

California's greenhouse gas emissions rose slightly in 2018

Associated Press

Fresno Bee and Modesto Bee, Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020

Greenhouse gas emissions in California increased slightly in 2018 due largely to lower hydroelectric power use, according to a newspaper report Monday.

The state Air Resources Board said California emitted the equivalent of 425 million metric tons of carbon dioxide in 2018 — about a million more than in the previous year, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Pollution overall remained well below the state's 2020 climate target of 431 million metric tons, a mark the state hit four years early, in 2016. But the unsteady progress underscores the challenge California faces as it pursues the more ambitious goal of cutting planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions another 40% by 2030, the Times said.

The increase in 2018 was mostly due to a decrease in the use of hydroelectric power resulting from lower precipitation in the winter of 2017-18, board spokesman Dave Glegern told the newspaper.

"That was partially compensated by increases in solar generation and other lower greenhouse gas intensity resources," Glegern said.

Last year's report found emissions reductions slowed in 2017, declining by 1.2%, versus a decline of 2.8% in 2016. To meet its 2030 goal, California must reverse that trend and significantly pick up the pace of emissions reductions across many sectors, the Times said.

Powerful winds to gust through the weekend, extending fire risk and threat of Bay Area blackouts

By Nora Mishanec

San Francisco Chronicle, Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020

Strong winds with the potential to spark new wildfires are expected to continue into the weekend, bringing bad news for the thousands of households and businesses facing potential power shut-offs.

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Strong currents in the mountains of Napa County and northeastern Sonoma County, where winds are expected to pick up significantly Wednesday night into Thursday, pose the biggest threat, meteorologists said. But the East Bay hills and the Santa Cruz mountains south of San Francisco could also see red flag conditions later this week.

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NWS sensors detected gusty winds of up to 40 mph overnight on the western side of Mt. St. Helena inside of Robert Louis Stevenson State Park, near the border of Napa and Sonoma counties. The area is within the zone covered by the red flag warning now in effect.

Current wind conditions have generally been weaker than what meteorologists would expect for this time of year, but forecasts for the coming days predict winds “distinctly stronger in comparison,” Walbrun said.

The offshore winds are not bringing high heat, however, and temperatures for much of the Bay Area were likely to remain cooler throughout the day Tuesday. Coastal areas including San Francisco were predicted to see temperatures in the 70s, with inland areas seeing temperatures in the mid-80s. The exception was northern Napa and Sonoma counties, where places like Cloverdale could see highs of up to 92 degrees.

Walbrun urged the public to remain vigilant as strong winds sweep dry terrain in areas that haven’t seen soaking rains since April.

“It’s been a long fire season, but unfortunately there’s still a lot of potential,” he said.

Meteorologists predict a brief lull Friday and Saturday before a significant rise in gusting winds on Sunday and Monday, he said.

SQF Complex updates: All evacuation orders lifted, Balch Park closes until 2022

By Joshua Yeager

Visalia Times-Delta, Monday, Oct. 19, 2020

Balch Park and Mountain Home Demonstration State Forest are closed to the public as a result of the SQF Complex, the largest fire in Tulare County history.

The popular recreation and camping destinations likely won't reopen until May 2022, according to Cal Fire officials, who say they need the time to clear the area of dangerous trees.

"The closure will allow for the mitigation of hazard trees that have died in the fire and that pose a risk to public safety along roads, trails, and campgrounds," said Toni Davis, spokeswoman for Cal Fire Tulare Unit. "It will also allow Cal Fire to implement resource conservation tactics to protect soil and watershed values."

The gates are closed on Bear Creek Road, just above Mountain Home Conservation Camp, and on Balch Park Road above the community of Happy Camp.

Fire officials previously reported that the Castle Fire spared all but one structure across the state- and county-owned land.

As of Monday, the Sequoia Complex has scorched 168,470 acres across the Tulare County mountains and destroyed 242 structures. All mandatory evacuation orders and most voluntary evacuation warnings were lifted as the fire reached 72% containment.

Residents can check to see if their property and homes were damaged via an interactive online map hosted on the county's website. The map shows icons of homes that users can click to see information, as well as photos.

The popular Balch Park, which is run by Tulare County, was closed earlier this year for repairs and upgrades.

The park, located east of Visalia along Highway 190, usually opens to the public on Memorial Day weekend and is a summer hotspot for recreation activities. It's a frequent overnight stop for out-of-towners, as well.

The park is known for its majestic grove of Giant Sequoia trees almost equal to the groves of nearby Sequoia and Kings Canyon national parks. The grove features the Lady Alice tree, and the Allen Russell Tree, which is the 33rd largest Sequoia in the world and the largest tree in Balch Park.

Mountain Home is one of nine demonstration forests managed by Cal Fire to research and showcase conservation techniques, including selective logging and controlled burns.

SQF Complex evacuation warnings (residents only):

- Mineral King
- Silver City
- South Fork Drive past Conley Bridge to the end of South Fork

[Bakersfield Californian Letter to the editor Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020](#)

An alternative to the proposed switch to electric cars

Gov. Gavin Newsom wants us all to drive electric cars by 2035. Assuming all the scientists are right about global warming, I agree that something needs to be done.

But where are we going to get all the electric power to drive the cars? How many square miles of solar panels do we need and where are we going to put them? Shall we cover the whole entire state of Nevada? Yeah, sure, why not — no, just kidding, really.

I certainly don't think we want to go to nuclear power. Especially not after Fukushima and the fact that we live in earthquake country.

But wait, instead of electric cars, maybe we should just try and reinstate former President Barack Obama's plan for increasing fuel efficiency. After the Nov. 3 election, I'm sure that both Democrats and Republicans could get together and try to push it through even if President Donald Trump does win.

And even if the scientists are wrong, it's not going to hurt to drive smaller, more fuel efficient cars. It will make us less dependent on foreign oil. And, I've always felt a little guilty about driving a two ton car two miles down to the store just to get a loaf of bread and a six-pack of beer. I wouldn't mind driving a smaller car as long as everybody else does too. I just don't want to be in a small car and get hit by a big SUV.

— Charles Mallett, Bakersfield