

## **Dixie Fire, at 200k acres, is California's 14th largest fire of all time**

By Amelia Davidson

The Sacramento Bee, Tuesday, July 27, 2021

The Dixie Fire roared back to life Monday night after a brief respite, expanding by 10,000 acres and continuing to threaten homes in Butte, Plumas and Tehama counties.

The fire now spans 208,200 acres (325 square miles), making it California's 14th-largest fire by acreage. Over 5,100 firefighters are battling the blaze, which ignited July 13 above the Cresta Dam in Feather River Canyon.

The state fire agency reported containment at 23% as of Tuesday morning, up one percentage point from the prior evening.

Cooler temperatures and slightly elevated humidity slowed fire expansion slightly Monday, said incident meteorologist Julia Ruthford in a Monday evening briefing. But the mild weather was not enough to keep the fire under control in the evening, when winds whipped it back up.

"(Weather) change has been the big thing that has driven a lot of what we've seen," said fire behavior analyst John Cook at the Tuesday morning briefing. "The fuels out there are so dry because of the drought that a little bit of tweak (in the wind) changes the fire."

Ruthford said that Tuesday would once again be "cooler with somewhat milder humidities." But, starting Wednesday, hot temperatures and low humidities should return, which could lead to critical fire weather. Wind direction is also forecast to change, beginning to blow down the canyon toward more populated areas of Butte County.

There also is potential for thunderstorms around the fire Tuesday, Ruthford said. The fire created its own weather patterns in the past days, generating giant pyro cumulonimbus clouds on multiple occasions in the last week.

The fire has destroyed 47 structures, according to Cal Fire's Tuesday morning incident report. It threatens over 10,700 more.

Numerous mandatory evacuation orders remain in place, including the communities of Meadow Valley, Bucks Lake, Prattville, Big Meadows and Lake Almanor West in Plumas County; Butte Meadows, Jonesville, Philbrook and High Lakes in Butte County; and the area of Colby Creek in Tehama County.

Detailed information on evacuation zones spanned seven pages of Cal Fire's incident report. Many roads are closed, including stretches of Highways 36, 70 and 89.

Officially, the fire's cause remains under investigation by Cal Fire. But Pacific Gas and Electric Co. in a July 18 filing to state regulators said its equipment may have started the fire.

Cal Fire is battling the Dixie Fire in unified command with Lassen National Forest.

### **Tamarack Fire**

Firefighters appear to have turned the tide on the Tamarack Fire, pushing containment up to 54% and keeping expansion minimal through Monday. The Tamarack Fire is burning in Alpine County and Douglas County, Nevada.

Rainfall helped crews increase containment by 11 percentage points from Monday to Tuesday morning. The fire received heavy rain and thunder at some points Monday, and a "steady rainfall covered the entire fire area" through the night, U.S. Forest Service officials said in a Tuesday morning update.

The Tamarack Fire has charred 68,103 acres as of Tuesday morning.

The Alpine County Sheriff's Office lifted a number of mandatory evacuation orders through the weekend and into Monday, the most recent being for Blue Lakes Road and the Blue Lakes campground areas. Mandatory evacuation orders remain in effect for the Highway 4 corridor between Highway 89 and Ebbetts Pass.

An interactive map from the Alpine County Sheriff's Office shows that at least 15 buildings were destroyed within the county. Estimates for Douglas County have not yet been released.

The wildfire ignited by lightning in early July in the Mokelumne Wilderness area and began to grow explosively in mid-July amid heavy winds. The U.S. Forest Service has since faced criticism for originally leaving the small fire to burn itself out.

### **Other California wildfires**

- The Beckwourth Complex, which previously held the title of California's largest wildfire so far this year, has remained stagnant for the last week.

The fire complex is now 98% contained and officials lifted all evacuation orders and warnings.

The larger of the two fires within the incident, the Sugar Fire, flared and destroyed several homes in the town of Doyle in mid-July. The fire ultimately burned over 105,000 acres.

Like the Tamarack Fire, lightning started the Beckwourth Complex in early July.

- The Lava Fire, which raged in Shasta-Trinity National Forest in late June and early July, has remained at 77% containment for nearly two weeks. The fire is burning in the rugged terrain near Mount Shasta, making it difficult for firefighters to access the fire to mop up.

