

From the CAL FIRE Information Center, I'm Scott McLean with the CAL FIRE Report for Monday, September 30, 2019.

Fall may have officially begun, but despite the cooler weather and even a little precipitation in some areas last week, California firefighters still battled over 170 new wildfires, 153 of which were within CAL FIRE's jurisdiction. You can see on our stats that so far this year, CAL FIRE firefighters have responded to nearly 4,500 fires which have burned over 40,000 acres. Compared to the over 600,000 acres burned last year, this is great news.

Switching over to our statewide fire map, you can see that there are currently 5 significant wildfires across the state, all of which are burning outside of CAL FIRE's jurisdiction. But earlier in the week, we did see several significant fires. Let's take a quick look at a few of the larger of those fires.

First off, on Saturday firefighters in Butte County responded to the Highway Fire just southeast of Chico. The Highway Fire grew to 300 acres in a just over an hour due to the extremely dry vegetation. A great reminder that, again, just because the weather feels a little cooler the vegetation is still critically dry and the potential for rapid fire growth is still there. Thanks to a quick response by firefighters, the Highway Fire was fully contained by the end of the day Saturday.

Next up, we'll talk about the Dehesa Fire in San Diego County. The Dehesa Fire sparked on Tuesday and was able to grow quickly due to some fairly windy conditions pushing the fire. Firefighters had the Dehesa Fire fully contained on Thursday at 200 acres.

And lastly, again in San Diego County, we had the Willow Fire last week which started on Wednesday, northeast of Lakeside. Due to its location, there were some evacuation orders put into place along a block of Willow Road, however no structures were damaged by the fire. The Willow Fire burned a total of 52 acres and was fully contained within a few hours on Wednesday evening.

Switching over to our fire weather forecast for the upcoming week, as I mentioned earlier we've had a nice break over the past several days from the consistent heat that we saw all summer long, but unfortunately conditions across the state will be warming up and humidity lowering as we move into the later part of this week.

In addition to that, we're looking at some windy conditions in the forecast. In Northern California, we'll likely see periods of gusty winds all throughout the week, which will elevate the fire danger during those times. And down south, in the Santa Barbara area and the deserts areas in particular, we're also forecast to see some windy conditions, however that should only last for a couple of days before conditions return back to normal in those areas.

Last Saturday, hundreds gathered at the state Capitol in Sacramento for the annual California Firefighter Memorial ceremony, paying tribute to the men and women who died in the line of duty while serving the people of California. The ceremony recognized 34 fallen firefighters from this and previous years. Included in the 34 were 5 CAL FIRE firefighters. The names were added to the over 1,300 firefighter names already on the memorial wall. Please join us in watching this short clip of the ceremony honoring these brave men and women. Thank you.