

Families return home after Tuesday night's wildlands fire



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Residents returned to their homes in the Soda Canyon area this morning following the hair-raising Tuesday night fire that scorched 90 acres in gusty winds, reducing a vacation house to ashes and destroying the garage and an old pigeon coop on a nearby property.

The fast-moving fire, which was reported at about 8:40 p.m. Tuesday, was declared contained at 8 a.m. Wednesday, CalFire

Assistant Chief David Shew said.

On Wednesday morning, CalFire crews continued to extinguish hotspots, with a helicopter delivering buckets of water. No one was injured in the fire, whose cause remains under investigation, Shew said at mid-day.

About 24 homes were evacuated as high winds, estimated at 30 miles per hour, fanned the flames. Luckily, the hills shielded the fire from the fiercest winds, CalFire said.

CalFire investigators are looking at a number of possibilities for what caused the fire, including downed power lines near Loma Vista Drive, Shew said. Damage estimates are still being compiled.

Anavon Anderson opened his front door in the 1300 block of Soda Canyon Road to check the howling winds, only to see flames taller than her two-story house a few hundreds yards away.

The fire destroyed her property's garage, along with a few outbuildings and an empty pigeon coop where her husband, Clyde, had raised birds.

"It was terrifying. It really was," Anavon Anderson said.

When she shouted an alarm, her husband ran outside to get their two cars out of the garage. He also turned on sprinklers on the roof of their two-story house and, using a hose, doused the area around the house with water.

Clyde Anderson, 80, said he lost a house in 1965 on the property. "I know what it can do," he said.

Soda Canyon Road was closed at Silverado Trail around 10:15 p.m. as 22 fire trucks, five inmate crews, three water tankers and two bulldozers poured into the area, CalFire said.