

## **Fire Burning In Delta Prompts Health Caution**

Oakdale Leader, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2021

A fire burning on Bradford Island in the northern portion of Contra Costa County has prompted local air officials to issue a health caution for smoke impacts for the northern and central regions of the San Joaquin Valley. Smoke impacts are being observed in the Valley today as smoke flows in through the Delta. The health caution will remain in place until the fire is extinguished. The District warns residents being impacted by smoke to stay indoors to reduce their exposure to particulate matter (PM) emissions.

Particulate matter can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic bronchitis, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Individuals with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of PM exposure. Those with existing respiratory conditions, including COVID-19, young children and the elderly, are especially susceptible to the health effects from this form of pollution. Anyone experiencing poor air quality due to wildfire smoke should move to a filtered, air-conditioned environment with windows closed. Common cloth and paper masks being used as protection from COVID-19 may not be sufficient protection from wildfire smoke inhalation.

The public is advised to visit the District's Wildfire Information Page at [www.valleyair.org/wildfires](http://www.valleyair.org/wildfires) for details on current and recently past wildfires affecting the Valley. The site includes resources on how to protect yourself from exposure to wildfire smoke, including instructions on how to make a DIY air filter for your home, links to foothill air monitors and the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN), allowing residents to track air quality at any Valley location. You can visit RAAN directly at [myRAAN.com](http://myRAAN.com) or use the "Valley Air" app, free to download on any mobile device. In addition, see the EPA's recommendations on "What Can I Do Now to Protect My Family from Wildfire Smoke?"

For more information, visit [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org) or call the District office in Modesto at 209-557-6400.

## **Smoke from Contra Costa wildfire is moving to our skies, prompts health caution**

By Dom McAndrew

KSEE 24, Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2021

Smoke from a Northern California wildfire is making its way to the Central Valley – prompting a health caution by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

The health caution was issued Monday for northern and central regions of the San Joaquin Valley. The caution will remain in place until the fire is extinguished. Air officials warn that particulate matter from smoke can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic bronchitis, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.

According to the air district, the fire is burning on Bradford Island, in the northern area of Contra Costa County. More information on how to protect yourself from wildfire smoke [can be found here](#).

## **Local groups jazzed about electric car donations**

By Juan Esparza Loera

Vida en el Valle, Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2021

The recent delivery of 20, slightly used Volkswagen e-Golfs to various non-profit organizations in the San Joaquin Valley is expected to pay numerous benefits beyond a new set of wheels.

The payoffs, said José Marín of Valley Clean Air Now, will be in more dependable transportation, cleaner air and educational outreach.

"Today is about electrifying their transportation that will allow and enable these organizations to educate their constituents, educate their members on what electric vehicles are doing for our daily lives," said Marín, whose organization teamed up with Electrify America in providing the electric cars.

Irene de Barraicua of Líderes Campesinas likes the idea that the statewide organization – with operations in Fresno, Huron, Madera, Merced, Kern County and seven other locations – will save on gasoline expenses.

“Our staff use their own vehicles,” said de Barraicua, the organization’s public relations director. “The amount of mileage that we spend is a huge expense. These electric vehicles will save us a lot of money.”

Líderes Campesinas focuses on farmworker women to educate them about issues like domestic abuse, pesticide exposure and civil rights while training them to become leaders in their communities.

De Barraicua called the donation of electric cars “a beautiful gift.” She said the organization will “educate and inform” its communities about sustainable and clean energy.

“We’re going to be able to reach out to the rural communities, who only represent about 6% of electric vehicle use,” said de Barraicua.

She noted that Gov. Gavin Newsom has mandated that all new passenger cars and trucks sold in the state be zero-emission by 2035.

Emilia Reyes, executive director of the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission, underscored the benefits of the electric cars during a July 16 press conference to announce the donations.

“We can’t afford to always have our staff using their own vehicles,” said Reyes, whose organization is the largest community action agency in the state and among the largest in the country. It has more than 1,200 full- and part-time employees.

Fresno EOC workers, she said, have gotten up in the middle of the night to make sure a student got his iPad repair back in time to remain enrolled in college.

“She used her own vehicle,” said Reyes.

Another Fresno EOC worker who works with former gang members to reduce gun violence “went to a shooting at 1 in the morning at the scene,” said Reyes.

Those acts of kindness, however, presented a problem.

“I’m committed to figuring out how to get the money to get vehicles,” said Reyes. “Lo and behold, a couple of weeks later, the universe heard me and sent me Valley CAN to give us the five vehicles for these programs.”

Other non-profit organizations getting the electric cars included Centro La Familia and Inspiration Transportation, which provides transportation to underserved communities that lack adequate public transportation.

“Bringing clean transportation to Fresno County is influential in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which we’re all being burdened by” said Marín. “Every day we hear about new patients being admitted to the emergency room for respiratory illnesses.”

According to the California Health Interview Survey, almost 1 of every 5 Fresno County residents have been diagnosed with asthma; and, 17% of residents visited the emergency room or urgent care for asthma.

