



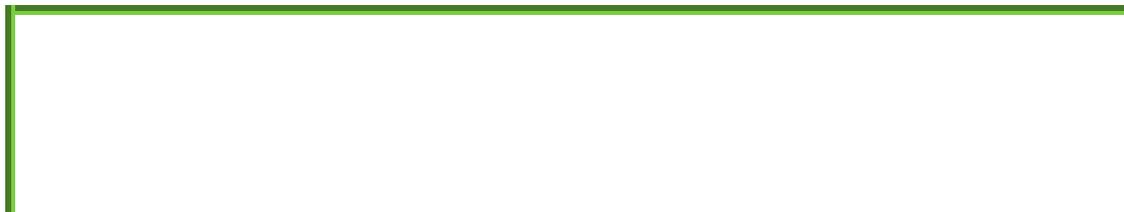
Protecting our rural environment by promoting citizen participation in sustainable land use planning since 2006

The Community Action Project (CAP) administers the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC), which is comprised of regional and local organizations, community groups, and concerned individuals who promote public participation in land use and resource planning to ensure a healthy human, natural, and economic environment now and in the future.

Learn more at www.calaverascap.com

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Join Us!

*Get a glimpse into what CPC membership is like by attending a meeting.
There is no commitment, just show up and listen in!*

Next Calaveras Planning Coalition Meeting

September 13, 2021 3 P.M. - 5 P.M.
New Members Welcome at CPC Meetings

Organizations, groups, and individuals (known as associate members) may join the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC). Prospective members may attend two consecutive meetings before making a final decision on membership in the Coalition. The membership form is a pledge to support and advocate for the Coalition's eleven Land Use and Development Principles, which you will find on our website:

www.calaverascap.com.

There is no membership fee. However, members are encouraged to donate to the Community Action Project/Calaveras Planning Coalition. Visitors and prospective members will, by necessity, be excluded from attorney/client privileged discussions.

If you are interested in membership, please email CPC Facilitator Tom Infusino, tomi@volcano.net, to receive a membership form, agenda, and the Zoom meeting connection.

To help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our county, all CAP and CPC meetings will be held online via Zoom until restrictions are lifted by the Public Health Department.

BOS Meeting August, 24 2021

[Agenda](#)

Planning Commission Meeting August 26, 2021

[Agenda](#)

Redistricting Timeline

- **September 1, 2021 at 6 pm** - Pre-Draft Map Public Workshop: Supervisor lead town hall located in **Valley Springs - Jenny Lind Veteran's Hall** focusing on Burson, Jenny Lind, Valley Springs and surrounding areas - **Hosted by District 1 & 5 Supervisors, Gary Tofanelli and Benjamin Stopper.**
- **September 3, 2021 at 6pm** - Pre-Draft Map Public Workshop: Supervisor lead town hall located in **Copperopolis - Courthouse at Town Square** focusing on Copperopolis and surrounding areas - **Hosted by District 4 & 5 Supervisors, Amanda Folendorf and Benjamin Stopper.**
- **September 8, 2021 at 6pm** - Pre-Draft Map Public Workshop: Supervisor lead town hall located in **Murphys - Ironstone Vineyards** focusing on communities along the Highway 4 corridor - **Hosted by District 3 & 4 Supervisors, Merita Callaway and Amanda Folendorf.**
- **September 9, 2021 at 6pm** - Pre-Draft Map Public Workshop: Supervisor lead town hall located in **Mokelumne Hill - Town Hall** focusing on Mokelumne Hill, Mountain Ranch, San Andreas and surrounding areas - **Hosted by District 1 & 2 Supervisors, Gary Tofanelli and Jack Garamendi.**
- **September 30, 2021** - Redistricting data to be received from U.S. Census Bureau. [See announcement from U.S. Census Bureau here](#)

- Remainder of the dates will be adjusted upon receipt of the U.S. Census Bureau Data -

- September - November 2021 - County reviews new geography, data and prepares draft map alternatives from U.S Census Bureau data and comments collected throughout the public outreach period.
- October - November 2021 - Release draft maps to the public.
- October 1, 2021 - Release of post draft map hearing dates and times.
- Date TBD - Public Hearing #1 Post Draft Maps: Presentation to the Board of Supervisors. Review draft map alternatives. Solicit public comment on the proposed draft maps. Staff to receive direction from the Board based on public comments for map revisions.
- Date TBD - Public Hearing #2 Post Draft Maps: Soliciting public comment on the proposed draft maps. Staff to receive direction from the Board based on public comments for map revisions.
- Date TBD - Resolution adopting draft map presented to the Board of Supervisors.
- Date TBD - Elections Office adjust precinct lines to conform to new supervisorial lines.

