

'Tide is turning' in LA fire

by UPI

LOS ANGELES - Los Angeles firefighters made progress against the fire that burned in Griffith Park, reporting it was 75 percent contained Wednesday afternoon.

Many residents who had been evacuated were permitted to return to their homes, and officials began to evaluate damage to the city's largest park, The Los Angeles Times reported.

Half of the 600 firefighters who had been working the fire were allowed to go off duty Wednesday.

"The tide is turning in our favor," Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said at a news conference. "We are winning the battle against the flames."

Property damage appeared minimal, the newspaper said, but some of Griffith Park's scenic points were destroyed or heavily damaged.

The park and its major attractions -- including the Griffith Observatory and the Los Angeles Zoo -- were to remain closed through Thursday.

After the fire broke out Tuesday, people were evacuated from their Hollywood Hills homes and officials ordered the zoo, the observatory, the Greek Theatre and other attraction evacuated.

The fire -- the fifth in the 4,200-acre Griffith Park since December -- was said to be the worst in at least 30 years as Los Angeles experiences its driest year on record.

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