Despite the stagnant containment, the fire has expanded minimally over the past two weeks. The only minor expansion occurred in wilderness areas near Mount Shasta.

The fire flared at the beginning of the month, forcing evacuations for thousands of Siskiyou County residents. The fire also burned through thousands of acres of marijuana farms run by the local Hmong population.

## **Valley Air District helps lower-income people get electric cars to help reduce pollution**

By Linda Ha

abc 30 Action News, Monday, July 26, 2021

FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) -- The Valley consistently ranks high on a list of polluted places in the United States. The American Lung Association says more than 135 million Americans live in areas where just breathing is a health risk.

The Valley Air District is helping to reduce pollution by providing access to electric vehicles where it used to be limited with its Drive Clean in the San Joaquin Program.

"We really want to ensure that Valley residents have the opportunity and access to clean vehicle transportation," said Brian Dodds, the program manager at the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

The program puts equity at the forefront, helping qualifying lower-income people navigate the process of securing vouchers for smog repairs and rebates for zero-emission cars.

"Incentives under the program include up to \$9,500 for residents replacing their car with a battery-electric or plug-in hybrid vehicle," Dodds said.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates vehicles make up nearly 75 percent of the carbon monoxide pollution in the U.S., which can cause severe health complications, including asthma, cancer, and birth defects.

"Unfortunately, southwest Fresno is home to the most polluted zip code in the state," said Emilia Reyes, CEO of the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission. "A clean air vehicle has the possibility of increasing the quality of life. They will have lower fueling costs, mechanic bills, a more reliable vehicle,

more money for basic needs."

A UCLA study compared four California air districts implementing programs like this.

It found the San Joaquin Valley model was the most successful in serving disadvantaged groups and could be a model in other places across the state.

Vehicle Program:

<https://www.valleyair.org/drivecleaninthesanjoaquin/>

Charging Program:

<http://valleyair.org/grants/chargeup.htm>

## **20-acre wildfire threatens to spread near SCICON in Tulare County mountains**

By Joshua Yeager

Visalia Times-Delta, Monday, July 26, 2021

A wildland fire burning above Springville has sparked road closures and voluntary evacuations as authorities brace for a "major commitment" of resources to the growing blaze.

Around 2:30 p.m. Monday, firefighters responded to a 20-acre wildfire burning off Bear Creek Road, near SCICON, according to a Cal Fire Tulare Unit spokesperson. The fire had grown to approximately 50 acres by 5 p.m.

The wildfire is expected to grow in size and firefighters have requested six air tankers to help contain the flames. The fire is burning on both sides of the road and spreading uphill, firefighters said.

Bear Creek Road is closed at the SCICON entrance, officials said. Some residents are leaving the area voluntarily but no evacuation warnings or orders are in place at this time, according to Public Information Officer Toni Davis.

Those who choose to leave are requested not to exit down Bear Creek Road.

Bear Creek forms a large loop through the Tulare County mountains and is located near many giant sequoia groves and tourist destinations, including Balch Park and Mountain Home Demonstration Forest.

Balch Park reopened earlier this summer after the SQF Complex Fire scorched nearly 170,000 acres, including half of the beloved park's 180 acres.

Last week, firefighters contained the River Fire in the northern Sierra Nevada, which exploded to more than 9,000 acres in a matter of hours near Yosemite National Park.

*This is a developing story.*

## **Winds stoke California's largest fire as blazes scorch West**

Bakersfield Californian, Monday, July 26, 2021

INDIAN FALLS, Calif. (AP) — Erratic winds and the potential for dry lightning added to the challenges facing firefighters battling California's largest wildfire, one of numerous blazes burning Monday across the U.S. West.

Over the weekend, the massive Dixie Fire merged with the smaller Fly Fire and tore through the remote Northern California community of Indian Falls. The blaze had already leveled at least 16 houses and other structures, but a new damage estimate wasn't immediately available because flames were still raging in the mountain area.

“Fire behavior has been so unpredictable, it hasn’t been safe for inspectors to go in to work,” said Mitch Matlow, a fire spokesman. “Until things settle down, we won’t know the extent of what’s burned.”

Flames spread in remote areas with steep terrain crews can’t easily reach, Matlow said. Gusty winds also hindered containment efforts and the problem could get worse with the predicted arrival later Monday of pyrocumulus clouds — literally meaning “fire clouds” — which can bring lightning and the risk of new ignitions.