- December 15, 2021 - Signatures in-lieu-of-filing fee period begins for U.S. Senate, Congressional, Legislative, and County candidates.
- June 7, 2022 - California Direct Primary

Local News

732-acre shaded fuel break in the works between Murphys and Forest Meadows

Noah Berner / Calaveras Enterprise / August 16 2021

Due to the increase in wildfire in recent years, the state and local organizations have stepped up efforts to mitigate risk through forest thinning, controlled burns and the establishment of fuel breaks.

The Calaveras County Resource Conservation District (CCRCDD) recently completed the first section of a 732-acre shaded fuel break on private land stretching between the town of Murphys and Forest Meadows on the south side of Highway 4.

CCRCDD estimates that the project will protect about 7,000 homes on the Ebbetts Pass Corridor. The project units are connected by a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) fuel break directly southeast of Forest Meadows.

Funding was provided through a \$2.1 million grant from Cal Fire's 2019 Fire Prevention Grant Program.

The CCRCDD was established following a vote by county residents in the November 2016 election, making Calaveras County the last rural county in the state to establish a resource conservation district.

"It was the third time that it was put to a vote, but it was the first time that there was no tax base associated with it," CCRCDD Executive Director Gordon Long said while driving up Forest Meadows Drive on the way to the project area on the morning of Aug. 5. "We are a strictly grant-driven organization, and it is a volunteer board."

While the CCRCDD has completed multiple smaller projects in the past, the scope of the Murphys-To-Forest Meadows Wildland Urban Interface Fuel Break Project is significantly greater.

"This is by far our biggest project," Long said. "We're pretty excited."

Tanner Logging was contracted to complete the first 85-acre unit on Darby Knob. Work on the unit began on June 3 and wrapped up on July 21.

"We were a little concerned with doing work this time of year," Long said. "But we only had one red flag day, and that was the day that we actually had a little bit of rain here."

Dick Tanner was just finishing up work in the area and moving out his last piece of heavy machinery when Long pulled up. Although work had been finished on the unit a couple of weeks earlier, Tanner Logging was hired by an adjacent landowner to do some additional work on their property.

"They hired Tanner on themselves and added some more fuels reduction and fire safety," Long said. "That's a great side effect when people see the work."

As he drove into the project area, Long passed a property owner walking his dog. He said that people in the area were supportive of the project.

"A lot of people out here feel much better," he said. "It's a big deal to a lot of people out here."

The total project impacts about 90 private parcels with about 50 habitable structures. Long said that only a few of the property owners failed to return right-of-entry forms.

"Because of fire danger now, I think that the general public understands the importance of doing this work," he said. "Everybody is fully appreciative of the work that we're trying to do for them."

Darby Knob sits at the top of the Stanislaus River Canyon. Several charred logs and stumps could still be seen from the Darby Fire, which passed through the area in 2001.

"This whole area was impacted by the Darby Fire," Long said, passing by a slope covered in masticated brush, but barren of trees. "There were no trees to leave because they burned."

The Old Gulch Fire also impacted the area in 1992 after jumping Highway 4.

"Where there's fire, it's going to come back again," Long said. "There's just something about drainages and slopes and people."

As Long proceeded down the gravel road, the view of the river canyon opened up. Masticated brush covered the forest floor between evenly spaced trees.

"Before, you could not even see the canyon from here," Long said. "This was just a wall of debris and trees and brush."

In addition to working for CCRCD, Long is employed by Amador County RCD and contracted to work with the National Resource Conservation Service. He holds a biology degree from California Polytechnic State University, and has worked as a wildlife biologist for much of his career.

"I'm a wildlife biologist by trade really, but I got into forestry work," he said. "This work that we're doing is actually doing more for wildlife than some of the wildlife projects I've done."

Long said the environmental studies for the project only took about three months.

“Since we’re a state special district, we can actually be the lead agency, which helps a lot,” he said. “Cal Fire and nonprofits, they usually have to have Cal Fire be the lead agency, and they’ve got a higher level of bureaucracy they’ve got to go through.”

