

SJM 7/17/92 B-1 FIRES & FIRE PROTECTION

Authorities cite arson in series of wildfires

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After a series of brush and wild-land fires this week, from Boulder Creek to the Pajaro Valley, a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection investigator is wondering whether more than one arsonist is on the loose.

Although some recent fires can be blamed on equipment, such as hot exhaust from farm machinery, others are indeed arson, said Oscar Burrell, CDF fire prevention officer.

"We have experienced some suspicious fires," Burrell said Thursday. "Whether they are linked is under investigation."

He said the blazes caused no injury or damage, other than to wild lands, but covered a total of about 50 acres.

Several fires were set Monday afternoon in Scotts Valley, he said. The following day, there was a series of wildfires in and around Boulder Creek in the San Lorenzo Valley.

On Wednesday, Burrell said, there were several fires in Watsonville and outside the city in the jurisdiction of Freedom Fire District.

"We are asking people who live in rural areas for assistance," he said. "We are asking them to be on the lookout for suspicious individuals or vehicles and to report them if they suspect they might be involved in arson."

He urged rural residents to write down the license number and description of any suspicious vehicle and to report them if any fires are set.