

Is This It? 'Armageddon-Like' Fire Rages Through California

The nation is still reeling from a series of major disasters in recent weeks, and now another one has hit us. At this moment, an enormous firestorm is consuming tens of thousands of acres in eight counties in northern California. Wind gusts of up to 50 mph are rapidly driving 15 large wildfires across Napa, Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino, Yuba, Nevada, Calaveras and Butte counties, and the devastation taking place is being described as "like Armageddon". Ultimately, it looks like this is going to be one of the worst months for wildfires in the history of the state, and all of this comes on the heels of Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma and the Las Vegas shooting. Ever since late August, it seems like all hell has broken loose in America.

So far, at least 1,500 structures have been destroyed, at least 20,000 people have been evacuated and at least 73,000 acres have been burned. The smell of smoke has reached San Jose, Oakland and San Francisco, and California Governor Jerry Brown has officially declared a state of emergency.

If these wildfires were just consuming isolated parts of northern California, this wouldn't be such a big story. The reason why this crisis is getting so much attention from the national media is because some of these fires are raging "unchecked through high-end resorts, grocery stores and tree-lined neighborhoods"...

More than a dozen wildfires whipped by powerful winds swept through California wine country Monday, destroying at least 1,500 homes and businesses and sending thousands fleeing as flames raged unchecked through high-end resorts, grocery stores and tree-lined neighborhoods.

As he fled through the ember-strewn streets of his neighborhood in Santa Rosa, Jeff Okrepkie knew it was probably the last time he would see his home of the past five years standing.

His worst fears were confirmed Monday morning when a friend sent him a photo of what was left: a smoldering heap of burnt metal and debris.

Could you imagine how helpless you would feel if you were forced to evacuate and you knew that your home and everything you owned were about to be consumed by fire?

That is what thousands of northern Californians are facing right now. In fact, many are getting out with so little time to spare that they can literally feel the heat from the flames as they drive away:

"It was an inferno like you've never seen before," said Marian Williams, who caravanned with neighbors before dawn as one of the wildfires reached the vineyards and ridges at her small Sonoma County town of Kenwood.

Ms. Williams could feel the heat of her fire through the car as she fled. "Trees were on fire like torches," she said.

At this point, Santa Rosa appears to be getting hit worse than just about anywhere else.

According to Cal Fire director Ken Pimlott, one major neighborhood within the city has already been completely destroyed...

When winds pushed the Tubbs fire into Santa Rosa on Sunday night, it created "a firestorm within a city," Cal Fire director Ken Pimlott said.

"It's fair to say it's been destroyed," Pimlott said of Santa

Rosa's Fountaingrove neighborhood. Hotels, a big box store and a high school burned as the flames danced around the 101 Freeway.

"Late last night starting around 10 o'clock you had 50-60 mph winds that surfaced—really across the whole northern half of the state," he said. "Every spark is going to ignite."

Authorities are telling us that the big box store that was destroyed was a Kmart, and the hotel that was burned to the ground was a Hilton. But even more disturbing was what happened to Journey's End retirement community:

In Santa Rosa, the fire gutted a Hilton hotel and flattened the Journey's End retirement community, a trailer park not far from the freeway that crosses the city. Most of the trailers were leveled, leaving a smoldering debris field of household appliances, filing cabinets and the charred personal effects of more than 100 residents. Pieces of ash fell like snowflake flurries, and a pall of white smoke across the city blotted out the sun.

Insurance will cover the Kmart and the Hilton, but it is probably fair to say that a lot of the people living in that trailer park did not have adequate coverage.

Sadly, many of them will now be forced to start over with essentially nothing.

I don't know if you have noticed, but wildfires are becoming a much bigger problem than they used to be. We were already not too far behind the record pace that was set in 2015, and if this month continues to be really bad, we could potentially set the all-time national record for number of acres burned in a single year by the end of 2017.

As I discuss in my brand-new book entitled *Living a Life That Really Matters*, our planet is becoming increasingly unstable.

And for those living in the state of California, I would be extremely concerned about all of the shaking we have recently been witnessing along the North American portion of the "Ring of Fire." The experts assure us that we are way overdue for "the Big One", and when it happens, it is going to be the worst disaster in the modern history of the state.

But hopefully things will start to settle down for at least a little while in our nation, because we have been put through quite a lot lately. After Harvey, Irma, Las Vegas and now these California wildfires, we could definitely use some time to recover.