

Grim beginning to California fire season

By Joseph Serna and Veronica Rocha, Los Angeles Times

As California enters traditional brush-fire season, there is something ominous in the air and on the ground.

Drought-stricken and ready to burn, the tree canopy in the central and southern end of the Sierra Nevada is awash in yellows, browns and oranges. Many of the trees showing green are already dead, but they just haven't shown it yet, said Jeffrey Moore, acting regional aerial survey program manager for the U.S. Forest Service.

"From our written history, this has probably been the worst situation California's forests have faced," Moore said. "If a fire comes in, it kills everything and leaves nothing behind."

Already, the fire statistics for 2016 are grim.

State fire officials estimate roughly 223,600 acres, or 350 square miles, of California have burned so far this year in some 4,000 wildfires on state and federal land. More than 300 homes have burned, and eight people have been killed, including a bulldozer operator helping fight a fire.

Read the whole story