

# Jackson Hole Daily



RYAN DORGAN/JACKSON HOLE DAILY

A sandhill crane makes its way through the forest Thursday near Spread Creek. The large birds are known for their unique cries and have been documented migrating at elevations as high as 11,800 feet.

■ **Regional**

## Wildfires scorch Western states

LAKE ISABELLA, Calif. (AP) — A deadly wildfire that roared through dry brush and trees in the mountains of central California gave residents little time to flee as flames burned dozens of homes to the ground, propane tanks exploded and smoke obscured the path to safety.

Two bodies were found Friday near Lake Isabella, a popular recreation area east of Bakersfield that was ravaged by wind-whipped flames, said Phil Neufeld, a spokesman for the Kern County Fire Department.

At least 80 houses were destroyed in the southern Sierra Nevada as the fire burned out of control across 29 square miles, leveling neighborhoods and forcing thousands of people to flee from fast-moving flames.

David Klippel, 78, a retired police officer, said he didn't see much of a threat after receiving an automated call advising him to leave. That changed dramatically within an hour Thursday afternoon.

"I've never been so close to a fast-moving, ferocious fire. It was unbelievable," said Klippel, who later learned his house had caught fire. "I almost didn't have time to get out."

Neighborhoods of mobile homes were charred to their foundations. Gusty winds pushed the flames and smoke farther into drought-starved terrain.

"The forces of nature collided with a spark," Kern County Fire Chief Brian Marshall said. "The mountainous terrain, five years of drought and wind

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# Teen death spurs tests

BY MARK HUFFMAN  
 JACKSON HOLE DAILY

The death of a teenage hockey player from a heart defect has convinced school district officials and doctors in Jackson that a program is needed to screen young athletes.

Teton County School District Superintendent Gillian Chapman said Friday that a cardiac screening program would be welcome, that "any time we can offer the opportunity to be safe and healthier it's important."

Dr. Ellen Gallant, a cardiologist at St. John's Medical Center, said, "We need this here in Jackson. It's about keeping kids safe and identifying this before problems rise."

Kayden Quinn Tapia — a

Jackson Hole High School student and a player in Jackson Hole Youth Hockey who was days short of 17 — was found dead on the Snake River dike the morning of June 14. Though police first suspected homicide, an autopsy found that Tapia had died of hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. The genetic heart condition causes a thickening of the heart wall that can lead to cardiac arrest.

Gallant called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy "the most common cause of sudden death in athletes" and noted it's especially dangerous because "prior to cardiac arrest there are typically not any other symptoms."

Tests find that about 1 in 500 young athletes have the

condition, Gallant said. A follow-up study of young soccer players in Italy found that screening cut fatalities by 89 percent. Screening takes only minutes.

Young athletes are where hypertrophic cardiomyopathy is most often seen because the defect's fatal outcomes are most often triggered by exertion.

"Generally these things tend to happen when there's exertion," said Dr. Brent Blue, Teton County coroner, "when they are stressing the heart."

"It tends to be when they're exerting themselves or right after," Gallant said.

Cost has been a deterrent in some school systems. But St. John's has the equipment to perform the EKGs and

echocardiograms that can detect hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, and Gallant said she would donate her own time, making testing "fairly inexpensive."

Another objection has been that knowing a young man or woman has a heart condition can itself be a problem — "the stress of knowing that something might happen," Gallant said.

She argues, though, that knowing can save lives. Depending on the severity of the condition, young people might be prevented from taking part in strenuous sports. Another alternative for some is to implant a small defibrillator, like a pacemaker, that can deal with the "electrical problems"

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