



U.S. Forest Service
Kaibab National Forest
800 S. 6th St.
Williams, AZ 86046
Voice: (928) 635-8200
Email: mailroom_r3_kaibab@fs.fed.us
Web: www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab

News Release

Media Contact: David Hercher
(928) 643-8110
davidjhercher@fs.fed.us



Fire managers to crews: Rx Ops are a marathon on North Zone prescribed fires

Fredonia, Ariz., Sept. 14, 2016 — For Immediate Release. “Timing, Tempo and Pace” – these three words were the leader’s intent that North Zone fire managers reiterated with firefighters at this morning’s 7:00 a.m. prescribed-fire briefing, before crews departed to initiate test-fire operations on the 914-acre Moquitch-4 and 1,226-acre Dry Park 422E Units on the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest.

Urging firefighters to keep safety in the forefront of their minds, fire managers reminded crews that today’s operations are planned events, events that take years to plan and prepare for, before fire is ever put on the ground.

“Remember, today’s operations are planned events,” said North Zone Fuels Specialist Dave Robinson. “An Rx is supposed to be boring. Take your time, remember to make good risk-based decisions today, and pick a good route before applying fire on the ground.”

By mid-morning test fire operations on the Moquitch-4 Unit were underway, while resources on the Dry Park 422E Unit remained on standby until North Zone Type-2 Burn Boss Dave Veater and Type-2 Burn Boss Trainee Jay Lusher had a good sense of how the fire would behave.

As test firing behavior started slow and uneventful, by mid-morning windy conditions changed that and the Moquitch resources quickly picked up and contained multiples spot fires with the aid of air support and the Dry Park resources, who were requested to provide additional holding support on the prescribed fire project while the spot fires were being suppressed.

“So far today we’ve been successful on the test fire of the Moquitch Rx. We’ve been able to take care of some of the heavy fuels along the northern boundary,” said Jay Lusher, Chief Fire and Aviation, Grand Canyon National Park. “We did pick up some spot fires due to some of the windy conditions, but we’ve been able to identify and contain all those spot fires at this time.”

Crews spent the remainder of today’s operations conducting grid-pattern searches adjacent to the Moquitch-4 Unit and extinguishing spot fires. Tomorrow’s operations are expected to resume on the Moquitch-4 Unit. Forecast weather outlook indicates lighter winds, similar temperatures and relative humidity.

Pending successful test-fire operations on the Moquitch-4 Unit tomorrow morning, firefighters may initiate test-fire operations on the Dry Park 422E Unit as well. Approximately 125 personnel are currently assigned to the North Kaibab Ranger District for prescribed-fire support operations.

As a reminder to forest visitors, fire personnel and vehicles will be visible within the vicinity of prescribed fire operations. Drivers are asked to use caution when driving in these areas, and to be aware that smoke may be visible from Highway 89A and Highway 67, within the vicinity of Jacob Lake, Houserock Valley and Marble Canyon; however, fire managers strive to minimize smoke impacts to the community as much as possible. Smoke is expected

to disperse to the northeast during the day, and residual smoke may settle into drainages and low lying areas overnight but should dissipate quickly as fire managers will only commence ignitions when conditions exist that will allow smoke to adequately ventilate.

For more information on how smoke can affect you, please visit www.phoenixvis.net/PPMmain.aspx.

All prescribed burning on the Kaibab National Forest is subject to approval by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and appropriate weather conditions. For additional information on the Smoke Management Division of the ADEQ and to view prescribed burns authorized on any given day, please visit www.azdeq.gov/environ/air/smoke/index.html.

Notifications of upcoming prescribed burns will be provided regularly throughout the season. Additional information on current and upcoming North Kaibab Ranger District prescribed burns are provided through the following methods:

- Fire Information Recorded Hotline: 928-635-8311
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/KaibabNF (Text ‘follow kaibabnf’ to 40404 to receive text messages.)
- Kaibab website “News & Events”: www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab
- InciWeb: inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5021/

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A sawyer works to contain a spot fire located atop of a snag. Credit the U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Kaibab National Forest. Photo by David Hercher.



Heavy fuels, also commonly referred to as “heavies,” consuming within the Moquitch-4 Rx test-fire area, which follows one of the burn-plan objectives; to reduce surface fuel loads to about five tons per acre. Credit the U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Kaibab National Forest. Photo by David Hercher.