A recent UCLA study gave high marks to an effort to retire high-emission cars with low-emission vehicles to underserved communities in the Central Valley. The Clean Cars 4 All campaign provides up to \$9,500 for a down payment on a cleaner burning vehicle.

“Breathing should not be listed as a bonus when looking for a residence,” said Reyes during a virtual conference last week on the UCLA study.

## **Evacuation order issued for Plumas County town of Greenville as Dixie Fire spreads**

By Chase DiFelicianantonio

San Francisco Chronicle, Monday, Aug. 2, 2021

A new evacuation order has been issued for the community of Greenville in Plumas County as the Dixie Fire continues to burn in Plumas and Butte counties.

The fire had burned close to 250,000 acres as of Monday according to a Cal Fire incident report from that morning. The blaze was 35% contained Monday and burning south of Lake Almanor, in Butte and Plumas counties, and to the northeast of the Chico area.

The mandatory evacuation order for Greenville, with a population of 1,129 people, was issued by the Plumas County Sheriff's office around 5:30 p.m.

Cal Fire Public Information Officer Hannah Schwalbe said the eastern section of the fire near Greenville was wind driven and unpredictable.

"We encourage people on the ground in Greenville to listen to the sheriffs because they're going to get people to the safest area possible," Schwalbe said, adding that the fire could encroach on roadways like Highway 89 which runs through Greenville and that sheriffs are ensuring people leave the area safely.

The fire grew by about 3,600 acres Sunday, but firefighters have been slowly increasing containment over the last two days.

Evacuation orders and warnings were lifted in some areas of Butte and Plumas counties recently, but both still had orders in places across swaths of each county.

The fire hasn't caused any civilian or firefighter injuries or deaths. It has so far destroyed 45 structures and is threatening more than 3,000 more.

More than 5,400 personnel were fighting the blaze, which Cal Fire expects to have contained by August 13. The cause of the fire which started July 13 is still under investigation.

See The Chronicle's Fire Tracker for updates on other blazes burning around the state.

## **Forest Service promises swifter action on new wildfires, after plea from California**

By Dale Kasler

Merced Sun-Star, Monday, Aug. 2, 2021

Hit with bipartisan criticism about a "wait and see" approach to fighting wildfires in California, the new chief of the USDA Forest Service is directing his agency to become more aggressive about suppressing new fires.

Forest Service Chief Randy Moore, who until earlier this year oversaw 18 national forests in California, is implementing the new policy amid complaints that the federal agency was too slow to respond to wildfires that began this year on national forest land in the north state.

"Chief Moore committed that he will issue a change of policy to all regions of the US Forest Service, including California to immediately put out all fires," said Rep. Doug LaMalfa, R-Richvale, who revealed the new direction in an email to environmental organizations, firefighter policy experts and others over the weekend.

"This is a major policy change for the US Forest Service, whose previous policy was to let the fire burn if it was not immediately adjacent to communities or major infrastructure," LaMalfa wrote.

LaMalfa, who has been critical of the agency's wildfire record, said Moore revealed the policy shift to him in a recent phone call.

"He's heard my story for a long time," the congressman said in an interview. Moore pledged that the agency will be "more pin-point on fires at the earliest possible time."

Moore's policy directive comes amid rising complaints about the Forest Service's response to a handful of recent wildfires, including the Tamarack Fire, which has burned 68,696 acres in California and Nevada. The fire began July 4 in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and was allowed to burn for several days. Then fierce winds caused the fire to spread dramatically, although it's now 82% contained.

Gov. Gavin Newsom, who toured the Tamarack burn zone last week with Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak, complained to President Joe Biden about the Forest Service's handling of the fire.

On a video call with Biden and other Western governors, Newsom blamed an agency culture that "too often is wait and see" for allowing the Tamarack Fire to spread.

“We need your help to change the culture in terms of the suppression strategies in this climate literally and figuratively to be more aggressive on these federal fires,” Newsom told Biden.

Newsom’s criticism followed similar complaints about the Tamarack Fire by Republican Rep. Tom McClintock, who urged Moore to change course and make sure “that all wildfires (are) suppressed as soon as possible.”

Officials with the Forest Service weren’t immediately available for comment Monday.

### **Out-of-control wildfires called ‘negligence’**

Critics have also said the Forest Service allowed the Beckwourth Complex fire to grow out of control. The fire, which began in early July in the Plumas National Forest, is now 98% contained after burning 105,670 acres.

“I think it was negligence,” said Dwight Ceresola, a Plumas County supervisor whose district is in the fire zone. After some initial suppression efforts, he said the Forest Service pulled personnel and equipment away from the fire too quickly.

Ironically, the Forest Service for years was so aggressive about extinguishing new wildfires that it was criticized for not letting some fires burn naturally as a means of removing flammable vegetation from the forests. In recent years, the agency has taken a more measured approach, saying it would let some fires burn if they didn’t threaten people, buildings or important infrastructure.

Timothy Ingalsbee, a retired firefighter, said the Forest Service is making a mistake by going back to its old policy.

“We’re stuck on this treadmill of mismanagement,” said Ingalsbee, a former Forest Service employee who runs an Oregon group called Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology.

