



# NEWS



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## Cadaver dogs searching rubble for human remains after 'Bluecut' fire

Victoria Spilabotte, Fox 11

Posted: August 19, 2016, 8:25PM

Meet Dublin. He's a nine year old lab trained to smell for human remains.

"This is what they live for this is what they are bred for," Peter Sellas, Dublin's handler, said. "Their pay check is a tug toy so this is all they want to do."

Dublin and Sellas are one of three teams searching homes that burned in the Blue Cut fire. 96 homes. These highly trained cadaver dogs, use their strong noses to sniff out any sign of human decomposition before alerting their handlers, but pawing around in the rubble is rough.

"They are walking around barefoot and the surface is hot just because it is summer and then you put them into house that's just burned down," another handler, John Thomas said.

The dogs with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department are helping the damage assessment teams.

So far, officials have counted 96 homes and over 200 outbuildings burned.

"We know this fire came into these communities with little to no warning and it's a very real possibility that somebody lost their life," Eric Sherwin, **San Bernardino County Fire**, said.

Diane Holmes who lives in the West Cajon valley, came home to find her house still standing.

Other houses in her neighborhood burned, but she's grateful firefighters saved hers from the flames.

"It was crazy fast and I've never seen it move that fast before," Holmes said. "We were grateful to get everything out, I know my neighbors some of them lost their homes but as far as I know all the people are ok and we're grateful for that."

The cadaver dogs searched about ten properties Friday morning and their search didn't turn up anything.

<http://www.foxla.com/news/local-news/194120374-story>

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## PHOTOS: Firefighters Gain Ground On California's Blue Cut Wildfire

Merrit Kennedy, NPR

August 20, 2016 9:27 AM ET



The Blue Cut fire burns in Upper Lytle Creek near Wrightwood, Calif., on Friday. Noah Berger/AP



Smoldering hillside from Blue Cut Fire along Highway 2 on the way to Wrightwood. Irfan Khan/LA Times via Getty Images



In very dense smoke from Blue Cut Fire a helicopter makes a water drop on still burning hills along Highway 2 on the way to Wrightwood. Irfan Khan/LA Times via Getty Images



A firefighter point their beam lights around a burnt area to check for damages made by the Blue Cut fire. Marcus Yam/LA Times via Getty Images



A firefighting helicopter pilot tries to stop flames close to jumping a ridge above Cajon Boulevard at the Blue Cut Fire on Thursday near Wrightwood, California. David McNew/Getty Images





Scorched cars and trailers burned by the Blue Cut fire line a residential street in Phelan, Calif., on Friday. Noah Berger/AP

Firefighters are gaining ground on the aggressive Blue Cut wildfire in Southern California's San Bernardino National Forest that has destroyed nearly 100 homes and more than 200 other structures.

It's one of several major fires impacting the drought-stricken state. And as NPR's Kirk Siegler tells our Newscast unit, hundreds of the 80,000 put under evacuation notice are now cleared to return home, but "controlling a blaze like this will take weeks." He explains:

"Just to get an idea of what crews are up against to contain it, imagine having to dig a large trench or fire line all the way around the perimeter of a city the size of San Francisco, and then keep a fire from spreading outside it. Firefighters are hoping to take advantage of some calmer winds that are in the forecast over the weekend."

The fire is still raging over more than 30,000 acres and is 40 percent contained, with 1,584 firefighters battling the blaze, according to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

It erupted Tuesday, and **San Bernardino Fire Chief** Mark Hartwig said it "moved with intensity and ferocity that firefighters haven't seen before," as member station KPCC reported. Here's more from KPCC:

"During five years of drought, California's wildlands have seen a continuous streak of destructive and sometimes deadly fires. No deaths have been reported in the latest fire, but crews assessing property damage were using cadaver dogs during searches.

"The dry vegetation is like firewood, said fire information officer Sean Collins."

The firefighters' efforts were complicated by a large number of people put under mandatory evacuation notice that didn't leave their homes, as NPR's Nate Rott reports. "Fifty percent of the people are not evacuating," Bob Poole of the San Bernardino Forest tells Nate. "We can't do much about it but tell them that it's in their best interest to leave." He adds that people often "change their minds when the flames reach their yard."

As Nate points out, Southern California residents have grown accustomed to wildfires. "Almost every homeowner you talk to here and in Southern California can remember the last big wildfire or the last time they were told to evacuate," he reported.

