

Storm Data and Unusual Weather Phenomena - October 2020

Location	Date/Time	Deaths & Injuries	Property & Crop Dmg	Event Type and Details
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CALIFORNIA, South Central

(CA-Z194) SEQUOIA KINGS

10/01/20 00:00 PST	0	Wildfire
10/31/20 23:59 PST	0	

The lightning caused Castle fire was discovered on the morning of August 19, 2020. It was located 25 miles north of Kernville on the Sequoia National Forest and just a few miles east of the Giant Sequoia National Monument. It grew slowly at first, reaching 2000 acres on August 23rd. It grew rapidly to 15,000 acres by August 25th and to 35,674 acres by August 31st. The rapid growth resulted in evacuations of several small mountain communities and the closure of Highway 190 and several other mountain roads. On August 29, the Castle fire was combined with the smaller Shot Gun fire to become the SQF Complex. The fire grew to 151,436 acres by the end of September and to 170,165 acres by the end of October.

(CA-Z190) CENTRAL SIERRA FOOTHILLS, (CA-Z192) CENTRAL SIERRA, (CA-Z193) NORTH KINGS RIVER

10/01/20 00:00 PST	0	Wildfire
10/31/20 23:59 PST	0	

The Creek fire started at 633 pm PDT on September 4th (Labor Day Weekend) in the vicinity of Big Creek, California near the town of Shaver Lake. The fire was in an area of very heavy tree mortality in the Sierra National Forest. The fire had explosive grown on September 5th and 6th under excessive heat and low humidity, but not much wind. The fire became plume dominated on the 5th and column collapses were noted by AlertFire Cameras late on the 5th within the extremely unstable environment. Damaging fire whirls occurred just north of Mammoth Pool with ground survey estimated winds at 115-125 mph, and near Huntington Lake with patterns indicating winds of 90-107 mph. By the evening of September 6th, the fire had grown to 73,278 acres. Extensive smoke allowed the fire to slow some by Monday and Tuesday September 7th-8th, however the fire continued to grow, reaching nearly 153,000 acres by September 9th. Around this time, the complexity of the incident necessitated management of the fire to be split into a north zone and a south zone with 2 overhead teams assigned. The fire closed Highway 168 and many local roads and there were evacuations of as many as 45,000 people. Hundreds of people were rescued by California National Guard helicopters from the Mammoth Pool area and also from the China Peak ski resort. Hot and dry conditions under strong high pressure continued throughout the remainder of September with extensive smoke often hampering air operations. By the end of September the fire had burned 307,051 acres and had destroyed 853 structures and damaged 64 others. Cost of containment was \$106 Million. The fire continued to grow by an average of 2000 acres a day throughout October under warm than normal conditions and low humidities and a couple of offshore wind events. The fire reached 379,571 acres by the end of November.

(CA-Z195) LAKE ISABELLA, (CA-Z196) TEHACHAPI AREA, (CA-Z198) INDIAN WELLS VALLEY

10/25/20 14:27 PST	0	High Wind (MAX 58 kt)
10/26/20 12:16 PST	0	

A strong low pressure system dropped southward through the Great Basin on October 25 and 26. While this system did not bring any moisture to the area, it did push a dry cold front southward through the area during the afternoon of October 25. This brought an end to a two week period of above normal temperatures across the area, and it also produced a period of gusty winds across the area between the afternoon of October 25 and the early morning of October 26. Peak wind gusts across much of the area ranged between 25 and 40 mph while across the Kern County Mountains and Deserts gusts were generally between 40 and 50 mph, but some low impact indicator sites briefly measured gusts exceeding 60 mph.