructive wildfire season with 8,527 fires that destroyed 22,751 buildings, killing 970 civilians and six firefighters.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, a direct contributor was an increase of dead tree fuel. In 2017, authorities recorded more than 129 million dead trees in California.

In San Bernardino County, a total of 1,350 acres were devastated by wildfires during the 2018 season from July 6 to Oct. 22, injuring five people.

The Federal Emergency Management Service says that wildfire suppression costs typically between \$1 billion to nearly \$2 billion each year.

In California, the 2018 wildfire season had a suppression cost of \$3.5 billion.

So far, the 2019 wildfire season has recorded 3,487 fires, totaling an estimated 45,364 acres. According to Cal Fire and the U.S. Forest Service, although the 2019 fire season has been relatively quiet in California compared to past years, October through December is still expected to have the greatest fire potential as the Santa Ana winds pick up.

Redlands authorities understand the dangers and, with only 18 firefighters to protect a city of more than 77,000 residents, and a 12-square-miles that comprise the danger zone, they rely on the community for assistance.

During his PowerPoint presentation, Chief Cooke said that the emergency response time in 2018 was 9:50 minutes, 3:30 more than the national response rate. Such rate could be lowered with more personnel and resources at hand, he said.

“In 2008, we received an average of 6,000 calls per year and the department had five firefighters, last year we received 10,700 calls for 18 firefighters,” said Cooke.

According to Redlands spokesman Carl Baker, a 2008 deployment study by a third-party consultant recommended adding a fifth fire station to address long response times and the lack of neighborhood fire station coverage in portions of the city.

“The city’s fourth fire station, Station 264, has been located in a “temporary” double-wide mobile home for a decade. In 2009, the department lost six suppression positions, which have not been added back,” said Baker. “There are no plans in the budget to add firefighters this year.”

Small but dangerous

Dead trees in the forest and around homes are a catastrophe waiting to happen, needing only a spark in any form to wreak havoc. The fact is, trees are drying and dying faster than normal because of insects.

Throughout the nation, botanists have identified several species of insects that cause trees to decay, becoming a fire hazard. Among those insects are the Gypsy Moth, Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Longhorn Beetle, Elm Bark Beetle and Tent Caterpillars.

Recently, a **San Bernardino County fire** hazard officer detected an invasive species in the San Bernardino community of Sugarloaf, in the Big Bear Valley: the Goldspotted Oak Borer.

Known as the GSOB, the insect is an invasive pest contributing to the on-going oak tree mortality occurring on federal, state, private and local Native American lands in many areas of Southern California.

According to Abigail Barraza, a community education specialist with the University of California Cooperative Extension in San Diego, GSOB are not directly dangerous to humans since they don't bite or sting. However, their boring behavior compromises the structural integrity of trees and makes them prone to falling, which can be dangerous.

"Dead and dying trees can also pose as fire hazards and that can be very dangerous as well," said Barraza. "GSOB is difficult to manage because there is not a definitive treatment for this pest that's known to kill in all life stages."

Barraza said that usually infestations by the GSOB are not noticed until they have reached a heavily infested level. Once the infestation has reached this level, trees must be removed, which is costly.

"If a homeowner is unable to afford tree removals, these trees can pose as falling hazards as well as become breeding grounds for more generations of GSOB," she added.

"Many people are inclined to use the wood from these fallen trees as firewood, however, moving this wood around can result in the spread of this pest."

Cal Fire authorities said this is the second GSOB infestation identified in the San Bernardino County. The first one was discovered in Oak Glen in the fall of last year.

This also is the second GSOB infestation on the San Bernardino National Forest with the first one occurring in Idyllwild in 2012, said Cal Fire.

Barraza said that Cal Fire, the San Bernardino National Forest, the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies are working to develop a GSOB response plan. Details have not been unveiled.

According to the University of California Cooperative Extension, as of 2010 the GSOB has killed an estimated 21,500 trees covering 1,893 square miles in the San Diego County alone. Recent aerial surveys found 42,000 dead trees in the San Bernardino National Forest for different reasons.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, 18 million trees throughout the state died in 2018, to elevate the number to 149 million dead trees — a catastrophe waiting to happen.

https://www.highlandnews.net/news/public_safety/preparing-for-the-fire-next-time/article_8b3034f2-c52b-11e9-a3dc-8b8aa09335c3.html