

California Wild-Fires: Paradise Lost, The Town of Paradise in Northern California Destroyed

By [Andy Rowell](#)

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As the deadliest wild-fires ever to hit California continue to rage, an estimated 31 people are known to have died, with over 200 still missing. Some 250,000 have been forced to flee their homes. Over 100,000 acres of land has been burnt, including luxury homes in Malibu.

As California once again reels from the fires, many are warning this is climate change in action.

The town of Paradise in Northern California, home to 23,000 people, has effectively been destroyed by what is known as the “Camp Fire”, and is now described as a ghost town. The grim headline in the Guardian said: “[Only bones and fragments](#)”.

At one stage the fire that engulfed [Paradise](#) travelled 11 miles in 11 hours or 80 acres a minute. One fire-fighter who had been involved in [trying to put out the](#) blaze, observed: “It’s devastation, total devastation, it’s pretty incredible something like this occurred,” “We’ve gone through lots of wildfire over the years, this is the worst I’ve seen personally.”

The mayor of Paradise, Jody Jones, [told the BBC](#):

“Most of the residential [area] is gone. I would say 90%. I had an opportunity to go up there and take a look for myself. Just about everyone I know lost their home.”

Yesterday, Governor Brown wrote to President Donald Trump, stating that the community of Paradise was “forever changed”, noting that

“every resident of Paradise will inevitably have lost their home or had a family member or loved one who had lost their home”.

Brown went on to add that

“November 2018 has been exceptionally dry” but the “fire weather conditions in [Southern California](#) are expected to worsen”.

Indeed, in the south of California, [near Los Angeles](#), the other major fire known as the Woolsey fire remains only 10% contained and has burned more than 87,000 acres in three days.

Brown has also made the link between climate change and the fires: He declared:

“This is not the new normal, this is the new abnormal. The chickens are coming home to roost, this is real here.”

Los Angeles fire chief, [Daryl Osby](#), also made the link:

“The fact of the matter is if you look at the state of California, climate challenge is happening statewide,” Osby said, adding that “it is going to be here for the foreseeable future”.

The statistics speak for themselves: As [Carbonbrief](#) have noted:

“In California, 14 of the 20 largest wildfires [on record](#) have occurred over the past 15 years. At the same time, the western US has experienced some of its warmest temperatures on record, with 10 of the past 15 years among the 15 warmest years on record, based on temperature records from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).”

As an article in [Wired](#) warns:

“This is what a climate change reckoning looks like ... The consequence is fires of unprecedented, almost unimaginable scale.”

But there is one person who, as usual, seems not to have grasped the reality of the situation at all. Trump’s response has been widely criticised as being typically ill-informed: Yesterday, he tweeted:

“With proper Forest Management, we can stop the devastation constantly going on in California. Get Smart!”

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— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [November 11, 2018](#)

Musician [Neil Young](#), who lost his home in the blaze, was one of many to criticise Trump’s response:

“Imagine a leader who defies science, saying these solutions shouldn’t be part of his decision-making on our behalf. Imagine a leader who cares more for his own, convenient option than he does for the people he leads. Imagine an unfit leader. Now imagine a fit one.”

He was not the only one to criticise [Trump](#):

“His comments are reckless and insulting to the firefighters and people being

affected," added Harold Schaitberger, president of the International Association of Fire Fighters.

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