

California Thomas fire becomes largest in state's history

23 December 2017



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NASA/EPA

Image caption

Satellite imagery shows the vast Thomas Fire, north of Los Angeles, which has spread as far as the Pacific coast

A deadly wildfire which has destroyed more than 700 homes in California is now the largest blaze in the state's recorded history.

The Thomas fire has burned more than 1000sq km - an area greater than New York City, Brussels and Paris combined.

The blaze broke out in Santa Paula in early December and has moved west towards the coast, one of several major fires in California in recent months.

Thousands of firefighters have been deployed to bring it under control.

Most of California's largest wildfires have been recorded this century. Scientists say the warming climate and spread of buildings into wilderness areas have contributed.

Skip Twitter post by @LosPadresNF





THOMAS FIRE INCIDENT UPDATE



Date: 12/22/2017 Time: 7:00 PM
 Ventura County Fire Information Line: 805-465-4450
 Santa Barbara County Fire Information Line: 800-400-1572
 Media Line: 925-588-6994

STATUS		
Incident Start Date: 12/04/2017	Incident Start Time: 6:26 P.M.	
Incident Type: Wildland Fire	Case: Under Investigation	
Incident Location: Santa Paula / Ventura	Expected Containment: 95/93/20000	
Total Acreage: 273,400	Containment: 65%	
Firefighter Fatalities: 0	Firefighter Injuries: 0	Civilian Injuries: 0
Total Cost To Date: \$277,183,000.00		
Structures Threatened: 18,800	Single Family Residences Destroyed: 775	Single Family Residences Damaged: 209
Multiple Residences Destroyed: 2	Minor Commercial/Residential Destroyed: 2	
Commercial Structures Destroyed: 10	Other Minor Structures Destroyed: 205	Other Minor Structures Damaged: 38

RESOURCES			
Engines: 371	Water Tenders: 38	Helicopters: 26	Air Tankers: 0
Dozers: 23	Others: 3	Total Personnel: 2843	Hand Crews: 03

SITUATION

Current Situation: The fire still moved through the area on December 22 and was reported to weak offshore flow. Winds gusting to 50 miles per hour forced flames to the south, with no notable fire activity in the phosphate area, Camino Dales or Fillmore. A persistent offshore flow will bring low relative humidity and above average temperatures to the fire area for several days. Fire behavior will increase over the next few days with the lowering relative humidity.

The fire area has not received any rainfall over .25 inches since February. The fuel conditions are far below critical levels. ERG's have dipped with the recent humidity recovery but will begin to increase with improved offshore flow.

Crews are engaging the Camino Dales to strengthen the fireline there. To the north of Camino Dales, crews will patrol the fire line in the Zaca fire area, and monitor fire spread where fire construction has not been possible due to very rough terrain. The firing operation from the past few days will be mopped up and patched.



THOMAS FIRE INCIDENT UPDATE

North of the community of Fillmore fire behavior has been minimal where it has backed into the Deep Springs. The spread east of Rose Valley to Bear Haven will be monitored by air. Fire spread has been minimal in this area for the last week, with 18 information corroborating that total. To the north, the fire is slowly moving through the Angus Wilderness and Bear Haven area, where it is being closely monitored. Carpinteria, the Ojai Valley area, and Highway 128 between Highway 150 and Fillmore are all in patrol status and will transition to unstaffed.

On 12/22 at 4PM California Incident Management Team 4 and California Intersagency Incident Management Team 4 will transfer command of the Thomas fire to California Intersagency Incident Management Team 5.

Mandatory Evacuations:	SANTA BARBARA COUNTY NONE UNINCORPORATED VENTURA COUNTY NONE
Voluntary Evacuations:	VENTURA COUNTY The residents on Hwy 33 between Rose Valley north to Hartman Ranch remain under voluntary evacuation warning due to fire activity in the nearby area.
Cooperating Agencies:	CAL FIRE, Ventura County Fire, Ventura County Sheriff, Santa Barbara County Fire, Santa Barbara County Sheriff, Santa Barbara City Fire, City of Ventura Fire, Central Fire Department, Occidental Police Department, City of Ventura Police Department, USFS/USFS Pacific National Forest, CAL OES, Red Cross, Southern California Edison, CHP, California Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation, SoCalGas, Santa Paula Police, Santa Paula Fire, Ventura County OES, Santa Barbara OES, Montecito Fire, Carpinteria - Sutterland Fire, California Conservation Corps, Cal Fire.

For more information on Roads, Mt. CA, go to www.roadstomwfire.org
 For more fire information go to <http://calfire.ca.gov/incidents/2017>



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 @LosPadresNF

12.22.2017 Good Evening from the #ThomasFire. The fire is 273,400 and 65% contained. The Thomas Fire has now become the largest fire in California's recorded history. Photo by Kari Greer for U.S.F.S.
 5:18 PM - Dec 23, 2017
 44 Replies
 8686 Retweets
 8686 likes

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)

Report

End of Twitter post by @LosPadresNF
 Skip Twitter post by @R5_Fire_News







USFS Fire-California

@R5_Fire_News

Since Jan. 1, wildfires have burned more than 635,000 acres of Nat'l Forest lands in Calif, well above both 5 & 10 year averages. #ThomasFire photos by Kari Greer

2:21 PM - Dec 23, 2017

22 Replies

5151 Retweets

7575 likes

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Report

End of Twitter post by @R5_Fire_News

The Thomas fire slowly eclipsed previous record-setting blazes, finally overtaking the 2003 Cedar fire in San Diego County, which burned 273,246 acres. It follows a series of deadly fires in the state's wine country in October that burned more than 10,000 homes and killed more than 40 people.

The Thomas fire has destroyed more than 1,000 buildings and claimed the life of one firefighter - Cory Iverson, a father of one from San Diego whose wife was expecting another child.

The blaze is now moving slower because of rain and less wind.



image copyright

MARK RALSTON

image caption

Development has encroached into wilderness, contributing to the wildfires

State fire agency Cal Fire says the Thomas blaze is now 65% contained and expected to continue to slow. Controlled burns by firefighters may cause some temporary expansion, it said.

Seven of California's 10 largest fires on record have occurred since 2000. Two were in the 1970s and the earliest was in 1932 - the Matilija fire which, like the Thomas fire, burned through Ventura County.