Another fast-moving wildfire in California's Lake County this week destroyed 300 structures, as The Los Angeles Times reported.

"They are just moving as fast as the wind can push them and that's leading to what we're seeing in terms of devastation," Pomona College professor and wildfire expert Char Miller told the *Times*, speaking about both fires. "Let's call it an imperfect storm of conditions: the drought, the heat, the low humidity. And let's be honest, this is not really big winds."

Meanwhile, California firefighters battling the flames are calling for reinforcements from neighboring states, as KPCC's Emily Guerin tells our Newscast unit.

"When lots of fires are burning at the same time, and most of Cal Fire's crews are on the front line, the agency turns to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho for more manpower," she says.

Guerin reports that "the Southwest and the Rocky Mountains are wetter and have fewer fires than Southern California," according to Robyn Broyles from the center. "So, we would go to those parts of the country to ask for assistance first, because we don't want to take resources away from parts of the country that are already needing them," Broyles says.

Meanwhile, as the fire is further contained, area residents are beginning to assess the damage to their homes.

Johanna Santore was out running errands when the fire erupted, and then tried to "rescue the family's four dogs, six cats and hamster but was blocked by closed roads," as The Associated Press reported.

Neighbors "found the house in smoldering ruins – with no sign of the pets," according to the wire service. "I'm actually feeling numb," Santore said. "It's like a nightmare."

<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/08/20/490739379/photos-firefighters-gain-ground-on-californias-blue-cut-wildfire>

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## Wrightwood evacuees return home

John M. Blodgett and Liset Márquez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin

Posted: August 20, 2016, 7:49 AM



San Bernardino County Fire Captain Jerren Grundy, left, with Station 227 in San Bernardino, checks on his mother-in-law's property in the West Cajon Valley as Captain Matt Durham, right, looks on Saturday. The house on the property was still intact, but surrounding outbuildings were burned when the Blue Cut fire ripped through the area on Tuesday. Photo by Sarah Alvarado

**SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS >>** For many Wrightwood residents, home is a good place to be.

Days after receiving a mandatory evacuation order because of the raging Blue Cut fire, officials determined Saturday that conditions were safe enough in the mountain community to downgrade the order to voluntary.

"I kissed the ground and said 'Thank you, Lord,' " said John "Gio" Muensterman, a West Cajon Valley resident who was able to return Saturday.

Muensterman and his wife, Vivian, returned Saturday afternoon after the evacuation order for Wrightwood was reduced to voluntary.

Vehicles quickly began to line up at the closure at highways 138 and 2 just after noon when the order was lifted, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

Sgt. William Busto said he expected about 1,800 residents to return to the mountain community Saturday. Some mandatory evacuations remain, including for the communities of Lytle Creek and West Cajon Valley.

The Muenstermans returned to their home of 35 years on Monte Vista Road to find it, the garage, chicken coops and doghouse all still standing, though the Blue Cut fire had come right up to their property.

The couple were able to return Saturday because they have a Wrightwood address and the evacuation order in that area was reduced to voluntary.

Before evacuating about 9 p.m. Tuesday, John said it was Vivian's idea to foam their trees in addition to spraying their home and other structures with gel. They did it themselves, using a standard garden hose to spray foam on their trees.

To put gel on the structures, John hooked up a generator and fire hose to his 5,000-gallon water tank. The fire hose was given to them about a decade ago when a fire department was replacing its hoses as a matter of routine.

The gel “kept the house from burning and the windows from exploding,” John explained. Their home wasn’t the only one in the area saved by gel.

“The gel was awesome,” said San Bernardino fire Capt. Jerren Grundy, whose crew was inspecting other homes in the vicinity of Highway 138 and Hess Road about the time the Muenstermans returned. “We were blown away. There were homes we thought would burn (anyways).”

## PROGRESS MADE

The Blue Cut fire’s growth was halted Saturday, and officials with the Cal Fire San Bernardino unit say containment has grown substantially.

The blaze has charred 37,020 acres since it sparked Tuesday morning. Most of that damage came before Thursday night, when fire officials listed containment at about 22 percent. Since then, containment grew to 40 percent Friday evening, and 73 percent as of Saturday evening, said Robert Taylor with the U.S. Forest Service.

“The fire itself was not very active and firefighters were able to make good progress,” he said. “The most active portion of the fire is on the east side, in the canyon between Lytle Creek proper and Wrightwood.”

