

FIRE DEPARTMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

Date Of Release: 10/17/2021
Fire Incident Number: 21-0089040
Incident Commander: Ventura City Fire Dept, Battalion 7, Matt Brock
Incident Type: Encampment debris fire
Date/Time of Incident: 10/17/2021 14:08pm
Incident Location: River Haven/ Santa Clara River, Ventura, CA
Cause/Origin: Unattended fire
Injuries Reported: None
Units Committed On-Scene: Four engines, one water tender, Two Battalion Chiefs
Total Fire Personnel On-Scene: 4
Agencies Involved: Ventura City Fire Department, Ventura County Fire Department

Narrative: Ventura City and County fire units responded to a reported vegetation fire near the River Haven encampment area adjacent to the Santa Clara River and Olivas Park golf course. Units arrived to find a growing wind driven fire in thick vegetation next to the encampment. Aggressive work by firefighters was able to halt the fire and keep it from significant growth and threat to nearby developed areas. The fire was contained and fully extinguished in approximately 2 hours. The cause was determined to be from an unattended cooking/ warming fire. No responsible party was identified and no significant injuries were reported. Several firefighters did suffer exposure to burning poison oak and self-treated including decontamination of safety clothing and equipment immediately after the fire.

The Ventura City Fire Department is committed to working with the City's Safe & Clean Program and regional partners to address any ongoing life-safety and property threats posed by homeless encampments in Ventura. Fires can occur in the river bottom because of homeless individuals living in the area who use fire often for warmth and cooking.