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News Release

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New fire start added to Jar Complex on Tusayan Ranger District

Tusayan, Ariz., July 3, 2015—For Immediate Release. A new fire started by lightning was added to three other fires being managed to achieve resource objectives on the Tusayan Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest.

The quarter-acre Old Fire is located west of Forest Road 2736 just north of Old Automobile Tank and is within the 16,100-acre planning area already established by fire managers for the Mason Fire. With the addition of the Old Fire, there are now four fires being managed within two planning areas as part of the Jar Complex, the goal of which is to improve forest health and reduce the potential for future high-intensity wildland fires on the Tusayan Ranger District.

The fastest growing of the four fires continues to be the Mason Fire, which is about 65 acres in size and is located just southwest of Camp 36 Tank about 4 miles south of Grandview Lookout Tower. If weather conditions allow, the Mason and Old fires will be able to grow within the predefined 16,100-acre management area over the next several weeks.

In a separate 3,600-acre planning area, the Lost and Shale fires continue to smolder but haven't shown much growth due to rain showers over the last few days. They are each under an acre in size but could become more active if there is a drying trend in the area. The Lost Fire is located about 6 miles south of Tusayan and a quarter mile east of Highway 64. The Shale Fire is about a mile southeast of the Lost Fire just west of the junction of forest roads 2703 and 2703A.

The combined planning area acreage for the four fires in the Jar Complex is about 19,700 acres. The overall strategy for fire managers is to allow the fires to play their natural role as disturbance factors in the ecosystem within that predetermined area, which will provide a variety of ecological and other resource and community protection benefits.

The Mason Fire is most likely to produce smoke visible by members of the public over the next few days. Due to prevailing winds, smoke will largely be pushed toward the northeast, making it visible from Desert View in Grand Canyon National Park and from Cameron, Ariz. As the four fires pick up in activity over the coming days and weeks, smoke columns are likely to become more visible from other areas including the Town of Tusayan, Highway 64 and Highway 180.

“It is common for us to get a number of lightning-caused fires during monsoon season,” said Quentin Johnson, fire management officer for the Tusayan Ranger District and the incident commander for the Jar Complex. “If the fires get started in areas appropriate for managing them, we try to take those opportunities. In the long run, the forest will be healthier, our communities will be safer, and the fires that do get started will be much more like the historic fires that burned naturally across this landscape.”

Additional Jar Complex information, photos and maps are available through the following sources: InciWeb <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4344/>; Kaibab National Forest Fire Information Phone Line (928) 635-8311; Text Message - text ‘follow kaibabnf’ to 40404.