



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

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News Release

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Castle Fire grows slowly on Kaibab Plateau while helping restore ecosystem

FREDONIA, Ariz., July 17, 2019 — The 50-acre Castle Fire on the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest grew slowly but steadily yesterday while wildland fire crews prepared boundary roads and other potential control lines for the fire's likely growth.

The Kaibab National Forest plans to allow the lightning-caused Castle Fire to continue growing within a defined area in order to fulfill its natural role of reducing dense forest fuels and improving overall ecosystem health.

The wildfire, which was discovered July 12, is located about 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.

With warm, dry and windy conditions predicted over the next several days, fire managers expect the Castle Fire to continue its slow and steady growth. Wildland fire crews will be working to secure designated perimeters within which the fire can move, including burning out when necessary to consume fuel between the edge of the fire and control lines.

The Castle Fire is burning in an area with dense mixed conifer, heavy fuel loading, and a significant amount of dead and down trees. Allowing the fire to act as a natural disturbance process in the ecosystem will help meet a variety of resource objectives including restoring the forest structure to more historic conditions, reducing spruce and fir encroachment of area meadows, removing fuels that could feed future severe wildfires, and promoting aspen regeneration.

While there is no planned end date for the wildfire, forest managers have established a planning area of several thousand acres within which it will be allowed to continue growing. 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.



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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.

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 east of Forest Road 761 near Oquer Canyon on the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest.
- **Current Resources:** Three crews, five engines, a dozer, a chipper, and miscellaneous fire management personnel. Total personnel: approximately 110.
- **Current Size:** About 50 acres.
- **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, and Fredonia.
- **Current Closures:** None.
- **Recent and Current Operations:** Wildland fire crews are preparing boundary roads and other potential control lines for the fire's likely growth. They are also doing work to protect potentially fire-sensitive sites such as range fences and ponderosa pine plantations in advance of the wildfire's spread.

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/KaibabNFPhotos>

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