

King Fire explodes to 70,000 acres; Hwy. 50 closed



Smoke clouds from the King Fire appear to be on fire.
Photo/Toogee Sielsch

The King Fire outside of Pollock Pines has swelled to 70,944 acres. It remains at 5 percent containment.

Highway 50 is closed from Pollock Pines to Riverton.

Because of the steep terrain it has been difficult for firefighters to get a handle on the blaze that is now in its

sixth day of raging through the Eldorado National Forest.

The dense forest, though, is also home to a number of permanent residents and U.S. Forest Service cabins. There are 2,007 single residences and 1,505 other minor structures that are threatened. All of those people living there have been temporarily displaced. A slew of mandatory and voluntary evacuations remain in place.

The evacuation center is at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Camino. Another Red Cross evacuation center is located at 6530 Wentworth Springs Road in Georgetown. Lake Tahoe Humane Society has provided cages for small animals because the West Slope ran out of them.

On Wednesday, Gov. Jerry Brown issued an emergency proclamation for El Dorado and Siskiyou counties because of the King and Boles fires. The Boles Fire is the one that swept through the town of Weed.

Smoke is expected to continue to be a problem for Truckee, Carson City and Reno areas. Washoe County is reporting unhealthy air quality. Thunderstorms are in the forecast for the next three days.

Nearly 3,700 people are working the King Fire with 299 engines, 15 helicopters, 49 dozers and 68 water tenders. Crews from Lake Tahoe are at the fire. The cause remains under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report