Long passed by a fuel break on Forest Service land on the edge of the project that was completed about three years ago. He said that once a fuel break is created, maintenance is still a challenge.

“You like to come in every five to seven years—it’s just hard,” he said. “Cal Fire and Forest Service have been hesitant to put a bunch of money into maintenance of these projects.”

Long said that while CCRCD expects to finish the project in March of 2024, most of the work should be completed by the summer of 2022.

The Murphys-To-Forest Meadows Wildland Urban Interface Fuel Break Project is part of a series of projects currently being planned, coordinated and implemented by multiple agencies and organizations, including CCRCD, Cal Fire, the U.S. Forest Service, the Calaveras Foothills Fire Safe Council, the Calaveras-Amador Forestry Team, Sierra Pacific Industries, homeowners associations and private landowners.

“It takes a village, and no one group can do everything,” Long said. “It’s nice getting all of the collaboration. That’s kind of heartwarming to see.”

Caldor fire has small towns under siege as it burns 104 structures

Lila Seidman & Alex Wigglesworth / LA Times / August 20, 2021

The growing Caldor fire in El Dorado County has leveled 104 structures, many of them in the decimated community of Grizzly Flats, and nearly 7,000 others are still threatened, authorities said Friday.

The blaze, which ignited Saturday, has surged past 70,000 acres, and firefighters have yet to contain any of the spreading flames.

Roughly 24,965 residents have been evacuated, as [winds threaten to push the fire](#) north near the communities of Kyburz and Whitehall, fire officials said.

Of top concern Friday was keeping the blaze — now at 73,415 acres — south of Highway 50, where homes dot the long, remote stretch of road, said Capt. Keith Wade, a public information officer for the fire.

Resources were strategically placed there for structure protection, and there are no plans to close the highway, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Ash was falling “like snow” at the El Dorado County Fair & Event Center in Placerville, where base camp for the blaze has been set up, Wade said.

Smoke from several regional fires hung heavy over the area, clamped down like a wet blanket by a high-pressure zone.

“It almost feels like you’re at the beach with that — like an overcast,” Wade said. “That’s how it feels here, except we’re drenched in smoke.”

Winds from the south are expected to pick up Saturday, sparking fears of spurring fire growth along the northern edge of the blaze.

Crews intend to work hard before that happens, Wade said, and anticipated there would be some containment of the growing fire by Saturday morning.

To the north of the Caldor fire, the monstrous [Dixie fire](#) continued to rampage in several counties above Sacramento. The massive blaze had swelled to 700,630 acres by Friday morning.

The fire ignited July 13 near a Pacific Gas and Electric Co. power station in Feather River Canyon and might have been caused by a Douglas fir falling onto a power line, [PG&E said](#). The utility has said its equipment may also be to blame for sparking the Fly fire, which started nine days later and eventually merged with the Dixie fire.

The blaze — the [second-largest in California history](#) — is growing in multiple directions, and has been plagued in recent days by changing winds, fire officials said. It is 35% contained. The community of Janesville along the eastern edge of the fire has been under direct threat for several days.

Changing weather conditions have confounded firefighting efforts, officials said.

For the majority of the fire’s life, winds have blown from the southwest, but the last two days, they have shifted to northwest, “almost like a 180,” said Capt. Jim Evans, a public information officer for the Dixie fire.

On Friday, they were expected to blow again from the southwest. Wind speeds are expected to increase throughout the afternoon, and a dry cold front is slated to arrive Saturday, according to incident meteorologist Joseph Goudsward.

“A town one day might be looking pretty good, then the winds shift, and next thing you know, the fire is going toward this town,” Evans said. “So we’re worried about all the towns nearby.”

Officials advised during a briefing Friday morning that firefighters might need to rethink their strategies given the instability of the weather.

“Obviously, the key word today is change,” said Billy See, a unified incident commander. “We’ve been on a roller-coaster ride, 30-plus days.”

[California faces unprecedented dangers as record heat, dryness combine with fierce winds](#)

More than a million acres have already burned fairly early in California's fire season. Elsewhere in the state are the [Cache fire](#) in Lake County and [French fire](#) in Kern County, which both sprang up Wednesday afternoon.

The Monument and McFarland fires, both sparked by lightning in late July, have seared more than 258,246 acres between them in Shasta and Trinity counties.

