

Tahoe fire destroys more than 165 homes

by UPI

LAKE TAHOE, Calif. -- Wildfire driven by high winds and fueled by drought-parched growth destroyed more than 165 homes and threatened hundreds more Sunday near Lake Tahoe, Calif.

The fire broke out Sunday afternoon, and was threatening the western boundary of South Lake Tahoe late Sunday evening, The Los Angeles Times reported.

The fire had burned at least 750 acres of heavily wooded terrain that had been severely dried out by drought conditions.

Officials said at least 1,000 people were evacuated in communities near the fire -- some taking refuge at two evacuation centers in South Lake Tahoe, while others went to stay with friends or in hotels. No injuries were reported as of Sunday night, the newspaper said.

The fire was believed to be caused by human activity, the Sacramento Bee reported Sunday. At least five air tankers and two helicopters were battling the blaze, with more aircraft called in, the Bee said.

Forest service officials said air operations were suspended at nightfall Sunday, but would resume Monday morning.

Winds began to diminish late Sunday, the Times reported.

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