### **‘Explosive’ growth at Dixie Fire prompts new evacuation orders**

By Amelia Davidson

The Sacramento Bee, Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2021

The massive Dixie Fire roared back to life heading into Tuesday, causing officials to issue new evacuation orders and ending a period of relative calm at the fire.

And with hot and dry conditions forecast for Tuesday, officials do not expect the growth to slow just yet.

“Firefighters worked through the night to protect structures in the Greenville area after the explosive fire growth experienced during late afternoon yesterday,” wrote Cal Fire in a Tuesday morning incident update. “Today, dry, hot and windy conditions are expected and the forecast calls for the return of active fire behavior.”

In its morning incident report Tuesday, the state fire agency said the fire encompassed 253,052 acres (396 square miles) — an area eight times the size of the city of San Francisco. The fire is California’s largest this season and the 11th-largest in state history by acres burned.

The fire increased by around 4,500 acres between Monday morning and Tuesday morning and containment remained stagnant at 35%.

Just over 5,100 firefighters are battling the blaze, which ignited July 14 above the Cresta Dam in Feather River Canyon in the burn scar of the deadly 2018 Camp Creek fire. Crews are fighting the fire in two zones: the east, which is managed by the U.S. Forest Service, and the west, which is managed by Cal Fire.

Over the weekend, crews increased containment by 11 percentage points, taking advantage of relatively calm weather. The weekend progress allowed crews to hold fire lines on the southwestern side of the fire despite deteriorating weather conditions Monday, keeping the blaze away from populated areas of Butte County.

But the eastern side of the fire expanded rapidly, causing officials to issue new evacuation orders Monday evening in Plumas County for towns on the northeast side of the fire. On Tuesday morning, officials

issued new evacuation orders in the Lake Almanor area — a region that had just come out from under evacuation orders as recently as Sunday.

The new orders add on to a series of evacuation orders and road closures already in place across Plumas County and northeast Butte County.

According to interagency fire behavior analyst Dennis Burns, the fire spotted up to a mile Monday evening, not just in the active east zone but also in the west zone. Burns said the behavior does not bode well for the situation on Tuesday.

“We’re looking at potentially another large fire growth day,” Burns said in a Tuesday morning incident update.

A total of 67 structures have been destroyed by the fire, and the Associated Press reported that the small town of Indian Falls accounted for more than half of those losses. Cal Fire estimated Tuesday morning that over 7,100 structures remain threatened by the fires, which is more than double their same estimate from Monday morning.

Officially, the fire’s cause remains under investigation. But Pacific Gas and Electric Co. disclosed shortly after the fire began that its equipment may have played a role in the wildfire’s ignition. On Monday, PG&E told public regulators that its equipment might also be to blame for the Fly Fire, which ignited east of the Dixie Fire on July 22 and later merged with the blaze.

### **Trinity County wildfires**

Large thunderstorms Thursday sparked multiple blazes in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Of over eight blazes that began, two have grown to a significant size: the McFarland Fire and the Monument Fire.

The McFarland Fire ignited in Trinity County south of Highway 36 near Wildwood. The fire grew to 15,925 acres Tuesday morning and is 5% contained.

The blaze more than doubled in size between Monday and Tuesday. An evacuation order is in place for the town of Wildwood.

The Monument Fire, also burning in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest south of Del Loma, grew to 6,057 acres Tuesday morning with 0% containment.

The fire more than doubled in size from Monday to Tuesday morning, prompting the Trinity County Sheriff’s Office to issue an evacuation order Monday night for the areas of Big Bar and Del Loma.

In a social media update Tuesday morning, U.S. Forest Service Officials said the blaze crossed the Trinity River and Highway 299 Monday evening and then burned actively through the night. Crews have also seen significant spotting from the fire.

Officials expect hot and dry weather patterns to fuel the fire’s expansion through at least Wednesday, but said that cooler temperatures could “potentially bring some relief” in the later half of the week.

### **Tamarack Fire**

The Tamarack Fire, once a major threat responsible for the destruction of several structures in California and Nevada, appears to be mostly under control.

The fire has charred 68,696 acres near Markleeville and over the Nevada state line as of Monday night. The fire expanded minimally over the last 72 hours and crews bumped containment up to 82%.

Jurisdiction over the fire changed hands Monday night, with the Rocky Mountain Type 1 Incident Management Team handing over control to the Sierra Front Type 3 Team. The Rocky Mountain team managed the fire since it first expanded rapidly in mid-July.

“You folks have proven to be very resilient,” said Dan Dallas, the incident commander of the Rocky Mountain team, in a last address to crews and surrounding residents. “The community really pulled together like they need to do in times like this.”

The Tamarack Fire was sparked by lightning July 4 and remained small and mostly inactive for weeks as the Forest Service decided to let it burn in the remote Mokelumne Wilderness. By mid-July, winds

whipped up the blaze, and it burned into Markleeville, eventually pushing east through Alpine County into Nevada.

Alpine County officials have confirmed that at least 15 structures were destroyed by the fire. In Douglas County, Nevada, preliminary surveys showed 13 structures damaged or destroyed south of Leviathan Mine Road.