

THE CAMP-PARADISE WILDFIRE : CALIFORNIA NOVEMBER 2018

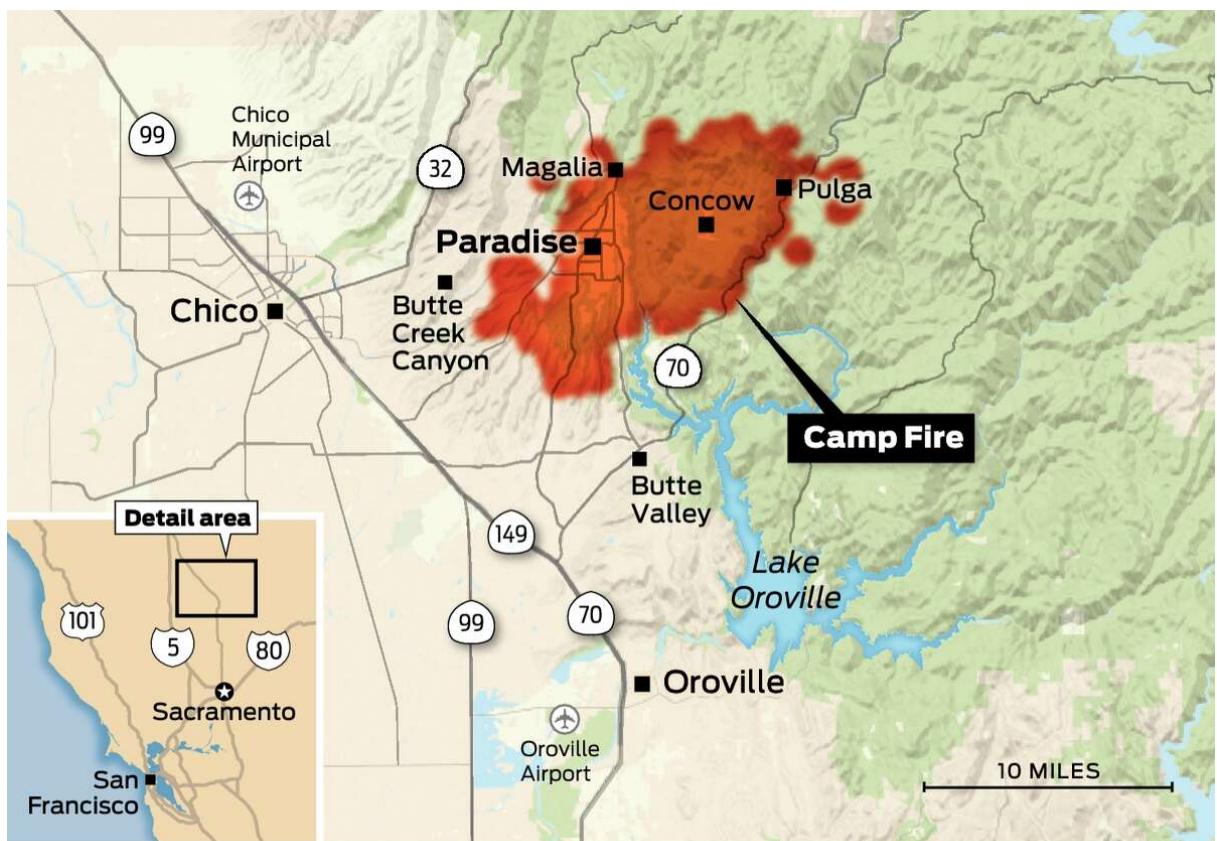
WHAT WAS IT?

- Located north of Sacramento on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains it was the worst wildfire ever to hit California
- 153,000 acres were burnt, 85 people killed, over 18,000 buildings lost and \$16.5 billion damage done
- Most of the town of Paradise was lost and 85% of the population displaced

WHY WAS IT SO BAD?

- Started by an electricity power line fault
- Several years of drought and dry weather for 200 days before the fire provided much dry, tinder-like vegetation
- 50 mph winds from the north east caused the fire to spread rapidly covering 4,600 acres per hour
- Paradise was 7 miles from the source of the fire allowing a wife fire front to form
- Paradise had gone over 100 years without a wildfire leading to a degree of complacency
- Evacuation was made difficult by a poor road layout, 38,000 people had to flee on only 4 roads
- Gridlock occurred, made worse by cars abandoned as the fire approached
- The public alert system was poor as only 30% of the population was registered





Sources: NASA MODIS, Nextzen, OpenStreetMap

Todd Trumbull / The Chronicle

IMPACTS

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Wildlife was devastated by the fire, but even after the fire the lack of vegetation had a major impact on the food chain (food sources were lost). The impact on wildlife will last for years
- Over 150,000 acres of woodland were burnt, over 1 million trees affected, over 80% of which were killed
- Soil was also severely damaged by the extreme temperatures of the fire
- The destruction of the vegetation left the soil unprotected so that later rainfall caused rapid soil erosion and even some debris flows

ECONOMIC

- The local economy was reduced by 50%, as over 600 businesses were damaged or destroyed. Over 85% of businesses closed
- The loss of the workforce and of customers hit the economy
- Jobs in the service industry, especially tourism were devastated
- There were some economic positives, particularly due to rebuilding and spending on the replacement of lost goods

SOCIAL

- Negative education and health impacts, 50 schools were lost and a major medical centre was burnt down
- Air pollution affected the Bay area and schools were closed
- Trauma and fear were major psychological consequences
- Many homes were lost leading to homelessness, some people left the area for good and there was a 5% reduction in population
- The destruction of businesses, hospitals and schools led to job losses