



## Compost piles continue to burn, thanks to high winds



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TRAVIS COUNTY -- A fire is still burning at a water treatment plant in Southeast Travis County, thanks to high winds Monday.

The fire sparked in the afternoon and burned through the night, with high winds helping to fuel the flames.

At its peak smoke from the flames filled the sky at the Hornsby Bend Biosolids Management Plant off SH 130 and FM 973, south of Manor.

Compost piles caught fire, ignited by the wind. Some areas of Central Texas felt gusts more than 50 mph on Monday.

Firefighters focused on keeping the fire contained to the plant Monday, instead of fighting the wind. AFD says it could be several days before the flames are completely out. This means smoke will continue to fill the air.

Jason Hill with Austin Water says the smoke is not toxic, but it is thick.

"These compost piles that are on fire are creating a lot of smoke. We understand that a lot of people who are in this area are seeing the smoke. It is a dense smoke. There's nothing toxic about the smoke, however if someone has breathing problems or asthma, they could see some problems because the smoke is so dense and it is blowing in different areas in and around the Hornsby Bend facility," Hill said.

When the 20-foot compost piles burn, they resemble stacks of lava. They burn quickly because they are in a constant state of chemical composting. It only takes a gust of high winds to set off a spark.

For now crews are monitoring the flames. Once the winds die down, firefighters will be able to start attacking the flames.