

NorCal wildfires burning much earlier this summer

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

You aren't imagining it: California's wildfire season really has started earlier than usual this year.

The state's biggest fires usually don't strike until August or later. This year, California already is besieged with two major fires, and it's the first week of July.

"It has been basically very dry since the beginning of April," said Paul Ullrich, a climatologist at UC Davis. "I wouldn't be surprised if the (fire) season is among the worst on record."

Already this year, CalFire has responded to 2,626 fires. That's about 260 more than at the same time a year ago, said agency spokesman Scott McLean.

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