

From the CAL FIRE Information Center, I'm Scott McLean with the CAL FIRE Report for Monday, August 5, 2019.

Last week, firefighters across the state battled 260 new fires, with 217 of those burning within CAL FIRE's jurisdiction. Taking a quick look at our stats so far this year, you can see that we're still looking at substantially fewer fires and acres burned this year when compared to last year. But it's important to note that a major factor in the reduction in fire activity so far this year has been due to the large amount of snow pack that we received over the winter and the weather patterns in general. As we move deeper into the summer that snow pack is melting off. In fact, at this point most, if not all, of the snow below 7,500 feet has melted off. What all this means is that the vegetation in those higher elevations is now beginning to rapidly dry out, which will significantly increase the potential for new large fires.

Taking a look at our Statewide Fire Map, you can see that there are currently 9 active significant fires burning from far up north in Siskiyou County all the way down to San Diego County. But keep in mind that most of these fires are not CAL FIRE incidents, but rather are fires that we are assisting other agencies with. Several of those are on National Forest land, and you can find more information on those incidents by visiting the US Forest Service's website, Inciweb, at Inciweb.NWCG.gov.

As far as within CAL FIRE's jurisdiction, there are currently 2 active significant fires. The first is the Gilbert Fire in Shasta County. That fire started yesterday evening in Palo Cedro, east of Redding. The Gilbert Fire has grown to 30 acres in total so far, but as of this morning firefighters have it 60% contained.

And in Contra Costa County, firefighters have been battling the Marsh Complex over the past couple of days. The Marsh Complex consists of multiple fires that sparked in the very early hours on Saturday morning and rapidly grew to just over 750 acres. Firefighters currently have the Marsh Complex 85% contained with full containment expected tomorrow.

Switching over to our fire weather headlines for the week, we're expecting last week's hot, dry conditions to continue into the early part of this week, however as we hit mid-week we're expecting to see a substantial cooling trend which will be a welcome sight.

We could also see some gusty winds in the middle of the week in the desert in Southern California, as well as to the east of the Sierra Mountains in the north. That means the potential for large fire growth in those areas for any new fires that may start.

This time of year, we like to remind residents and visitors alike to be Arson Aware. 95% of all wildfires in the state are caused by humans. While most of those are accidental, around 6% of those fires are caused intentionally by arsonists. Our law enforcement officers work diligently to investigate all fires and prosecute those suspected of starting fires, and part of that process relies on tips and observations from individuals who may have observed suspicious activity near or at the origin of wildfires.

So what should you do if you see suspicious activity near a fire? Be sure to make a note of specific details – things like the location where you observed the suspicious behavior and the time that you observed it. Also, make a note of the individual you observed. It's important to have as detailed a description as possible, including things like gender, approximate height and weight, a description of their clothing, hair color, and any distinguishing characteristics such as tattoos. And if there are any vehicles involved, make a note of that as well, including things like the make and model, the color of the

vehicle, the location and direction of travel, the license plate number, bumper stickers or other distinguishing markings, and any other occupants that are in the vehicle.

But please be careful and do NOT approach the individual or individuals engaging in the suspicious behavior. To report the activity, you can call the CAL FIRE arson hotline at 1-800-468-4408.

For more information on reporting suspicious activity, as well as other tips, be sure to visit our website at fire.ca.gov.

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