



# NEWS



## News Headlines 08/20/2020

- Lightning fire erupts near Rimrock
- Destructive wildfires burn across Southern California with a common factor: lightning

## Lightning fire erupts near Rimrock

Staff Writer, Hi-Desert Star

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The Heaps Peak helicopter 534 made a water drop on the tip-top fire on Saturday. Credit: USFS Captain Robert Gillespie

**BIG BEAR** — A lightning strike ignited the brush near Tip-Top Mountain Saturday, Aug. 15, causing a fire on the mountain ridge northwest of Rimrock. Crews from Yucca Valley, Big Bear, Cal Fire and the United States Forest Service responded to the fire, containing it by 8 p.m. Sunday night, Aug. 16, and getting it completely under control by 4 p.m. Monday, Aug. 17.

**San Bernardino County fire** department Battalion Chief Mike McClintock and a brush engine crew from the Yucca Valley station were dispatched at 2:57 p.m. Saturday. County fire had received 911 calls from both the Yucca Valley area and the mountaintop; firefighters from the mountain also responded to the scene.

Upon arrival, McClintock said, they found 3-5 acres burning well off the road in steep terrain. State and federal forestry workers were dispatched to the scene around 3:30 p.m. A fixed-wing aircraft from Cal Fire and helicopters from the U.S. Forest Service dropped fire retardant and water on the scene, slowing the fire and keeping it in check on the ridge.

Ground crews then directly accessed the fire, which held at about 2.5 acres until it was controlled. The scene was turned over to the U.S. Forest Service as the fire was within that agency's boundary.

<https://hidesertstar.com/news/174078/lightning-fire-erupts-near-rimrock/>

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## Destructive wildfires burn across Southern California with a common factor: lightning

Colin Atagi, Palm Springs Desert Sun

Posted: August 19, 2020, 2:33 pm

U.S. Forest Service Battalion Chief Jim Snow was on his way to the 43,248-acre Dome Fire in the Mojave National Preserve Tuesday afternoon when he stopped briefly to investigate a smaller fire in Joshua Tree.

Nearly 150 miles separated the two blazes. The timing is an unfortunate representation of the number of wildfires plaguing Southern California and the rest of the Golden State.

As of Wednesday, 23 major wildfires have been reported across California with at least four of them in the southland. A handful of smaller fires have also been reported in Southern California, including 10 in the San Bernardino National Forest, where firefighters have been performing reconnaissance flights to look for smoke in response to the lightning activity.

Causes vary, but a number of fires were sparked by lightning strikes that developed from thunderstorms above various parts of the region, mostly in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

This includes the 160-acre Joshua Tree fire —now contained — which was preceded minutes earlier by another blaze that charred a tenth of an acre 2 miles to the south. That also was caused by a lightning strike, which has fire officials on edge.

"Each strike could be a potential fire, and I'm surprised we only had two," **San Bernardino County Fire Battalion Chief Mike McClintock** said.

Gov. Gavin Newsom on Wednesday said 10,849 lightning strikes had been reported across California over the past few days as an annual monsoonal period develops.

National Weather Service forecasters say the monsoonal period got off to a late start this week after normally being prevalent by mid-July.

Thunderstorms were expected through Wednesday before tapering off ahead of the weekend. Anything that develops in the future will likely arise at higher elevations.

"We're not projecting any by, say, the coast," said Rose Schoenfeld, a NWS meteorology intern. "It is along the mountain chain and the most likelihood is the Big Bear region."

Meteorologist Phil Gonsalves said 99 cloud-to-ground lightning strikes were recorded across Southern California Tuesday, but added "that was not an active day. It may even be below average."

Lightning also is blamed for the Dome Fire, which is the largest fire in Southern California. Five percent of its perimeter was contained and its rate of spread was minimal Wednesday, said Alex Olow, a member of its incident management team.

Officials estimate the fire, located about 30 miles southwest of Primm, Nev., may be fully contained by Aug. 30, he said.

Behind the Dome Fire in size is the Apple Fire, which continues to burn after starting July 31 in Cherry Valley, about 20 miles east of San Bernardino. As of Wednesday, it's burned 33,424 acres and was 95% contained.

Cal Fire investigators say the Apple Fire was ignited by a diesel-fueled vehicle "emitting burning carbon from the exhaust system."

The Apple Fire is among at least three major fires that have not been directly linked to lightning, at least for now.

Officials are still trying to identify the cause of the Lake Fire, which sparked Aug. 12 in the Angeles National Forest. It's burned 25,948 acres, destroyed 12 structures and continues to threaten 4,570 others.

It's burning near Lake Hughes in an area northeast of Interstate 5 and south of Highway 138. About 38% of its perimeter has been contained.

Also burning is the 4,300 acre Ranch 2 Fire north of Azusa, a city about 20 miles from Los Angeles. It started Aug. 13 and a 36-year-old man, Osmin Palencia, has been charged with arson, according to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office.

Firefighters are contending with rising temperatures amid California's historic heatwave, which is bringing triple-digit temperatures across the state.

Newsom stressed California has "quite literally" invested billions of dollars into fire preparations and other states, including Texas, Nevada and Arizona, have agreed to assist whenever needed.

Although Newsom offered a positive outlook, he acknowledged existing conditions are not ideal.

"This fire season has been very active and not surprisingly that activity is taking shape in a number of counties up and down the state of California," he said.

<https://www.desertsun.com/story/news/environment/wildfires/2020/08/19/california-wildfires-lightning-common-factor-across-southland/5606238002/>