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News Release

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Management ignitions to begin along perimeter of Jar Complex planning area

Tusayan, Ariz., July 5, 2015—For Immediate Release. With drier conditions and higher winds predicted for today, firefighters will begin management ignitions along perimeter roads of the Mason Fire planning area in order to reinforce boundaries established for the fire and protect fire-sensitive resources such as range fences.

The Mason Fire, which is the largest of the four lightning-caused fires that are part of the Jar Complex on the Tusayan Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest, grew to 85 acres yesterday and is expected to pick up in activity today due to the changing weather conditions. The Mason Fire is located just southwest of Camp 36 Tank about 4 miles south of Grandview Lookout Tower and is burning predominantly in ponderosa pine.

Today, fire managers will use drip torches to burn fuels along Forest Road 301A from its intersection with FR 317 west toward FR 304. FR 301A serves as the northeastern boundary of the 16,100-acre planning area established for the Mason and Old fires, which are being managed to achieve resource-related objectives such as allowing fire to play its natural role in a fire-adapted ecosystem and improving overall forest health conditions. The Old Fire, located west of Forest Road 2736 just north of Old Automobile Tank, remains at under an acre in size but will likely increase in both size and activity as conditions dry out.

The other two fires that are part of the Jar Complex are the Lost and Shale fires, which are each just under an acre in size. 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. Fire managers have defined a 3,600-acre planning area within which the two fires will be allowed to grow over the coming days and weeks.

Besides conducting management ignitions along the northeastern boundary of the Mason Fire planning area today, firefighters will also continue additional work in preparation for fire growth including lining archaeological sites, trick tanks, range fences and any other potentially fire-sensitive resources within the established planning areas. Crews will also continue grading and making other improvements to roads in the area. Motorists using forest roads 301, 301A, 302 and 320 are asked to use caution due to the presence of heavy equipment for the road improvement work and firefighting trucks and personnel.

While smoke from the fires has not been very visible over the last few days due to cloud cover and rain, drier conditions in the forecast are expected to lead to increased fire activity and smoke production. The Mason Fire is most likely to produce smoke visible by members of the public. 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, smoke columns are likely to become more visible from other areas including the Town of Tusayan, Highway 64 and Highway 180.

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.