



El Dorado Fire: September 28, 2020 Update

Public Information:

Phone: (909) 383-5688

<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7148>

San Bernardino National Forest:

Email: 2020.eldorado@firenet.gov

Twitter: [@SanBernardinoNF](https://twitter.com/SanBernardinoNF)

Facebook: [SanBernardinoNF](https://www.facebook.com/SanBernardinoNF)

www.fs.usda.gov/sbnf

INCIDENT INFORMATION

Start Date: 9/05/2020

Location: Oak Glen/West Yucaipa in San Bernardino County CA

Size: 22,666 acres

Percent containment: 92%

Cause: Human-caused

ASSIGNED RESOURCES:

Hand Crews: 11

Helicopters: 4

Engines: 23

Dozers: 2

Water Tenders: 1

Total Personnel: 505

Injuries: 13 Fatality: 1

Residence: Damaged 4 Destroyed: 5

Other Structures: Destroyed: 15

CURRENT CONDITIONS:

A local Red Flag warning has been declared until 7 p.m. today. A red flag warning is a **forecast warning** issued by the National Weather Service to inform area firefighting and land management agencies that conditions are ideal for wildland fire combustion, and rapid spread.

Interior burning on the El Dorado Fire will continue for several days, perhaps even weeks as the fire continues to burn in the steep rocky and inaccessible portions of the San Geronio Wilderness. Highway 38 remains closed to through traffic, and forest roads and hiking trails within the San Geronio Wilderness Area remain closed.

Please check <https://roads.dot.ca.gov/> for updated highway conditions, and the [San Bernardino National Forest website](https://www.fs.usda.gov/sbnf) for forest roads and trails information.

The USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region announced that current closure orders and fire prohibitions in California have been extended. This decision will be evaluated daily, taking fire and weather conditions into account. The closure order prevents any entry onto Forest Service Lands except in limited situations. This order does not prevent use of state highways to access mountain communities. The fire prohibition includes building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire, campfire, or stove. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/R5>

Residents and visitors in the fire area should be aware that recently burned areas are at a **greater risk of mudflows and flash floods**. Fires eliminate vegetation that hold soil and rocks in place and charred ground may

be unable to absorb water. Forest Service Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Teams and CAL FIRE Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT) efforts are focused on the protection of human life, safety, and property. Rapid burn assessments identify areas that have increased potential for floods and mudflow, enabling county, state, and federal emergency managers to better plan their responses to future rain events. For more information, please visit the [El Dorado Post-Fire BAER InciWeb page](#).

Residents in the mountain and foothill areas should stay informed of weather forecasts. Register your cell phones with the Telephone Emergency Notification System (TENS) / Swift 911 and have an emergency plan. Visit www.sbcounty.gov for more emergency preparedness information.

The El Dorado Fire began on September 5th in El Dorado Park near Yucaipa, CA. Temperatures recorded the day the fire started were 15 to 20 degrees above normal, and in many cases broke new record high temperatures. Over a 23-day period, the fire burned 22,680 acres in the Oak Glen / Yucaipa Ridge area and within the San Gorgonio Wilderness Area of the San Bernardino National Forest. The fire forced the evacuations of Oak Glen, north Yucaipa, Mountain Home Village, Forest Falls, and Angelus Oaks communities. The fire required 60 miles of fireline and ranged from a minimum elevation of 3030' to a maximum of 10,640'. There were 4 residences damaged, 5 residences destroyed along with 15 other structures destroyed.

The incident command post was established at Yucaipa Regional Park, Yucaipa, CA, and two complex incident management teams rotated through the incident, California Interagency Management Team 11, Incident Commander Chris Fogle and California Interagency Management Team 13 lead by Incident Commander Mike Wakoski.

At the peak, there were 1,351 personnel assigned to the fire, including 17 hand crews, 177 engines, 20 water tenders, 17 dozers, and 10 helicopters. Numerous Fixed Wing Tankers, including the DC-10 assisted with aerial fire-retardant drops. Three Canadian Fire Bosses, a Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) Water Scooper were also used for the first time in Southern California and were based out of Big Bear Airport & Lake.

This fire resulted in one firefighter fatality, [Charlie Morton](#), a 14-year veteran firefighter with the San Bernardino National Forest, as well as thirteen injuries. The memorial service for fallen USDA Forest Service firefighter Charles Edward Morton was held on Friday, September 25, 2020, at 11 a.m. in San Bernardino, CA.

Nearly 3,000 phone calls were placed by affected residents to the San Bernardino National Forest's Fire Information Center, (909-383-5688), and nearly one million pageviews on <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7148/> Two community meetings were held in Forest Falls and in Angelus Oak as the respective communities were repopulated. Two additional Facebook Live events were held to answer questions regarding the fire.

Mike Wakoski, Incident Commander of California Incident Management Team 13 on behalf of the entire team would like to sincerely thank the city of Yucaipa and surrounding mountain communities of Mountain Home Village, Forest Falls, Angelus Oaks, Barton Flats and Big Bear for their patience, understanding, and hospitality as California Incident Management Teams 11 and 13 managed the El Dorado fire.

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