

Agenda Item #30
File #21-462

CAL FIRE Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit (LNU) Lightning Complex Fire Recovery Update

Presented to the Board of Supervisors
on May 25, 2021
Office of Emergency Services



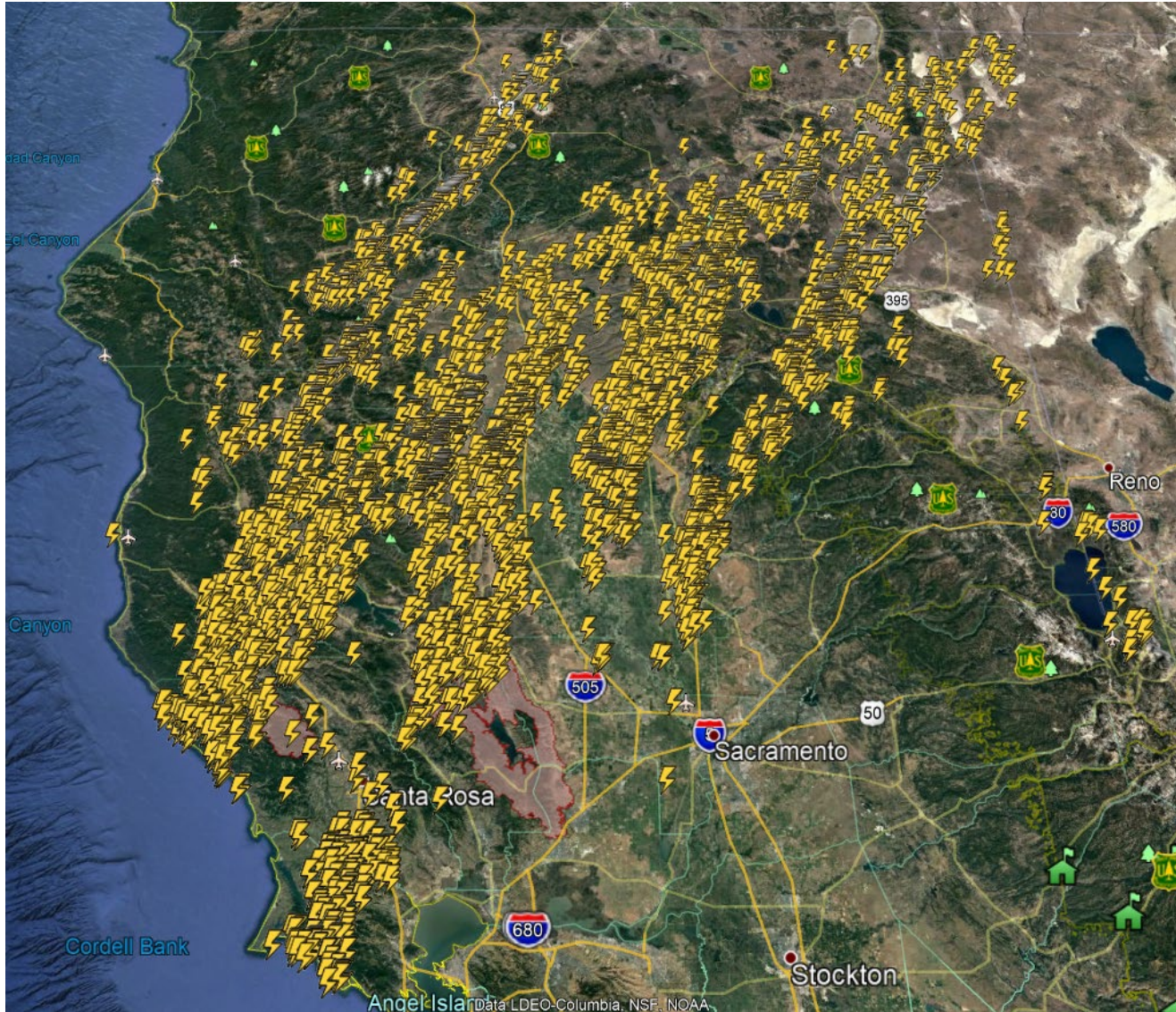
2020

LNU Lightning Complex



PRESENTATION FOR SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MAY 25, 2021



2020 LNU Lightning Complex

The 2020 LNU Lightning Complex was a result of a two-day lightning event producing more than 2000 lightning strikes in LNU between August 16 – 17, 2020.

The Sonoma Lake Napa Unit (LNU) responded to over 90 reported vegetation fires during this time – several developed into major fires.

