

From the CAL FIRE Information Center, I'm Scott McLean with the CAL FIRE Report for Monday, October 7, 2019.

Throughout the week last week, CAL FIRE firefighters battled 170 new wildfires, including several significant fires primarily in the northern part of the state. But the bulk of the large fire activity occurred over the weekend, with two significant fires starting during Red Flag Warning conditions prompted by very low humidity and gusty winds across several counties in Northern California. This is typical in the fall months in California, where we haven't seen enough rainfall to make a real impact, and so when the winds really start to kick up it gives wildfires a chance to move very quickly.

Taking a quick look at our overall stats so far for the year, we've now seen just over 4,600 wildfires in 2019 within CAL FIRE's jurisdiction, burning just over 40,700 acres. However, when combined with US Forest Service jurisdictional land, that number jumps up to 4,657 fires in California, for a total of 157,981 acres. Still well below last year's fire activity, and even the average numbers that we would see in a typical year.

Let's take a look now at those significant fires that I just mentioned that started over the weekend. The first of those fires is called the American Fire, which is burning east of American Canyon in Napa County. Fanned by the high winds in the area yesterday, the American Fire grew to over 500 acres in the span of just a few hours. However, firefighters made significant progress overnight, and currently have the American Fire 80% contained. Fire personnel will continue to work tirelessly constructing and strengthening containment lines and extinguishing hot spots throughout the day today.

And in Mariposa County, the Briceburg Fire also started yesterday north of Midpines. The Briceburg Fire grew very rapidly, prompting the evacuation of the Briceburg Campground. Overnight, again fanned by those high winds, the fire has grown to a total of 250 acres so far and is burning in steep and rugged terrain. Firefighters continue to work diligently to get containment lines around the Briceburg Fire.

Clearly so far in today's report, the reoccurring theme is high winds, and this coming week we're unfortunately expecting that trend to continue. Beginning on Tuesday, a Fire Weather Watch has been issued across dozens of counties spanning from as far north as Shasta county all the way down to parts of Tuolumne and Santa Clara counties. The winds in those areas are expected to gust as high as 50 mph in some areas. Many of the affected areas will see a decrease in the wind activity after Wednesday, but some areas could see gusty winds all the way to Friday. These winds are expected to come with very low humidity, down into the single digits in some areas, and no precipitation. So potentially very dangerous wildfire conditions are on the way, not unlike conditions that we saw around this time last year. Large areas of Southern California could also see very gusty winds beginning late Wednesday into Friday evening.

So I ask that you please be prepared and be ready to Go in the event of a wildfire starting in your community. This is so important. We saw last year that these wind events can lead to devastating and sometimes tragic consequences. It's vital that you are ready to Go now. Know which things you will need to take with you, and pack them now. Have a plan for multiple routes to evacuate from your community, in case your first route is blocked. And leave early. One of the biggest obstacles during evacuations is road congestion. You can help alleviate and even avoid it by leaving as soon as possible. Don't wait until authorities tell you to leave. If you feel like you are in danger, just Go.

For more information on what you can do now to prepare to Go, visit our website at ReadyForWildfire.org.

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