The state is entering uncharted territory as [record dry conditions](#) continue to fuel destruction. Officials have attributed warming temperatures and worsening drought to the explosive growth of fires this summer.

Wigglesworth reported from Placerville and Seidman from Los Angeles

3 additional COVID-19 deaths signal danger for Calaveras County's unvaccinated population

Dakota Morlan / Calaveras Enterprise / August 17, 2021

COVID-19 case numbers are growing rapidly in Calaveras County, but vaccination rates are not.

On Monday, the county's public health department announced three additional deaths linked to the coronavirus—a male in his late 40's and two women in their 60's—bringing the countywide death toll to 61.

The recent deaths correlate with the number of active confirmed cases, which have increased roughly five-fold since the beginning of August, as a Delta variant-fueled surge nears an infection rate not seen since last winter.

Vaccination rates, however, have not shown such significant growth. Calaveras County's fully vaccinated population has increased by about 2% since mid-July, now at 41.2%, with roughly 10% having received just one dose, according to an L.A. Times vaccination tracker.

That puts the county in forty-third place out of 58 California counties and below the statewide rate of 55% of residents fully vaccinated.

County Health Officer René Ramirez, MD, has been fighting an uphill battle to change minds and change the tide since taking his position in April. At public meetings, his warnings to residents have been frustrated and fervent: the pandemic is not yet over.

“The vaccine against Covid is safe and effective and is our best chance at getting past this pandemic,” Ramirez told the Enterprise. “The vast majority of complications and deaths due to Covid are now being seen primarily against unvaccinated individuals. This means that the morbidity and mortality associated with Covid is now considered largely a preventable issue.”

While it is unknown exactly how many cases can be attributed to the more contagious Delta variant within Calaveras County, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has listed Delta as the predominant variant throughout the United States.

This is bad news for unvaccinated individuals, who are at a higher risk of serious illness if they contract the coronavirus, which vaccinated individuals can still transmit, according to the CDC.

“The COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States are highly effective at preventing severe disease and death, including against the Delta variant. But they are not 100% effective and some fully vaccinated people will become infected (called a breakthrough infection) and experience illness. For such people, the vaccine still provides them strong protection against serious illness and death,” the CDC states. “Although breakthrough infections happen much less often than infections in unvaccinated people, individuals infected with the Delta variant, including fully vaccinated people with symptomatic breakthrough infections, can transmit it to others. CDC is continuing to assess data on whether fully vaccinated people with asymptomatic breakthrough infections can transmit. However, the greatest risk of transmission is among unvaccinated people who are much more likely to contract, and therefore transmit the virus.”

Yet anxieties persist surrounding the available Covid vaccines, all of which have received Emergency Use Authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) but are awaiting full FDA approval.

However, Ramirez insists that the vaccines are safe, and that individuals should consider the greater risk of not getting the jab.

“This is not a matter of opinion,” he said. “It has been established that the Covid vaccine is safe and effective. Keep in mind nothing is without concern of safety. Everything has risk. Any of the over-the-counter medication, to the food you eat, to the items you buy, to your daily activities. ...

“What we do know is that the Covid vaccine is much safer than many of the other activities anyone engages in on a daily basis. In the spirit of transparency, the CDC has listed known adverse reactions of the vaccine. All of which do not even come close to the potential complications of the Covid virus itself.”

Documented adverse reactions (which are vaccine type-specific) include anaphylaxis, myocarditis and blood clots, though the CDC lists these incidences as rare among the roughly 168.3 million Americans who have been fully vaccinated, which is about 51% of the total population.

Experts say about 85% of Americans will need to be vaccinated to bring the pandemic under control, an L.A. Times article states. Until then, new variants can gain a foothold among the unvaccinated population, continuing to overwhelm hospitals as surges ebb and flow.

“(The) Covid vaccine’s initial development was based on the original version of the virus, not the subsequent variants,” Ramirez said. “However, we do continue to monitor the vaccine’s effectiveness as it holds up against developing variants. An analogous question to you would be do you ensure measures to have the most up-to-date security version for your phone, device or computer? The longer this virus is around, the more opportunities there (are) for it to mutate with further variants, which continues to threaten our safety and vaccine effectiveness.”

On Monday, there were two Covid patients hospitalized at Dignity Health Mark Twain Medical Center (MTMC), Calaveras County’s only hospital. While CEO and President Doug Archer says there are no concerns about capacity currently, significant increases in hospitalizations across the state and in neighboring counties are cause for concern.

