

Extreme Weather Sparks LA's Most Expensive Wildfire Ever

Description

On a seemingly serene Tuesday morning at approximately 10 am, Los Angeles enjoyed a moment of calm.

However, within the span of fewer than 24 hours, a staggering 2,925 acres of the [Pacific Palisades ignited](#), marking the most catastrophic wildfire Southern California has witnessed since 2011.

Compounding the crisis, three additional fires erupted in the vicinity, with one, known as the Eaton Fire, consuming over 2,000 acres.

As of Wednesday morning, the Los Angeles Fire Department reported that [firefighters](#) had failed to contain any of the blazes, leading to the destruction of more than 1,000 structures and the tragic loss of at least two lives, with the potential for exacerbation in the hours ahead.

[Wildfires are a familiar plight in California](#), yet this particular incident raises alarms due to several alarming factors.

An "urban firestorm" facing potential record losses

LA streets burning

High winds propelled the flames across California. (AP Photo/Ethan Swope)

Notably, few [brush fires in California's history](#) have occurred in such densely populated urban areas.

UCLA climate scientist Daniel Swain referred to it as an "urban firestorm" while reviewing live footage of the ongoing Eaton Fire. Historical context reveals that the 1991 Tunnel Fire, which ravaged over 1,500 acres of Oakland, is dwarfed by the current blazes and is notable for its extensive loss of life and property.

Swain and his colleagues have posited that the Palisades Fire may emerge as the costliest wildfire disaster recorded in the United States, primarily due to the significant number of upscale structures involved. "We are likely witnessing what may become the most expensive wildfire disaster in California, if not national history," he asserted.

A historic windstorm accelerates the spread

LA house on fire

The affected homes represent some of the world's most valuable real estate. (AP Photo/Eugene Garcia)

Additionally, a powerful windstorm besieged the region from Tuesday into Wednesday morning, with gusts reaching up to 90 miles per hour, according to the National Weather Service.

In a mere two-and-a-half hours overnight, the size of the Palisades Fire more than doubled, hampered further by winds so fierce that aircraft tasked with water and retardant drops were grounded.

This phenomenon—a perilous amalgamation of fierce winds and arid, expansive territories—encourages fires that advance more swiftly than emergency responders can react. Douglas Kelley, a wildfire expert at the UK's Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, noted the unprecedented speed of the fire's growth, which exceeded expectations.

A recent [study](#) published in *Science* revealed that while only around 3% of US wildfires from 2001 to 2020 were categorized as "fast fires," they accounted for the majority of damage and suppression costs.

The exacerbated conditions of this wildfire outbreak are vitally interconnected with the evolving [climate crisis](#).

A weather phenomenon creates optimal fire conditions

staircase exposed by fire in LA house

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The remains of a grand staircase in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood. (AP Photo/Ethan Swope)



Recent winters in Southern California have brought considerable rainfall, yet a lack of precipitation in recent months has rendered the flourishing vegetation highly susceptible to fire.

This cycle of dry and wet conditions, which Swain terms "hydroclimate whiplash," leads to extreme enhanced fire risk, as evidenced by the destructive Camp Fire of 2018.

The emergence of such extreme weather events and intensified wildfires presents a profound challenge for the region.

This article was originally published by [Business Insider](#).

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Vocabulary List:

1. **Catastrophic** /ˌkæt.əˈstrɒf.ɪk/ (adjective): Involving a violent and sudden disaster particularly one that causes a lot of damage.
2. **Exacerbation** /ɪɡˌzæs.əˈbeɪ.jən/ (noun): The process of making a problem bad situation or negative feeling worse.
3. **Erupted** /ɪˈrʌptɪd/ (verb): Broke out or burst forth suddenly often referring to a fire or volcanic activity.
4. **Phenomenon** /fəˈnɒ.mɪ.nən/ (noun): An observable fact or event especially one of scientific interest.
5. **Susceptible** /səˈsep.tə.bəl/ (adjective): Easily influenced or harmed by a particular thing.
6. **Accelerates** /əkˈsel.ə.reɪts/ (verb): Causes something to happen or occur more quickly.

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What event marked the most catastrophic wildfire Southern California has witnessed since 2011?
Option: A. Ignition of 2,925 acres in Pacific Palisades
Option: B. Destruction of over 1,000 structures
Option: C. Loss of at least two lives
Option: D. Emergence of a historic windstorm
2. Which fire consumed over 2,000 acres in the vicinity?
Option: A. Eaton Fire
Option: B. Tunnel Fire



