

# 3 California wildfires destroy thousands of structures and force emergency evacuations

*(CNN)* A series of fast-moving wildfires is racing Friday up and down California, destroying thousands of structures and forcing thousands of residents to evacuate through flame-lined streets.

Two fires are just miles from the bar where 12 people were killed in a mass shooting in Southern California's Thousand Oaks, and part of that city has been evacuated.

And a blaze in Northern California sent terrified residents running for their lives as it closed in and destroyed parts of the town of Paradise, near Chico.

Fanned by high winds and low humidity, the fires spread rapidly Thursday and overnight into Friday. The threat continues Friday morning, with millions of Californians under "red flag" warnings portending windy, arid and warm conditions that pose extreme fire risks.

## **Camp Fire: People flee 'carrying their babies and kids'**

In Northern California, Tanah Clunies-Ross woke up in the dark Thursday to what sounded like lumps of coal raining down on her home. Within minutes, her family and thousands of people were racing to escape the raging flames of the Camp Fire.

"The smell of the smoke and realizing the smoke was a lot closer than I thought and then seeing flames up to my knees. ... I lost it," she said.

Her family was among at least 40,000 residents forced to evacuate in Butte County after the fire broke out early Thursday, "growing uncontrollably" at a rate of about 80 football fields per minute.

So far, it has burned at least 20,000 acres, injured firefighters and residents, and destroyed parts of Paradise, a town of 26,000 people roughly 80 miles north of

Sacramento.

Friday morning the fire was burning to the outer edges of Chico, a city of 93,000 people about a 90-mile drive north of Sacramento. Area hospitals have evacuated and all of Butte County schools have closed Friday.



Whitney Vaughan described a scene of panic and terror as she recalled her narrow escape from her Paradise home on Thursday morning.

Vaughan and her husband had just fled their home as flames rushed them. She saw a man “sprinting past our house carrying a little baby, running as fast as he could.”

They drove away but got eventually got caught in traffic. Flames were inches away, smoke was thick, cars weren’t moving and people were panicking. Some people left their cars there “and took off running, carrying their babies and kids.”

She cried as she recorded video of the terrifying scene, which she posted to Facebook. She and her husband eventually were able to drive away safely.

“We thought the fire was going to kill us,” she told CNN.

The Paradise Inn burns as the Camp Fire tears through Paradise on Thursday, November 8. A state of emergency has been declared in Butte County, where

thousands have been forced to evacuate.

The full extent of the destruction is still unknown, but authorities believe up to 1,000 buildings have been destroyed — most of those in Paradise, a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) spokesman said.

Multiple injuries have been reported by both civilians and firefighters, Cal Fire spokesman John Gaddie said. The extent of their injuries is unknown.

In Paradise on Friday morning, the town's main road was littered with downed trees and power lines. Much of the brush and grasses were blackened along the valleys, and many trees were still burning, a CNN crew there observed.

Late Thursday, more than 2,200 firefighters were battling the flames and the fire remains uncontained, according to Cal Fire.

Gov.-elect Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency in the area and has requested federal funds to help those impacted by wildfires in the state. Newsom is serving as acting governor while Gov. Jerry Brown is traveling out of state.

Authorities fear the fire, fueled by strong winds, could reach Chico — a city of 90,000 people where many Butte County families already have evacuated to shelters.



An unknown number of homes and buildings in Paradise have been destroyed by

the Camp Fire.

## **Woolsey Fire: Thousands of homes evacuated, Malibu threatened**

In Southern California, the night sky burned orange as the Woolsey Fire in Los Angeles and Ventura counties grew thousands of acres overnight, exploding from 2,000 acres to 8,000 in a matter of hours.

The Woolsey Fire is one of two blazes burning just miles from the site of Wednesday night's shooting massacre in Thousand Oaks. This one is just to the east of that city, part of which was evacuated.

About 75,000 homes in Ventura and Los Angeles counties are under evacuation orders, the Ventura County Fire Department said. Some structures have already been destroyed, Cal Fire reported.

"Please, please, please if you are asked to voluntarily leave the area, please do," Ventura County fire Capt. Scott Dettore told CNN affiliate KTLA on Friday morning. "Make sure your stuff is packed and ready. Please leave the area."



The Woolsey Fire in Southern California exploded in size overnight Thursday.

By Friday morning, the fire had crossed US 101 a few miles east of Thousand Oaks and was headed south to the Pacific coast — in the direction of the seaside city of Malibu and Pepperdine University, the Los Angeles County Fire Department said.

Pepperdine on Friday closed its Malibu and Calabasas campuses because of the approaching blaze.

Hidden Hills resident Adrienne Janic gave her home over to firefighters late Thursday to use as a command center. Her deck provided a strong vantage point to monitor the spread of the fire.

By 1 a.m. (4 a.m. ET), more firefighters arrived as the flames closed in on Janic's street.

"While a lot of my yard and neighbors' yards burned, the firefighters saved our homes," Janic tweeted just after 2 a.m. (5 a.m. ET) Friday. "We are still not out of the woods yet."

Christy Dawn Little abandoned her Oak Park home, northeast of Thousand Oaks, around 11 p.m. PT.

"I had to work this evening, and ran out when I realized how close it was," Little told CNN. "We have found a safe hotel ... (in) Los Angeles."

Video of her drive out of town shows the fire emitting an orange-red glow in the distance in the nighttime sky.

## **Hill Fire: RVs, outbuildings burned**

The Hill Fire is the other fire burning near the site of this week's mass shooting in Thousand Oaks.

This fire quickly spread to cover 10,000 acres, Ventura County Fire Department officials said.

Just 12 minutes after it started Thursday afternoon, the flames spread across US 101, leaving several drivers temporarily stranded. The highway is expected to remain closed Friday morning, Ventura County Fire Chief Mark Lorenzen said.

Residents posted on social media to share their views of the flames nearly consuming the hillside in the Newbury Park area of western Thousand Oaks.

While no homes or businesses have been lost due to the fast-moving blaze, a number of RVs and outbuildings have been burned and a firefighter suffered a minor injury, authorities said.

Fire officials anticipate the fire will reach the Pacific Ocean.

CNN's Emanuella Grinberg, Nick Valencia, Tristan Smith, Amanda Watts, Joe Sutton, Gianluca Mezzofiore, Stella Chan, Amanda Jackson and Jennifer Selva contributed to this report.

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