

Firefighters complete containment of Coastal Fire

By **Daniel Langhorne** - May 17, 2022



A view of the Coastal Fire in Aliso Canyon as seen from Top of the World on Wednesday. Photo courtesy of Trish Sweeney

Firefighters have achieved 100% containment of the Coastal Fire after working in hot weather and steep terrain for six days, fire officials said Tuesday morning.

The fire consumed 200 acres and destroyed 10 homes in the Coronado Pointe neighborhood of Laguna Niguel. Another 11 homes were damaged. Two firefighters injured on the fire line are “recovering and doing well”, an Orange County Fire Authority spokesperson said.

“Once again, the Laguna Beach Fire Department, the Laguna Beach Police Department, Laguna Beach city staff, and the Orange County Fire Authority successfully met the challenge of protecting our town from the threat of wildfire. Our hearts go out to the residents of Laguna Niguel for their devastating losses,” Mayor Sue Kempf wrote in a text message.

Residents in the Balboa Nyes (Portafina) neighborhood [faced an evacuation warning Wednesday](#) that was lifted hours later after authorities were confident the blaze wouldn’t change course toward Laguna Beach.

“This underscores the need for more HeloPods strategically placed around town, persistent fuel modification around our perimeter, and diligence by our residents to manage fuel around homes,” Kempf wrote.

Laguna Beach will remain focused on these and other mitigation strategies as city staff expand [a 2019 wildfire safety and mitigation plan](#) approved by the City Council.

Top of the World residents had a front-row seat to the aerial firefighting efforts.

“The firefighters and the resources they brought to this Coastal Fire behind the Ranch were impressive. Our hearts go out to the 20 homeowners who lost their homes,” said Gene Felder, president of the Top of the World Neighborhood Association.

The Coastal Fire’s cause remains under investigation. Southern California Edison notified the California Public Utilities Commission that its grid experienced “circuit activity” in Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park at 2:45 p.m. on Wednesday, according to an email obtained by Los Angeles Times.

The Orange County District Attorney’s Office needs to prioritize timely prosecution of suspected arsonists and individuals starting campfires for warmth or light, Felder said. Since February 2020, Laguna Beach officers have arrested four individuals

on suspicion of arson in incidents that had the potential to burn into open spaces, Laguna Beach police Capt. Rachel Johnson wrote in a March 24 email.

“It ought to be a very serious crime and we should publicize that to anyone who might start one of these fires,” Felder said.

This story is developing and will be updated.