Conditions on that portion of the fire line are rugged and not as easily accessible, but there were at least 14 helicopters and 26 water tenders available Saturday to help crews, Taylor said. In all, more than 2,600 firefighters continue to battle the fire.

## WITHOUT POWER

More than 300 Southern California Edison personnel worked Saturday to restore power and repair utility poles damaged by the Blue Cut fire.

Numerous power poles along a stretch of Highway 138, between the 15 Freeway and Highway 2, were toppled over or blackened. In some cases, the poles were so badly burned only the portion attached to the power lines remained.

SCE officials identified 384 poles that were damaged or destroyed in the fire, according to the utility’s website. Saturday was the first day of full-scale restoration work.

As of Saturday afternoon, there were 312 customers without power in the communities of Hesperia, Oak Hills, Pinon Hills, Phelan, Victorville and several unincorporated communities.

“Due to the continuing fires in San Bernardino County and the difficulty in accessing the impacted areas, customers should be prepared to be without service for several more days,” Jeff Billingsley, SCE incident commander stated in the post.



“We know this is an inconvenience and we appreciate their patience,” he continued.

Officials expect to install portable generators where feasible.

## GOING HOME

Oaks Springs Valley resident Mike McGary, 58, who returned home Saturday recalled how fire conditions quickly changed last week, and he had to leave work early to head home and pack.

When evacuation orders came Wednesday, McGary and his wife hitched their trailer to his truck and headed for a campsite in Victorville. It was not an easy decision.

“There were tears,” he said, when he pulled away from the home he’s lived in since 1978.

Talking by phone Saturday, McGary said he was happy to be home.

When the fire first broke out, McGary said he remembers thinking to himself: there was no way the fire could burn near his home. In a matter of hours, conditions quickly changed.

“It was spooky. The smoke was so close,” he said, recalling the scene the first night of the fire. “I’ve been through a lot of fires and this is the fastest one I’ve ever seen.”

## FAST GROWTH

The inferno began Tuesday morning about five miles north of Lytle Creek in the Cajon Pass. Steady winds quickly carried the flames across brittle undergrowth caused by years of drought.

More than 25,000 acres were scorched in the first two days, forcing the temporary evacuation of at least 82,000 people.

About 57 square miles have burned. At least 105 homes and 216 buildings were lost as of Friday, according to a Forest Service news release.

Even as the containment grows, Taylor said crews still have a long road ahead.

A containment line means the fire is no longer spreading, but there still may be hot spots and smoldering for the next couple of weeks.

For example, crews were able to get 100 percent containment of the Pilot fire on the same day the Blue Cut fire broke out, but at least 100 personnel are still on site, Taylor said.

“There’s still internal burning that has to be watched,” he said.

As for the Blue Cut fire, Taylor said “firefighters will be here for quite a while.”

In addition to the cleanup phase, crews are also conducting suppression repair since bulldozers have been used in some areas to create fire breaks to stop flames from jumping. It’s also to ensure invasive weeds don’t grow in the burned vegetation areas.

“Once all the fire line has been burned, we don’t leave the area until we repair the landscape,” Taylor said.

## UNDER WATCH

Sheriff’s deputies continued to patrol in areas under evacuation orders Saturday. At the fire’s peak, nearly 35,000 homes had been evacuated and 70 deputies, two per unit, were assigned to patrol the areas, according to a news release Saturday morning.

Deputies have arrested six people while on these patrols.

As of 8 p.m. Saturday, a number of road closures were still in effect including:

- Highway 138 from 15 Freeway to Highway 2
- Highway 2 from L.A. County line to Highway 138
- Old Cajon Boulevard north of Devore
- Lytle Creek Road at Glen Helen Parkway
- Lone Pine Canyon Road from East Canyon Drive through Highway 138
- Swarthout Canyon Road to Cajon Boulevard

While the cause of the fire has yet to be determined, fire officials are asking anyone who may have photos or video of the area when the fire started to contact them.

Investigators are specifically looking for footage of the southbound 15 Freeway between Cleghorn and Kenwood roads or along Old Cajon Boulevard from Tuesday between 10 and 11 a.m.

Anyone with information is asked to call 800-78-CRIME (27463) or visit [www.wetip.com](http://www.wetip.com).