The largest being the **Hennessey**, just West of the south edge of Lake Berryessa, the **Gamble** on the northeast edge of Lake Berryessa, & '15-10' fire at the north end of Lake Berryessa.

Before full containment, the complex burned in six counties; Sonoma, Lake, Napa, Solano, Yolo and Colusa.

STATEWIDE ~ AUGUST 2020

Between August 15 – 19 over 12,000 Lightning Strikes in Northern CA:

Fires were established in multiple CAL FIRE Units and National Forests

Hills Fire (Fresno) – 2,120 ac

#River Fire (Monterey) – 48,088 ac

Jones Fire (Nevada) – 705 ac

*#SCU Lightning Complex (Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin) - 396,624 ac

*#CZU Lightning Complex (Santa Cruz, San Mateo) – 86,509 ac

*#LNU Lightning Complex (Lake, Napa, Yolo, Solano, Sonoma, Colusa) – 363,220 ac

#Butte/Tehama/Glenn Lightning Complex (Tehama, Glenn, Butte) – 19,609 ac

*#August Complex (Mendocino National Forest) – 1,032,648 ac

*#North Complex (Plumas National Forest) – 318,930 ac

Holser Fire (Ventura) – 3,000 ac

Dolan Fire (Los Padres National Forest + Fort Hunter-Liggett) 124,924 ac

Salt Fire (Calaveras) – 1,789 ac

#Carmel Fire (Monterey) – 6,905 ac

W-5 Cold Springs (Modoc National Forest) – 84,817 ac

Sequoia Lightning Complex (Sequoia National Forest) – 169,688 ac

Woodward Fire (Point Reyes National Seashore) – 4,929 ac

* 5 of Top 20 Largest Fires in CA History / # CALFIRE IMT Type 1 Assigned



2020 LNU Lightning Complex

Monday, August 17 multiple simultaneous fire starts in LNU, largest being the Hennessey, Gamble and '15-10'.

Multiple new fires discovered on August 18, 19, and 20 with extreme fire behavior and rapid growth.

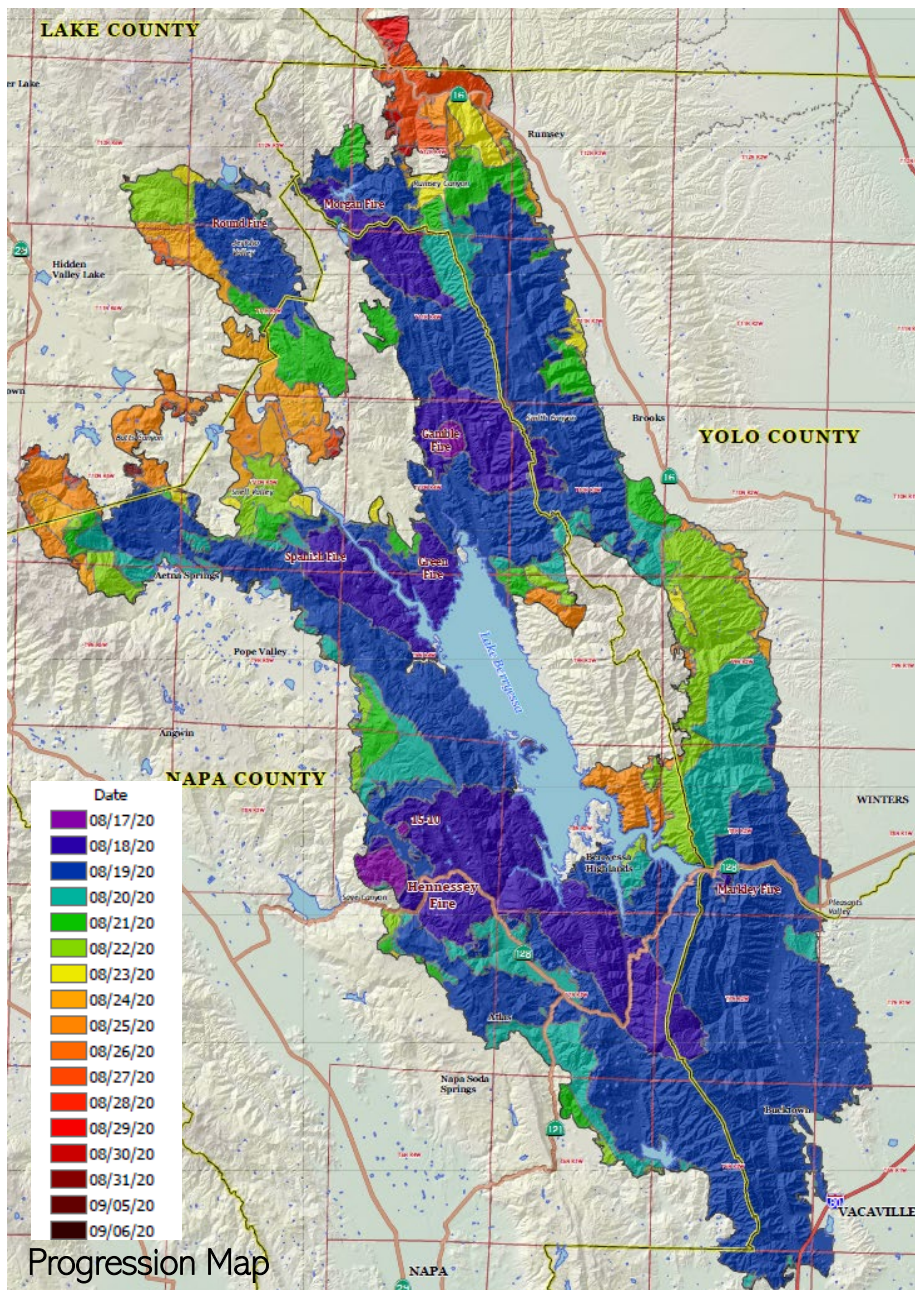
Communities in Sonoma, Lake, Napa, Solano, Yolo, and Colusa Counties impacted, forcing the evacuation of thousands.

