

Scott McLean: From the CAL FIRE Information Center, I'm Scott McLean with the CAL FIRE Report for Monday, September 9, 2019.

Last week, fire activity kicked into high gear starting with another round of dry lightning across much of the north early in the week, and continuing into the weekend with some high winds and very low humidity. In all, 361 new wildfires sparked in the last week in California, of which 239 were in CAL FIRE's jurisdiction. You can see that our yearly acreage stats took a significant jump as well, with 47,847 acres now burned across CAL FIRE's jurisdiction this year, for a grand total of 128,750 acres across all jurisdictions.

Switching over to our statewide fire map, you can see that as of today, firefighters are currently battling 18 significant wildfires from San Diego County all the way north to Siskiyou County. A good portion of those were sparked by that lightning that I mentioned earlier, especially those up north and in the higher elevations.

Let's zoom in for a closer look at a few of the larger significant fires. We'll start in Tehama County with the Red Bank Fire. That fire started on Thursday afternoon in a very remote location West of Red Bluff, making firefighter access very difficult. With more on the Red Bank Fire, Deputy Ops Chief Jarrod Clinkenbeard prepared this video with the latest.

Jarrold Clinkenbeard: Hello, I'm Jarrod Clinkenbeard, Deputy Operations, CAL FIRE Incident Management Team 5. Today's situational update for the Red Bank Incident for Monday, November 9. Today, we sit at approximately 8,800 acres and about 50% contained. Some of the challenges with the rough terrain and the narrow roads have been hampering our efforts, but with the weather change we're making very good progress. To the northeast side of the fire, we're making really good progress as well as well as down here on the southeast portion of the fire. To the west of us here on the South Incident, we are making good progress in cooperation with the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, and I want to thank the residents and the community for their continued cooperation and support.

McLean: Thank you Chief Clinkenbeard for that information. Moving on now to Butte County, where the Swedes Fire started on Saturday east of Oroville. The Swedes Fire grew very quickly to 400 acres, burning in an area of steep, rugged terrain. It led to the evacuations around the fire area and unfortunately destroyed 2 structures. Thankfully due in part to some cooperative weather, crews are making great progress and all evacuation orders have been reduced to warnings. Currently the Swedes Fire is 40% contained.

Next up, we have the Taboose Fire in Inyo County. That fire started on Friday off Highway 395, south of Big Pine. CAL FIRE is battling the Taboose Fire in Unified Command with The Inyo National Forest and the Inyo Sheriff's Office. It is currently at 10,500 acres in size and is 10% contained as of this morning. Several areas are under evacuation orders. Firefighters continue to make good progress, but there is some concern with a Red Flag Warning for high winds today in the area which may present some additional challenges. I'll have more on that Red Flag Warning in a moment.

And down in Riverside County, CAL FIRE is in Unified Command with the City of Murrieta on the Tenaja Fire in La Cresta. The Tenaja Fire grew to nearly 2,000 acres in less than 24 hours after starting on Wednesday. While the Tenaja Fire led to several evacuation orders and road closures, all of those have since been lifted thanks to the hard work by firefighters. The Tenaja Fire is 90% contained as of this morning.

And finally, the largest of the significant wildfires going on right now - the US Forest Service is battling the Walker Fire in the Plumas National Forest east of the community of Taylorsville. According to the US Forest Service, that fire is currently 43,931 acres and 7% contained. An interesting thing to note about the Walker Fire is that it's burning in higher elevations, which is a clear sign that vegetation even in higher elevations in the state has now dried out, which means unfortunately we may see more fires in those areas in the coming weeks and months. For more information on the Walker Fire, and the other US Forest Service fires across the state, be sure to visit Inciweb at inciweb.nwccg.org.

Now on to the Fire Weather Headlines for the upcoming week. I mentioned earlier that we have Red Flag Conditions today. Those are due to some very high winds and low humidity through tonight along the southern Sierra and Owens Valley areas, including the Inyo and Toiyabe National Forests.

But that's not the only concern this week – we're also expecting more windy conditions in combination with low humidity in a few other areas in southern California over the next few days, including Santa Barbara County.

And as we enter the second half of the week, we're likely to see conditions warm up and humidity lower across most of the state.

Conditions are there for large wildfires, and as you heard most of the large fires that are currently active have led to evacuations. With the vegetation being extremely dry across most of the state at this point, and with the weather shifting toward windy fall conditions over the next few weeks, you need to be prepared. I can't stress this enough. When an evacuation is ordered in your community, you may have very little time to react. It's vital to have a plan in place. This time of year, keep your emergency supply kit near where your vehicle is normally parked, or even in your vehicle, so it's easy to grab it and go. You don't want to have to waste time tracking it down or moving it a long distance to your vehicle. And have an evacuation checklist written out and available. It's much easier to simply go down the list of things to get ready, time permitting, before you head out, rather than trying to remember them during the stress of an evacuation. Both of these tips mean you can leave early, which will help you and your family get out of the fire area safely, and help to avoid creating, or getting stuck in, road congestion during an emergency.

For more tips on how you can get ready to Go in the event of an evacuation, visit our website at ReadyForWildfire.org

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