

NEWS RELEASE

Kaibab National Forest



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Significant Growth Expected For Sitgreaves and Hammer Fires

WILLIAMS, Ariz. – Kaibab National Forest fire managers expect significant growth on both the Sitgreaves and Hammer fires over the next few days until early next week when rainy conditions are again in the forecast. Crews will take advantage of these drier days to continue management ignitions to meet specific resource objectives.

Management ignitions are used for a variety of purposes such as to create a black barrier to keep a fire within a defined area, to burn out around private property or other highly valued resources to further protect them from the fire's natural growth, and to establish a lower-intensity backing fire at the top of a ridge in areas that are at risk of undesirable high-intensity uphill runs.

Sitgreaves Complex, Williams Ranger District

The Sitgreaves Complex, which is located about 5 miles north to northwest of Parks, Ariz., picked up in activity yesterday due to drier conditions and grew by 450 acres to a total size of 4,600 acres. Crews established fire on the top of Bald Mountain, and today they plan to allow that lower-intensity backing fire to work its way downhill. They will also continue management ignitions along the southwest corner of the fire area to strengthen established containment lines. Fire managers are considering the possibility of using aerial ignitions with a helicopter on some of the steep, upper slopes within the fire area. Smoke will be very visible from Interstate 40 and Parks, especially during the late afternoon hours when temperatures and fire activity increase.

Hammer Fire, Tusayan Ranger District

The Hammer Fire, located about 10 miles southeast of Tusayan, Ariz., grew significantly yesterday reaching a total size of 2,889 acres. Crews continued working along the north and east perimeters of the fire conducting management ignitions, and the fire spread quickly within the interior of the planning area. With dry conditions predicted over the next few days, the Hammer Fire is expected to grow rapidly within the boundaries established for it. Ideally, as moderate-intensity fire moves through the forest, it will clean up layers of accumulated forest debris, known as hazardous fuels, and consume ladder fuels, which are smaller trees and low-hanging branches that could carry fire into treetops.

“Fire activity and behavior are responsive to changing weather conditions,” said Art Gonzales, fire staff officer for the Kaibab National Forest. “The Sitgreaves and Hammer fires are good examples of how fires historically spread during this time of year. These monsoonal conditions provide an environment that contributes to fire effects that produce a mosaic burn pattern.”

Additional information, photos and maps are available at the following locations:

- Inciweb: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/>
- Kaibab Fire Information Line: (928) 635-8311
- Text message: text ‘follow kaibabnf’ to 40404