

High wind could impact Kern until Wednesday

The Bakersfield Californian, Monday, Sept. 27, 2021

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued a high wind advisory through Tuesday evening.

Moderate to gusty winds could blow dust and PM10 across the San Joaquin Valley. Smoke from the KNP Complex and Windy Fire continues to impact Kern County, according to the news release.

Strong winds cause dust to blow from areas with dry soil and create unhealthy concentrations of PM10. This pollution can aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and increase risk of respiratory infections, according to the news release.

Older adults and children should avoid outdoor exercise. To monitor PM10 levels in your area, visit www.airnow.gov.

Community health program seeks to help asthma sufferers living near Little Manila in Stockton

Laura S. Diaz

Stockton Record, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2021

Little Manila Rising is seeking south Stockton residents afflicted with asthma to participate in a program aimed at improving their health.

As a neighborhood, Little Manila is “chronically under-invested” and suffers “high air pollution and groundwater contamination,” Reuters reported earlier this year.

The Decreasing Asthma Within Neighborhoods (DAWN) Program has been developed to address that health issue.

Interested or know someone that could participate? Here’s what to know:

What is the DAWN Program?

Dr. Dawn Bohulano Mabalon was a born-and-raised Stocktonian and founding member of Little Manila Rising (LMR), who focused her professional academic career on the study of the Filipino community in America.

Mabalon unexpectedly passed away from an asthma attack at the age of 45 in 2018.

Losing her “was very hard to our community,” said Elaine Barut Health and Equity director at LMR. The DAWN Program — Decreasing Asthma Within Neighborhoods — not only carries Mabalon’s name but continues to work towards community betterment like she did.

DAWN's goal is to mitigate asthma and advocate to improve community health and development through data and research. The program is in its second out of three years and is currently working on its community mapping approach, trying to answer:

- How many residents have asthma and/or experience asthma symptoms and where are they located in the neighborhood?
- What are green spaces around the neighborhood?
- What are pollution sources nearby?

Wanting to tackle these two issues — health problems and air pollution — the DAWN program is geographically focusing within the same designated map that passed and approved Assembly Bill 617 (on nonvehicular air pollution and the Community Air Protection Program).

Streetwise, those limits are roughly around Harding Way on the northern edge, the San Joaquin River and its sloughs on the west, and a diagonal cut from Highway 99 to McKinley Avenue on the south and east boundaries.

Program enrollment is free, and LMR (along with their health partners) is conducting home visitations for those living with asthma, Barut said. Their current target audience is people who are enrolled or eligible for MediCal, yet they also help others enroll, such as if:

- You don't have insurance but are eligible for MediCal.
- You have a different insurance provider.
- You do not have insurance.

"We are committed to forming a policy brief," with the findings of the home visitations and research, said CaseyAnn Carbonell of Everyday Impact Consulting, who is working with the DAWN Program.

The group plans to use the results of the fieldwork to help the local community, draft policy and continue to find funding to mitigate health and environmental problems.

Barut said she was told the "county doesn't have a campaign on it (asthma) because of funding issues," when reaching out to local organizations and agencies for DAWN health partnerships.

Asthma "is a huge issue in Stockton, but there is no asthma education," Carbonell said.

Remembering Dawn Mabalon

- [Family, friends still trying to make sense of Dawn Bohulano Mabalon's death](#)
- [Family, friends grapple with loss of Dawn Mabalon](#)
- [Guillermo: Dawn Mabalon: 'The most de-colonized' Filipina/o](#)
- [Concert Sunday dedicated to Filipino-American champion Dawn Mabalon](#)

How to enroll in DAWN

You can click on the following link Barut provided: tinyurl.com/dawnamp.

This asthma-mitigation program was created with the intention to reduce asthma cases through in-home assessments, education, and referrals of families to both social and health care services, Barut wanted to remind the community.

For those enrolled, community health workers conduct a home visit model, which includes three home visits for adults and five home visits for 18 and younger.

