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HOPEFUL FOR A BREAK

Could monsoon rains, super El Niño sedate CO wildfires?



The Aspen Acres Fire burns close to homes near Colorado City on July 3. ZACHARY ALLEN/THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Miles Blumhardt
Fort Collins Coloradoan
USA TODAY NETWORK

Destructive wildfires are raging in western Colorado, causing air quality alerts. Drought is gripping much of the state. A heat wave is looming.

All of that is applying increasing pressure on the monsoon and super El Niño to deliver life-giving moisture.

Despite the wildfire doom and gloom, help appears to be on the way in the form of an active monsoon season ramping up as early as next week and strengthening El Niño through winter, offering a glimmer of hope an end to

wildfires and persistent drought in Colorado is in sight.

"I think to some extent, we are all looking for some reason to be optimistic," Russ Schumacher, state climatologist and professor in Colorado State University's Department of Atmospheric Science, told the Coloradoan. "There are no guarantees but there is reason to be cautiously optimistic."

Here's a breakdown of Colorado's wildfires, statewide heat wave, possibility of flash flooding on burn scars and when and what impacts the monsoon season and building super El Niño are expected to bring to Colorado.

Aspen Acres Fire continues to grow, threaten homes

Wildfires continue to scorch western Colorado, with the Aspen Acres Fire southwest of Pueblo demanding the most attention.

As of July 8, the fire had grown to 96,031 acres, destroyed 266 homes and was 15% contained, according to the Pueblo Chieftain. It has grown to the seventh-largest wildfire in state history, surpassing the 87,284-acre High Park Fire in Larimer County in 2012, another extremely dry year.

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Fort Collins Habitat closes ReStore

Sady Swanson
Fort Collins Coloradoan
USA TODAY NETWORK

Habitat for Humanity's ReStore will close later in 2026 after 25 years in Fort Collins.

Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity's leadership and board of directors made the decision to close the reuse store "after extensive evaluation of the ReStore's long-term stability and future operating needs," according to a Habitat for Humanity news release. The board "determined that closing the store is the most responsible path forward for the organization and its mission."

Habitat for Humanity ReStores are independently owned reuse stores operated by local Habitat for Humanity organizations, and the sales from donated items help fund Habitat for Humanity's main mission of building affordable homes, according to the nonprofit's website.

The Fort Collins facility is set to close its doors and cease all activities, including store operations and inventory liquidation, by Dec. 1, according to the news release.

"This is an incredibly difficult decision because the ReStore has meant so much to so many people," Executive Director and CEO of Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity Kristin Candella said in the news release. "The ReStore's impact extends far beyond retail sales. It has helped families, strengthened neighborhoods, reduced waste, and connected our community to Habitat's mission for more than 25 years. We are profoundly grateful to everyone who has been part of that story."

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Trump 'not sure' he wants deal with Iran

Number of U.S. service members killed rises to 14

Francesca Chambers, Erin Mansfield, Zac Anderson, Bart Jansen, Chris Cann, Joey Garrison and Rachel Barber

USA TODAY

President Donald Trump said he's no longer sure he wants to negotiate a peace deal with Iran as he called Tehran's leaders "sick people" and signaled he would rather end the conflict militarily, casting major doubt whether the U.S. ceasefire with Iran will hold.

"I'm not sure I want to make a deal,"

Trump said July 8 at a news conference at the NATO summit in Ankara, Turkey. "Let's just finish the job."

Asked whether he's restarting the U.S. war on Iran, Trump pushed back. "I don't think it's going to start again," he said. "Anything that happens, it's going to be over very quickly."

Trump's remarks came as he threatened a second night of air strikes on Iran after the two sides traded strikes following a series of attacks on tankers in the Strait of Hormuz that the United States blamed on Iran.

"To me, I think it's over. I don't want to deal with them," Trump said earlier in

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President Donald Trump, left, attends a NATO summit on July 8 with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, right. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is also pictured. VYVES HERMAN/REUTERS

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