

Wildfire inside Yosemite National Park forces partial closure. Here's the latest

By Anthony Galaviz

Modesto Bee, Fresno Bee, Friday, July 08, 2022

A wildfire forced a partial closure Thursday at Yosemite National Park. A tweet from park administration said the blaze, dubbed the Washburn Fire, was burning near the lower portion of the Mariposa Grove.

First reports said flames had consumed about eight acres, but later grew to 60 to 70 acres Thursday evening. Few other details were immediately available. Another update by the park service will be made Friday morning, spokesman Scott Gediman said.

Smoke from the Washburn Fire could be seen from Fresno.

The Mariposa Grove has been closed "until further notice," park officials said in a tweet. Firefighters were attacking the blaze from the ground and in the air.

Fire burning in Yosemite National Park is near some of the largest trees on the planet

By Anthony Galaviz

Modesto Bee, Fresno Bee, Thursday, July 07, 2022

The Washburn Fire was reported Thursday in Yosemite National Park's Mariposa Grove, home to more than 500 mature giant sequoias.

It wasn't immediately clear Thursday whether the fire had damaged or threatened the historic tree grove.

The park service first reported the fire just before 5:30 p.m. Thursday via Twitter. First reports said flames had consumed about eight acres, but later grew to 60 to 70 acres. Few other details were immediately available. Another update by the park service will be made Friday morning, spokesman Scott Gediman said.

Smoke from the Washburn Fire could be seen from Fresno.

According to the park's website, the Mariposa Grove was set aside as protected federal land in 1864 when then-President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation protecting Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley for "public use, resort, and recreation."

"This landmark legislation holds an important place in our country's history and was enacted at a time when the nation was embroiled in the Civil War," the park service says. "For the first time in our nation's history, the federal government set aside scenic natural areas to be protected for the benefit of future generations."

The Mariposa Grove was added to Yosemite National Park in 1906.

Grizzly Giant is the most well-known tree in the Mariposa Grove. At 209 feet, it is one of the largest trees in the world and is estimated to be between 2,000 and 3,000 years old.

Wildfire update: Electra Fire slows as crews hold acreage, containment overnight

By Amelia Davidson

Sacramento Bee, Thursday, July 07, 2022

The Electra Fire maintained its acreage and containment overnight Thursday, as crews took advantage of cool weather to tamp down hot spots at the blaze near Jackson.

The fire, which is burning along the Amador-Calaveras county line, is 4,227 acres and 40% contained as of Thursday morning, Cal Fire said. After roaring to life Monday, prompting widespread evacuation orders — and temporarily trapping around 100 people in a PG&E powerhouse — the blaze died down Wednesday, with officials lifting evacuation orders Wednesday and Thursday. Crews increased containment Wednesday from 10% to 40% and a number of evacuation orders and warnings were lifted.

Cal Fire expects full containment by July 18, according to the Thursday morning incident report.

In a morning briefing at the blaze, Cal Fire night operations manager Jeff Loveless called Wednesday a “very successful day.” Fire behavior specialist Brian Newman warned temperatures are supposed to rise and humidity is supposed to drop Thursday, but winds levels are also supposed to drop, allowing for “very similar fire behavior” Thursday compared to Wednesday.

The fire is burning in a canyon next to the north fork of the Mokelumne River. Crews have so far been able to stop the fire from spreading to populated areas outside of the canyon, but 1,217 structures remain threatened by the blaze, Cal Fire said Thursday.

Officials were able to lift a number of evacuation orders across Amador and Calaveras counties Thursday afternoon. In Amador County, evacuation orders were reduced to warnings in areas north of Tabeaud Road at Amador Lane, Ponderosa Way and East Clinton Road to Arrow Head Road. In Calaveras County, officials lifted evacuation orders for the Montgomery Lane area.

But numerous evacuation orders still stand in both counties. Both counties are running online maps to indicate the latest evacuation order and warning information. Amador County’s maps is available [here](#), and Calaveras’ [here](#).

On Wednesday, officials lifted some evacuation orders and warnings in Amador County as the containment grew. A road closure moved up Butte Mountain Road from the Lower Clinton Road Intersection to the Upper Clinton Road Intersection, reducing the evacuation order for the previously-closed stretch. The warning zone running east from Jackson, along Highway 88 to Previtali Road, was also removed Wednesday afternoon, allowing residents to return to their homes.

