



NEWS



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2 fires ignite below Crestline bridge, arson suspect caught

Doug Saunders, Press-Enterprise

Posted: May 1, 2017, 10:27 PM



Firefighters are battling three vegetation fires just below the Crestline Bridge Monday night, May 1, 2017 (Doug Saunders, The San Bernardino Sun/SCNG)

CRESTLINE >> While firefighters battled two vegetation fires Monday night, May 1, law enforcement caught the man suspected of starting the fires.

Shortly after 8 p.m. two fires, dubbed the Bridge fire, were reported to authorities in the mountain community just below the Crestline bridge.

Firefighters aggressively battled the flames and stopped the forward spread by 10 p.m. Crews were “making good progress” on the larger 3-acre fire, according to a Forest Service tweet. A smaller fire had already been put out.

Meanwhile San Bernardino police and sheriffs deputies searched Old Waterman Canyon road for the person they suspected ignited the fires.

At about 11 p.m. the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department tweeted that the suspect was in custody, and “no longer a danger to the public.”

Initially it was reported that the man was considered armed but at the time of this report that was unconfirmed. Highway 18 is closed between Lake Gregory and Sierra Way for an undetermined amount of time.

<http://www.pe.com/2017/05/01/46114/>

Arson Suspect Detained As Firefighters Battle Crestline Brush Fires

ABC7 News

Posted: May 2, 2017, 1:00 AM

CRESTLINE, Calif. (KABC) –

San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies detained a man believed to have set several brush fires along Highway 18 near Crestline Bridge in the San Bernardino National Forest, officials said.

Eyewitnesses say the arson suspect is a shirtless tattooed man, who was possibly armed with a long rifle or an ax. He was reportedly suffering from burns.

Three separate brush fires in the same area burned through at least six acres before firefighters were able to extinguish two and contain the forward spread of the larger blaze.

Deputies closed Highway 18 in the San Bernardino mountains from Sierra Way to Highway 138 as they searched for the arson suspect.

No homes were threatened in the area.

<http://abc7.com/news/deputies-looking-for-arson-suspect-in-san-bernardino-national-forest/1943119/>

Arson suspect arrested following extensive search

Highland News

Posted: May 2, 2017, 7:37 AM

On May 1, 2017 at about 8:07 p.m., the California Highway Patrol and the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department received multiple 911 calls reporting a male attempting to start a fire on Highway 18 just below the Highway 138 cut off in the county area of Crestline. Officers from both agencies responded to the scene along with Cal Fire and US Forestry Fire. Numerous additional 911 calls were received reporting the subject was armed with a firearm and carrying an axe. The subject also threw rocks at a vehicle on the highway.

The subject ran down the highway, fled over the side, and headed down toward Lower Bonnie Canyon. The subject lit an additional fire in the dense brush of the canyon, below the highway. Highway 18 was closed and all traffic was evacuated due to the fire and armed subject.

Multiple law enforcement agencies to include: San Bernardino County Sheriff's Twin Peaks and Central Stations, California Highway Patrol, San Bernardino Police Department, Cal Fire Investigators, US Forest Service Officers, and K9s from both the Sheriff's Department and Montclair Police responded. A perimeter was established as helicopters from the Sheriff's Department and Highway Patrol used FLIR to search for the subject in the dense brush.

The subject, Benjamin Andrew Baptiste, 27, of Cedar Glen, was located on the side of Highway 18, within a half mile of Old Mormon Road, by deputies. Baptiste was taken into custody without incident. Baptiste was treated by medical personnel for multiple lacerations from the brush and for burns to his hands and arms.

Baptiste was booked into the West Valley Detention Center on multiple counts of arson.

If you have any information regarding this investigation, please contact Deputy Brian Butts at the Twin Peaks Station, (909) 336-0600 or WeTip 1-800-78-CRIME.

http://www.highlandnews.net/news/crime_and_fire/arson-suspect-arrested-following-extensive-search/article_eec1c2c6-2f44-11e7-a0b4-2f5a0a07bb4a.html

Firefighters Battling Possible Arson Related Fires in Crestline

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: May 1, 2017



(CBS Facebook Live)

CRESTLINE, Calif. (VVNG.com) Firefighters are battling three small fires in the town of Crestline, the largest has been dubbed the Bridge Fire.

