

Fire burning near Yosemite National Park grows to 2,000 acres

By Vikaas Shanker

Sierra Star, Tuesday, October 9, 2019

The Briceburg Fire in Mariposa County reached 2,000 acres as of Tuesday.

The vegetation fire was 10 percent contained as of Tuesday evening, according to the latest CalFire incident status report. Highway 140, a major tourist route to Yosemite National Park, was closed from Colorado Road to Savages Trading Post.

Mandatory evacuation orders were issued for addresses on Highway 140 between Octagon Road and Buffalo Gulch, any homes or camps on Buffalo Gulch Road, Bug Hostel and Briceburg Campground. Mandatory evacuations previously were ordered for three homes near the fire, Briceburg Information Center and the McCabe Flat Campground.

The San Joaquin Valley Air District on Tuesday issued a "cautionary statement" in connection with dust and debris blowing around the foothills and into the valley in connection with the fire. Authorities urged anyone exposed to wildfire smoke to remain indoors with the windows closed, especially those with heart or lung diseases and elderly people and young children.

The fire started around 2:30 p.m. Sunday near Highway 140 and the Briceburg Road bridge. It grew to 500 acres by Monday afternoon.

In addition to the fire, some Mariposa County customers also were included in a multi-county planned power shutoff by Pacific Gas & Electric as a part of a statewide wildfire action plan, according to alerts by the company.

An evacuation center has been set up at New Life Christian Fellowship, located at 5089 Cole Road in Mariposa.

A small animal evacuation center has been set up at the SPCA of Mariposa County at 5599 Highway 49 in Mariposa, with phone number 209-966-5275. Those seeking help with evacuating large animals are being asked to contact Mariposa Animal Control at 209-966-3615.

People in these areas are advised to prepare for possible evacuation:

Colorado Road, between Highway 140 and Davis Road

Any home or camp on Davis Road

Highway 140 from Colorado Road to Midpines Market

Ponderosa Way and all side streets, including Deer Park, Leichtlin Lane and Feliciana Mountain Road

Rancheria Creek Road

Rumley Mine Road

The cause of the fire remained under investigation, the report states.

Smoke, blowing dust force health warning across the Valley

By Kyra Haas

Visalia Times-Delta, Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2019

A fire burning near Yosemite National Park has doubled in size overnight, according to Cal Fire officials.

The Briceburg Fire, located in Mariposa County at Highway 140 and Briceburg Bridge Road north of Midpines, has burned 3,600 acres since it was reported earlier this week.

The fire is 10% contained, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection website.

Firefighters worked through the night on Tuesday to remove dry vegetation between the constructed containment lines and the main body of the fire. Firefighters will continue to work towards containment on Wednesday, according to Cal Fire officials.

Highway 140 is closed from Colorado Road to Savages Trading Post. Yosemite National Park remains open.

The fire prompted air quality officials to take action.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has issued a Valley-wide health cautionary statement, due to smoke from the fire and blowing dust anticipated Wednesday.

The Valley Air District anticipates wildfire smoke will continue to affect the Valley until the fire is extinguished, but the blowing dust should subside by Thursday, according to a district news release.

Millions of homes across California will also be without power due to wind activity and fire risk. Power will go out at noon on Wednesday for about 1,812 people in Coulterville, La Grange, Greeley Hill and Mariposa.

Wildfire smoke and blowing dust can create high concentrations of pollutants that worsen respiratory diseases and trigger asthma attacks, according to the release. These pollutants include PM2.5 and PM10.

The district's Real-Time Air Advisory Network (myRAAN.com) shows air quality at any Valley address. While able to detect microscopic pollutants in smoke, the monitors might not always detect larger particles present in dust and ash.

For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call a district office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-392-5500).

Unhealthy air possible from wind, wildfires

The Bakersfield Californian, Tuesday, October 8, 2019

A wildfire in Mariposa County near Yosemite National Park and blowing dust from gusty winds forecasted for Wednesday have prompted the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to issue a health alert.

Smoke impacts are expected to continue until the fire is extinguished, while blowing dust should subside by Thursday, said a news release from the air district. The alert has been issued for the entire San Joaquin Valley.

The Briceburg Fire started Sunday in Mariposa County and has burned 1,200 acres and was 10 percent contained as of Tuesday afternoon.

Meanwhile, a system bringing strong, dry winds is moving into California from north to south over the next several days.

Anyone exposed to poor air quality or wildfire smoke should move indoors to an air-conditioned/filtered environment with their windows closed, the district said.

Wildfire smoke and wind-blown dust can create unhealthy concentrations of PM2.5 and PM10, which can trigger asthma attacks and exacerbate respiratory diseases. PM2.5 can also increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.