Evacuation centers are open at the at the Italian Picnic Grounds, 581 Highway 49 in Sutter Creek and at Calaveras County Mountain Oak School, 150 Old Oak Road.

Officials made two separate arrests inside the Amador County evacuation zone Wednesday, the Amador County Sheriff’s Office said in a social media post. Deputies arrested one man after he passed a roadblock without a reason, and then was found to possess drugs and be in violation of his parole. Later in the day, deputies arrested a different man who entered the evacuation zone without reason, and then was found to have a loaded gun in his car, as well as drugs and illegal fireworks. The second man fled on foot, but was eventually taken into custody.

Around 8,000 households in Amador and Calaveras counties remain without power, PG&E reported on social media Wednesday, as lines have been de-energized around the blaze.

A total of 1,864 firefighters were at the blaze Thursday morning, including 161 engines and 14 helicopters. One first-responder injury has been reported from the fire.

Washburn Fire closes Mariposa Grove in Yosemite National Park

By Lauren Hernandez

San Francisco Chronicle, Thursday, July 7, 2022

A wildfire burning in Yosemite National Park closed a grove of giant sequoias on Thursday afternoon, parks officials said. All other portions of the park were open, officials said.

The fire, dubbed the Washburn fire, had scorched between 5 and 8 acres “near the lower portion of the Mariposa Grove” as of shortly before 5:30 p.m., according to Yosemite National Park officials.

More than 500 mature giant sequoias are located in Mariposa Grove, which is in the southern portion of the park, according to a Yosemite National Park webpage.

Firefighters were working to suppress the blaze using crews on the ground as well as aircraft, park officials said. A photo shared by park officials showed flames burning trees in the grove.

The grove and Mariposa Grove Road are closed “until further notice,” park officials said in an alert.

Fresno Bee, Opinion, Friday, July 08, 2022

There's nothing safe or sane about fireworks in Fresno. City should ban them next year

By The Fresno Bee Editorial Board

The air pollution may have subsided from Fourth of July fireworks, but that doesn't mean action to ban the pyrotechnics from Fresno should be allowed to drift away like so much smoke.

Fresno City Councilmember Miguel Arias has raised a call to ban the sale of "safe and sane" fireworks in the city. He plans to hold community meetings to hear from citizens, then bring the idea to his colleagues. The council should take heed and make it happen. It would return Fresno to its stance of yesteryear, when fireworks were disallowed in city limits.

That's right. From the 1920s to the year 2000, fireworks were banned in the city. That changed when then-mayor Jim Patterson pushed to let legal fireworks be used and the City Council agreed. The Bee reported that key reasons for lifting the ban were patriotism, profits for charity groups selling fireworks and the fact safe-and-sane fireworks were legal in Fresno County and neighboring cities.

Ever since, however, Fresno has had to endure accidental injuries and fires caused by people not being safe enough with their legal fireworks. And the case can be made that having legal pyrotechnics for home use encourages the use of illegal fireworks that produce bigger booms and flashes — as well as more fires and injuries.

HOMES BURNED

This past holiday witnessed a two-alarm fire that burned three homes in central Fresno. The cause was illegal fireworks. A total of 44 citations were issued by city officials from July 1-4. City firefighters responded to 88 blazes.

In Fresno County, 23 fires broke out on the Fourth, and Cal Fire officers confiscated 1,200 pounds of illegal fireworks in the weekend before the holiday — more than a typical year.

Arias said allowing legal fireworks is a major burden for the city. First, the city devotes staff time to issuing permits to nonprofit groups hoping to sell fireworks. Then police and fire respond to mishaps that occur on the Fourth. Pets scared by all the noise go missing and have to be rounded up and returned to owners.

There is also the air pollution caused by firework use. Last year monitors used by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District showed fine-particle pollution that was "off the chart," according to a spokeswoman. That just gets added to the generally poor air quality that is present in Fresno summers.

NONPROFIT GROUPS

Nonprofits like church groups and youth sports teams rely on fireworks sales because of the significant money generated in a short time. The nonprofits represent worthy groups, to be sure. But how moral is it for a church group to sell a product that can start a fire? Or a youth team to sell something that can potentially maim a young person?

