



NEWS



News Headlines 01/28/2021

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Storm predicted to hit county; Burn areas at higher flood risk

Staff Writer, Big Bear Grizzly

Posted: January 27, 2021 at 5:22PM



The National Weather Service predicts heavy rainfall in Southern California to arrive late Thursday, Jan. 28, into Friday, Jan. 29, with rain levels at the 6,000-foot level. Rain could melt the snowpack and cause flooding and mudslides.

The El Dorado Fire burn area is at risk. According to the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department, if the predicted rainfall amounts occur, there is a potential for flooding and mud and debris flows, as well as mudslides in the recent burn areas.

Heavy rainfall can cause normally dry washes and riverbeds to become raging torrents in a very short amount of time. Mudslides are already reported in Central and Northern California areas as the storm moves through those areas. As little as 12 inches of moving water can move a vehicle. Never cross a road that you can't see due to it being covered by water. Turn around, don't drown.

People who live in areas that have burned recently including the El Dorado Fire, are presented with unique challenges. This includes Angelus Oaks and Forest Falls. Highway 38 could also be impacted by floods and mudslides as charred ground where vegetation has been burned away creates a loss of soil strength and can no longer easily absorb rainwater. This increases the risk of flooding and mudflows. Properties directly affected by fires and those located downstream of the burn areas are most at risk.

Plan ahead. The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department has a Ready! Set! Go! Flood preparation brochure available online at <https://www.sbcfire.org/Programs/ReadySetGoFlood.aspx>. It includes information about how to prepare for wet weather such as cleaning out rain gutters and storm drains, where to sign up for emergency alerts, fire stations that have sandbags available, and what to have in your emergency kit.

Sandbags do not guarantee a water-tight seal, but properly placed sandbags can help redirect water, mud and debris away from your home. For more information, visit www.sbcfire.org. Resources for those affected by the El Dorado/Apple Fire burn area is available at burnareainfo.sbcounty.gov.

If you haven't already done so, you can register to receive emergency text messages on your cell phone through the Telephone Emergency Notification System, or TENS, at www.sbcounty.gov/SBCFire/TENS/TENSContact.aspx or by calling 211 or 909-980-2857 for assistance.

<https://bigbeargrizzly.net/news/4905/storm-predicted-to-hit-county-burn-areas-at-higher-flood-risk/>

Evacuation warnings issued in Inland Empire due to flash flood concerns

Tom Tucker, News Channel 3

Posted: January 27, 2021



An evacuation warning was issued Wednesday afternoon for communities in northeast Yucaipa, Oak Glen and Mountain Home Village due to the possibility of flash floods from a heavy storm moving into Southern California.

An evacuation warning was issued Wednesday afternoon for communities in northeast Yucaipa, Oak Glen and Mountain Home Village due to the possibility of flash floods from a heavy storm moving into Southern California.

Evacuations were also in effect for Cherry Valley and Beaumont in Riverside County.

A winter storm watch is in effect until Friday at 3 p.m. as a new storm system could bring 2-4 inches of rain to some communities and more than 10 inches of snow to the mountains.

Fire officials said recent burn areas are at a higher risk for flooding and advised residents to be prepared.

If the recent burn areas in Southern California receive the rainfall amount predicted, there is a potential for flooding, as well as mud and debris flows and a strong possibility of mudslides, according to **San Bernardino County Fire**.

Multiple signs have been posted along Oak Glen Road in Oak Glen, warning residents about possible trouble if the storm is as strong as expected.

"Some of those areas are the ones you see behind us here above the north bench is an area of grave concern," said Cal Fire Captain Bennet Miloy

He said while all of the snow at lower elevations would typically be a good thing, dangerous conditions could arise if snow-capped foothills are pounded with heavy rain.

In Riverside County, officials were also anticipating flash floods when the storm reaches the region, but it wasn't certain which areas would experience flooding.

"We had a couple of rain events but they've been fairly minor rain events. This is the first one that's really going to hit the thresholds, and that's really where the theories on what the burn scar potential could do are going to be tested," said Shane Reichardt with Riverside County Emergency Management.

