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(Colo.)-Large Wildfire Burns 14,000 Acres, Damages 18 Structures

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 06/10/2012 07:02 PM

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP) - More residents are being asked to evacuate from near a fast-moving wildfire in northern Colorado that has grown to 14,000 acres, or about 22 miles, in one day.

Authorities issued 183 more evacuation notices on Sunday in addition to about 1,600 issued earlier.

The fire, which has damaged or destroyed 18 structures thus far, is sending up heavy smoke and creating an eerie, orange dusk in the middle of the day. Some ash fell as authorities issued a briefing on the fire.

Authorities say Mother Nature is running the fire, which has been erratic and spreading in multiple directions.

It was first reported early Saturday morning in the Paradise Park area, a mountainous area about 15 miles west of Fort Collins.

It's not clear how many houses have been evacuated but the Red Cross said about 500 people have registered with shelters.

Eighteen structures have been damaged or destroyed.

Sheriff Justin Smith told evacuees that one person is unaccounted for in the fire area but said he couldn't provide any details.

It remains unclear if the burned structures were homes or other kind of buildings.

The cause of the fire isn't known but authorities planned to visit the area where the fire started.

Volunteers at a wolf sanctuary near the fire have removed 11 of the animals and hope the remaining 19 will take shelter in a series of underground concrete bunkers known as "fire dens" if the blaze passes through.

WOLF sanctuary spokeswoman Michelle Proulx said the wolves were taken to kennels in Larimer County, and depending on the conditions Sunday, volunteers might go back and retrieve the

remaining animals.

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