

# NEWS RELEASE

## Kaibab National Forest



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### Belknap Fire Continues Growing, Benefiting Forest Health

**TUSAYAN, Ariz.** – The lightning-caused Belknap Fire that is being managed to improve forest health on the Tusayan Ranger District has grown to 1,156 acres, reaching close to half of what fire managers expect to be its final size.

Yesterday, fire managers used both aerial and hand management ignitions to establish lower-intensity backing fire at the tops of ridges to reduce the risk of undesirable high-intensity uphill runs. More than 760 acres were treated due to successful management ignitions as well as the natural spread of the fire within predetermined boundaries.

“We were able to get a lot accomplished yesterday due to favorable weather conditions, the use of the helicopter for aerial ignitions, and the hard work of our firefighters on the ground,” said Quentin Johnson, incident commander for the Belknap Fire and the fire management officer for the Tusayan Ranger District. “Our hope is that we will have a few more days of good conditions so that we can continue to reduce hazardous fuels and meet other forest health objectives in a planning area of about 2,900 acres.”

Today, crews will continue to use management ignitions to secure established boundary lines for the fire, protect historical and cultural sites, and bring lower-intensity fire down through drainages. A helicopter will again be used for aerial ignitions, which will be focused on remaining ridge tops within the planned fire area. Use of the helicopter reduces exposure to fire fighters on the ground, as the helicopter is able to conduct management ignitions in areas with steep, hazardous terrain. While aerial ignitions are occurring, fire crews will use hand ignitions along forest roads 310 near Grandview Lookout Tower and 307 east of Hull Cabin.

Smoke will continue to be visible from the Belknap Fire, which is located 12 miles east of Tusayan, Ariz., on the Coconino Rim. However, smoke impacts to populated areas have been minimal and are expected to remain so.

A detour remains in place for the Arizona Trail sections within the planning area for the Belknap Fire. The trail detour follows Forest Road 310. Signs and detour maps have been posted in the vicinity for Arizona Trail users.

Date Reported: Aug. 26, 2014

Location: 12 miles east of Tusayan on the Coconino Rim

Cause: Lightning

Size: 1,156 acres

Landscape/Fuels: Ponderosa pine and pinyon/juniper

Fire Behavior: Majority low to moderate intensity

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

- Inciweb: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4097/>
- Kaibab Fire Information Line: (928) 635-8311
- Text message: text ‘follow kaibabnf’ to 40404



A fire fighter patrols a perimeter road for the Belknap Fire, while management ignitions occur behind him.  
Photo credit: USFS/Bob Blasi