

Is This a Sign of End-Times Manifestations in Los Angeles?

A fast-moving wildfire that has killed one person and destroyed more than a dozen homes in the drought-parched canyons northwest of Los Angeles, had scorched more than 33,000 acres of land by early Monday, fire officials said.

Authorities said the so-called Sand Fire grew from 22,000 acres, or more than 34 square miles (88 square km), a day earlier, fueled by high winds and parched conditions after years of drought.

Nearly 3,000 firefighters were battling to contain the blaze, which was threatening a string of small communities near Santa Clarita, a city about 40 miles (65 km) northwest of Los Angeles, fire officials said.

"This is the fifth year of an ongoing drought, so we have very extreme fire behavior," Los Angeles County Fire Department Chief Daryl Osby said at a news conference on Sunday. "These are not normal times."

A 10,262-acre (4,155-hectare) fire was also burning in a coastal area of Monterey county, 300 miles (480 km) northwest of Santa Clarita, prompting authorities to widen evacuation orders to several communities on Sunday, a Cal Fire spokeswoman said.

One person suffered non-life-threatening injuries and one structure was destroyed, the spokeswoman, Amber Anderson, said.

The fire near Santa Clarita, first reported Friday afternoon, has prompted the evacuation of 1,500 residences and destroyed

at least 18 homes, the fire department said in a statement.

All the affected communities were in or around the San Gabriel Mountains, which is dotted with multimillion-dollar homes.

About 100 commercial buildings in the path of the fire were under evacuation orders, fire officials said.

An “unexpected wind event” forced officials to cancel plans for residents to return to some areas, fire officials said via a Twitter post late on Sunday.

“All evacuations will remain in place,” they said.

The 14 Freeway was closed to traffic because of the threat posed by the blaze, the California Highway Patrol said on Twitter.

The remains of an unidentified person were found late on Saturday in a charred vehicle in the path of the blaze. The cause of death was yet to be determined, fire officials said.

Extreme heat, strong winds and parched rugged terrain will continue to hamper firefighters, said the officials, who were still trying to pinpoint the cause of the wildfire which was only 10 percent contained as of early Monday. {eo}

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