



NEWS



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South fire threatens 600 structures in Lytle Creek, evacuations in place

Brian Rokos & Quinn Wilson, The SUN

Posted: August 25, 2021



Manny Hernandez runs away from his burning home along Lytle Creek Road after an unsuccessful attempt to find his family's cats near Lytle Creek Wednesday, Aug. 25, 2021, during the South fire. Hernandez, who has lived at the home for 35-years, did not find his families cats. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

A rapidly expanding brush fire in Lytle Creek in San Bernardino County on Wednesday, Aug. 25, burned several homes and was threatening others along with businesses and forced evacuations, fire officials said.

By 6 p.m., the fire's size had reached 500 acres with around 600 structures threatened, said Cal Fire/San Bernardino. Around 1,000 residents were under evacuation orders, Cal Fire said.

Residents of Lytle Creek who live north of Lytle Creek Ranger Station on Lytle Creek Road were ordered to evacuate around 6:50 p.m., according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

Additional evacuation orders were issued for Lytle Creek Road south of the ranger station, west of Sierra Avenue, north of the 15 Freeway and east of Duncan Canyon Road to the foothills.

An evacuation warning was in place for residents north of Glen Helen Parkway, east of Sierra Avenue and Lytle Creek Road and west of the 15 Freeway, the San Bernardino National Forest reported.

Lytle Creek is north of Rialto and on the south side of the Cajon Pass.

One firefighter from an unspecified agency was transported to a hospital with a minor injury, Cal Fire said.

High voltage power transmission lines that feed the Greater Los Angeles area were also threatened by the fire and were a secondary concern after the immediate threat to the Lytle Creek community, said Mike McClintock, battalion chief with the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

Some structures had burned, including homes seen ablaze in TV footage. San Bernardino County Fire Department spokesman Eric Sherwin estimated about a dozen or so structures had been damaged or destroyed.

The fire was advancing to the northeast. In some areas, light winds pushed the flames, and in others, the flames were assisted by the topography as flames burn more easily uphill.

McClintock said the Fire Department was forecasting the fire's potential spread and had contingency plans in the event it got into the Cajon Pass.

The fire was burning on the east side of Lytle Creek Road north of Glen Helen Parkway, as well as west of Lytle Creek Road.

The fire was reported at 1:40 p.m. on Lytle Creek Road, one mile north of Duncan Canyon Road. Sherwin said officials are investigating whether excavation equipment in the area might have touched off the blaze.

Containment is the area of a fire that firefighters have surrounded, usually with hand lines dug up using shovels or trenches plowed with bulldozers.

Traffic on the 15 Freeway was moving slowly in the area. The Sierra on- and off-ramps of the 15 were closed.

An evacuation center was set up at Jessie Turner Community Center, 15556 Summit Ave., Fontana. Large animals can be taken to the Devore Animal Shelter, 19777 Shelter Way, San Bernardino.

Sherwin said firefighters are entering the beginning of the peak of the fire season, and even though the temperatures in the past week have been cooler, brush remains dry. Windy conditions also impacted the fire's spread, Sherwin said.

The Lytle Creek area on Wednesday saw wind gusts as high as 19 mph and a "pretty low" relative humidity at around 16 percent, said Philip Gonsalves, meteorologist with the National Weather Service's San Diego office. The high for the area was 93 degrees, Gonsalves said.

"(Wednesday's weather conditions) certainly weren't helpful for firefighting efforts," Gonsalves said.

Conditions on Thursday are expected to be similar in terms of wind gusts and Gonsalves said a slightly higher relative humidity can be expected, however, not enough to make much of a difference for the fire. Temperatures are expected to be in the mid-to-low 90s in lower elevation areas and in the 80s in higher altitudes, Gonsalves said.

The fire is being jointly managed by San Bernardino County, the U.S. Forest Service and Cal Fire's San Bernardino Unit. Firefighters from throughout Southern California were on the lines.

More than 500 firefighters and over 50 engines were on the scene working to suppress the fire.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2021/08/25/brush-fire-in-lytle-creek-threatens-homes-prompts-evacuations/>

South Fire: 680 acres burned, homes destroyed as evacuation orders remain in place for Lytle Creek

Nouran Salahieh & Gene Kang, KTLA 5

Posted: August 26, 2021

The South Fire burning in the Lytle Creek area had grown to 680 acres and destroyed multiple homes as of Thursday morning.