On July 14, there were 23 available ICU beds in San Joaquin County, according to state data. On Aug. 13, there were four. On June 27 in Stanislaus County, there were 42 ICU beds available, and on Aug. 14, there were 20.

“Covid is ramping up,” Archer said.

In response, some hospitals including MTMC are ramping up mitigation efforts in a controversial decision to mandate vaccines for all employees. The hospital announced its new rule on Aug. 12, following a mandate from Dignity Health.

“After a thoughtful and thorough review, Mark Twain Medical Center has decided to require all of its employees, physicians, Advanced Practice Providers, volunteers, and others who provide care in our facilities to be vaccinated against COVID-19,” the statement reads. “Our people have responded selflessly to the needs of the community throughout the pandemic, and this decision is further proof of our commitment to keeping our communities safer and healthier. If you are medically able to get the COVID-19 vaccine, we urge you to do so.”

The announcement received mixed reactions from the community on social media, with some praising the move and others calling it illegal.

Last week, a Covid vaccine mandate passed its first-ever legal test before the Supreme Court when the justices upheld Indiana University’s requirement that students be vaccinated to attend classes in the fall.

Meanwhile, local public health is increasing its testing and vaccination efforts, with walk-in vaccine clinics coming up at Grocery Outlet in Valley Springs, Utica Park in Angels Camp and the Murphys Library. No-cost mobile testing sites are also available at various locations and dates. Visit the Calaveras County Public Health [website](#) or [Facebook page](#) for the latest information.

Supporters Enjoy guided hike at Red Lake

CAP supporters Bob Leitzell and family hold their Clif bars after a great hike around Red Lake

At our silent auction fundraiser in fall of 2019, Bob bid on a guided hike, hosted by the facilitator of the CPC, Tom Infusino. While they had to delay their plans due to COVID, they were finally able to get together this July to hike around Red Lake on Carson Pass. Tom shared his knowledge of the local wildflowers and the history of the Mormon Emigrant Trail. The hikers also got to enjoy Bald Eagle sightings and a Spotted Sandpiper.

Spotted Sandpiper

Bald Eagle

CAP is grateful to the Leitzell's for their support. We are also grateful to the Clif Family Foundation for continuing to support the efforts of CAP and the CPC. In addition to their products keeping our supporters healthy and energized on the trail, they provide financial support that allows CAP and the CPC to do the important work we do.



Sierra Nevada
Conservancy
Funding
Opportunities
Newsletter
for August/Sep
tember



This is an electronic newsletter published every two months containing information on upcoming grant and funding opportunities for the Sierra Nevada region. The newsletter includes federal, state, and private foundation funders as well as additional resources and information related to grant funding. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy provides the Funding Opportunities Newsletter as a free resource under its Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program.

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Regional News

Dixie fire forces new evacuations and strains resources as it burns for more than a month

Alex Wigglesworth / LA Times / August 14, 2021

More than a month after it ignited near a Pacific Gas and Electric Co. power station in Feather River Canyon, the relentless Dixie fire shows no signs of slowing down as it continues to threaten homes and strain firefighting resources.

The fire had burned 540,581 acres, destroyed at least 738 residences and commercial properties and forced nearly 29,000 people from their homes as of Saturday morning, authorities said. Nearly 15,000 structures remained threatened.

The fire made a number of significant runs Friday, sending up multiple large columns of ash and smoke that in at least one case generated its own lightning, officials said. Its ferocity has stunned even veteran firefighters, adding an element of unpredictability that makes it difficult to determine when they'll be able to get the upper hand.

"'Typical' is a challenging word for us," said Dan McKeague, public information officer with the U.S. Forest Service, noting the massive fire is unusual in both its sheer size and its erratic behavior. "When you have the combination of this active a fire over this big of a landscape, there's not much typical about it."

The fire, which was 31% contained, prompted [new evacuation orders](#) for Genesee Valley on Friday night as thunderstorms swept through, causing erratic outflow winds that increased fire activity, McKeague said.

"You can have really sudden changes in terms of the wind direction when we have those outflow drafts," he said. "If you picture a faucet where water is coming down and then when it hits the sink it spreads out in all directions, that's what that air is doing as those pressure systems interact."

Fire officials were eying Saturday's conditions nervously, as a smoke inversion that had put a cap on the fire earlier in the week had cleared out, he said.