<https://abc7.com/evacuation-warning-storm-southern-california-rain/10070911/>

In California: Blue Shield tapped to run state vaccine system; Bay Area hit by big storm

Winston Gieseke, USA Today

Posted: January 27, 2021 at 9:06PM



The El Dorado Fire burns in the San Bernardino National Forest near Yucaipa, Calif., on Saturday, September 5, 2020. Taya Gray/The Desert Sun

Greetings, I'm Winston Gieseke, philanthropy and special sections editor for The Desert Sun in Palm Springs, shining a spotlight on all things Golden State. Here are some of the day's headlines from this great state of ours.

In California brings you top Golden State stories and commentary from across the USA TODAY Network and beyond. Get it free, straight to your inbox.

Blue Shield of California tapped to run state vaccine system

UC Davis Medical Center nurse Heather Donaldson prepares to inoculate a staff member with the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020 in Sacramento, Calif.

Health insurance giant Blue Shield of California will be the outside administrator tasked with ramping up the state's coronavirus vaccine delivery system, which to date has been slow, stilted and plagued by confusion, the state health agency said Wednesday.

Another major health care provider, Kaiser Permanente, will also help in the effort to deliver vaccines speedily and equitably across the state of nearly 40 million residents, the agency said.

While the contract with Blue Shield is still being finalized, its task will be to "create, contract with and manage a statewide vaccine administration network" and to allocate doses directly to providers, which will include pharmacies, public and private health networks and hospitals, pop-up sites and community health centers.

Currently, the state allocates doses to county public health departments and hospital and health care networks, but counties say they don't know what the hospitals have and everyone wants more vaccine.

Blue Shield of California said in a statement it was "honored to be invited by the governor to play an important role" in battling the pandemic and declined further questions.

In other vaccination news, a health care worker at UC Irvine Medical Center died after receiving his second dose of Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine, the Orange County Register reports.

Tim Zook, a 60-year-old X-ray technologist, suffered an adverse reaction within hours after the second shot was administered, reporting an upset stomach and trouble breathing. At the emergency room, Zook was put on oxygen. Four hours later, a BiPAP machine was needed to help push air into his lungs. While multiple tests revealed he did not have COVID-19, he died a few days later.

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“We are not blaming any pharmaceutical company,” said his wife, Rochelle Zook. “My husband loved what he did. He worked in hospitals for 36½ years. He believed in vaccines. I’m sure he would take that vaccine again, and he’d want the public to take it.”

According to the Orange County coroner, the cause of death is inconclusive for now. Additional toxicology tests are needed and will likely take months.

Feds: California man sent threatening texts to families of congressman, journalist on day of Capitol riot

Protesters attack the Capitol on Jan. 6.

Federal authorities say a California man sent threatening text messages to the families of a New York congressman and a journalist on the same day pro-Donald Trump rioters stormed the U.S. Capitol.

Robert Lemke, 35, was arrested in California on Tuesday on a charge of making threatening interstate communications, according to a complaint filed by the Justice Department. To the congressman’s brother, Lemke texted: “Your brother is putting your entire family at risk with his lies and other words. We are armed and nearby your house.”

While the complaint does not name the congressman, both the New York Times and NBC News have identified him as Democratic Rep. Hakeem Jeffries.

“Stop telling lies; Biden did not win, he will not be president,” Lemke texted the congressman’s brother on Jan. 6.

"He was radicalized by 'the big lie' that Donald Trump told and that has been supported by so many Republicans in the House and the Senate," Jeffries told MSNBC.

According to the complaint, Lemke also told a "New York City-based" relative of a journalist — identified by the New York Times as ABC anchor George Stephanopoulos — that the journalist’s “words are putting you and your family at risk. We are nearby armed and ready. Thousands of us are active/retired law enforcement, military, etc. That’s how we do it.”

Lemke faces a maximum of five years in prison.

Dana Point earns distinction as first Whale Heritage Site in the U.S.

whale promo

Located in Orange County, the small harbor city of Dana Point off the Southern California coast has long been a haven for those interested in observing dolphins and whales in their native habitat. And on Wednesday, it was announced by USA TODAY that the area had been designated a Whale Heritage Site — the first in the United States.

According to the official Whale Heritage Sites website, the designation is a "globally recognized program to identify destinations that implement and celebrate responsible and sustainable whale and dolphin watching."

Dana Point is an illustration that "cetaceans should be only enjoyed in the wild, where they live in harmony with people and they're experienced respectfully, by a protective and responsible tourism industry," said Ben Williamson, U.S. programs director for World Animal Protection.

