

# Evacuations lifted for L.A.-area foothills

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LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE — Evacuation orders were lifted for hundreds of foothill homes Wednesday morning as a winter storm that threatened mudslides moved off without causing any serious damage.

Residents of 541 homes were being notified that they could return to affected areas in La Canada Flintridge, La Crescenta, Acton and two canyons, said Los Angeles County fire Capt. Mark Savage.

"The thunderstorm has moved in the other direction and residents are safe to go back to their community," he said.

The homes north of Los Angeles were threatened because they lie beneath slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains that were burned bare by wildfires. Without plants to hold the soil, heavy rain could have sluiced mud, boulders and tree limbs downslope.

"We had public works and fire personnel patrolling the area all night, just looking for any activity," Savage said. "We really did not get any significant rain pass through the area. That was obviously good news."

Deputies went door to door Tuesday issuing orders for people to leave and making them sign waivers if they refused. Savage said about 40 percent of those contacted chose to stay — despite the fact that a mudslide last weekend damaged 43 homes.

The storm moved off Wednesday morning, although the National Weather Service said 2 to 4 inches of snow still could fall in the Antelope Valley and in the mountains above 2,500 feet.

Several mountain school districts declared snow days and closed.

However, the frequently snow-bound Grapevine area of Interstate 5 remained open. The high mountain pass 50 miles northwest of Los Angeles is a major route between Northern and Southern California.

The weather was expected to clear by afternoon and continue dry and mostly sunny through the beginning of next week.

Meanwhile, a fleet of 300 dump trucks and backhoes continued to clear debris basins that filled from earlier storms.