The fires were reported at about 8:00 pm on Monday, May 1st and are currently burning along Highway 18 south of Crestline near Highway 138.

According to unconfirmed reports, a man armed with an ax started 3 separate brush fires along Highway 18 in Crestline. Police are actively searching for the suspect who is believed to be on foot.

State Route 18 is currently shut down from Lake Gregory to Sierra away, per CalTrans.

According to a tweet from San Bernardino County National Forest, the 3 fires are 1/2 acre, 2 acres and 3 acres in size. Crews have stopped forward rate of spread.

The US Forest Service is the lead agency Cal Fire and **San Bernardino County Fire** are assisting.

Information will be updated as it becomes available.

<http://www.vvng.com/firefighters-battling-possible-arson-related-fires-crestline/>

Victorville house fire quickly doused Monday

Daily Press

Posted: May 1, 2017, 1:55 PM



San Bernardino County Fire Department responded to a fire in the 17300 block of Jupiter Avenue after multiple reports of smoke showing were received around 1 p.m. Monday. [Kevin Trudgeon, Daily Press]

VICTORVILLE — Firefighters quickly doused a house fire Monday afternoon after a garage became fully engulfed, authorities said.

San Bernardino County Fire Department personnel responded to the 17300 block of Jupiter Avenue after multiple reports of smoke showing were received around 1 p.m. Monday.

“We got dispatched to a residential structure fire and when the first engine pulled up on scene the garage was heavily involved and extending into the house,” Battalion Chief Bobby Cox told the Daily Press. “We went right into attack mode.”

Firefighters quickly knocked down the blaze within 15 minutes of arriving and had it fully extinguished just before 1:30 p.m., authorities said.

A neighbor, who declined to give his name, said he was walking by when he saw the fire and helped a man get out of the fenced-in yard in front of the house.

“The flames were really high and I saw an old man waving his cane, so I just went over there and got him out,” the neighbor said. “When (the firefighters) got here they got it out right away, they knocked it down quick.”

There was one downed residential service power line due to the fire, County Fire spokesperson Eric Sherwin said.

According to Sherwin, a total of 15 firefighters responded to the fire, with three engines and one truck.

Sherwin said two people were displaced from the home — one adult and one child — and American Red Cross was contacted to assist them.

The cause of the blaze remains under investigation.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20170501/victorville-house-fire-quickly-doused-monday>

Firefighters continue to battle fires in Cajon Pass, Highgrove

Ali Tadayon, The Press-Enterprise

Posted: May 1, 2017, 9:50 PM



Fire investigators look for possible clues at the origin site of the Opera Fire on Monday, May 1, 2017 in Highgrove. (Stan Lim, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

Firefighters worked throughout the day Monday battling three wildfires in the Inland Empire that had been burning since Sunday afternoon.

The fires each spread rapidly, causing large responses by local fire departments. Meteorologist Brett Albright of the National Weather Service, said the rapid spread was due in part to Santa Ana winds.

The hot, dry gusts blew into the area Friday and Saturday, drying out brush. By Sunday afternoon, when the fires had already started, dry air blew into the area, spreading the fires, Albright said.

By Monday, humidity was higher, and winds weren't as dry, Albright said. That helped firefighters build containment lines on the fires and mop up the interiors.

The largest of the three was the Opera Fire in the Box Springs Mountains, which rapidly grew to 1,350 acres on Sunday. Cal Fire/Riverside County Fire Department spokesman Capt. Lucas Spelman said firefighters hope to have the fire completely out by 8 a.m. Tuesday.

The second largest wildfire to spark Sunday was the Tower Fire in the Cajon Pass, which peaked at 200 acres. That fire was first reported about 4:30 p.m. Sunday along the 15 Freeway just north of Cleghorn Road, according to the San Bernardino County Fire Department. The blaze was 60 percent contained by Monday evening and had not grown in size, according to a tweet from the San Bernardino National Forest Service.