Option: C. Urban Firestorm

Option: D. Brush Fire

3. What did UCLA climate scientist Daniel Swain refer to the ongoing Eaton Fire as?

Option: A. Urban Firestorm

Option: B. Windstorm

Option: C. Brush Fire

Option: D. Tunnel Fire

4. What type of weather phenomenon encouraged fires to advance swiftly?

Option: A. Fierce winds and arid territories

Option: B. Heavy rainfall and wet conditions

Option: C. Snowstorms and extreme cold

Option: D. Calm weather and humid conditions

5. What risk factor is associated with the cycle of dry and wet conditions noted by Swain?

Option: A. Enhanced fire risk

Option: B. Reduced fire risk

Option: C. Increased water supply

Option: D. Decreased plant growth

6. Which event poses a profound challenge for the region according to the text?

Option: A. Intensified wildfires

Option: B. Enhanced vegetation growth

Option: C. Decreased windstorms

Option: D. Reduced precipitation

True-False

7. The Palisades Fire may become the costliest wildfire disaster in the United States.

8. A recent study revealed that fast fires accounted for a small portion of damage and suppression costs.

9. Douglas Kelley is a wildfire expert from the US.

10. The windstorm that hit the region grounded aircraft tasked with fire response efforts.

11. Southern California experienced wet conditions during recent winters.



12. The Camp Fire of 2018 was caused by a lack of precipitation.

Gap-Fill

13. The Eaton Fire consumed over _____ acres in the vicinity.

14. Recent winters in Southern California have brought considerable _____.

15. The Palisades Fire may emerge as the costliest wildfire disaster recorded in the United States if it exceeds the estimated _____.

16. The size of the Palisades Fire more than doubled in a mere two-and-a-half hours overnight during the _____.

17. Improved strategies are needed to mitigate the risks posed by extreme weather events and intensified _____.

18. The Los Angeles Fire Department reported the tragic loss of at least _____ lives due to the wildfires.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. A. Ignition of 2,925 acres in Pacific Palisades 2. A. Eaton Fire 3. A. Urban Firestorm 4. A. Fierce winds and arid territories 5. A. Enhanced fire risk 6. A. Intensified wildfires

True-False: 7. True 8. False 9. False 10. True 11. True 12. False

Gap-Fill: 13. 2,000 14. rainfall 15. structural damage 16. historic windstorm 17. wildfires 18. two

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. What is the act of refraining from indulging in something?

Option: Sobriety

Option: Deteriorate



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- Option: Renewed
Option: Exacerbation
2. Which term is related to mental processes such as thinking learning and understanding?
- Option: Self-efficacy
Option: Divergence
Option: Catalyze
Option: Perception
3. Which word means to burst or break out suddenly?
- Option: Susceptible
Option: Accelerates
Option: Erupted
Option: Advancement
4. What term describes something that has subtle differences or shades of meaning?
- Option: Reintegration
Option: Heralded
Option: Nuanced
Option: Intrigue
5. What term is used to describe an observable fact or event?
- Option: Elusive
Option: Catalyze
Option: Altered
Option: Phenomenon
6. Which word refers to finding something for the first time?
- Option: Paleontological
Option: Discovery
Option: Excavation
Option: Trackway
7. What term means happening by chance rather than intention?
- Option: Interactions
Option: Fortuitous
Option: Translocation
Option: Advancement
8. What term describes the back-and-forth action or influence between two or more entities?
- Option: Interaction
Option: Susceptible
Option: Divergence



Option: Altered

9. Which word describes something that is difficult to capture or achieve?

Option: Elusive

Option: Catastrophic

Option: Herald

Option: Accelerates

10. What term refers to the state of being sober or abstaining from alcohol?

Option: Erupted

Option: Sobriety

Option: Translocation

Option: Advancement

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

11. Leaving a machine unused for a long time can cause it to _____.

12. The use of fertilizers _____ the growth of plants.

13. In plants the movement of sugars within the phloem is called _____.

14. Technological _____ has revolutionized the way we communicate.

15. The earthquake had a _____ impact on the city causing massive destruction.

16. After the conflict there was a _____ effort to rebuild the war-torn country.

17. The new scientific discovery was _____ as a major breakthrough in the field.

18. The stress of the situation led to an _____ of her existing health issues.

19. The program aims to support the _____ of ex-convicts into society.

20. The movie's plot was filled with twists and turns that added an element of _____.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. Certain individuals may be more to allergies due to genetic factors.

22. The artist's style showed a clear from traditional painting techniques.



23. The new regulations aimed to innovation in the industry.
24. The experimental treatment the DNA of the cells.
25. The archaeological team conducted an extensive of the site.
26. The fossilized footprints formed an ancient through the mud.
27. Building can help individuals tackle challenges with confidence.
28. Individuals may have different of the same event based on their background.
29. The migration patterns of birds are a natural studied by biologists.
30. Nutrients are transported within the plant through the process of .

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Sobriety 2. Perception 3. Erupted 4. Nuanced 5. Phenomenon 6. Discovery 7. Fortuitous 8. Interaction 9. Elusive 10. Sobriety

Gap-Fill: 11. Deteriorate 12. Accelerates 13. Translocation 14. Advancement 15. Catastrophic 16. Renewed 17. Heralded 18. Exacerbation 19. Reintegration 20. Intrigue

Matching sentence: 1. Susceptible 2. Divergence 3. Catalyze 4. Altered 5. Excavation 6. Trackway 7. Self-efficacy 8. Perception 9. Phenomenon 10. Translocation

CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL5

Date Created

2025/01/09

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