

California wildfires bring air quality, visibility warnings

The Associated Press

In the Fresno Bee, Modesto Bee and other papers, Monday, July 20, 2020

COALINGA, Calif. - Authorities warned of poor air quality in central and northern parts of California on Monday due to wildfires in rural areas.

An air quality alert was issued for most of the San Joaquin Valley due to smoke from the Mineral Fire in Fresno County west of Coalinga.

The fire has grown to more than 44 square miles (114 square kilometers) and was 49% contained. Seven structures have been destroyed and 60 remained threatened.

In the northeastern region of the state, the Hog Fire west of Susanville covered 9 square miles (23 square kilometers) of Lassen County.

The National Weather Service issued a dense smoke advisory for Lassen and parts of Plumas and Sierra counties due to visibility as low as a quarter-mile (0.4 kilometer).

Several smaller fires burned elsewhere in California, including a 450-acre (182-hectare) blaze in Siskiyou County that triggered an evacuation of the tiny community of Hawkinsville.

Firefighters battle rural wildfires in central California

The Associated Press

In the Modesto Bee, Merced Sun-star and other papers, Thurs., July 16, 2020

COALINGA, Calif. - More than 900 firefighters aided by helicopters and air tankers battled a wildfire in a rural area of central California on Thursday.

The fire in the Diablo Range west of the Fresno County city of Coalinga grew to nearly 26 square miles (67 square kilometers) and was 20% contained, a fire command statement said.

One structure was destroyed, 60 were threatened and some evacuation orders were in place. No injuries were reported.

Firefighters have been dealing with steep and rugged topography and temperatures in the 90s since the fire erupted Monday afternoon near Mineral Springs Road and State Route 198.

"Our crews are also adjusting to additional in-camp safety modifications which have been implemented due to COVID-19," the statement said.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District warned of potential smoke impacts on health for residents of Fresno, Kings and Kern counties, and possibly the entire valley until the Mineral fire is extinguished.

To the north, a fire in a rural area of San Benito County near Panoche was 50% contained after scorching more than 2 square miles (6 square kilometers).