Beat: News

Our Earth

More natural disasters this month.

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USPA NEWS - We should be concerned about all the natural events that have been occurring month after month. Our seasons are changing and disasters are becoming more frequent.

Since my last article about whether our Earth was trying to tell us something, more natural disasters have affected the world. Currently, nations are dealing with wildfires, flooding, heatwaves, drought, and earthquakes.

With a deadly global heatwave, people are dying from heatstroke. In Spain, a road worker in his 40´s and a 78 year old gentleman died from the heat this week. The extended heatwave in South Korea has killed 29 people, with 15 days of temperatures of 35°C (95°F). The country has not seen temperatures like this in 111 years. The Prime Minister has halted public construction until the heat drops. Elderly farmers are the ones who are most at risk. Neighboring Japan is also affected with dozens of deaths reported. Most of the northern hemisphere is also dealing with the heat from the United States to Great Britain.

Wildfires are also causing death and destruction across the world. In Greece, at least 91 people have died in what is called “Europe´s deadliest forest fire in more than a century.“ On July 23rd, a fire swept without warning through the Village of Mati. Many were killed by the fire, while others drowned by jumping off a cliff into the sea to get away from the flames. The fire damaged more than 2,000 homes and twenty-five percent of those will need to be demolished. California wildfires continue and they are dealing with their seventh largest blaze ever in the state. The Mendocino Complex fire in northern California has burned more than 314 square miles, has destroyed 55 homes and threatens 12,300 more buildings.

In July, parts of the globe have sustained flooding. Japan endured flash floods, landslides, and flooded fields. Two million residents were forced to evacuate parts of western and central Japan due to excessive rain fall. On the other side of the world, at least one person died when flash floods hit Iowa in June. Fourth of July celebrations were dampened in Minnesota and Texas due to heavy rain, surface flooding and washed out roads. Also in July, the eastern part of the United States saw heavy rain and flash flooding in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. Currently, a dam in Lynchburg, Virginia is stable, after the area dealt with heavy rain. Nearly 80,000 people were evacuated due to flooding. Should the dam fail, Lynchburg could deal with flood waters in excess of 17 feet.

Drought conditions continue in those areas effected with heatwave conditions and others. During the week of July 25-31, twenty nine percent of the United States with 74.9 million residents experienced drought. The worst areas or those effected by “exceptional drought“ were parts of Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. The United States Drought Monitor classifies “Exceptional Drought“ as exceptional and widespread crop and pasture losses, and shortages of water creating water emergencies. Such conditions also brings concern of wildfires.

On July 29th, an earthquake hit the island of Lombok, Indonesia. Homes were damaged and more than 160 people injured and 14 killed when the 6.4 magnitude quake happened. Tremors could be felt as far as 40 km (25 miles) east on the island of Bali. More than 60 smaller quakes followed. Lombok is popular with tourists due to its beaches and hiking trails. Indonesia is prone to earthquakes, because it lies on the Ring of Fire, the line of frequent quakes and volcanic eruptions that circles the Pacific Rim.

All this activity in only a month´s time. When I report next month and discuss the most current natural disasters, I can only hope that there is not much to write about. Let us pray for a quiet month.

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