Wildfire Near San Francisco Burns About 14,000 Acres

The blaze, the Corral Fire, was 50 percent contained by Sunday evening. It was the largest so far in this year's California wildfire season.

June 2, 2024

U.S. and Canada Wildfires

The blaze, the fast-spreading Corral Fire, is California's largest so far this wildfire season and has shut down major highways and prompted residents to flee their homes.AlertCalifornia/UC San Diego, via Associated Press

A fast-spreading wildfire east of San Francisco has burned about 14,000 acres, prompting an evacuation order and for a time shutting down major highways, according to public safety alerts and Cal Fire, California's firefighting agency.

The blaze, named the Corral Fire, began Saturday afternoon outside Tracy, Calif., and was 50 percent contained by Sunday evening, Cal Fire said.

On Saturday, two firefighters were admitted to a hospital for minor to moderate burn injuries but were expected to make a full recovery, said Josh Silveira, a Cal fire battalion chief.

The fire is the largest so far in this year's California wildfire season, which typically runs from April to October.

After an unusually wet winter that included heavy snowfall and significant rainfall, experts expect the spring and summer seasons to stay relatively mild.

Still, California fire officials warned last week that an abundance of dry grass in the San Francisco and Modesto areas was creating a greater fire hazard as summer neared.

Residents were prohibited from burning anything on their own properties, and fire officials for the Santa Clara area announced that all burn permits in their region would be suspended beginning Monday.

Smoke from the Corral blaze, which was reported to have started as a grass fire, closed down parts of Interstate 580 beginning late Saturday, and an evacuation order was issued for nearby communities. At 6 p.m., the order was downgraded to an evacuation warning, with residents advised to remain vigilant and prepare for potential changes but not required to leave

immediately.

By Sunday afternoon, both lanes of the highway, as well as California State Route 132, had been reopened, Chief Silveira said.

The fire began near a test site for the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, which, among other things, develops explosives.

The laboratory “recently completed a series of controlled burns to eliminate dangerous dry grass areas and provide buffer zones around Site 300 buildings,” said Breanna Bishop, a spokeswoman for the laboratory. “The Corral Fire is not related to the controlled burns.”

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Livia Albeck-Ripka and Yan Zhuang contributed reporting.

Ali Watkins is a reporter on the Metro desk, covering crime and law enforcement in New York. Previously, she covered national security in Washington for The Times, BuzzFeed and McClatchy Newspapers. More about Ali Watkins