Arias' plan is to let nonprofits set up food and merchandise booths at public fireworks shows sponsored by the city. At night's end, the total revenue can be split between the participating groups. "This would eliminate street-level fireworks that are toxic to public health and divert a lot of public safety resources," he said in an interview with The Bee Editorial Board.

Better yet, it would keep fireworks centralized at certain stadiums, with professionals putting on the shows, thus minimizing the dangers. Arias said the council allocated \$50,000 in this year's budget for one or two such shows next July, and he has visions for expanding beyond that.

LIMIT THE DANGERS

Climate scientists believe California is increasingly becoming more arid. Dry, hot weather means prime conditions for wildfires. The communities of Bass Lake and Shaver Lake ban safe-and-sane fireworks because of wildfire concerns. The Fresno-Clovis urban area is just as dry.

Fresno residents just have to accept reality: Fireworks of any kind are too risky to use today. Arias' council colleagues should take up his call and restore a ban that was once in place. There are other, safer ways to see the beautiful explosions without two-alarm fires in a neighborhood.

[Sacramento Bee, Opinion, Friday, July 08, 2022](#)

California's wildfire smoke season is already here. Are you and your home ready for it?

By The Sacramento Bee Editorial Board

Wildfire season is here, along with its telltale herald: smoke. It darkens the California skies every year, turning our days into orange nights and, ironically, our sunsets into beautiful bursts of color.

The Electra Fire, burning southeast of Sacramento along the Amador-Calaveras county line, has already diminished air quality in the region. The smoke hasn't yet made its way to Sacramento, but it's likely one of many more to come this year.

Gone are the days when Californians could afford to be caught off-guard by massive smoke events. Climate change and poorly regulated power monopolies have practically made annual California wildfires a guarantee. It's up to every Californian to be ready for heavy smoke days.

Even for Californians who have not been particularly susceptible to wildfire smoke, two years of living with COVID has made wildfire smoke's fine, airborne particulates even more dangerous. A recent study by researchers at Harvard's School of Public Health found that thousands of COVID cases and deaths in California, Oregon and Washington in 2020 may be attributable to increases in air pollution from wildfire smoke.

Prolonged wildfire smoke exposure can make people more susceptible to respiratory infections such as pneumonia and bronchitis, and recent research suggests this means increased vulnerability to COVID, according to the Washington State Department of Health.

Many of the signs and symptoms of wildfire smoke exposure mimic COVID, including eye, nose and throat irritation, headaches, shortness of breath, tightness in the chest and worsening asthma attacks or respiratory distress.

Californians can mitigate air pollution and respiratory distress by keeping their homes' indoor air as clean as possible during smoke events, including by using HEPA ("high-efficiency particulate air") filters or PM2.5 masks (those certified as filtering small particulate matter). Cloth masks won't block the most harmful smoke particles. The Environmental Protection Agency suggests keeping doors and windows shut, sealing cracks, avoiding burning cigarettes and candles, and refraining from cooking anything that will create smoke indoors.

Homemade filtering devices, such as a HEPA filter (or multiple filters) strapped to the back of a standard box fan, can also help protect a home. Checking air quality during a smoke event can help you prepare accordingly.

Most important, many of us must be prepared for the worst-case scenario, an emergency evacuation. It's a reality of living in California during climate change.

Many evacuees during the 2018 Camp Fire in Paradise had only minutes to leave their homes. That makes it worthwhile to consider what we would take with us in such an emergency ahead of time.

Preparation for an evacuation is critical. When the 2017 Tubbs Fire swept through a residential neighborhood of Santa Rosa, it destroyed 1,300 homes, or 5% of the city's housing stock. The chances of something like that happening in the Sacramento area are low but not impossible, according to Cal Fire's Fire and Resource Assessment Program, thanks to large swaths of the region being in what's known as the wildland-urban interface, or WUI.

California should take steps to provide PM2.5-filtering masks to the public free of charge during wildfire season. The state could also declare smoke days as other parts of the country have snow days, discouraging unnecessary travel. State leaders should also be more assertive in regulating utility

companies like PG&E, whose faulty equipment caused 31 wildfires in five years by one judge's reckoning, killing 113 Californians and destroying more than 1.5 million acres.