"That puts more sun on the fire, and potentially more air movement," he said. "That's not a good thing in terms of fire behavior."

Firefighters on the western flank of the fire saw a lot of activity along Highway 36 between Chester and Westwood, where crews put in 50 to 100 feet of contingency line, said Edwin Zuniga, public information officer with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

"A lot of structure protection resources are being assigned to that specific area to protect the peninsula on Lake Almanor, the cabins along that stretch of Highway 36 and the community of Westwood," he said.

The weather was continuing to pose a challenge, with hotter and drier conditions forecast for the next couple days, he said.

Temperatures in the area of the fire were expected to reach anywhere from the upper 80s to just shy of 100, depending on the smoke cover, said Scott Rowe, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Sacramento.

The Dixie fire ignited July 13 near the spot where a tree fell into a PG&E power line. The utility has said it took a worker about 10 hours to reach the remote site and observe flames.

Although the cause of the fire remains under review, prosecutors in at least two counties are investigating PG&E for potential criminal charges, saying it should have been aware of the high risk of fire in the canyon. It is the same canyon where PG&E equipment ignited the 2018 Camp fire, which saw the utility plead guilty to 84 counts of manslaughter after the town of Paradise was decimated. PG&E had planned to bury the power line that might have started the Dixie fire as part of a safety campaign announced in the wake of the Camp fire, but work on the project hadn't yet begun.

The Dixie fire took off amid extreme conditions, as human-caused climate change has sent temperatures rising and upended the natural patterns of precipitation on which California relies to supply its ecosystems with water.

The state this year saw its hottest June and July on record, with the heat most intense in the interior areas where the fire is burning, Rowe said.

Authorities have also blamed a century of aggressive fire suppression for creating patches of forest that are overgrown with thick understories of dry brush and in some cases enabling invasive species to move into areas where more frequent, low-intensity fires would once have kept them out.

The conditions have aligned to produce an intense, active fire season that has stressed resources, resulting in shortages of personnel and equipment that are being felt nationwide.

More than 6,500 personnel were assigned to the Dixie fire — about a quarter of the nearly 25,000 people who were out fighting more than 100 large uncontained fires nationwide, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

"And yet there are some critical positions that we're unable to fill as frequently as we'd like," McKeague said. "That includes our division supervisors, our dozer operators, our hotshot crews and even some critical line medic positions that are responsible for any medical emergencies for our firefighters."

That comes after the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group recently issued memos warning firefighters of a shortage of radio communications equipment and advising those arriving to incidents to bring enough food and water to be self-sufficient for three days due to a high demand for supplies.

Although there have been no specific actions firefighters were unable to complete due to the personnel shortages, they've at times found themselves with not as much coverage on certain areas of the fire as they'd like, McKeague said.

"With a fire this big and this active, we certainly would be putting any and all of those additional resources to use, if they were available," he said.

There was also a 10% to 15% chance of more thunderstorms moving over the fire Saturday, causing officials to warn firefighters on the line to be aware of potentially changing conditions, including the possibility of ground lightning strikes, according to authorities.

“With fuels that are this dry, historically dry, you always run a good chance of those causing new ignitions,” McKeague said, noting the probability of ignition — essentially the chance that an ember that lands in vegetation will start a new fire — has consistently been between 90% and 100%.

In a normal year, vegetation in the Sierra Nevada goes through a spring "greenup," sucking up moisture, then blossoming and putting on new growth before it goes dormant in the dry summer months, as it is evolved to do, said Ryan Bauer, fuels and prescribed fire program manager for the Plumas National Forest. At that point, the vegetation starts to burn like it's dead even though it's alive.

This year, Bauer said, precipitation was sparse and fell early in the season so the live vegetation never reached its full moisture content before it started going dormant.

“So it's all critically dry right now,” he said. “The brush is burning just like dead fuel.”

That also resulted in conditions being ripe for active fires starting earlier in the year. Normally, he said, the Plumas National Forest wouldn't really enter its fire season until mid-July. This year, it started in mid-May. It is expected to last through September if not October.

"We've been in fire season for a long time," he said, "and we've still got a lot of fire season ahead of us."

This story originally appeared in [Los Angeles Times](#).

National forests closed as California wildfires surge

Ethan Swope & John Antczak / AP / August 20, 2021

PLACERVILLE, Calif. (AP) — Millions of acres of national forest in Northern California are being closed because of dangerous fire conditions that already have sent a score of blazes raging through the area and destroyed hundreds of homes.

