17% containment of King Fire



Smoke obscures the mountains in Lake Tahoe on Sept. 21. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Updated 8:45pm:

The massive King Fire that destroyed 10 single family residences and 22 other structures, mostly in the White Meadows area, is now 17 percent contained.

However, there are 12,000 single residences and 9,000 other minor structures that remain threatened by the blaze burning east of Pollock Pines. Nearly 3,000 people are still displaced.

With the spread of the 82,018-acre fire into Placer County in the Tahoe National Forest, crews have closed off roads in the Foresthill area. Brush on Sunday was cleared from Soda Springs Road so it could serve as a containment line if need be.

Predictions are the southwest section near Swansboro could be contained Sunday night. Higher humidity levels overnight are expected to keep the forward movement to a minimum.

The main arm of the fire is largely burning north along the ridge between French Meadows and Hell Hole Reservoir. This is near the 2001 Star Fire.

More than 5,000 people are fighting the fire, including Lake

Tahoe crews. Four people have been injured since the fire started Sept. 13. How the fire started has not been released, but Wayne Allen Huntsman of Pollock Pines has been charged with arson. He pleaded not guilty.

Smoke from the King Fire canceled the second annual Ironman Lake Tahoe on Sept. 21. Athletes were to have begun the swim at Kings Beach in the morning, with the bike ride in the Northstar-Martis Valley-Truckee areas and the run involving Squaw Valley. Organizers waited until the last-minute – so much so that the pros were in the water.

This is the second time in a matter of years that a major sporting event at Lake Tahoe had to be canceled. In May 2011 the Tour of California bike ride was snowed out at Lake Tahoe.

Smoke lingered in the air on the South Shore on Sept. 21.

Highway 50 is still down to one lane headed west between Riverton and Pollock Pines.

There are no evacuations in the Lake Tahoe Basin and officials say at this time there is no threat of the fire coming into basin. However, hikers and backpackers are urged to stay out of Desolation and Granite Chief wilderness areas while the fire is active. Areas of Eldorado National Forest near the fire are off-limits.

The Silver Fork Elementary School will open for classes Monday, as the evacuation has been lifted. Otter Creek Elementary School will remain closed; those students will attend classes at Georgetown School.

On Monday at 7pm community meetings are scheduled at Golden Sierra High School in Garden Valley and at the Seventh-day Adventist Church Camino. The latter is also the evacuation center.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report