It's only a matter of time before this year's wildfire and smoke season gets worse. California must be prepared to protect its citizens, and those citizens must be prepared to protect themselves.

[Arvin and Lamont will receive 30 million dollars to reduce air pollution.](#)

Arvin y Lamont recibirán 30 millones de dólares por inversiones aéreas claras

Por Erica Murillo, Kern Sol News

El Popular News, Thursday, July 7, 2022

El Programa de Reducción de Emisiones Comunitarias (CERP) ha aprobado más de \$30 millones en inversiones para reducir la contaminación del aire en las comunidades de Arvin y Lamont.

AB 617 ha estado trabajando con la comunidad de Arvin y Lamont durante los últimos 16 meses para poder crear medidas que ayuden a mejorar la calidad del aire en estas comunidades; se han implementado un total de 31 medidas para ayudar a estas comunidades.

Estas medidas tienen como objetivo reducir los impactos peligrosos de los contaminantes atmosféricos con aproximadamente 136 toneladas de PM 2.5, 421 toneladas de NOx y 161 toneladas de COV.

“Estamos apuntando a más de 700 toneladas de reducción, y los miembros de la comunidad están realmente enfocados en asegurarse de que habrá emisiones que mejoren el aire en Arvin y Lamont”, dijo Jessica Olsen, Directora de Estrategias y Recursos Comunitarios.

Las 31 medidas se llevarán a la Junta de Recursos del Aire de California en octubre para que sean aprobadas oficialmente. A partir de ahora, la implementación de medidas puede iniciarse con ciertas medidas.

Una de las medidas que se pueden poner en marcha ahora sería cambiar los equipos agrícolas a cero emisiones. El equipo agrícola es una gran prioridad para los miembros de la comunidad de Arvin y Lamont porque hay muchos campos agrícolas alrededor de ambas comunidades.

Otra medida que se puede iniciar de inmediato sería hacer divulgación para informar a los miembros de la comunidad sobre cómo mejorar la calidad del aire y cómo pueden ayudar a sus comunidades. El alcance se dedicará a hablar con los residentes sobre cómo pueden tomar medidas para proteger sus casas, también incluye llegar a las escuelas para involucrar a las escuelas también.

Hay un par de prioridades en las que la comunidad realmente se está enfocando para mejorar su comunidad, como el uso de pesticidas.

AB 617 está trabajando con el Departamento de Pesticidas con el apoyo y la retroalimentación que la comunidad está proporcionando, como proporcionar monitoreo para el uso de pesticidas para la seguridad de la comunidad.

Otro proceso que la comunidad está priorizando es tener monitoreo del aire comunitario. Esto ayudará a los miembros y agencias de la comunidad a comprender qué está afectando el aire y qué es lo que más necesita la comunidad.

“Continuaremos trabajando con la comunidad en el despliegue y seguimiento dentro de los límites para que podamos comenzar a comprender cuáles son los impactos de la comunidad y cómo van a mejorar con el tiempo. Definitivamente vemos una mejora en la calidad del aire y, con suerte, eso conduce a mejores resultados de salud y ciertamente a una mejor calidad de vida para la comunidad”, dijo Olsen.

AB 617 continuará teniendo reuniones con la comunidad para poder determinar cómo se implementarán estas medidas. La comunidad está participando y aprendiendo cómo funcionan las aplicaciones y cómo funciona el monitoreo para poder implementar ideas para ayudar a su comunidad.

AB 617 ha trabajado duro con la comunidad y las asociaciones para poder llegar a donde están. Con líderes de la comunidad que han dado un paso adelante para liderar, Arvin y Lamont han podido establecer lo que necesitan en su comunidad. Ha sido un largo viaje hacia esta aprobación. Ahora será el comienzo del proceso para comenzar a implementar estas medidas.

“Estamos agradecidos por la aprobación porque antes incluso de llevarla a la junta la llevamos al CSC y les pedimos que votaran y fue unánime. Estamos agradecidos de que las personas reconozcan el proceso, reconozcan el informe y apoyen todo esto y el esfuerzo enfocado que llega a su comunidad”, dijo Olsen.

La implementación de las 31 medidas será un proceso de cinco años y la comunidad, AB 617, y las asociaciones continuarán trabajando juntas para ayudar a mejorar la calidad del aire de Arvin y Lamont.