Fire officials said the blaze had charred nearly 309 square miles (800 square kilometers) of timber and brush in Plumas and Butte counties, about two hours northeast of Sacramento. It was 22% contained and more than 10,000 homes were still under threat.

Authorities were hopeful that improving weather will help them continue to make progress against the nation’s largest wildfire, the Bootleg Fire in southern Oregon. It was 53% contained after scorching 640 square miles (1,657 square kilometers) of remote land. On Monday, an additional crew of Oregon National Guardsmen were sent to help out the more than 2,200 people battling the blaze.

The lightning-caused fire has burned at least 70 homes, mainly cabins, and some 2,000 residences were under evacuation orders.

In Montana, four firefighters were released from a hospital and a fifth was being treated at a burn center Monday after a wildfire overran them last week, authorities said. The five were building a defensive line at the Devil’s Creek Fire in Garfield County when winds shifted suddenly and blew flames back at them.

The firefighter still being treated — a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee — “is making good progress and is in good spirits,” spokesperson Kari Cobb said.

Crews were trying to keep the 10-square-mile (26-square-kilometer) fire from reaching Fort Peck Reservoir along the Missouri River in central Montana. It’s one of three major fires in the state.

Firefighters have frequently dealt with perilous fire behavior, with flames consuming huge areas of vegetation each day. Such conditions are often from a combination of unusual random, short-term and natural weather patterns heightened by long-term, human-caused climate change. Global warming has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years.

Across the West this summer, firefighters have confronted an unusually large number of unpredictable early season fires, U.S. Forest Service Chief Randy Moore said.

He recalled a recent small blaze in the Lava Beds area of California that firefighters thought they had doused, only to have the fire flare up again after it burned through a system of tree roots and travelled beneath a containment line.

“It’s off the charts in terms of how some of these fires are behaving,” Moore said.

Elsewhere in California, the 106-square-mile (275-square-kilometer) Tamarack Fire south of Lake Tahoe continued to burn through timber and chaparral but firefighters made progress, aided by cooler weather. The fire was 54% contained and evacuation orders that affected some 2,000 residents in 15 communities on both sides of the California-Nevada state line had been lifted. The fire, sparked by lightning July 4 in Alpine County, California, has destroyed at least 23 buildings, including more than a dozen in Nevada.

In north-central Washington, firefighters battled two blazes in Okanogan County that threatened hundreds of homes and again caused hazardous air quality conditions over the weekend. And in northern Idaho, east of Spokane, Washington, a small fire near the Silverwood Theme Park prompted evacuations Friday evening at the park and in the surrounding area. The theme park was back open with the fire half contained.

More than 85 large wildfires were burning across the country, most of them in Western states. They had burned over 2,343 square miles (6,068 square kilometers) of land.

## **Peak Fire's containment grows slightly, acres burning holds**

Bakersfield Californian, Monday, July 26, 2021

The Peak Fire remains steady at 2,098 acres and is 81 percent contained as of Monday, the Californian Interagency Incident Management Team said in a news release.

A potential shift in the weather could produce erratic winds in the Piute Peak area, according to the Californian Interagency Incident Management Team. The scheduled rainfall could suppress the fire's growth. Firefighters are "carefully monitoring" the weather.

The flames are in "monitor and patrol status" because the perimeter around the fire has been established, said the incident team in a news release. Some crews are leaving to fight wildfires in other areas.

About 40 residential structures were threatened in the region. Evacuation warnings were lifted Saturday.

## **Six new electric buses added to Clovis Unified School District**

By Peter Lopez

Fox 26 News, Monday, July 26, 2021

CLOVIS, Calif. (FOX26) — Clovis Unified School District announced Monday that it has added six new electric buses to its collection of vehicles.

The new electric buses were funded from grants provided by San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, PG&E, and VW Mitigation Trust Fund.

"We're excited and grateful to partner with these organizations as they support our continuous efforts of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions throughout our district," said CUSD Transportation Director Sheryl Boe.

According to CUSD, five of the six electric buses were delivered in June and the last is expected to show up any day now.

The school district says the electric buses can fit up to 78 students and can run for about 90 miles when fully charged. They also say they own three other EV buses that were purchased last year.

The nine electric buses cost \$3.17 million, according to Boe.

CUSD says they own 166 buses and plans to buy more electric buses within the next five years.