

# Western wildfires: Wind, heat, dry land fueling large blazes

Winds in the West are helping stoke wildfires sweeping across the Northern Rocky Mountains, Pacific Northwest and elsewhere, posing problems for firefighters trying to contain the flames fed by drought.

Weather was expected to worsen fires in some areas, as the federal government said it will exhaust its firefighting budget next month. Here's a look at blazes in Western states:

Two large fires in Oregon have burned through buildings and forced evacuations as strong winds pick up, sending guests of a resort fleeing.

A fire on the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in rural central Oregon exploded to more than 50 square miles Friday, forcing evacuations of a rural subdivision and a resort that had 400 guests booked Thursday night.

The fire was expected to keep growing as strong winds push it through dry grassland. Sparks from a passing vehicle started the flames earlier this week that destroyed three structures, including a mobile home.

In eastern Oregon, a 34-square-mile, lightning-sparked fire Friday burned 20 to 25 structures south of Canyon City and forced evacuations of residents in the area, while others were warned to be ready to leave quickly, KTVZ-TV in Bend reported.

The deputy state fire marshal says that the structures were destroyed along Canyon Creek, located along Highway 395 south of the endangered town of Canyon City, according to Deschutes County sheriff's Sgt. Nathan Garibay.

Also in eastern Oregon, a lightning-caused fire south of Baker City moved west toward Black Mountain and several summer homes. People in that area and those along a creek to the south were ordered to evacuate.

The 20-square-mile fire burned an unknown number of structures in a neighborhood Thursday.

Firefighters across Washington state are facing extreme heat and high winds as they battle large blazes and numerous smaller fires, and officials feared lightning storms Friday could make it worse.

Hundreds of people were evacuating from the central Washington city of Chelan as lightning-sparked wildfires advanced. Flames and smoke were visible from downtown.

The fires were among those being battled throughout Washington, including an uncontained blaze near Cougar Creek that had burned 28 square miles near the Yakima Indian Reservation. The state requested help Friday from the National

Guard to fight that fire.

A wildfire in a rugged area of northern Washington state near the Canadian border chased hundreds of people from their homes and burned 10 to 12 structures.

A blaze northeast of Colville scorched almost 5 square miles and forced evacuations at campgrounds in the area.

Mandatory evacuations were put in place Friday for areas west of the city limits of Kamiah in northwest Idaho because of a 20-square-mile fire, a TV station reported.

KREM-TV in Boise said that residents of the city of Kamiah and other surrounding areas have been told they should be packed and ready to evacuate at any time. These areas include Harrisburg East, Caribel, Tom Taha, Adams Grade, Kamiah proper, East Kamiah, Woodland Grade, Frasure Grade, Ridgewood, and Fort Misery.

Photos sent to KREM from viewers showed a home in Kamiah that the station says was burned to the ground.

A giant blaze on the Idaho-Oregon border grew to 414 square miles Friday, scorching grassland ranchers need to feed cattle and primary habitat for sage grouse, a bird being considered for federal protection.

The Owyhee County

Sheriff's Office recommended residents evacuate several drainages on the southern edge of the fire, and some roads were closed to recreational visitors, but locals were allowed in.

Dozens of smaller fires burned forested areas of the state, mainly caused by lightning storms.

In central Idaho, a 600-acre fire 13 miles north of Crouch in timber is the largest of three fires started in that area when lightning moved through earlier this week.

Hot, dry weather has helped ignite dozens of new wildfires across the Northern Rockies, and lightning and strong winds were expected to make things worse, officials said.

Thunderstorms could start new blazes and lead existing ones to spread but would not bring enough moisture to help crews battling the flames in drought conditions in Montana, Idaho and parts of North Dakota and Wyoming, said Bryan Henry of the Northern Rockies Coordination Center.

The weather helped the largest Montana fire, in Glacier National Park, spread from just a few acres Sunday to more than 23 square miles Friday. It is uncontained in a remote area of the park, where it has forced some trail

closures and is threatening two cabins, fire officials said.

A lightning-sparked fire in the Helena National Forest northeast of Lincoln has grown to 2 square miles since Monday. Its rapid growth led to the evacuation of a dozen nearby cabins, most of which are second homes.

Wildfires racing through drought-stricken southern California have burned over three square miles of land and two cabins.

A fire erupted shortly after 1 p.m. Friday in the Angeles National Forest northeast of Los Angeles.

Gusty winds quickly drove the flames through 800 acres of brushy ridges near Glendora. Two campgrounds containing at least 40 people have been evacuated.

Hundreds of firefighters are battling the flames in 100-degree heat. Two cabins have burned.

Another fire erupted Friday afternoon in Simi Valley, just northwest of Los Angeles. It has destroyed 150 acres of land and is plowing through hills next to subdivisions containing hundreds of homes.

In northern California, firefighters made more gains Friday against a wildfire 100 miles north of San Francisco that forced mountain-town dwellers to evacuate for the second time in days.



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