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20160820/wrightwood-evacuees-return-home-as-blue-cut-fire-growth-halted>

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## After four days and 100-plus homes destroyed, fire crews getting control of SoCal blaze

*Containment of the Blue Cut Fire jumped from 40 percent to nearly 70 percent overnight, officials said.*

Sarah Mulé and Doug G. Ware, UPI

Posted: August 20, 2016, 7:14 PM



A van destroyed by the Blue Cut Fire sits in Mormon Rocks, California, on Friday. By Saturday afternoon, the blaze had burned more than 37,000 acres, destroyed at least 105 homes and was about 70 percent contained, officials said. Photo by Jim Ruymen/UPI

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, Calif., Aug. 20 (UPI) -- Firefighters gained more control Saturday over a savage blaze in the Southern California wilderness that's so far destroyed more than 300 homes and other structures, and blackened nearly 60 square miles of land.

Crews continued to fight the Blue Cut Fire overnight Friday and now have the flames nearly three-quarters contained. Officials said containment was at about 70 percent by Saturday afternoon -- up from just 26 percent a day earlier and 40 percent Friday night. More than 37,000 acres in San Bernardino County have been charred.

The wildfire started Tuesday near the Cajon Pass off Interstate 15, about 65 miles northeast of Los Angeles.

Some of the evacuations were lifted Friday, allowing some of the 82,000 people under mandatory orders to return to their homes -- if there was a home to return to.

"We know there are going to be people who are going to come home to nothing in a fire like this, that seemed to burn at will and jump literally a half-mile ahead of itself," **San Bernardino County Fire** Chief Mark Hartwig said.

Saturday, officials said at least 105 homes had been destroyed, along with more than 200 other structures. However, not one death or injury has been reported.

"The crews are still working to determine that everyone made it out safe and there were no fatalities in this fire," Daniel Berlant, a spokesman for Cal Fire, said.

More than 34,000 buildings, though, are still threatened by the fast-moving fire, which is being fed by extreme drought conditions. Saturday, fire crews focused on the communities of Lytle Creek and Wrightwood.

"There's still internal burning that has to be watched," U.S. Forest Service official Robert Taylor said.

The fire shut down stretches of several roads in the area, including California Highway 138 and Interstate 15, which is the main route between Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

More than 2,600 firefighters are working to put out the flames, officials said. The U.S. Forest Service's website lists 275 fire engines, 32 bulldozers, 26 water tenders, 10 air tankers and 14 helicopters on the scene.

The cause of the fire, which is one of several burning in California, is not yet known. The Chimney Fire in San Luis Obispo County has burned more than 15,000 acres and is 32 percent contained. The Clayton Fire, started by an arsonist in Northern California, has destroyed about 300 structures, 4,000 acres and is 80 percent contained.

[http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/US/2016/08/20/Southern-California-Blue-Cut-wildfire-destroys-nearly-100-homes/4591471696375/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2016/08/20/Southern-California-Blue-Cut-wildfire-destroys-nearly-100-homes/4591471696375/)

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## Firefighters keep Blue Cut fire from spreading, increase containment during 7th day

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: August 22, 2016, 7:28 AM



Yo Chu Pak stands in what was the living room of his burned home off of Highway 138 for the first time Monday since the Blue Cut fire swept through the area. Pak, who has lived on the property for 13 years with his family, lost his most important item, his U.S. Citizenship certificate to the Blue Cut fire. They had no insurance. Will Lester/Staff Photographer

**CAJON PASS >>** Firefighters continued to gain ground on the Blue Cut fire, holding its spread and increasing containment to 89 percent, fire officials said Monday.

The blaze has charred 37,020 acres — about 57 square miles — since it was sparked Tuesday about five miles north of Lytle Creek in the Cajon Pass. Most of that damage came before Thursday night, when fire officials listed containment at 22 percent.

“I want to thank all the agencies that continue to protect our county and its residents from wildfire,” Chief Mark Hartwig said Monday in a post on the **San Bernardino County Fire Department’s** Facebook page. “Thank you for your dedicated support. We could not do it without you.”

The Fire Department thanked cooperating agencies in the same post for “helping restore the area and are grateful for our resilient residents and communities that have endured this wildfire. We ask that residents returning to the evacuation zone exercise caution. Firefighters, engines, and heavy equipment continue to operate in the area.”

The monstrous wildfire forced more than 82,000 people to evacuate and destroyed more than 300 buildings, 105 of which were homes.

