

From the CAL FIRE Information Center, I'm Scott McLean with the CAL FIRE Report for Monday, December 2, 2019.

Rainy weather, colder temperatures, and even snow in some areas is finally here. As if ushering in the holiday season, early last week the state saw a dramatic shift to much more winter-like weather conditions with nearly every corner of California receiving the first significant rainfall since Spring. However, despite this shift in weather, there were still over 180 new wildfires in CAL FIRE's jurisdiction last week, including a few large, significant wildfires that broke out prior to the rainfall.

We'll take a quick look at two of those large fires now – the first was the Foothills Fire in Placer County northwest of the city of Roseville. The Foothills Fire started on Monday, November 25 in an area of very dry, grassy vegetation, which allowed it to grow rapidly to just over 350 acres due to windy conditions. Firefighters were able to get a handle on that fire quickly, however, and had it fully contained within a few hours.

The second fire of note last week, which still has hot spots burning this week despite all of the rain, is in Santa Barbara County in the Los Padres National Forest. That fire is called the Cave Fire, and according to the US Forest Service, it is currently 90% contained at 3,126 acres. Firefighters continue to work to extinguish hot spots to ensure that the fire is fully contained.

With the increased precipitation and lower temperatures expected to continue in the foreseeable forecast, large fire potential is expected to remain low. CAL FIRE Units across the state will begin evaluating transitioning to winter readiness levels over the next few weeks. With that being the case, this will be the last CAL FIRE Report live stream until we see significant wildfire or incident activity once again. Remember, wildfires aren't a question of IF in this state, only a question of WHEN.

But before we sign off, we wanted to remind you that while wildfire potential may be on the decline, this is the time of year when we often see an uptick in structure fires as residents begin using heating equipment and sources of open flames in their homes more often.

A few things to keep in mind to help keep your family safer this winter: be sure to keep any flammable items at least 3 feet away from any source of heat. That means curtains, furniture, any kind of flammable material should be no less than 3 feet away from any electric heaters, fireplaces, pellet stoves, or other heating equipment. You should also have all heating equipment, including your fireplace chimney, cleaned and inspected every year before you begin using them. And finally, turn off heaters and snuff out any other open flames like candles each and every time you leave the room, and before you go to sleep. A very common cause of home fires are candles left burning after a resident falls asleep, which can tip over or otherwise catch a nearby material on fire without them even knowing it happened.

For more tips on how you can stay safe during the cold months, be sure to visit our website at fire.ca.gov.

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