

RIM FIRE

Greenhouse Gas Emissions & Air Quality Impacts

The Rim Fire affected air quality across California and Nevada

- An Air Alert was issued for San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Mariposa, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Kern Counties due to smoke impacts from the Rim Fire. Air alerts are issued when conditions leading to ozone formation occur, placing the valley at risk for exceeding Federal ozone standards. Ozone, even at low levels, can harm human health and affect our forests and wildlife.
- Air quality warnings were issued for Lake Tahoe, Carson City, and Reno - more than 100 miles away from the fire. In response to these pollution levels, the Washoe County School District and Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association cancelled outdoor school activities including football games and recess.

According to the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association health risks associated with smoke from wildfires include: respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, heat stroke and exhaustion, asthma, and permanent damage to the lungs and heart.

When megafires like the Rim Fire burn, carbon that was being stored in the forest is released as greenhouse gas that effects our climate.

- [Initial estimates indicate that the Rim Fire released 12.06 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.](#)
- According to the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, an increase in the frequency and intensity of wildfires has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of air quality improvement efforts made over the last few decades.

The Rim Fire was the first of its kind, but it certainly won't be the last. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy has committed \$1 million towards Rim Fire restoration. Without significant increases in investment, these types of events will continue throughout the Sierra. To learn more please visit our web site.



Photo Credit: Ron West

The Rim Fire released the equivalent of:

- *Annual greenhouse gas emissions from 2.57 million cars*
- *Carbon dioxide emissions from the electricity use of 1.3 million homes for 1 year*
- *Annual carbon dioxide emissions of 3 coal fired power plants*

Based on the U.S. EPA's equivalency calculator.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is a state agency that carries out a mission of protecting the environment and economy in a complementary fashion across the Sierra Nevada Region.



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