Despite the final evacuation orders being lifted Sunday, roadways in the area remain closed to most traffic except residents who can verify they live in the area.

Lone Pine Canyon Road at Swarthout Canyon Road to Highway 138 is closed and US Forest Road 3N31 at Lone Pine Canyon Road is closed. The dirt road portion of Lytle Creek Road is closed from the gun range to the forest, officials said.

But even allowing nervous residents back into their communities to see if their homes still were standing was fraught with hiccups and glitches, some residents said.

Scott Sayles was not able to immediately get back into his West Cajon Valley home because he has a Phelan mailing address.

“I was born and raised in West Cajon Valley — 54 years — but as far as the post office and DMV is concerned, I live in Phelan,” said Sayles on Monday morning. “I really appreciate the job (California Highway Patrol and San Bernardino County Sheriff’s) are doing tremendously, but some of the guys that aren’t familiar with the area don’t really know the details of what area is what, but when you bring in guys from 50 to 75 miles away, they really don’t know the details.”

After some time, Sayles and his girlfriend were finally able to return to their home, which was spared by the blaze, but most if not all of the outbuildings on their property were gone.

“We still can’t stay here because we have no electricity or water, but I’m working on that,” he said.

According to the Southern California Edison outage map, there still are at least 100 customers without power due to the Blue Cut fire. There is no estimated time to have power restored to those homes and businesses.

“Utility companies will continue to work in the fire area to replace damaged and destroyed infrastructure,” according to a NFS statement released Monday morning.

It went on to say repairs of railroad corridor should be complete within 24 hours. Rail lines have resumed active operations.

The San Bernardino National Forest has requested a Burned Area Emergency Response team to the area that, among other duties, will assess the charred landscape for possible future mudslides, said John Miller, spokesman for the NFS.

As residents return to their homes, San Bernardino County Department of Public Health authorities warn those affected by the massive blaze to use caution when cleaning up.

While ash from the recent Blue Cut and Pilot fires is relatively nontoxic, it will contain small amounts of hazardous chemicals that may cause various health risks, Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare of the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health said in a news release.

The ash also can affect those with respiratory issues such as asthma.

County health officials advise people to wear gloves, long-sleeved shirts and long pants to avoid skin contact with the ash. They also recommend people use masks rated N-95 or P-100.

Besides ash, health officials also warned that food exposed to fire can be compromised by not only the heat of the fire, but also smoke fumes and chemicals used to fight the fire, which contain toxic materials.

Damage to wells and septic systems can also come from flames, smoke, ash, power outages or equipment failure due to fire damage, according to the release.

There were 34 hand crews, 102 fire engines from several different stations and departments, 14 bulldozers, nine water tenders and nine helicopters still battling the blaze Monday, fire officials said in a release.

While the cause of the fire has yet to be determined, authorities are asking anyone with any information or photographers or video regarding the start of the fire to contact them at 1-800-47-ARSON or WeTip.com.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20160822/firefighters-keep-blue-cut-fire-from-spreading-increase-containment-during-7th-day>

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## Blue Cut Fire – 36,274 Acres – 100% Contained (UPDATE 66)

Michael P. Neufeld, Rim of the World News

Posted: August 23, 2016, 12:59 AM



The Blue Cut Fire in the Cajon Pass is now 100% contained. (Photo by CALFIRE)



County Fire Chief Mark Hartwig has announced that at least 96 single-family homes have been destroyed in the Blue Cut Fire which began in the Cajon Pass area. (Photo by San Bernardino County Fire)



One of the 105 homes destroyed by the Blue Cut Fire. (Photo Courtesy Supervisor James Ramos).

UPDATE 66: Tuesday, August 23 – 7:56 a.m.

Cajon Pass – The Blue Cut Fire — according to CALFIRE — is now 100 percent contained after burning 36,274 acres.



The Damage Assessment Team — working under the Blue Cut Fire Unified Command — has issued its preliminary report showing 105 single family residences and 216 outbuildings were destroyed, and 3 single family residences and 5 other structures were damaged.

Numerous vehicles were also destroyed or damaged.

UPDATE 65: Tuesday, August 23 – 4:23 a.m.

Cajon Pass – The latest information on the Blue Cut Fire in the Cajon Pass is that it is 96% contained.

Highway 138 was re-opened by Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol at 6 p.m. Monday.

