



Forest Service

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News Release

Dry weather and high temperatures produce temporary increase in smoke from Castle Fire

FREDONIA, Ariz., August 20, 2019 -- With support from recently added firefighting resources, Castle Fire crews yesterday continued to hold the fire within established boundaries, in spite of above average temperatures and low relative humidity. Crews were holding and patrolling the fire's perimeter as well as extinguishing identified interior hot spots close to the perimeter. Although smoke could be seen from the fire all day, the smoke was being generated from interior pockets of previously unburned fuel that had ignited rather than from any increase in the overall wildfire size.

Today, fire crews will continue to focus on patrolling and holding the fire while being vigilant to detect any spotting of embers across fire lines. The additional resources who arrived yesterday will again bolster patrolling and monitoring of the fire's perimeter. Another aerial reconnaissance was conducted yesterday, allowing fire managers to feel confident the Castle Fire is meeting the objective of functioning as a natural disturbance within the ecosystem as it reduces accumulations of forest fuels such as dead and down vegetation and encroaching, unhealthy stands of piñon-juniper.

An area of focus for fire managers continues to be along the northern perimeter, where a deep canyon contains dense fuels that continue to burn intensely. Crews are monitoring this area closely and will be working to mitigate fire intensity and extinguish any spotting that might occur.

Smoke is continuing to be visible from surrounding communities and is expected to settle in the valleys during early morning and late evenings. Several wildfires are increasing in activity in the area given the dry and unseasonably warm conditions. Please visit IncWeb for information on all the current wildfires in northern Arizona and southern Utah. 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](#).

Soon after the Castle Fire started on July 12, fire managers pre-identified a planning area in which the lightning-caused wildfire would be allowed to fulfill its natural role within a fire-dependent ecosystem. The fire has burned across the entire 19,368-acre planning area, burning through a significant amount of dead





and down trees and some mixed conifer species. However, pockets of unburned vegetation remain within the wildfire's interior and 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:** 5 engines, and miscellaneous fire management personnel. Total personnel approximately 67.
- **Current Size:** About 19,368 acres within a 19,368-acre planning area. 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:** Kaibab National Forest managers have 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 and 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](https://twitter.com/KaibabNF)
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/KaibabNF
- Flickr: <http://bit.ly/CastleFire2019>

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