



United States Department of Agriculture

**Forest Service**

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# News Release

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## Lightning-caused wildfire to assist in forest restoration efforts on Kaibab Plateau

**FREDONIA, Ariz.**, July 15, 2019 — The Kaibab National Forest is planning to allow the lightning-caused Castle Fire on the North Kaibab Ranger District to continue growing within a defined area in order to fulfill its natural role of reducing dense forest fuels and improving overall ecosystem health.

While currently only about an acre in size, fire managers expect the Castle Fire to grow quickly today and through this week given anticipated dry and windy weather conditions. The naturally-caused wildfire, which will be used by fire managers to meet a variety of resource objectives, is located about 11 miles south of Jacob Lake, 3 miles west of Highway 67, and just north of Forest Road 759 on the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest.

The fire, which was discovered July 12, is burning in an area that has a significant amount of dead and down trees as well as heavy encroachment by mixed conifer species. Allowing the wildfire to naturally burn through this area will remove fuels that could feed future severe wildfires as well as help to restore the forest's structure to more historic conditions.

While there is no planned end date for the wildfire, forest managers have established a planning area of about 12,000 acres within which it will be allowed to grow. This does not mean that the wildfire will move across the entire planning area, as weather conditions and terrain will be large factors in long-term activity and growth.

The Castle Fire poses no danger to structures or other local infrastructure. However, smoke is likely to become more visible over the coming days as the fire spreads within the defined planning area. As needed, fire managers plan to conduct burnout operations in order to strengthen established control lines, which frequently causes a temporary increase in the amount of smoke produced.

Additional information and maps will soon be available.



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## CASTLE FIRE OVERVIEW

- **Discovery Date:** July 12, 2019.
- **Cause:** Lightning.
- **Location:** Approximately 11 miles south of Jacob Lake, 3 miles west of Highway 67, and just north of Forest Road 759 on the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest.
- **Current Size:** About 1 acre within a 12,000-acre planning area.
- **Predicted Smoke Impacts:** Smoke is expected to become more visible today from both the north and south rims of Grand Canyon National Park, Jacob Lake, Highway 67, Highway 89A, and Fredonia.
- **Current Closures:** None.
- **Recent and Current Operations:** Wildland fire crews are monitoring the fire and preparing possible burnout operations to ensure it remains within the planning area.

Kaibab National Forest information is available through the following sources:

- Kaibab National Forest Website: [www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab](http://www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab)
- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/KaibabNF](https://www.twitter.com/KaibabNF)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/KaibabNF](https://www.facebook.com/KaibabNF)
- Flickr: <http://bit.ly/KaibabNFPhotos>

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