UPDATE 64: Monday, August 21 – 6:43 p.m.

Cajon Pass – Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol have just re-opened Highway 138 through the Blue Cut Fire area.

However, utility workers, highway crews, law enforcement and fire personnel may still be working in the area and motorists should proceed with caution, Caltrans spokesperson Terri Kasinga told ROTWNEWS.com.

The roadway fully opened at 6 p.m. Monday.

“All state routes that were initially closed due to the Blue Cut Fire are now open,” Kasinga said.

UPDATE 63: Monday, August 21 – 9:25 a.m.

Cajon Pass – The U.S. Forest Service is reporting minimal fire behavior was observed overnight with the acreage remaining at 37,020. Containment of the Blue Cut Fire is now 89 percent.

Firefighters continue to extinguish hot spots inside of the fire perimeter.

Fire suppression repair efforts, which include erosion control, are in progress and the San Bernardino National Forest has requested a BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response) team.

Residents allowed to return to their homes should be aware that utility crews continue to work in the fire area to replace damaged and destroyed infrastructure.

Assessment and repair of rail corridor should be complete within 24 hours.

UPDATE 62: Sunday, August 21 – 6:16 p.m.

Cajon Pass – All evacuations due to the Blue Cut Fire have been lifted. However, only residents with identification will be allowed past checkpoints.

Some residents returning to their homes may find that they are without electricity, according to a Sheriff's Department media release.

The fire is now reported to be 85 percent contained.

UPDATE 61: Sunday, August 21 – 10 a.m.

Lytle Creek – Residents of Lytle Creek are being allowed to return to their homes. The mandatory evacuation order was lifted at 10 a.m. Sunday with the fire at 83 percent containment.

Residents only are being permitted in the area — with verification needed — at the Lytle Creek Road and Glen Helen Parkway checkpoint.

UPDATE 60: Sunday, August 21 – 7:50 a.m.

Cajon Pass – The U. S. Forest Service is reporting that containment of the Blue Cut Fire is now at 83 percent.

A Twitter post also shows that the acreage held at 37,020 overnight.

UPDATE 59: Saturday, August 20 – Noon

Cajon Pass – Evacuation orders for Wrightwood have been reduced from mandatory to voluntary. The change was effective at 12 noon on Saturday, August 20. Residents should be aware that fire equipment and utility crews are still working in the area.

RESIDENTS ONLY will be allowed past the road closure at Highway 138 / Highway 2 by providing verification of residency to personnel assigned at the road closure.

The Blue Cut Fire is now 73 percent contained.

Caltrans is now reporting that all ramps at Cleghorn and Kenwood are now open.

Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford got a bird's eye view of the Blue Cut fire during a ride along with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department helicopter. This is looking across I-15 southwest over Mormon Rocks toward Lytle Creek and Wrightwood. (Photo by Supervisor Janice Rutherford)

UPDATE 58: Saturday, August 20 – 8:12 a.m.

Cajon Pass – CALFIRE spokesperson Daniel Burlant and Socalmountains.com are reporting that the Blue Cut Fire — which has burned 57 square miles (37,020 acres) — is now 68 percent contained.

UPDATE 57: Friday, August 19 – 10:26 p.m.

Cajon Pass – The latest information on the Blue Cut Fire in the Cajon Pass is that it has burned 37,020 acres and is 40% contained. To date, 105 single-family homes have been destroyed along with 216 outbuildings.

The information provided by the U.S. Forest Service shows that 2,684 firefighters are working the fire.

UPDATE 56: Friday, August 19 – 2:40 p.m.

Cajon Pass – Once again, improved mapping has changed the acreage burned in the Blue Cut Fire in the Cajon Pass. The fire is currently 37,002 acres with 26% containment.

The Blue Cut Fire now has 1,584 personnel on scene including 178 engines, 26 crews, 10 air tankers, 2 Very Large Air Tankers (VLAT's), and 17 Helicopters, including night flying helicopters, according to InciWeb.

UPDATE 55: Friday, August 19 – 1:40 p.m.

Cajon Pass – The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department has announced the mandatory evacuation orders for residents west of Baldy Mesa Road to Wilson Ranch Road south of Phelan Road to Mission Street affected by the Blue Cut Fire have been lifted.

## ROAD CHANGES

Eastbound Highway 138 from I-15 to Summit Valley is now open allowing traffic all the way to Crestline, according to Caltrans..

