



Forest Service

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

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News Release

Fill Fire Update – September 20, 2016

Fire Location:

- In the 2002 Rodeo - Chediski Fire area: T10N R19E Section 22.
- East Boundary is Forest Service Road (FR) 132, North Boundary is FR 139, West Boundary is FR 9845K, and the South Boundary is FR 300.

Start Date: September 15, 2016, reported at 11:49

Cause: Lightning

Size: Approximately 1,000 acres

Vegetation: Ponderosa Pine and Juniper, with areas of moderate to heavy accumulation of dead and down logs.

Resources: 3 Engines and miscellaneous personnel

The Fill Fire is continuing to burn southwest of Pinedale in the previous Rodeo-Chediski Fire perimeter off the Forest Service 132 and 300 roads on the Lakeside Ranger District. Smoke may continue to impact Highway 260 and Clay Springs, and may be visible from State Highway 60 and U.S. Highway 260, as well as the communities of Heber-Overgaard, Linden, Pinedale, Snowflake, Taylor, Show Low and Pinetop-Lakeside.

The 2002 Rodeo-Chediski Fire was Arizona's second largest fire at 468,000 acres and cost \$43.1 million dollars to suppress. Before the fire, the Rodeo-Chediski area was a ponderosa pine forest that had experienced a large buildup of "ladder fuels". Ladder fuels are plants, low growing shrubs and tree branches that create a ladder of fuels up the tree. When a fire moves through an area without ladder fuels, the fire will stay on the ground and burn only a few small trees and clear up dead vegetation. If there are ladder fuels, a fire can move up the tree and cause a crown fire that will burn from tree to tree. Crown fires are very devastating to the soils, wildlife, trees and plants of an area.



Wildfires burn in irregular patterns at what fire mangers call “burn intensities”. The burn intensity of a fire determines how hot a fire burns in a particular area and the amount of damage it does to the environment. Burn intensities can vary from low severity, which is a ground fire that does minimal damage to trees and plants, to high severity which can destroy all trees and plants.

Since the Rodeo-Chediski Fire burned in different intensities over the area, there are places in the fire that still have healthy large ponderosa pine and oak trees. In other areas, the fire burned at a high intensity and killed all of the trees in the area. Those dead trees eventually fell over and new trees started to grow, filling in many of the spaces. Unfortunately, while the new trees were growing, the old trees were still lying on the ground. This caused fuel ladders to the new trees, which puts them at risk if there is a new high intensity fire.

Fire managers on the Fill Fire are keeping the lightning caused fire at a low intensity to help clean up the dead trees and ladder fuels. The additional benefits to the area include grass regeneration to support elk and deer populations, more potential oak trees and pine trees regenerating, and the area will be a safer environment for firefighters to work in to suppress future fires in the area.

Information on the Fill Fire can be found on Inciweb at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5036/>.

The public can obtain additional fire information via the following:

- Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests <http://www.fs.usda.gov/asnf>
- Northeastern Arizona Public Information System <http://311info.net/> or call 311 or 928-333-3412

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