"We also offer incentives for joining the program such as offering a cleaning bucket and remediation supplies (air purifier, bed sheets, vacuum, HVAC filters, etc., depending on the case)," Barut said.

Still have questions and/or want some more details? For more information, you can contact community health worker Omar Sanchez at (209) 727-4521 or via email at omar@littlemanila.org between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. from Monday to Friday.

"All information collected will be kept strictly confidential," the registration link reads.

Strong winds fanning Windy, KNP Complex fires as they burn through southern Sierra Nevada

By Lila Seidman

Los Angeles Times and other papers, Tuesday, Sept. 28, 2021

Gusty winds blowing through the southern Sierra Nevada continue to spread the growing KNP Complex and Windy fires, which have burned more than 135,000 acres combined as they tear through steep, rugged terrain.

Furious westerly winds — some gusting up to 40 mph — fanned the Windy fire's growth by nearly 2,000 acres in a day. The fire, raging in the Sequoia National Forest and Tule River Indian Reservation, had ballooned to 87,318 acres on Tuesday and was only 4% contained.

The KNP Complex fire, burning to the north in the Sequoia National Park, had burned through 48,344 acres and was 8% contained.

Both fires erupted Sept. 9 amid a massive lightning storm that sent dozens of bolts shooting into the dense forest, home to groves of giant sequoia trees, including the famed General Sherman tree. Since then, they have expanded rapidly through the drought-stricken vegetation.

“If you had told me 2½ weeks ago that at this point, we would be less than 10% containment, I probably would’ve said, ‘Well, I’m not sure I want to hear that.’ But here we are,” said Clay Jordan, superintendent for the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

During a community meeting Monday, Jordan said fire officials were wrestling with “very difficult decisions,” weighing firefighters’ lives and communities at risk from the blazes.

Because of the extreme steepness of the terrain and hazards posed by standing dead trees — known as snags — firefighting efforts have included significant amounts of indirect attacks, such as building containment lines, officials said.

“You can place firefighters in there, expose them to great risk, and have very little chance of success,” Jordan said. “You just can’t justify that level of risk.” The downside is that with indirect methods, “the matrix of containment is not a good measure of progress,” he said.

The benefits of indirect work can take a while to show, said Jim Mackensen, a public information officer for the Windy fire, who said intense fire behavior and rough terrain have often made direct firefighting techniques infeasible.

An infestation of bark beetles a few years ago killed a large number of drought-weakened trees, felling them and strewing their parched carcasses on the ground.

“When the fire gets into those areas, it sets all those logs and stuff on fire, so it’s got a tremendous amount of energy,” Mackensen said. “We can’t put firefighters right on the line to fight those fires.”

In many instances, crews instead have backed away from the edge of the fire and put containment lines off roadways or dozer lines while waiting “for the fire to come down closer to us,” Mackensen said. He said he expected containment on the fires to increase over the next several days as the flames reach those lines.

Roughly 158 homes in the Sequoia National Park, in the Lodgepole area, and nearby communities of Three Rivers and Hartland are threatened by the KNP Complex. Personnel were prioritizing protecting those structures Tuesday, officials said.

Meanwhile, crews from Tulare County were assessing potential damage to homes and other properties in the Sugarloaf and Pine Flat areas, along the south end of the Windy fire, where flames swept through in recent days.

Despite fire officials’ cautious optimism that indirect firefighting methods will pay off, albeit more slowly, there’s general consensus that both the KNP Complex and Windy fires will continue to swell.

Years of drought have primed the state’s vegetation to burn faster and hotter — a problem firefighters are contending with up and down the state.

A winter and spring of little rain and minimal snow runoff — followed by months of unusually warm conditions and several summer heat waves — left wildlands primed to burn fast, giving fire crews little time to get a handle on flames before they explode.

And adding to fire experts’ concerns is the fact that much of the dry vegetation this year hasn’t yet encountered severe winds, which tend to arrive in the form of Santa Anas and sundowners later in the year.

When the extreme dryness does meet strong winds it can quickly spell disaster.