Baldy Mesa Road south of Phelan Road has also re-opened.

UPDATE 54: Friday, August 19 – 10:35 a.m.

Victorville, CA – **San Bernardino County Fire** Chief Mark Hartwig has just announced that 96 single-family homes have been lost in the Blue Cut Fire and that others sustained damage.

Hartwig told a news conference from the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds that 213 out buildings have also been destroyed along with numerous vehicles.

Several commercial structures — including the historic Summit Inn/Cafe — have also been destroyed or sustained damage.

UPDATE 53: Friday, August 19 – 10:05 a.m.

Lytle Creek, CA – The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department has issued a request to the news media requesting that the fact that Lytle Creek is still under mandatory evacuation orders be emphasized.

Rumors to the contrary have residents trying to return to the evacuation zone. The area is still closed.

UPDATE 52: Friday, August 19 – 9:55 a.m.

Cajon Pass – Caltrans has reopened a small portion of Highway 138 from Summit Valley Road to Highway 173.

The Caltrans media advisory indicates that the other section of Highway 138 remains closed from Summit Valley Road west to the Los Angeles County line for utility pole repair until further notice.

The fire is now 26% contained after consuming 37,002 acres.

## RECEPTION & CARE CENTERS

The American Red Cross Reception and Care Centers in Hesperia and Fontana report this morning that they have registered just over 300 people.

Should the Blue Cuit Fire require additional evacuations the center scan accommodate additional evacuees.

<http://rotwnews.com/2016/08/23/breaking-news-bluecut-fire-in-cajon-pass-making-run-towards-wrightwoodf/>

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## **Fire officials: Bluecut Fire fully contained Tuesday morning**

**Jose Quintero, Victor Valley Daily Press**

Posted: August 23, 2016, 7:58 AM



A Union Pacific train passes thru the Cajon Pass near Keenbrook where vehicles, structures and vegetation burned in the Bluecut Fire. David Pardo, Daily Press

**CAJON PASS** — Fire officials announced the Bluecut Fire was fully contained Tuesday morning after burning in the Cajon Pass for a week despite telling the Daily Press on Monday that full containment wasn't expected until Aug. 31.

The announcement comes exactly a week after announcing full containment of the Pilot Fire, which burned over 8,000 acres in the San Bernardino Mountains and Summit Valley for over a week.

Incident Command also revised the total acreage for the Bluecut Fire to 36,274 acres, down from 37,020 which had been reported by fire officials for over three days.

According to the Incident Command website, the ongoing plans for the fire are continual mop up and securing and reinforcing containment lines, along with “demobilization of excess resources to the incident.”

The Incident Command website showed Tuesday morning that 1,223 firefighters still remain assigned to the fire.

San Bernardino Forest Service spokeswoman Lauren Durocher told the Daily Press on Monday that fire crews were focusing on the lone open line in the fire in the western portion of the perimeter at Gobblers Knob near Lytle Creek.

Durocher said the area was “rather steep” and that Incident Command was anticipating the fire to be fully contained on Aug. 31.



The Bluecut Fire, which is believed to have destroyed 105 homes, 216 outbuildings and over 200 vehicles, began as a second-alarm vegetation fire on Aug. 16 in the Cajon Pass, near Cajon Boulevard about a quarter-mile west of I-15. The blaze raged through the Cajon Creek and spread to 6,500 acres in less than four hours and 18,000 acres by the end of the day. The fire forced authorities to evacuate over 34,500 homes and 82,000 residents as Gov. Jerry Brown issued a state of emergency.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation and fire investigators are asking for the public's assistance in determining the cause. Fire officials told the Daily Press that investigators did not have any leads on how the fire may have started. Photos or videos that might assist investigators are especially welcome. If you have any information you can call 1-800-47-ARSON. Those wishing to remain anonymous may call the WeTip hotline at 800-782-7436 or visit [www.wetip.com](http://www.wetip.com).

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20160823/fire-officials-bluecut-fire-fully-contained-tuesday-morning>

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## **Blue Cut fire fully contained**

**Anne Millerbernd, The Press-Enterprise**

Posted: August 23, 2016, 8:50AM

One week after it ignited west of Interstate 15 in the Cajon Pass, the Blue Cut fire is completely contained.

The fire peaked just above 37,000 acres, but by Tuesday, Aug. 23, it was down to 36,274 acres.

