

## **UPDATE: Visibility issues hamper firefighters**

By Ben van der Meer/Appeal-Democrat  
2009-08-16 14:16:11

Fire crews were hopeful of keeping the Yuba Fire burning east of Marysville contained to about 2,000 acres today, but said conditions in which the fire could spread would come mid-afternoon.

Cal Fire Battalion Chief and fire investigator Bill Mendonca said the 2,200-acre fire was burning on both the Yuba and Nevada County sides of the Yuba River at noon Sunday, and visibility conditions were making fighting the fire from the air difficult.

"There are very few spots where the inversion layer is allowing copters in there right now," Mendonca said. "It's just not safe to fly them or the tankers in with that much smoke."

CalFire reported the fire has jumped the Yuba River at Frech Corral and may be a threat to Colgate Powerhouse and associated transmission lines.

The fire remained at 15 percent contained Sunday, with Marian Flowers, a volunteer at Cal Fire in Auburn, saying firefighters were hopeful of getting containment by Thursday.

Residences on Troost Trail in Nevada County were added to a voluntary evacuation order Sunday, Flowers said. People living on Providence Road, Candlewood Way, Yuba Nevada Road, Lake Francis Road, Halvey Road, Frank Harding Way, Colgate Tunnel Lane, Road 1052, Canyon View, and a portion of Marysville Road east of Lake Francis Road continued to be under a mandatory evacuation order.

Residents in Dobbins remained under a voluntary evacuation order. Dobbins-Oregon House Community Center continued to be an evacuation shelter Sunday, as did Loma Rica Community Church.

Flowers said Pleasant Valley Road at Bridgeport Road had been closed to non-local traffic today.

The fire, which was started Friday afternoon by a red-tailed hawk that flew into powerlines, had also knocked out electricity to residents over a large area in the foothills between Yuba and Nevada counties. The fire had caused no deaths and only two minor injuries to firefighters, but cost over \$1.8 million to date.

About 80 homes remained threatened by the fire, with two burned.

National Weather Service forecaster Steve Goldstein said the fire would cause poor air quality for the next few days, and advised people with chronic breathing issues to avoid outdoor activity in the early part of the day, when conditions would be worst.

"Run the air conditioner, because that will help clean the air," said Goldstein, who works in NWS' Sacramento office. "If you're not running it to save money, now is not the time."