

NEWS RELEASE

Kaibab National Forest

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Kaibab National Forest To Manage Prescribed Burns and Wildland Fire Use Fire

WILLIAMS, Ariz. – Cooler temperatures and increased precipitation are allowing fire managers on the Kaibab National Forest to begin prescribed burning on the Tusayan Ranger District and to manage a small wildland fire use fire on the Williams Ranger District.

If conditions remain suitable, fire managers will consider three areas on the Tusayan Ranger District for possible prescribed fire treatments. The first area is known as Tusayan East. About 450 acres are available for burning in the area, which is located just east of the community of Tusayan. Fire managers plan to burn in small blocks of 100 acres or less. They will begin burning near the Tusayan Ranger Station and slowly work south toward Tusayan. Objectives of the Tusayan East burn are to increase protection to the Tusayan community, reduce hazardous fuels and the potential for undesirable fire behavior, stimulate the growth of native grasses and forbs, protect older trees and enhance wildlife habitat.

The second area being considered for prescribed burning on the Tusayan Ranger District is Tusayan South. About 750 acres are available for burning in the area, which is located just west of state Highway 64 and south of Grand Canyon National Park Airport. Fire managers will be looking for days with minimal winds or winds from the north in order to avoid smoke impacts to Tusayan and the airport.

The third area being considered for burning is Red Horse, which is located just west of Russell Tank and north of Bucklar Ranch. Up to 1,800 acres are available for prescribed fire treatments in the area. Because of its distance from the community of Tusayan and Grand Canyon National Park, fire managers said they don't expect any smoke impacts from the Red Horse burn.

Fire managers will be evaluating wind speed, wind direction, relative humidity, precipitation amounts, fuel moisture levels and other factors before determining which burn to begin first. Burning could begin as soon as this weekend and continue for the next few weeks.

“If we receive too much more rain, it will be too wet for us to get the desired effects from these burns,” said Dave Mills, assistant fire management officer for the Tusayan Ranger District. “Conditions are ideal right now for us to be able to safely manage these burns while also getting beneficial effects on the ground.”

In addition to the prescribed burns on the Tusayan Ranger District, Kaibab National Forest fire managers are also managing a wildland fire use (WFU) fire on the Williams Ranger District. The Radio

WFU fire has grown to about 2 acres and is located just off Forest Road 74 between Radio Hill and Frenchy Hill. It is about 3 miles north of Interstate 40 in Pittman Valley.

The Radio WFU fire was called in by the Bill Williams Mountain lookout tower on July 16 in the late afternoon. Since then, it has grown slowly. Smoke is visible from I-40, state Highway 64 and Red Lake.

As with all WFU fires, the Radio WFU fire was started by a natural ignition source – lightning. Fire managers go through a rigorous decision-making process before putting any fire into WFU status. Many factors could lead to the suppression of a potential WFU fire including threats to life, property or resources; lack of firefighting personnel and equipment; and, significant fire activity in the local area. Fire managers have to weigh the potential risks and benefits of any particular fire before putting it into WFU status.

For more information, please contact Jackie Denk at (928) 635-8314.

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