Crews worked through the night to battle the dry-brush fueled fire, attacking it from the ground and the air as flames threatened to advance onto hundreds of homes.

The blaze broke out around 1:40 p.m. Wednesday and was burning near the 15 Freeway, in the area of Lytle Creek and Duncan roads, north of the Glen Helen Parkway. It was still 0% contained Thursday morning.

Residents were ordered to flee their homes shortly after the blaze was reported.

The areas of Lytle Creek Road north and south of the Ranger Station, west of Sierra Avenue, north of the 15 Freeway and east of Duncan Canyon Road remained under mandatory evacuation orders.

All residents north of Glen Helen Parkway, East of Sierra/Lytle Creek Road and West of the 15 Freeway were under evacuation warnings.

An evacuation shelter was set up at the Jessie Turner Center on 15556 Summit Ave. in Fontana.

The fire had destroyed four residential structures and 14 out buildings as of Thursday morning, according to Cal Fire.

Tim Handman lost his trailer home in the fire along the 3100 block of Lytle Creek Road.

“My place is gone,” Handman said as he stood among the fire-charred remains. “It just burned to the ground.”

Still, he had a positive outlook: “It can be replaced,” he said.

His home was on a property where multiple trailers and cars burned Wednesday, including the home of Jose Lamas.

“That’s where I lived 11 years,” Lamas said, his voice shaking as he gestured toward the fire-ravaged property barely visible in the smoky air.

“The good thing is we’re all alive,” he said. “Material wise, it’s OK. We’ll start over somehow.”

Sky5 was over the wind-fanned blaze Wednesday as the flames tore through homes and spread across the foothills, burning near power transmission lines.

A difficult firefight was still ahead for crews Thursday.

“Really tough conditions, very steep terrain,” San Bernardino County Fire Battalion Chief Mike McClintock told KTLA. “So we’re really going to work on today to bolster those containment lines so that we can hopefully switch to mop up in the next few days.”

More than 360 firefighters were battling the blaze Thursday morning.

The fire broke out at a time when some local firefighters are off fighting the massive wildfires in Northern California and other Western states.

“Some of our firefighters that we normally have on our forests, they’re working at fires in Northern California, or Idaho,” US Forest Service spokeswoman Lyn Sieliet told KTLA Wednesday. “We always keep a minimum staff on hand, but we don’t have the full staff that we normally do, say when there’s no fires happening anywhere in the nation.”

Additional resources were ordered to help battle the destructive fire and were arriving on scene Thursday, according to the fire’s InciWeb page.

It remains unclear what sparked the wildfire. Officials said the cause of the blaze remains under investigation.

The following roads were still closed due to the fire Thursday:

- Sierra Ave North of the 15 Freeway
- Lytle Creek Road to Duncan Canyon
- Lytle Creek Road to Sierra Avenue
- Glen Helen Parkway at Sycamore Center Drive
- Lone Pine Canyon Road at Highway 138

<https://ktla.com/news/local-news/south-fire-680-acres-burned-homes-destroyed-as-evacuation-orders-remain-in-place-for-lytle-creek-area/>

South Fire burns 700 acres, 0% Contained

Staff Writer, Spectrum News

Posted: August 26, 2021

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. — The South Fire near the Fontana area in San Bernardino County has quickly burned 700 acres and as of Thursday morning is 0% contained. The fire started at approximately 1:36 p.m. Wednesday.

The fire has destroyed 18 structures.

Resources have been ordered and are arriving on scene to start fire suppression efforts.

Evacuations have been ordered for Lytle Creek Rd. north and south of the ranger station, west of Sierra Ave., north of the I-15 and east of Duncan Canyon Rd.

An evacuation center has been set up at the Jessie Turner Center 15556 Summit Ave., Fontana CA 92336.

The following road closures have been made:

- Sierra Ave north of the I-15
- Lytle Creek Rd. to Duncan Canyon
- Lytle Creek Rd. to Sierra Ave.
- Glen Helen Parkway between Sycamore Center Dr.

The cause of the fire is currently under investigation.

Residents in the mountain and foothill areas should stay informed of weather forecasts. Register your cell phones with the Telephone Emergency Notification System (TENS) / Swift 911 and have an emergency plan. Visit www.sbcounty.gov for more emergency preparedness information.

