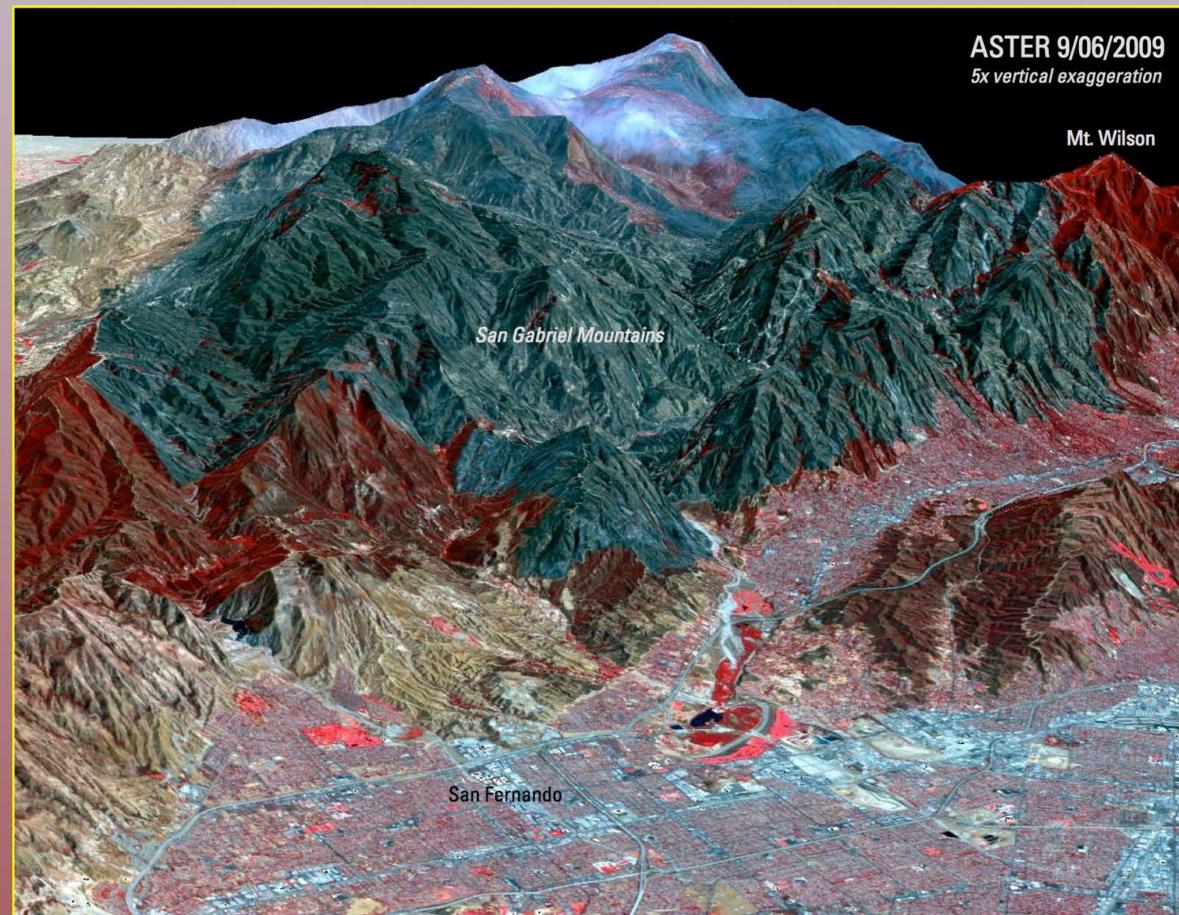


# The California Station Fire

On August 26, 2009, the Station Fire, caused by arson, spread in the Angeles National Forest and San Gabriel mountains north of Los Angeles, California. Over 160,000 acres had burned by the morning of September 9, with associated loss of life, destruction of numerous buildings, and threat to about 4,000 structures. Key communication equipment and facilities on Mount Wilson were threatened, including the Observatory. Nearly 4,500 individuals were assembled to combat the blaze, at a cost of over \$70 million for just the first two weeks of firefighting.

NASA Earth Observing System satellites acquired data used to characterize the extent of the burned regions and the threat posed to adjacent areas. The Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer (ASTER) and the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) provided timely information for analysis.



## Image Descriptions

**Above:** Oblique view of the San Gabriel Mountains north of Los Angeles. This ASTER image was acquired on September 6, 2009, and is displayed with visible and near-infrared bands assigned to RGB as 3, 2, 1. Image data were draped on a digital elevation model made from ASTER data. Vegetation appears red with this color assignment, and the burned areas are clearly apparent in the mountains as dark blue-grey. Los Angeles is in the foreground. The peak at right rear with red vegetation is Mount Wilson.

**Top right:** A downlooking view of the ASTER September 6 scene, with the burned area visible as dark blue-grey. Mount Wilson is located in the unburned red area at lower right. ASTER orbits Earth at an altitude of 705 kilometers. The ground resolution is 15 meters.

**Lower right:** A regional view acquired by the Aqua MODIS instrument on August 31, 2009. Firefronts are outlined in red, and a long smoke plume is visible drifting to the northeast. The ground resolution is 250 meters, acquired from a 705-kilometer altitude.

**Left:** A view of the Mount Wilson Observatory from the UCLA Department of Physics and Astronomy 150-foot Solar Tower.

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