The U.S. Forest Service announced Thursday that beginning on Aug. 22 it will close nine national forests from near Lake Tahoe at the Nevada border on the east all the way west to Six Rivers National Forest, which stretches north to the Oregon border and contains more than 1 million acres of land alone.

The Eldorado National Forest already had been closed because of the Caldor Fire, which gutted the Sierra Nevada town of Grizzly Flats this week. The uncontained blaze had destroyed well over 100 square miles (259 square kilometers) of land.

After growing to 10 times its original size in just two days, the fire's progress slowed a bit on Thursday and it was pushing east into less-populated forest areas. However, some 25,000

people remained under evacuation orders.

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Fire managers rushed resources to the fire growing on steep slopes in a forested region southwest of Lake Tahoe. More than 650 firefighters and 13 helicopters were assigned to the blaze, and air tankers from throughout the state were flying fire suppression missions there as conditions allowed, authorities said.

"The hope is with the additional resources and personnel on scene, we can really start to build that box around this fire and start the containment," said Keith Wade of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

In Omo Ranch, close to where the fire started, a bulldozer ripped out trees to build a fire line and stop the blaze from spreading south.

While nearly the entire town evacuated, Thurman Conroy and his wife, Michele, stayed behind to protect their house and their business, Conroy General Store. But they were prepared to flee if the fire got too close.

"The fire wants us bad because it's made every attempt it can to get out of that canyon and up this way," Thurman said. "So they keep beating it down. And it's just ... it's resilient, it's stubborn, it won't go away. That's all we can do."

Evacuees from the Caldor Fire found refuge in places like the Green Valley Community Church in Placerville, west of the fire, where they set up tents and trailers in a parking lot. Adrian Childress, 7, painted pictures to pass the time and a special tent was set up for people who wished to pray.

Gusty weather has pushed a series of disastrous blazes through California trees, grass and brush. A dozen fires threatened thousands of homes and the hottest have forced evacuations of entire small communities tucked into scenic forest areas.

More than 10,000 firefighters were on the lines.

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The Dixie Fire, burning since July 13 in the northern Sierra Nevada and southern Cascades, ballooned further to about 1,060 square miles (2,745 square kilometers) and was only 35% contained, authorities said.

It is the first fire in recorded state history to stretch east and west all the way across the Sierra Nevada range, authorities said.

The fire, which gutted the town of Greenville two weeks ago, has destroyed more than 1,200 buildings including 649 homes, according to ongoing damage assessments.

There have been a handful of injuries but no deaths but it was only three years ago that a fire not too far southwest of a current blaze killed 85 people and virtually razed the town of Paradise in Butte County.

One small but destructive blaze burned through a mobile home park and reduced an estimated 50 homes to ashes in Lake County, about 80 miles (130 kilometers) north of San Francisco.

Climate change has made the West warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make the weather more extreme and wildfires more destructive, according to scientists.

The vegetation has been turned to tinder by hot, dry weather and an ongoing drought that also has scorched much of the Western United States, fire officials said.

More than 100 large, active fires were burning in more than a dozen Western states, according to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. Those fires were straining resources and that has made it harder for California to obtain equipment and crews from out of state.

The U.S. Forest Service has approached Canada, Mexico and Australia for assistance, although they already are busy battling Canadian blazes, agency spokesman Jonathan Groveman said.

Climate change won't kill tourism, but the industry is in for a painful reckoning

Ciara Nugent / Time / August 18, 2021

Turkish tour guide Erkan Sehirli likes to take his American and European visitors to the gulf of Gökova region on his country's southwestern coastline. Together they hike trails that pass through ancient ruins, overlooking picturesque bays where cruise ships drop their guests for lunch. Sold as "the place where green meets blue," Gökova is an upscale, boutique destination and one of the region's most beloved natural attractions.

Or it was, until wildfires tore through the area in late July amid one of the worst heat waves to hit the southern Mediterranean in decades. "You can't be there any more. It's all grey. It's like walking on the moon," Sehirli told me over the phone from the nearby town of Bodrum last week. "One day you're in heaven, and the next day everything is gone."