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-east/wildfires/2021/08/26/south-fire-burns-500-acres--0--contained#>

Llamas, sheep huddle together as brush fire burns in Lytle Creek area near Fontana

Staff Writer, ABC7

Posted: August 25, 2021

LYTLE CREEK, Calif. (KABC) -- Animals, including llamas and sheep, were seen huddling together in their enclosures as a brush fire burned between Lytle Creek and Fontana on Wednesday.

As firefighters continued to battle the flames, saving human and animal lives are top of mind for the crews on the front lines.

Advertisement

The property owners did not have much time to prepare to evacuate, since the fire, which ignited around 1:30 p.m., spread so quickly. The blaze, dubbed the South Fire, was burning in an area west of the 15 Freeway and south of Lytle Creek Road.

Some residents were seen opening up enclosures to free the animals as quickly as they could from their ranch-like properties.

A family llamas, sheep and goats were seen huddling together in groups under thick layers of smoke.

Some horses were seen in an adjacent property, though thankfully, structures on that specific lot were not on fire. Residents could be seen trying to corral and rescue the horses.

Other structures and parked vehicles were seen burning in in Lytle Creek.

An evacuation center was set up for large animals at the Devore Animal Shelter, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. The shelter is located at 19777 Shelter Way in San Bernardino.

<https://abc7.com/animals-huddle-together-as-fire-burns-in-lytle-creek-area/10975456/>

Lytle Creek: Evacuation orders remain in place after 700-acre South Fire destroys 4 homes

Staff Writer, MSN

Posted: August 26, 2021

Crews appear to have gained the upper hand on a brush fire that burned some homes and at least 700 acres in San Bernardino County, but evacuation orders remained in place Thursday morning.

The quick-moving brush fire erupted Wednesday afternoon in the area between Lytle Creek and Fontana near the 15 Freeway.

The so-called South Fire was reported shortly after 1:30 p.m. and was burning amid light winds in an area west of the interstate and south of Lytle Creek Road. Though winds seemed to have died down, but fire remains 0% contained.

Several structures and parked vehicles were engulfed in flames, and residents were seen trying to rescue llamas and horses who were penned inside enclosed areas on ranch-like properties. Propane tanks were heard exploding.

Firefighters on the ground raced to douse flames and protect other homes as at least two tankers dropped water and Phos-Chek from overhead. At least four homes and 14 outbuildings were destroyed as 1,000 residents were under evacuation.

There were no immediate reports of injuries.

The San Bernardino County Fire Department initially said the blaze began when an excavator that was being operated in a backyard struck a rock, igniting sparks that spread to dry brush nearby. A fire department spokesperson later said there was no definite cause and an investigation is ongoing.

Cal Fire and San Bernardino National Forest firefighters also responded to the burn area. More than 100 personnel were involved in the firefight.

At least two residents in the area ignored a subsequent evacuation order, then later called 911 when their home was surrounded by flames, fire officials said. Firefighters returned and were able to rescue the trapped residents.

One resident said sprinklers installed on the roof of his home helped save the property from being destroyed.

An evacuation order was issued for Lytle Creek Road south of the Lytle Creek ranger station, west of Sierra Avenue, north of the 15 Freeway and east of Duncan Canyon to the foothills, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

Residents in all areas north of the ranger station were initially ordered to shelter in place, but an evacuation order was later issued.

An evacuation warning was issued for the area north of Glen Helen Parkway, east of Sierra Avenue and Lytle Creek Rd. west of the 15 Freeway.

An evacuation center for large animals was established at the Devore Animal Shelter, located at 19777 Shelter Way in San Bernardino.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/weather/topstories/lytle-creek-evacuation-orders-remain-in-place-after-700-acre-south-fire-destroys-4-homes/ar-AANLUJk>

Updates: South Fire and Westward Fire

KVCR, Jonathan Linden

Posted: August 25, 2021



Here's the latest information on the South Fire near Lytle Creek and the Westward Fire in Banning.
LAST UPDATED: August 26th at 12:10 A.M.

South Fire near Lytle Creek

The “South Fire” is occurring near Lytle Creek. Evacuation notices have been issued for individuals living west of the 15-Freeway, North of Glen Helen Parkway, and East of Sierra Ave and Lytle Creek Road.