Currently, more than 3,500 marine mammals live in captivity around the world, according to a report released by World Animal Protection in 2019. "Dolphins are forced to live in barren tanks, reduced to performing in exchange for food," Williamson said. "And it's not fun; it's cruelty."

The world's other Whale Heritage Sites are located in Hervey Bay, Australia; The Bluff, South Africa; and Tenerife-La Gomera Marine Area, Spain.

Burn areas under an evacuation warning

The El Dorado Fire burns in the San Bernardino National Forest near Yucaipa, Calif., on Saturday, September 5, 2020.

The Bay Area's most powerful storm in a year soaked the region Wednesday with rain, snow and intense winds that felled trees and knocked out power from Sonoma to Monterey County, the Mercury News reported.

While the rain and blustery conditions were expected to continue into Thursday, about 5,000 residents in the Santa Cruz Mountains remained under evacuation as the fear of potentially deadly mudslides persisted into the night.

A rainstorm expected Friday also led to an evacuation warning in parts of Southern California due to fears of flooding territory charred by a pair of wildfires last year. The warning covers homes in areas north of Interstate 10 near Banning and Beaumont.

"Based on current maps, I would estimate a total of a couple hundred homes fall within these zones, including Beaumont High School and Mountain View Middle School," said California Highway Patrol Officer Matthew Napier of the CHP San Geronimo office. The affected area is home to about 990 people.

The area has been affected by one of two fires: The Apple Fire, which began July 31 near Cherry Valley and burned 33,424 acres, and the El Dorado Fire, which charred 22,597 acres after igniting Sept. 5 near Yucaipa. Burn areas are especially prone to flooding since the land can't absorb water.

San Bernardino County's portion of the El Dorado Fire's burn area also is under an evacuation warning, the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** tweeted.

San Francisco votes to rename 44 schools for namesakes' ties to racism, slavery

The San Francisco School Board has voted to rename 44 school sites new names with no connection to slavery, oppression, racism or similar criteria, including Abraham Lincoln High School.

San Francisco school board officials decided by a 6-1 vote on Tuesday night to rename public schools carrying the names of people connected to slavery, oppression or racism.

More than a third of the district's 125 schools made the list of objectionable names, the San Francisco Chronicle reported, including those named for Abraham Lincoln, Dianne Feinstein, George Washington and Paul Revere.

The new namesakes must adhere to a set of guidelines, including that individuals proposed must not have been slave owners or abetted in slavery or genocide, violated human rights violations or be "known racists and/or white supremacists."

Feinstein, a U.S. senator from California since 1992, is on the list because she replaced a vandalized Confederate flag as the city's mayor.

While San Francisco Mayor London Breed in December called it "offensive" for SFUSD to be focused on renaming schools in the midst of a global health pandemic, schools will have until April to offer new names, which will then be voted on by board members.

Since 2014, more than 30 schools in the country have been renamed to remove Confederate references.

Actress Cloris Leachman dead at 94

Actress Cloris Leachman gestures to honoree Mel Brooks in the audience during the American Film Institute's 41st Lifetime Achievement Award Gala in June 2013 in Los Angeles.

And lastly, we say goodbye to Oscar- and Emmy-award-winning actress Cloris Leachman, who died Wednesday of natural causes at her home in Encinitas. She was 94.

Perhaps best known for her role as Phyllis Lindstrom on TV's "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and its spinoff "Phyllis," she also appeared in films such as "The Last Picture Show" and one of my personal favorites, the Mel Brooks classic "Young Frankenstein," in which she played the unforgettable Frau Blücher (cue horse whinny).

"It's been my privilege to work with Cloris Leachman, one of the most fearless actresses of our time," Juliet Green, Leachman's longtime manager, said in a statement to ABC News. "You never knew what Cloris was going to say or do and that unpredictable quality was part of her unparalleled magic."

That's all for now. We'll be back in your inbox tomorrow with more Golden State news.

In California is a roundup of news from across USA Today network newsrooms. Also contributing: The New York Times, NBC News, The Orange County Register, San Francisco Chronicle.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/01/27/blue-shield-california-tapped-run-state-vaccine-system/4284673001/>

El Dorado, Apple Fire burn areas under evacuation warning ahead of rainstorm

Colin Atagi, Palms Springs Desert Sun

Posted: January 27, 2021 at 11:24AM



An evacuation warning has been issued ahead of a rainstorm expected on Friday due to fears of flooding in Riverside County territory charred by a pair of wildfires west of the Coachella Valley last year.

