

King Fire surges to nearly 30,000 acres



Pyro cumulus clouds from the King Fire taken from Taylor Creek on Sept. 17. Photo/Toogee Sielsch

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The King Fire burning northeast of Pollock Pines is at 27,930 acres and remains at 5 percent containment as of Wednesday night.

It is burning in steep, rugged terrain at a rapid rate north.

Highway 50 in the American River Canyon was opened Wednesday afternoon. However, it is one lane traffic from three miles east of Pollock Pines to Pollock Pines. Smoke is thick in the area.

No structures have been lost, but more than 2,000 residences are threatened along with more than 1,000 other buildings.

The mandatory closure to all residences south of Highway 50 between Fresh Pond and Riverton has been changed to a voluntary advisory. There are mandatory evacuations for Volcanoville, Quintette, Blodgett and Upper Ice House. As of

late this afternoon more mandatory evacuations have been ordered for Crystal Basin: Granite Springs, Ice House Road (east side), Pickett Pen Road, Rubicon Trail, Windmiller Trail, Wrights Lake Road, including all Forest Service roads, trails, and access roads in the Crystal Basin recreation area between Ice House Road and Desolation Wilderness, north of the Highway 50 corridor.

“This afternoon the fire made a significant run to the northwest necessitating the mandatory evacuation order for Quintette and Volcanoville,” CalFire said in a statement. “It became very active in the afternoon with spotting up to one half mile.”

Rain is in the forecast for the next three days.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the Red Cross center.

There is still no cause for the blaze that started Sept. 13.

Pollock Pines Elementary School District will resume classes Sept. 18.

Two people have been injured, but a CalFire spokesperson did not have the extent of the injuries nor did he know they were firefighters.

South Lake Tahoe, Lake Valley and the California Conservation Corps in Meyers have sent people to help fight the fire. They are among the more than 2,500 people fighting the fire, along with the resources of 11 helicopters, 245 engines, 43 dozers and 57 water tenders.

Smoke continues to be an issue in the Lake Tahoe Basin, Truckee, Carson City and Reno areas. El Dorado County Air Quality Management District and Health and Human Services Agency – Public Health Division has issued an advisory regarding air quality. Fine particles in smoke can cause health issues, especially for children, older people or those

with respiratory problems.

“Driving from Auburn to Tahoe Tuesday afternoon, the smoke along I-80 became extremely thick and irritating to the eyes over Donner Summit and into Truckee,” Bill Kingman told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Visibility was brown air and only for a short distance. I likened it to Los Angeles on a good day. The smoke lessened slightly going over Highway 267 to Kings Beach, but you could not see the lake from the summit nor could you see across the lake at all.”

Here is a time lapse video of the King Fire smoke coming into the Tahoe basin. It was shot from UNR’s mountaintop camera at Heavenly’s Angel’s Roost.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*