Individuals needing to evacuate can go to the Jesse Turner Center in Fontana. If you have large animals that need to be evacuated, you can take them to the San Bernardino County Animal Shelter in Devore.

Cal Fire of San Bernardino is reporting the following...

- 500 acres burned
- 0% contained
- 600 structures threatened
- 1,000 residents under evacuation
- 1 firefighter was transported with a minor injury.

Westward Fire in Banning

The “Westward Fire” is occurring in Banning, near South San Gorgonio Ave and 4th Street.

As of 5:40 PM, all evacuation warnings have been lifted, but Highway 243 will remain closed in both directions between Wesley Street and Twin Pines.

Cal Fire of Riverside County is reporting the following...

- 200 acres burned
- 10% contained
- All evacuations have been lifted
- No reported injuries

<https://www.kvcrnews.org/2021-08-25/updates-south-fire-and-westward-fire>

South Fire: Wildfire in Lytle Creek near Fontana burns down homes, threatens animals

KJ Hiramoto, FOX11

Posted: August 26, 2021



SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, Calif. - An out-of-control fire continues to burn in the Lytle Creek area, burning down multiple homes and putting farm animals in danger. The community in the San Gabriel Mountains is roughly ten miles north of Fontana in San Bernardino County.

The fire sparked on Wednesday afternoon and grew overnight from 500 to 700 acres with no containment, the San Bernardino National Forest reported. Four homes have been destroyed by the blaze, as well as 14 outbuildings. Multiple other structures were also damaged by the flames.

One firefighter was taken to a hospital with a minor injury, fire officials said.

The blaze is being fueled by low humidity, wind, and dry conditions.

According to Cal Fire San Bernardino, nearly a thousand residents were under evacuation orders.

EVACUATION ORDERS

An evacuation order is in effect for those living in the following areas:

- West of Sierra Avenue and Lytle Creek Road

EVACUATION WARNING

An evacuation warning is in place for the following areas:

- Lytle Creek Rd. south of the Ranger Station
- West of Sierra Ave.
- North of the 15 Freeway
- East of Duncan Canyon to the foothills
- North of Glen Helen
- East of Sierra Ave./Lytle Creek Rd. west of the 15 Freeway

An evacuation shelter is available at the Jessie Turner Health and Fitness Community Center, located at 15556 Summit Avenue. A shelter for large animals is also provided at the Devore Animal Shelter, located at 19777 Shelter Way in San Bernardino.

An information call center line for those impacted by the fire is available at 909-383-5688.

ROAD CLOSURES

All ramps at Sierra at the 15 Freeway reopened. High 138 is open but access to Line Pine Canyon is closed, Caltrans said.

<https://www.foxla.com/news/south-fire-wildfire-spreading-across-fontana-area-evacuation-underway>

UPDATE: South Fire destroys 18 structures and is still 0 percent contained

Gilbert Gonzalez, Fontana Herald News

Posted: August 25, 2021



The South Fire, which erupted on Aug. 25 in the Lytle Creek area just north of Fontana, remained 0 percent contained as of the morning of Aug. 26, according to the San Bernardino National Forest.

The wildfire has burned 700 acres and has destroyed four residential structures and 14 out buildings, the San Bernardino National Forest said in a Twitter post.

"Crews worked through the night with the help of a night flying helicopter and Air Attack," the post said. "Crews are preparing for day shift with high temperatures and low RH levels."

On Aug. 25, evacuation orders were announced for Lytle Creek Road, south of the Ranger Station, west of Sierra Avenue, north of the Interstate 15 Freeway, and east of Duncan Canyon to the foothills, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

An evacuation warning was announced for the area north of Glen Helen, east of Sierra Avenue/Lytle Creek Road, and west of the I-15 Freeway.

The Sheriff's Department said that residents living in all areas north of the Lytle Creek Ranger Station on Lytle Creek Road were to shelter in place.

Hundreds of firefighters and numerous air assets were on scene from Cal Fire, San Bernardino County Fire Department, and San Bernardino National Forest.

The Jessie Turner Center, located at 15556 Summit Avenue in northwestern Fontana, is being used as a possible evacuation site for residents fleeing the flames.

An information call center was set up at (909) 383-5688.

Because of the thick smoke, the air quality in Fontana is poor, and an advisory has been issued through Friday, Aug. 27 by the South Coast Air Quality Management District.