



## Sand Fire

### August 1, 2016, Morning Update

#### **Fire Information:**

Phone: 626-574-5208, staffed 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Email: [sandfireunified@gmail.com](mailto:sandfireunified@gmail.com)

Web: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4878>

**Fire Situation:** At 98 percent contained, the fire is not active apart from isolated pockets of vegetation periodically burning and generating visible smoke well within the fire's interior. Such smoke from the Sand Fire could be visible for several days or weeks to come. This interior burning does not pose a threat to contained fire lines, which continue to hold after being tested by several days of strong gusty winds.

Firefighters continue patrolling, reinforcing, and mopping up containment lines. Yesterday, heavy-equipment operators and hand crews made good progress repairing the over two hundred miles of fire and dozer lines constructed during the fire-suppression phase. Lines are repaired to minimize erosion, lessen visual impacts, and reduce off-highway vehicle use and the spread of nonnative invasive plants.

As containment has increased, personnel and equipment have steadily been released from the incident, and fire managers have been preparing to transfer command of the fire to the local unit. Transfer of command will take place tomorrow morning at 6:00 when the Angeles National Forest's Type 3 organization assumes responsibility for the fire. The incident command post at Golden Valley High School in Santa Clarita will be dismantled tomorrow. The Type 3 organization will base its operations out of Acton Park (3751 Syracuse Avenue).

Southern California Interagency Incident Management Team 3, under the command of Mike Wakoski, and Los Angeles County Fire, under the command of Deputy Chief Vince Pena, would like to thank cooperators and community members for their support throughout the suppression efforts.

The fire is 41,432 acres and 98 percent contained. Resources include 30 engines, 19 hand crews, 3 helicopters, 7 water tenders, 11 dozers, and 783 personnel.

**Weather:** Today will be slightly warmer and drier than yesterday with the temperature peaking at just under 100 degrees and the minimum relative humidity dropping to around 25 percent. Southwest, upcanyon winds will be 10–18 mph this afternoon, gusting to 28 mph. Monsoonal moisture is still over the fire area, bringing a low (10 percent) chance of thunderstorms. If storms do develop, the main hazards will be gusty and erratic outflow winds and lightning strikes.

#### **Closures:**

As of 6:00 Sunday evening, all road closures due to fire activity were lifted. However, because Southern California Edison is using helicopters to place power poles in the fire area, temporary

closures will take place intermittently during daylight hours tomorrow. Southern California Edison will coordinate road closures with California Highway Patrol and Los Angeles Sheriff's Department as it works to restore power. The temporary closures required by Southern California Edison will be at the Sand Canyon Road and Placerita Canyon Road going into Bear Divide and also at Little Tujunga Canyon Road north of the Wildlife Way Station. Call Southern California Edison (800-655-4555) for more information.

An area, road, and trail closure is in effect on the Angeles National Forest (Order 01-16-05, July 28, 2016). The Pacific Coast Trail is closed where it passes through the area closure.

### **Sand Fire History:**

The fire started in the early afternoon of Friday, July 22, 2016, off of Highway 14 just northeast of Sand Canyon Road. Unified command was established later that evening when the fire spotted across Southern Pacific rail lines. A red flag warning for strong winds and low relative humidity was in effect the day the fire started. During that afternoon and evening north-northwest winds gusted between 30 and 35 mph, relative humidity dropped into the single digits, and with such critical conditions, the fire spread rapidly to the south. The fire grew to over 10,000 acres on the first day. Although wind direction changed to the southwest on the second day, July 23, drought-stressed vegetation and dry, hot, windy weather contributed to an additional 10,000 acres of growth. Over the next several days, winds remained gusty, the temperature remained high, and the relative humidity low.

The fire threatened over 10,000 buildings, resulting in the evacuation of 20,000 people from communities of Sand Canyon, Placerita Canyon, Soledad Canyon, and Acton. Foothill communities and Agua Dulce were prepped for evacuation. One large-animal shelter and three evacuation centers were established. A Los Angeles County damage inspection team reported that 19 single-family dwellings were destroyed and 4 damaged and 97 minor structures were destroyed and 20 damaged. Public use of drones within the temporary-flight-restriction area led to air operations being shut down for brief periods.

The public was affected by the fire in other ways as well: Southern California Edison powerlines and poles were damaged, causing power outages; Highway 14 was closed for two days and several other roads were either closed to everyone or closed to nonresidents; Metrolink was shut down for two days; and the Angeles National Forest closed the Magic Mountain Wilderness Area and all Forest Service roads and trails in and near the fire.

Aircraft dropped almost 500,000 gallons of retardant and over 150,000 gallons of water during the suppression phase. Firefighters constructed over 150 miles of line by hand, and dozers operators constructed over 70 miles of dozer line.

The Sand Fire is under unified command with Southern California Interagency Incident Management Team 3 (Incident Commander Mike Wakoski) and Los Angeles County Fire (Deputy Chief Vince Pena). Assisting agencies include Los Angeles County Sheriff, Los Angeles Fire, California Office of Emergency Services, CAL FIRE, California Highway Patrol, Los Angeles County Public Works, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Southern California Edison, Metrolink, Los Angeles County Animal Care and Control, and American Red Cross.