Evening of August 18, the Hennessey, Markley, Gamble, Morgan, and others merged.

- Significant dry North Wind Event occurred
- Fire made a 12-mile run resulting in fire spreading over Mt. Vaca and down into Solano and Yolo Counties.
- Fire growth in 24hr period ~ 150,000 ac
- Unprecedented rate of spread
- Immediate evacuation of the Pleasants Valley Road area, including the general areas and communities of Quail, Mix, & Gates Canyons, English Hills, and threatened the City limits of Winters and Vacaville that evening.

Incident resources redeployed to Solano area, numerous Solano and Yolo County agencies were also responding to new 911 fire calls into the area.

Evacuations were requested and ordered via different avenues to Solano Dispatch and fire agencies.



2020 LNU Lightning Complex

Challenges

- Multiple major fires throughout Central and Northern CA severely impacted resource allocation and availability
- Many fire agency resources already deployed to other fires outside of area
- Initial confusion on incident organization – command structure and overall operational plan as fire rapidly ran into Solano County
- Location of fire and rapidly growing size of incident
- Coordination between incoming 911 calls to Solano Dispatch and the other 911 Call Centers and the local response and intent with the overall incident structure was not possible given the rapid spread of the fire
- Majority of human and structural loss occurred the evening of August 18th and day of August 19.
- Loss of Fire Crews
- COVID – limited availability due to existing pandemic response
- Lightning fires also affected Oregon and Washington – Resource drawdown



Quail Canyon



Markley Fire near Quail Canyon

Successes

- Solano County agencies worked well together in the response to the new threat
- Many local agencies committed resources beyond normal comfort level
- Mutual aid requested resources
 - Filled by agencies outside of area such as Contra Costa and Alameda Counties among others
 - Also beyond normal comfort level and beyond what they already had committed to other fires
- As fire progressed up Mt. Vaca, local CAL FIRE BC Chief Watson responded from his position on the Markley Fire to Pleasants Valley Road and ultimately worked to bridge the gap (incident organization and crucial augmented response from LG) working side by side with allied partners (Fairfield BC Sturdee) to coordinate communication between Solano Dispatch and the incident resources and response
- CAL FIRE Incident Management Team 2 assigned a dedicated liaison to the Solano County EOC
 - Direct contact for the County to the overall incident organization



Solano County Listening Session Questions

How did the fire start?

Majority of the fires were lightning caused; Markley fire was human caused

How did the fire burn into Solano County?

Hennessey, Markley, Green, 15-10, Spring, Quail...all merged the night of the 18th into the 19th

Strong wind event, 12-mile run, 150k growth

Minimal fire resources available

What can we do?

Defensible Space

Home Hardening

Fire Resistant Landscaping

Vegetation Management + Maintenance

Fire Safe Councils

Grants

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QUESTIONS?

