

# Visibility hampers King Fire, weather helps



Mount Tallac at 5pm Sept. 20 is not visible from South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Susan Wood

## Updated 10:10pm:

Visibility grounded air resources fighting the King Fire that continues to burn out of control east of Pollock Pines. However, a low pressure system passed south of the incident Saturday, bringing clouds and increased humidity to moderate fire activity.

For the night of Sept. 20 officials anticipate the spread to be minimal. The higher humidity should moderate the fire behavior. The wild card are thunderstorms could impact the area by bringing outflow winds.

All helicopters left the French Meadows area Saturday afternoon when pilots could not see more than two mile. The air tankers had to stop flying before that.

The smell of smoke inundated the Y area of South Lake late Sept. 20, but was dissipating as the night went on. Smoke is billowing over Mount Tallac to the point it could not longer

be seen.

“There is no concern of the King Fire coming into the basin and (smoke) is a direct result of wind shift only. There is no reason for concern or to contact the local fire department,” South Lake Tahoe officials said.

The fire has burned 81,944 acres, with much of it in the Eldorado National Forest. However, it has moved into the Tahoe National Forest in Placer County. It remains at 10 percent containment.

The damage assessment team continued to work in the White Meadows area to assess the extent of damage to structures. That assessment should be completed Sunday. A handful of homes have been destroyed, possibly more.

The fire started Sept. 13 by an arsonist, according to officials. Wayne Allen Huntsman is in custody, having pleaded not guilty to arson charges.

Four firefighters have been injured, but the extent and severity has not been released.

More than 4,900 people are fighting the fire, with some coming from as far away as Florida.

Evacuation orders are still in effect for nearly 3,000 people, as 12,000 single residences and 9,000 other minor structures are threatened. The Sacramento Region Community Foundation is collecting monetary donations to assist people affected by the fire. Checks may be sent to 955 University Ave., Suite A, Sacramento, CA 95825. For more info, email [tina@sacregcf.org](mailto:tina@sacregcf.org).

Highway 50 is open, though westbound traffic is down to one lane. Click on the state icon on *Lake Tahoe News*' home page for real time road information.

It is costing \$5 million a day to fight the fire.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*