



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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Fire Update: Grand Canyon National Park, August 2, 2009

Grand Canyon, Ariz. – Firefighters continue to monitor and manage several lightning-caused fires discovered last week on the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park.

Fire Update

The **Aspen Fire**, located on the Walhalla Plateau approximately 3.5 miles east of the North Rim developed area, is the most active and visible of the fires. The fire grew to 676 acres on Saturday and continued to produce smoke columns visible from the North Rim developed area, the Cape Royal Road and viewpoints on the South Rim. It is burning in mixed vegetation, consisting of ponderosa pine with fir and Mexican locust, as well as dead and down logs from the 2001 Vista Fire. Last night firefighters conducted burn out operations, creating a northern containment line (an area devoid of fuel) in order to prevent the fire from impacting the Cape Royal Road. The total Aspen Fire acreage including the burnout operations is 733 acres.

Five additional fires are being monitored and managed on the North Rim at this time:

- The **Angel Fire** (1 acre) is being managed for resource benefits and is smoldering and creeping in dead and down logs from the 2000 Outlet Fire.
- The **Butte Fire** (5 acres) is being allowed to burn itself out in the inner canyon east of Walhalla Plateau.
- The **Point Fire** (2 acres) was contained last week and will be in patrol status until it is declared out.
- The **Poplar Fire** (0.1 acres) is being managed for resource benefits and is smoldering in dead and down logs from the 2003 Poplar Fire.
- The **Thompson Fire** (1 acre) has been controlled and will be in patrol status until it is declared out.

Roads and Restrictions

- Last night a pilot car was used to escort visitors down the Cape Royal Road during burnout operations. Late in the evening, a temporary closure of the road was put in place in order to protect firefighter and visitor safety. The Cape Royal Road remains closed at this time.

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- All other roads and facilities in the park are open at this time.
- Some backcountry restrictions may apply on the Walhalla Plateau as firefighters continue to manage the Aspen Fire. Check in at the North Rim Backcountry Office for more information.

Smoke

Visitors to the North Rim should expect to see smoke from the Aspen fire from the Cape Royal Road and the North Rim developed area. Smoke from the fires is also visible from South Rim viewpoints. In addition, smoke may sink into Bright Angel Canyon during the evening hours. Coordination with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is ongoing.

Objectives

The Angel, Aspen, and Poplar Fires are all being managed for resource benefits. The benefits fire managers expect to achieve with these fires include maintaining fire in a fire-dependent ecosystem, reducing heavy fuel loads that can increase the risk of large fires that exhibit undesirable fire behaviors and effects, recycling of nutrients and diversification of wildlife habitat.

Additional news releases about these fires will be posted as significant changes in size, fire activity or management objectives occur.

For more information, please contact Fire Information Officer Connie Birkland at 928-638-7066. For more on the fire management program at Grand Canyon National Park, please visit the park's web site at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm>. For more on visiting the backcountry in the park, please call the park's backcountry office at 928-638-7875.

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