

35% containment in Topaz Fire as it moves toward Wellington

Updated May 24, 2012, 7:30pm:

The Topaz Ranch Estates Fire is burning west of Rickey Canyon in the Pinenut Mountain Range in Wellington..

The burn area is estimated to be approximately 7,500 acres, and the fire is estimated to be approximately 35 percent contained.

No additional structures have burned. The fire has had no active perimeter growth since 6pm.

Ground crews are holding the line in all divisions. The ground crews were supported by air in their efforts until approximately 2:30 pm, when prevailing winds became too strong for continued helicopter operations.

Updated May 24, 2012, 7:50am:

Firefighters working overnight on the Topaz blaze south of Gardnerville still have it 15 percent contained, however the total acreage burned has increased to 7,500.

Updated May 23, 2012, 9:25pm:

The Topaz Fire has grown to approximately 7,000 acres and is approximately 15 percent contained.

The fire continues to burn in the hills to the north and east of the Topaz Ranch Estates residential area.

No additional structures beyond the 19 that have burned are in immediate threat.

Air operations are suspended for the night, however ground crews will continue to work throughout the night expanding and

improving ground fire breaks.

The number of responding fire personnel has increased to approximately 575.

Updated: May 23, 2012, 11:20am:

The Topaz Fire has grown to 6,600 acres, without additional loss of structures.

“The preliminary investigation indicates that the fire was caused by a private residential open burn which exceeded the regulatory limitations and permit requirements, including the ignition of materials not allowed under the regulations,” according to the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office.

The mutual investigation is continuing with the Nevada State Fire Marshall, Douglas County Sheriff’s Office and Bureau of Land Management.

Updated May 23, 2012, 10:30am:

The Topaz Fire south of Gardnerville is at 6,403 acres. It continues to burn in a northeast direction.

Evacuations are voluntary at this point. No roads are closed.

No injuries or deaths have been reported. However, 19 buildings, including two houses, have been lost.

There are still 120 residences and about 300 outbuildings that are threatened.

Full containment is expected by May 23. As of Wednesday morning the fire is 10 percent contained.

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Updated May 23, 2012, 8:05am:

Fire officials are reporting the Topaz Estates Fire being at 4,500 acres, with 10 percent containment.

No more structures burned overnight.

The fire is moving toward Smith Valley.

An air campaign will resume this morning in addition to the ongoing fight on the ground to control the blaze.

Updated May 22, 2012, 9:50pm:

It was originally believed seven house homes had been burned, however Douglas County sheriff's department just released revised numbers – two house and 17 outbuildings were destroyed.

The fire has grown to 4,400 acres.

It continues to move in a northeasterly direction, away from homes in the Topaz Ranch Estates residential area.

Fire crews are still working on containment.

Updated May 22, 2012, 8:50pm:

Fire crews are using bulldozers and hand crews to cut a fire break between the fire and the homes in the area along Sandstone Drive in the Topaz area of Douglas County.

U.S. Forest Service personnel and equipment from the Lake Tahoe Basin have been sent to the fire. Tahoe Douglas crews are also fighting the other.

Other Tahoe agencies are on alert in case more resources are needed.

The helicopter crews are obtaining water for their air drops from Topaz Lake, so boaters on the lake should stay out of the way.

Updated May 22, 2012, 8:15pm:

The Topaz Ranch Estates Fire has destroyed seven houses.

The 3,500 acre blaze south of Gardnerville is still raging out of control, but is not longer threatening homes, according to authorities.

Contact the American Red Cross at (775) 856.1000 for information about evacuations.

Updated May 22, 2012, 5:55pm:

According to the Sierra Front Interagency Dispatch Center, the Topaz Ranch Estates Fire has consumed 1,600 acres and is moving at a rapid pace to the northeast.

About 100 structures are threatened.

Evacuated residents can find shelter at the Topaz Ranch Estates Community Center (call 775.721.4697). Evacuated large animals can be taken to the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Gardnerville. Small pets to the animal shelter in Gardnerville.

A hiker who called 911 reporting that he was stranded by the fire has been evacuated by helicopter.

Updated May 22, 2012, 4:20pm:

The wildland fire in Topaz Ranch Estates has grown to 400 acres, with four houses destroyed and zero containment.

“The initial investigation reveals the fire may have been caused by a controlled burn from the previous day. Although the fire was extinguished on previous day, it is believed to have rekindled,” Douglas County sheriff’s Sgt. Jim Halsey said in a statement.

The fire is being fought from the air with water drops by helicopter and by ground with five strike teams.

Douglas County sheriff's mounted posse is on scene for large animal evacuations.

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At least two structures have burned to the ground in a fast moving fire in Douglas County.

Residents in the Topaz Ranch Estates area being evacuated.

Jill Catlow with East Fork Fire in Minden told *Lake Tahoe News* more than 200 acres have burned as of 3pm, with two or three structures – maybe more having been lost.

She said the winds are high. This is the second consecutive day the region has been a red flag warning.

The May 22 fire started a little before 2pm. The cause as of now is not known.

Area fire agencies are on the scene, with additional resources coming in from Mono County. Ground and air crews are helping to douse the fast moving flames.

This area is about 20 miles south of Gardnerville. People are being evacuated to the community center at Carter.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*