



CAL FIRE/Butte County Fire Department

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NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Duty PIO
530-521-8265

RELEASE Saturday,
DATE: July 27, 2024

CAL FIRE Investigators Arrest Man for Arson in Park Fire

Butte County – A 42-year-old Chico man was arrested early Thursday morning on suspicion of starting the Park Fire.

At 2:53 pm on Wednesday, July 24, CAL FIRE and the Chico Fire Department responded to a vegetation fire in Upper Bidwell Park. As of Saturday morning, the Park Fire had burned more than 307,000 acres in Butte and Tehama Counties and destroyed more than 100 homes.

As the fire was starting, an unknown male was seen pushing a car that was on fire into a gully near Alligator Hole in upper Bidwell Park. The car went approximately 60 feet down an embankment near Chico Creek, burning completely and spreading the flames that became the Park Fire.

The male was seen leaving the area by blending in with other citizens who were fleeing the rapidly growing fire. CAL FIRE investigators responded, secured the scene, and began to search for clues to the identity of the unknown man.

The man was eventually identified as 42-year-old Ronnie Dean Stout II of Chico. With the help of the Butte County District Attorney's Office, a warrant was issued by a local judge for him. Stout was arrested by CAL FIRE Law Enforcement officers, assisted by District Attorney investigators, and booked into the Butte County Jail where he is being held without bail until his arraignment on Monday of next week.

Anyone who has information or was in the Alligator Hole area between noon and 3:00 pm on Wednesday, July 24 is encouraged to call the CAL FIRE/ Butte County Fire Prevention Bureau at 530-538-7888 or the Statewide Arson Hotline at 800-468-4408.

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