

Firefighters battle rural wildfires in Central California

Associated Press

In the Fresno Bee and Modesto Bee, Thursday, July 16, 2020

More than 900 firefighters aided by helicopters and air tankers battled a wildfire in a rural area of Central California on Thursday.

The fire in the Diablo Range west of the Fresno County city of Coalinga grew to nearly 26 square miles (66.7 square kilometers) and was 20% contained, a fire command statement said.

One structure was destroyed, 60 were threatened and some evacuation orders were in place. No injuries were reported.

Firefighters have been dealing with steep and rugged topography and temperatures in the 90s since the fire erupted Monday afternoon near Mineral Springs Road and State Route 198.

"Our crews are also adjusting to additional in-camp safety modifications which have been implemented due to COVID-19," the statement said.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District warned of potential smoke impacts on health for residents of Fresno, Kings and Kern counties, and possibly the entire valley until the Mineral fire is extinguished.

To the north, a fire in a rural area of San Benito County near Panoche was 50% contained after scorching more than 2 square miles (5.6 square kilometers.)

Fresno County fire leads to health caution issued in Kern

The Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, July 15, 2020

A mineral fire located in western Fresno County near Coalinga grew to over 10,000 acres as of Wednesday afternoon, causing significant smoke to enter the central and southern part of the San Joaquin Valley.

According to a news release from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, the smoke is expected to impact Kern County residents. A health caution has been issued and will remain until the fire is extinguished, which may not happen until late next week, the control district said.

PM pollution can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic bronchitis and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, the control district said. The news release added that Individuals with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with PM exposure. Those with respiratory conditions, including COVID-19, young children and the elderly are especially susceptible to the health effects from this form of pollution, the control district said.

Anyone experiencing poor air quality due to wildfire smoke should move indoors to a filtered, air-conditioned environment with windows closed, the control district said.

Residents can use the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) to track air quality at any Valley location by visiting myRAAN.com.

For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call the local District office at 392-5500.

Mineral Fire: 11,000 acres burned, evacuation orders issued for some Fresno County residents

Residents in Fresno County are urged to stay indoors, especially those with asthma or other respiratory health issues.

ABC 30, Wednesday, July 15, 2020

FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) -- Evacuation orders have been issued by the Fresno County Sheriff's Office as firefighters work to gain containment of the Mineral Fire burning in western Fresno County.

The fire has charred 11,000 acres since breaking out Monday afternoon, and is 5% contained. It has also forced more people to leave their homes.

Sheriff's officials issued an evacuation order for all residents on Los Gatos Creek Road from Indians Springs to Union Carbide Road.

Other nearby residents were told to be prepared to evacuate. Officials say those with pets and livestock should leave now, if they haven't already.

Hundreds of firefighters joined the battle Tuesday. A command post has been set up at the Coalinga Rodeo grounds, which will provide the crews with food and supplies.

Firefighters expect the fire to last for a few days, depending on weather conditions.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has issued a "health caution" on Tuesday for Fresno County.

Residents in Fresno County are urged to stay indoors, especially those with asthma or other respiratory health issues.

Air district officials say as the fire continues to burn, the smoke could also affect Merced, Madera and Tulare counties.

[The following clip in Spanish mentions the health caution issued by the District due to smoke impacts from the Mineral Fire.](#)

Advierten sobre mala de calidad del aire debido a incendio que ya consumió 11 mil acres en el condado de Fresno

Las llamas del incendio se iniciaron el lunes por la tarde al este de Coalinga, y tras horas de combate sólo ha podido ser contenido en un 5%, según el último reporte del Departamento de Bomberos del condado.

Univision 21, Wed., July 15, 2020

Al menos 550 bomberos trabajan por detener el avance de las llamas del denominado incendio Mineral, al oeste del condado de Fresno, el cual ha consumido hasta el momento 11 mil acres y unas 50 viviendas se encuentran en riesgo.

De acuerdo al último reporte del Departamento de Bomberos del condado, el incendio ha sido contenido en un 5%, y se han ordenado evacuaciones en zonas aledañas como la comunidad de Bingham Springs, parte del camino Los Gatos Creek y el colegio West Hills.

Las condiciones del tiempo con temperaturas bordeando los 100 grados, además del difícil acceso al foco del incendio ha empeorado las labores de contención. Durante los dos días de emergencia, los residentes del condado han podido advertir una densa nube de humo sobre el condado de Fresno.

Por su parte, el Distrito de Calidad del Aire del Valle de San Joaquín emitió una advertencia por la mala calidad del aire que se mantendrá por lo menos durante los próximos 10 días, hasta que el foco se extinga en un 100%. El Departamento de Bomberos del condado de Fresno proyecta contener el incendio en su totalidad el 24 de julio.

La agencia que controla la contaminación en el aire recomienda mantenerse en interiores y evitar respirar al aire libre, pues puede ser dañino para la salud. "La contaminación por partículas puede desencadenar ataques de asma, agravar la bronquitis crónica y aumentar el riesgo de ataque cardíaco" dice un comunicado enviado por el Distrito de Calidad del Aire del Valle de San Joaquín.

Los residentes pueden usar la Red de Asesoría Aérea en Tiempo Real (RAAN) del Distrito para rastrear la calidad del aire en cualquier lugar del Valle, sin embargo advierten que las estaciones de monitoreo están diseñadas para detectar PM 2.5 microscópica, por lo que puede suceder que partículas más grandes como cenizas no sean detectadas.

"Si tú hueles a humo o ves cenizas que caen en tu vecindad inmediata, considera la calidad del aire como "poco saludable" (Nivel RAAN 4 o mayor) incluso si RAAN muestra un menor nivel de contaminación, aseguran las autoridades.