The warning covers homes in zones Mias A, Mias B, Bench A, Noble A, Noble B, Noble F, Noble G zones and the Millard Shooting Ranch. Those areas are north of Interstate 10 near Banning and Beaumont.

"Based on current maps, I would estimate a total of a couple hundred homes fall within these zones, including Beaumont High School and Mountain View Middle School," said California Highway Patrol Officer Matthew Napier of the CHP San Geronio office.

Shane Reichardt, Riverside County Emergency Management Department senior public information specialist, said about 990 people live in the affected area.

The weather forced county health officials to cancel a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at San Geronio Middle School in Beaumont Friday. All appointments are rescheduled to Monday and patients will be notified via email for verification.

Each zone falls within areas affected by one of two fires: The Apple Fire, which began July 31 near Cherry Valley and burned 33,424 acres, and the El Dorado Fire, which charred 22,597 acres after igniting Sept. 5 near Yucaipa.

Burn areas are prone to flooding since the land can't absorb water, and the warning is in place so people can be prepared to leave their homes, Reichardt said.

"It's to let people know there's rain in the forecast that's a concern, and we want people who may be impacted to be ready because we could issue evacuations at any point," he said.

This map illustrates zones that are under an evacuation warning due to potential flooding during a rainstorm on Friday, Jan. 29, 2021. The areas are within the burn scars of two wildfires and ground can't absorb water.

The warning, he said, may benefit senior citizens who need help moving or owners who need extra time to move large animals before the storm hits.

San Bernardino County's portion of the El Dorado Fire's burn area also is under an evacuation warning, the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department tweeted

The burn areas could receive around 3 inches of rain Friday with precipitation falling at a maximum rate of 0.60 inches per hour, said Brandt Maxwell, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

A flash flood watch has been issued for communities and mountains across Southern California, including the San Jacinto Mountains and San Bernardino Mountains.

The watch is in effect Thursday evening through Friday afternoon, according to the National Weather Service.

Snow mitigates flood risk

Snowfall in the San Bernardino Mountains may develop at the 5,000-foot level and that should delay water flow from higher elevations, he said.

"That means the higher parts will be protected effectively," Maxwell said.

Reichardt concurred snowfall could stave off flooding but said heavy rainfall still could be problematic.

"The snow should help slow (flooding) because it's not gonna flow off the mountains. But if the storm ended up producing more rain than snow, then it could be the opposite," he said.

The storm will be the third to hit Southern California in about a week and forecasters advise the region could be hit by rain, snow and low temperatures similar to conditions on Monday.

How much rain in the desert?

Palm Springs is expected to receive about 0.50 inches of rain Friday, which is slightly more than the 0.33 inches it got Monday. Maxwell said Friday's storm is "run-of-the-mill for this time of year in the Coachella Valley and "It's something we see at least once every winter, if not more."

Snow may fall as low as 5,000 feet in the San Jacinto Mountains, which is higher than Monday when it was closer to around 2,000 feet.

The higher elevation lessens the chance of Palm Springs residents seeing graupel, the icy droplets that formed during Monday's storm.

"It doesn't reduce it to zero, but it does reduce it somewhat," Maxwell said.

<https://www.desertsun.com/story/weather/2021/01/27/el-dorado-apple-fire-burn-areas-under-evacuation-warning-due-storm/4277494001/>

Former Hesperia Mayor Dies After Being Hospitalized with Covid-19

Staff Writer, California City News

Posted: January 28, 2021



Former Hesperia mayor Paul Russ has died following complications from COVID-19. He was 61 years old. Russ' daughter confirmed her father passed away Thursday after multiple trips to the emergency room. His nurse told her the cause was COVID pneumonia.

Russ was no stranger to health complications. He was a cancer survivor who had previously undergone both a kidney and liver transplant.

Russ is being remembered for his perseverance and for the groundwork he laid as a public official. "During his time on the council, Paul used his financial knowledge to help the city," said Hesperia Councilman Larry Bird. "Hesperia finds itself in a good position today, partly because of his efforts, especially in helping the city transition to **San Bernardino County Fire**, which will be his legacy."

<https://www.californiacitynews.org/2021/01/former-hesperia-mayor-dies-after-being-hospitalized-covid-19.html>