

From the CAL FIRE Information Center, I'm Scott McLean with the CAL FIRE Report for Monday, September 12, 2019.

It continues to be a very busy September with nearly 140 new wildfires starting throughout the state in the past week alone. And unfortunately, we're not expecting to see a significant break in the activity any time soon. I'll have more on the forecast for wildfire potential for the next couple of months in a few minutes, but first, a quick update on the larger wildfires across California.

Thanks to the great work by firefighters, all but one of the large, significant wildfires have been fully contained as of this morning. That remaining fire is the Ranch Fire in Tehama County burning southwest of Red Bluff. The Ranch Fire started on Sunday, November 3, during some particularly dry and warm weather conditions and grew to over 2,500 acres over the next couple of days. Access was a major challenge on the Ranch Fire, making access for firefighters difficult due to the steep, rugged terrain in the area. However, as of this morning, firefighters now have the Ranch Fire 85% contained.

Next up, some great news on the Kincade Fire in Sonoma County that started back in late October northeast of Geyserville. The Kincade Fire is 100% contained as of Wednesday, November 6th. The Kincade Fire charred almost 78,000 acres in the nearly two-weeks that it was active, destroying 374 structures and leading to the evacuations of thousands in the surrounding communities. This was because of the potential for substantial growth of the fire into major populated areas due to extreme windy weather that was occurring at the time. As the firefight ends, the long road to recovery begins for those in the affected areas, and we'd like to remind residents that assistance may be available, and we encourage you to visit so.co.emergency.org for more information on available resources. That's s-o-c-o-emergency dot org.

And finally, on October 31, the Maria Fire started in Ventura County in the community of Santa Paula, growing to just under 10,000 acres. According to the Ventura County Fire Department, The Maria Fire was fully contained on November 06. This, again, was pushed by a major wind event in Southern California. That's the trend we've been seeing since the start of Fall, extremely low humidity, a lack of overall moisture, which leads to vegetation that's very receptive to fire during time of critical fire weather. With more on the vegetation conditions we're seeing out there, we're joined by Battalion Chief Lucas Spelman.

BC Lucas Spelman: Thank you Chief. I'm Lucas Spelman with CAL FIRE. This week's weather continues to dry our brush and now we are at record low fuels in spots throughout the state. That's right – lower than this time last year which produced the Camp Fire and the Woolsey Fire. So CAL FIRE urges you to be fire safe. Make sure all Defensible Space work is finished before 10 AM and that this winter's wood piles are not stacked up against your home. As history has shown, this is the most catastrophic wildfire time of the year. So please, don't fall for the weather. Be Ready, be Set, and be prepared to Go at the moment's notice. Back to you, Chief McLean.

As Lucas mentioned, we're seeing record low vegetation moisture out there, and the forecasts for the next couple of months show that this trend is expected to continue. You can see on this graphic a visual representation of the danger we're likely looking at for the next couple of months. All the way up into Siskiyou and Shasta County, down into the central valley and along the coasts in central and southern California, we're forecast to continue to see an above normal potential for fire danger through the rest of this month. And then even into December, areas in southern California will continue to see a heightened fire danger, including along the coast into Santa Barbara and Ventura counties where a

couple of years ago we saw the deadly and destructive Thomas Fire in December. So this is not the time to let your guard down.

With that said, this is often the time of year when some Californians are used to seeing suspensions lifted on the burning of landscape debris piles in their areas. But be aware – landscape debris burning is still suspended in much of the state. You can find the current list of areas where burning is suspended or allowed on our website at burnpermit.fire.ca.gov.

Escaped Landscape Debris Burns are a leading cause of wildfires every year, so even if your area no longer has burn suspensions in place, consider alternatives to burn piles like chipping, composting or mulching, curbside pickup programs, or disposing of them at local biomass or green waste facilities.

If you do still choose to conduct landscape debris pile burns in an area where they are allowed, I ask that you please do so as safely as possible. Keep piles under 4 feet by 4 feet. Clear all flammable materials and vegetation within a 10 foot radius around your pile, making sure to cut all the way down to the bare soil. Keep a water supply close by and stay in attendance until the burn pile is completely out. And it can't be said enough - never burn on extremely dry or windy days. And also note that even after burn suspensions are lifted, you will still need to contact your local air quality control management agency to ensure that a given day is a permissive burn day before burning.

For more information on the burn suspension status in your area, and how to safely conduct landscape debris burns, visit our website at fire.ca.gov.

And that's the latest on the fire situation in California. I'm Scott McLean. Stay safe.