This summer, the climate crisis has made itself increasingly visible through a torrent of extreme weather events across the world, and the places we go to get away from it all have not been spared. The Mediterranean fires have destroyed landscapes and [forced dramatic evacuations](#) from beach resorts in Turkey, Greece and Italy. Germany's historic floods have [washed out](#) mountain trails in Bavaria. A historic drought in the western U.S. has forced inns in Mendocino to rely [on portable toilets](#), and vacation operators in Arizona to cancel houseboat bookings for [dried up Lake Powell](#). These events are a kick in the teeth for local tourism industries that are just beginning to recover from COVID-19.

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They're also a sign of the sector's extreme vulnerability to climate change. The growing number of natural disasters each year—which have already quadrupled between 1970 and 2016—are threatening the natural and cultural heritage that tourism destinations rely on to lure in visitors. Warming global temperatures are lengthening the period of summer that is unpleasantly hot in beach resort regions, and shortening ski seasons in mountain retreats. Rising sea levels are eroding beaches in coastal communities. Increasing water scarcity in warmer regions is sowing potential for conflict between locals and the resource-intensive tourism industry. And some travelers are beginning to confront the looming question of whether or not to keep flying when the technology to decarbonize aviation is decades away from being used at scale.

A reckoning for the tourism industry could come soon. In July, G7 leaders threw their weight behind a burgeoning movement in the finance world for mandatory climate risk disclosure, which would force companies and their financiers to tell investors how their business is exposed to climate change. The tourism industry is “not at all” prepared for the level of risk that process might expose, says Daniel Scott, a professor of Geography and Environmental Management at Canada’s University of Waterloo, who has spent two decades researching the interaction between climate change and tourism. “They’ve got to do a lot in the next little while—probably the next three to five years—to understand both what the changing physical climate means for them, but also the transition to net zero”

Climate change won’t necessarily kill tourism. The industry has proved adept at adjusting its seasons and offerings to suit new weather patterns. Canada’s Whistler ski resort, for example, has been so successful expanding its snow-free activities that it now makes more money in the “green season,” Scott says. In Turkey, Sehirli still has plenty to show visitors outside of Gökova, like the ancient city of Ephesus. And, if the unpleasant heat of late summer stretches further into September, he says he expects Europeans and Americans will just start coming more in winter.

But climate instability will disrupt the industry in painful ways. And unfortunately, everything points to the biggest losers being those with the fewest resources. Because it opens up flows of foreign exchange and encourages investment in local infrastructure, tourism is often touted as a route to prosperity and stability for struggling countries. According to the U.N., it is a principal export for 83% of developing countries and the biggest export in a third of them. Development experts often call the industry the largest voluntary transfer of wealth from rich to poor, with the sums moved dwarfing aid budgets.

Where the tourism industry relies on coasts and other areas of natural beauty, it may be particularly vulnerable to climate impacts, like sea level rise, glacier melt or extreme weather. Low-lying island nations in the South Pacific are losing their beaches to sea level rise and their coral reefs to ocean warming. In the Himalayas, snow and glacier melt is making the mountains more hazardous and destroying the ecosystem’s natural beauty. In the Caribbean, where tourism makes up 20-30% of GDP in many countries, research by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has found that the unusually strong 2017 Atlantic hurricane season cost the region 826,100 visitors, who would have generated \$741 million.

The storms triggered hikes in insurance premiums of up to 40%, increasing a key cost for the area's hotels.

There will be some winners in this dynamic. For example, destinations with cooler climates, like Scandinavia, could welcome more visitors as they warm. And across the globe, larger companies with deeper pockets might be able to weather increased costs of doing business, and spread their risk across different destinations. But more than 80% of the tourism industry is made up of small and medium-sized businesses, per the WTTC. They may struggle to survive if they lose physical assets to extreme weather or if the risks of a more volatile climate drive up the cost of doing business.

There are solutions to stem the damage, like coastal adaptation to protect communities and landscapes that draw tourists. Better forest management can reduce the spread of wildfires. Government financial support can help small businesses bounce back when disaster strikes.

But for those of us lucky enough to travel abroad, the ethics of vacationing are getting ever more complicated. Should I fly on a fossil-fueled plane to a Caribbean island so my tourist dollars can help rebuild part of the local area that was recently destroyed by a hurricane? Should I patronize a coastal restaurant and enjoy carbon-intensive surf and turf as their beach is washed into the ocean? Should I just stay home and send my money abroad? Probably, yes. But will I?



The Tyger

By William Blake

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

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