The blaze destroyed more than 300 structures, about a third of which were homes, and forced the evacuation of about 82,000 residents.

Officials have said the fire displayed unprecedented growth in its first few days. It grew to cover 18,000 acres — about 28 square miles — in less than 24 hours.

The fire forced I-15 — the main artery between the Inland Empire and the High Desert — to shutter for more than a day. Still closed Tuesday was US Forest Road 3N31 at Lone Pine Canyon Road and a dirt road portion of Lytle Creek from the gun range into the forest, according to an incident fact sheet from the U.S. Forest Service.

As of Tuesday morning, no more mandatory evacuations are in place, and residents are allowed back in their homes with proof of residency in most areas.

The plan Tuesday for the over 1,200 firefighters still at the blaze is mostly related to reinforcing current containment lines around the fire and cleaning up after it.

Nobody was killed in the fire, though there were firefighters injured.

Forest Service and fire officials have asked for the public's help as they search for the cause of the fire. Anyone with information about how it may have ignited is asked to call 800-47-ARSON or go to WeTip.com.

Those wanting to donate to residents impacted by the flames can visit <https://ieuw.org/help> or text RELIEF to 40403.

<http://www.dailynews.com/general-news/20160823/blue-cut-fire-fully-contained>

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## **Thank you firefighters**

**Genevieve Heater, Victor Valley Daily Press, Letter to the Editor**

Posted: August 23, 2016

As school is again canceled in Apple Valley due to a little smoke, I thank those who have walked into the thickest smoke. At the Sand Fire, the Pilot Fire, and now the Bluecut Fire.

[\(Print Edition Only\)](#)

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## **Red Cross closing Bluecut shelters**

**Victor Valley Daily Press**

Posted: August 23, 2016

In response to the mandatory evacuations due to the Bluecut Fire being lifted, the American Red Cross serving San Bernardino County is closing down the evacuation shelters at the Jessie Turner Community Center in Fontana and the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds in Victorville Tuesday.

The Red Cross now shifts into recovery mode to help families affected by the wildfire on the road to recovery. Client casework is being conducted at the Red Cross Victorville Office at 17199 Yuma St., Suite 2, in Victorville Tuesday through Thursday from noon to 8 p.m. Residents can call 760-380-7231 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to speak with a client caseworker.

Representatives from the Red Cross will be working with local officials to promote readiness.

[\(Print Edition Only\)](#)

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## **Fire could lead to septic system damage**

**Victor Valley Daily Press**

Posted: August 23, 2016

San Bernardino County Environmental Health Services warns that septic systems may become damaged during a wildfire, leading to well-water contamination and malfunctioning of wastewater systems.

The underground elements of a well, pumping system or septic system are typically unharmed by wildfire, but damage to the electrical or plumbing components that are exposed at the surface can affect system performance, the safety of a private water supply and the proper disposal of wastewater. If a well has potentially become contaminated, drinking water must be tested for bacteria by a certified laboratory.

While waiting for test results, water may be used for showering and flushing toilets. Residents should avoid swallowing water from showers or baths. Water should not be used for drinking or cooking purposes unless it has been boiled or disinfected.

Always use bottled water for cooking and drinking until well water has been tested and certified as safe.

If you are on a water system, please contact your water company for information on safety concerns. Should you have any questions about your water, please contact Environmental Health at 1-800-442-2283 or your water company.

[\(Print Edition Only\)](#)

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## **Bluecut Fire relief fund launched**

**Victor Valley Daily Press**

Posted: August 23, 2016

Inland Empire United Way has established a fire relief fund in collaboration with other community and nonprofit partners for the collection of financial donations to help residents impacted by the Bluecut Fire. The Community Foundation — which serves San Bernardino and Riverside Counties — has committed the first \$100,000 to the fund and encourages others to join in their concern for those whose lives have been affected by this disaster. Contributions will be used to address the short- and longterm needs of those affected by the Bluecut Fire. United Way is committed to working with other local nonprofits and service providers to identify the greatest needs and best resources for helping the community recover in the weeks and months ahead. One-hundred percent of contributions will be directed to recovery efforts for those affected by the Bluecut Fire. Donations can be made online at [www.IEUW.org/help](http://www.IEUW.org/help), by texting RELIEF to 40403, or by check made payable to Inland Empire United Way sent to: IEUW Fire Fund, 9644 Hermosa Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730.

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