

Raging wildfires in California prompt huge evacuation

Required Annotations		Student-Created Annotations		Summary / Questions / Reflection	
----------------------	--	-----------------------------	--	----------------------------------	--

Student-created

Required (bold)

SANTA ROSA, California — Strong winds are causing several wildfires, and almost 200,000 people have been ordered to leave their homes. California's governor declared a statewide emergency Sunday, October 27. Still, millions of residents remained without power after electricity was cut to prevent more fires. By Tuesday night, the fire had taken over more than 119 square miles in Sonoma County. This area is larger than the city of Sacramento.

Wildfires Destroy 123 Structures

Governor Gavin Newsom said that officials were using "every resource available" to respond to the wildfires. The fires include a large blaze in Northern California's wine country. Strong winds of more than 102 miles per hour were causing the fire to spread. California fire officials said Tuesday that the fire had grown to burn over 119 square miles. Officials reported that only 15 percent of the fire was under control, and at least 189 structures have been destroyed. Another 39 structures were damaged.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, two grass fires briefly stopped traffic on an interstate bridge.

In Southern California, a wildfire in the Santa Clarita area near Los Angeles destroyed 22 structures. As of Tuesday night, the Tick Fire was 90 percent contained.

The biggest evacuation was in Northern California's Sonoma County. Around 180,000 people had to pack up and leave their homes, many in the middle of the night. As of Tuesday, residents in two areas of Sonoma County were allowed to return home. However, the Sheriff's Office informed them that they may have to evacuate again.

Power Shut Down As Preventative Measure

To prevent its power lines from sparking in the high winds and setting off more blazes, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) turned off its electricity sources. The company provides gas and electricity to homes and businesses throughout California. PG&E said Sunday that the shut-offs impacted 965,000 customers, while another 100,000 lost electricity because of the winds. This leaves nearly 1.3 million people without power.

The company has been criticized by many for the power outages, including the governor, who blames PG&E for failing to keep their electrical systems up to date. Officials are also concerned about the effect the power outages will have on hospitals, nursing homes and similar facilities.

Fire officials feared that the winds could spread fire across a major highway. As a result, authorities began evacuating parts of the city of Santa Rosa, which was devastated by another wildfire in 2017.

Largest Evacuation In Recent Memory

"This is the largest evacuation that any of us ... can remember," the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office tweeted Sunday. "Take care of each other."

Hundreds of people arrived at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa by Sunday. More than 300 people slept inside an auditorium, while others stayed in a separate building with their pets.

Among them was Maribel Cruz, 19 years old. She packed up her dog, four cats and fish as soon as she was told to flee her trailer in Windsor. Cruz grew up in

Windsor, a town about 60 miles north of San Francisco, and was hopeful that the wind would cooperate and save her town.

Sonoma County Sheriff Mark Essick urged residents in the evacuation zone to get out immediately.

On Sunday, Essick disagreed with concerns that too many people were being evacuated from their homes. He noted that the winds had already pushed fire toward the towns of Healdsburg and Windsor overnight.

Historic Buildings And Toppled Trees

The Soda Rock Winery, a historic attraction outside Healdsburg, burned down Sunday after winds caused the fires to spread. The winery's buildings included a general store and post office founded in 1869.

In central California, **ravaging** winds knocked down a tree, killing a woman and injuring a man.

In 2017, many areas of California were devastated by wildfires. Compared to the 2017 fires, the winds this time around were much stronger and lasted longer, said Matt Mehle. Mehle studies the weather for the National Weather Service.

Fire officials fear that the Northern California fires may continue to spread. If they do, it could set fire to an area that hasn't burned in 80 years.

Steve Volmer works for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, a state agency that works to prevent fires. He notes the plants in that area are old, dry and dense, making it easier for the fire to spread.

Stretch Of Interstate Shut Down

Two grass fires shut down a 6-mile stretch of Interstate 80, including a bridge between the cities of Crockett and Vallejo. Smoke from another grass fire Sunday forced the closure of another stretch of Interstate 80. This section runs through Sacramento, the California state capital.

The city of Vallejo lost power during the fires. They say the **blackout** shut off the city's access to water, causing an emergency. The city prohibited residents from watering their yards, and asked people to limit bathing and flushing toilets, according to the Vallejo Times Herald.

"Not Again"

Many residents said the situation makes them angry.

"It has brought a lot of anxiety," said Cody Rodriguez, 20 years old, who lived for a week at a Santa Rosa shelter during the 2017 fires and checked into a Napa County shelter on Sunday. "I was like, 'I don't want to go through this again.'"

Questions

- 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
-

1. Read the following summary of the article.

Governor Gavin Newsom has declared a state of emergency in California. Strong winds have caused several wildfires and 200,000 residents have been ordered to evacuate. Structures have been destroyed and power was shut off for millions.

Is this an objective summary? Why or why not?

- a) Yes; the summary highlights the effects of the wildfires on California without judgment.
 - b) Yes; the summary explains how residents are reacting to the wildfires without offering opinions.
 - c) No; the first sentence shows a biased perspective of Governor Newsom's decision.
 - d) No; the last sentence exaggerates some of the effects of the wildfires in California.
2. One of the article's central ideas is that the wildfires have led to major destruction in California. How does the author introduce this central idea?
 - a) by explaining how traffic on an interstate bridge in the San Francisco Bay Area was temporarily closed because of fires
 - b) by stating the size of the area that burned in Northern California and the number of structures that were destroyed
 - c) by explaining what percentage of a wildfire was controlled by fire crews in the Santa Clarita area near Los Angeles
 - d) by comparing the current wildfire in Santa Rosa with a devastating blaze in 2017 that had much weaker winds
 3. Which of the following MOST influenced Pacific Gas & Electric to shut off power for many California residents?
 - a) the concerns that residents voiced about the power lines potentially being dangerous
 - b) the concerns that people expressed about paying for power while they were evacuated
 - c) the desire to follow the requirements set forth by Governor Newsom's emergency declaration
 - d) the desire to minimize the possibility that the power lines would spark more fires
 4. According to the article, why did Sonoma County Sheriff Mark Essick disagree with residents?
 - a) because he believed that the decision to wait on evacuations would result in less confusion
 - b) because he defended his decision on evacuations after some criticized him for urging so many to leave
 - c) because he argued that the fire was already pushing in another direction and away from their area
 - d) because he worried that he had let too many people evacuate unnecessarily after the fire started