The smallest of the three burned in the hills west of Temescal Valley, south of Corona. The 15-acre fire was 100 percent contained by Monday morning.

Firefighters had the Opera Fire 90 percent contained by Monday evening. The blaze initially threatened 60 homes in the Pigeon Pass, Belvedere Heights and Highgrove communities. By Monday morning, no homes were threatened, Spelman said. No injuries or structure losses were reported.

On Monday morning, investigators from Cal Fire and the Riverside Fire Department focused on a small patch of brush near the end of the Mt. Vernon roadway off Palmyrita Avenue. Spelman said that patch is where the

fire started. Though the fire's cause hasn't been determined, investigators have talked to someone who witnessed activity in that area when the fire first started.

Spelman blamed the fire's rapid spread Sunday — it grew from 300 to 1,350 acres in about six hours — to the extremely dry brush in the Box Springs Mountains. Prior to the weekend's Santa Ana winds drying out the brush, drought already had killed much of the vegetation.

“Because of the last 5 to 6 years of drought, the biggest problem we have is all of those things have been dead for 5 years,” Spelman said.

Despite Southern California's wet winter, there hasn't been much rain in the region over the past few months, said Albright, the meteorologist.

“That's just the way it is in Southern California. If we go a few months without rain, the smaller, lighter fuels catch fire,” Albright said. “And there are plenty of sources for those fires.”

Firefighters' efforts initially were hampered by drones in the area, but firefighting helicopters were in the air Sunday evening.

The fire's destruction is detrimental to the wildlife in the Box Springs Mountains, Spelman said. Burros that frequent the area took refuge on residential streets in the Reche Canyon and Sunnymead Ranch communities Sunday. The fire also took away some of the cover for the ground animals that inhabit the area, making them easy targets for birds of prey.

Riverside County Animal Services spokesman John Welsh said his agency didn't receive any reports of injured burros after the fire.

Amber LeVonne, who operates the Donkeyland rescue near Pigeon Pass Road in Moreno Valley, said she had prepared for the 30 donkeys in her care to be evacuated. Thankfully, she said, they didn't have to go.

LeVonne said “several herds” of wild burros wandered onto the Donkeyland property while avoiding the fire. The burros have since moved to different areas, she said.

While the fire was spreading, LeVonne was worried that a creek in the area that the burros frequently drink from would be compromised. The creek is on land belonging to a housing development near Spring Mountain Road.

Debbie Melvin, who works for the development, said the fire burned right up to the creek, but did not compromise it. Several houses already have been built on the development, but no one is living in them yet. Melvin said the fire burned right up to the development's wall.

The Sandals Church Hunter Park campus is located close to where the fire started. Sandals Operations director Brian Chelette, via email, said some staff members and churchgoers were at the campus at the time, and had to evacuate. Chelette said he remained at the facility to provide firefighters access to the industrial park.

<http://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/general-news/20170501/firefighters-continue-to-battle-fires-in-cajon-pass-highgrove>

Victorville Man Airlifted After Suffering Burns From Car Radiator

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: May 1, 2017



(Hugo C. Valdez, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif. (VVNG.com) A Victorville man was flown to a hospital with serious burns to his face after an apparent accident involving a car radiator Monday evening.

At about 6:50 p.m. **San Bernardino County Fire** was dispatched to a residence in the 14000 block of Kicking Horse Circle in Victorville. Per scanner reports, a 24-year-old male suffered burns to his face and skin caused by hot liquid from the radiator.

Emergency personnel treated the male in the driveway of the home next to a vehicle that had the hood propped open.

Due to the patient's injuries, emergency personnel requested the launch of an air ambulance which landed at Hook Park in Victorville.

The man's face and head were bandaged and loaded into the awaiting medic-vac. He was transported to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center for the treatment of his injuries.

No additional information is available at this time.

<http://www.vvng.com/victorville-man-airlifted-suffering-burns-car-radiator/>