



Forest Service

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News Release

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Castle Fire Crews Begin Mop Up and Suppression Repair

FREDONIA, Ariz., August 21, 2019 -- Widespread dry, hot weather, and low humidity have increased activity on several wildfires in far northern Arizona and southern Utah, contributing to noticeable smoke impacts in the area. However, as the Castle Fire burns through the remaining pockets of unburned vegetation within its interior, smoke production from the wildfire is expected to diminish over the coming days.

The total size of the 19,368-acre Castle Fire, which has spread across the full extent of the pre-determined planning area established for it, has not changed in more than a week. Fire crews made significant progress yesterday mopping up the wildfire's perimeter by locating and extinguishing interior hot spots. Management of the wildfire is expected to be returned to local resources as early as the end of this week.

Today, firefighters will continue to focus on patrolling and mopping up the fire's perimeter. They will also begin using heavy equipment to clear interior roads, rehabilitate and repair suppression scars, and remove hazardous snags along roads. One area remains within the fire's perimeter on the north end that continues to produce significant smoke. Crews are monitoring this area closely, and smoke production is expected to diminish as the fire consumes the heavy fuels that had built up there.

Fire managers are pleased that the Castle Fire is meeting the objective of functioning as a natural disturbance within the ecosystem as it reduces heavy accumulations of forest fuels such as dead and down vegetation and encroaching, unhealthy stands of piñon-juniper.

Smoke from area fires is continuing to be visible from surrounding communities and is expected to settle in the valleys during early morning and late evenings. For local air quality and related information, please visit the following websites: www.airnow.gov or the [Smoke Management Division of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality](#). Please visit [InciWeb](#) for more information on the Castle Fire and other wildfires in the area.

The Castle Fire exists entirely within the pre-identified planning area in which the lightning-caused fire has been allowed to fulfill its natural role within a fire-dependent ecosystem. The fire has burned





through a majority of the 19,368-acre planning area, leaving a mosaic of islands of unburned fuels together with openings that will benefit wildlife and the forest ecosystem into the future. Some pockets of unburned vegetation remain within the wildfire's interior that may burn over the coming days. By allowing the wildfire to naturally burn through this area, the ecosystem will become healthier and more resilient.

A Closure Order remains in effect for the Castle Fire area: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6439/>

CASTLE FIRE OVERVIEW

- **Discovery Date:** July 12, 2019.
- **Cause:** Lightning.
- **Location (point of origin):** Approximately 11 miles south of Jacob Lake, 3 miles west of Highway 67, and just east of Forest Road 761 near Oquer Canyon on the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest.
- **Current Resources:** 8 engines, 1 water tender, and miscellaneous fire management personnel. Total personnel approximately 64.
- **Current Size:** About 19,368 acres, entirely within the planning area. Small pockets of unburned vegetation remain within the wildfire's interior and may burn over the coming days.
- **Predicted Smoke Impacts:** Smoke is expected to be visible from both the north and south rims of Grand Canyon National Park, Jacob Lake, Highway 67, Highway 89A, Fredonia and Page. To learn more about smoke and public health, visit <http://bit.ly/SmokeHealthAwareness>.
- **Current Closures:** The Kaibab National Forest has implemented a temporary Closure Order for the Castle Fire area in order to provide for public and firefighter safety. For specific information about the Closure Order, please visit: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6439/>.
- **Recent and Current Operations:** Fire crews will patrol, monitor, mop up, and repair fire suppression actions over the next several days. They will also hold designated perimeters within which the fire can move and mitigate hot spots if they occur. A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is in place over the fire area.

Kaibab National Forest information is available through the following sources:

- Castle Fire Inciweb Page: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6439/>
- Kaibab National Forest Website: www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/KaibabNF
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/KaibabNF
- Flickr: <http://bit.ly/CastleFire2019>

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