

De Luz Canyon Fire Believed Controlled

Smoke-blackened fighters today completed a fire line around the 5-day-old De Luz Canyon blaze, which has burned over almost 15,000 acres northwest of Fallbrook and destroyed ranch structures and livestock.

State Division of Forestry officials said that, barring any adverse change in the weather, they hope to have the blaze completely under control by 6 tonight.

Fire fighters were backfiring on two main points one about 2 miles into Riverside County and the other about a half mile in the Cleveland National Forest. J. K. Mace, deputy state forester from Riverside, said 600 men including Marines, state and U.S. foresters, still were battling the blaze.

The conflagration is all in heavy brush country and no residences were endangered today.

Last night, however, the J. C. Baxter ranch miraculously escaped destruction when the blaze swept up canyons on either side, completely isolating it.

The J. C. Baxter ranch house, 2 miles above De Luz Post Office, stood intact today in a small "island" in the midst of a desolate waste caused by the De Luz Canyon fire.

Mr. and Mrs. Baxter and 12 firemen escaped with their lives late yesterday when the ranch was surrounded by a whirlwind-born fire. The blaze destroyed a chicken coop, barn and goat shed and more than a dozen chickens and ducks and rabbits.

Other buildings were charred and bushes and trees next to the house were burned or wilted, but the house itself escaped damage.

The whirlwind, almost a miniature tornado, occurred when a thermal was set up by the blaze whipping up canyons on either side of the ranch. The wind tore limbs off trees and lifted a couple of firemen and Baxter completely off their feet.

One of the firemen was badly burned about the face. Baxter praised him for his fire-fighting effort.

"If he hadn't stuck to his fire hose, the house would have gone up. I don't know who the guy was, but he certainly deserves a medal," Baxter said.

L. R. Chatten, associate state forester of La Mesa headquarters, said that firemen and bulldozers had cut a line around the fire at noon today, and were backfiring. He explained the backfiring was to build a wide gap over which the blaze could not jump.

Early this morning the fire was still raging on a 4-mile front in Riverside County after being swept north by heavy winds from the De Luz canyon area about 10

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