



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Carlsbad Caverns National Park

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Carlsbad Caverns News Release

For Immediate Release

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Management of New Fire Transitions Back To Local Level

Carlsbad Caverns National Park, NM---- The Type 2 New Mexico Incident Management Team (Craig Cowie, IC) will transition management of the New Fire back to the local level at 6 am on May 29. Many firefighters and resources were demobilized yesterday and additional resources will be released today and tomorrow. Two hot shot crews, one fire use module, one helicopter, and various overhead will remain assigned to the fire.

The lightning ignited New Fire is currently 17, 294 acres (13,380 NPS, 3,317 BLM, 528 State Land, 16 USFS) and is 60 percent contained. It is burning in grasses and shrubs. The eastern and northern portions of the fire have been suppressed where they threatened park infrastructure and oil and gas facilities on BLM lands. The south and west side of the fire remains active. The fire is currently burning in steep, rocky terrain where it poses no immediate threats to life or property and is benefitting this fire-adapted landscape. Fire size and activity will vary with changes in weather, topography and vegetation. Firefighters continue to patrol and monitor the fire and are prepared to take action as needed.

“The fire exemplifies our flexibility in managing naturally ignited fires,” said Incident Commander Craig Cowie. “We continually reassess and adjust our response strategies to ensure we utilize resources where they are needed most and can be most effective. Our team has suppressed the fire where it was a threat. Local fire resources will continue to manage this fire as it progresses naturally,” he added.

Naturally occurring fires have helped shape the landscape over time and maintain the diversity of species. They also stimulate new plant growth and create a mosaic of burned and unburned vegetation which can help limit or slow the intensity and limit the spread of large wildfires in the future.

The main cave at Carlsbad Caverns remains open for visitors. All backcountry trails, including Yucca Canyon Trail, Slaughter Canyon Trail, and the Rattlesnake Canyon Trail remain closed for public safety due to fire activity. The Sitting Bull Falls Day Use Area is open on the Lincoln National Forest. Open fires including cigarettes, camp fires, and stoves are currently not allowed in the park.

This will be the last fire update unless significant changes occur. For fire information, please call 575-785-3038 or visit www.inciweb.org.

0800 May 28, 2010

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