U.S. Forest Service
Kaibab National Forest
800 S. 6th St.
Williams, AZ 86046
Voice: (928) 635-8200
Email: mailroom_r3_kaibab@fs.fed.us
Web: www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab

News Release

Media Contact: David Hercher
(928) 643-8110
davidjhercher@fs.fed.us

Fire Restoration Continues on Stina, Cat

Fredonia, Ariz., Sept. 17, 2018 — For Immediate Release. With the Stina fire now at more than 90-percent contained local resources have nearly completed the fire suppression repair work, which is the first of the three-phased approach to aiding in the recovery of an area following a wildfire. Meanwhile, due to the limited access and steep terrain, firefighters continue a confine-contain strategy on the Cat Fire.

“Our goal after a wildfire is to reduce our footprint from suppression operations, so that we may help restore and expedite the functionality of the impacted ecosystem,” said North Kaibab District Ranger Randall Walker. Much of this is accomplished by pulling flagging, picking up trash, repairing hand and dozer fire lines, roads, trails, safety zones and drop points and removing slash explained Walker.

Meanwhile, as suppression repair on Stina concludes, it is important to remind visitors that the aftermath of a wildfire can be as dangerous as the fire itself. To identify and manage potential risk, a Burned Area Emergency Response Team will move in quickly after a fire – often before the fire has even reached full containment so they may assess whether the wildfire created any unacceptable safety risks to human life, property, and critical natural and cultural resources.

Currently, on the North Kaibab Ranger District, this is what happened – concurrent to fire suppression repair operations on the Stina Fire and active fire operations on the Cat Fire, a small team comprised of wildlife biologists, a soil scientist, archaeologist and silviculturist began phase two the last week of August. Severely burned areas, very steep slopes, and areas where damaging rains may expedite erosion were identified as focal points for this BAER team.

Armed with a “Burned Area Reflectance Classification (BARC)” map derived from satellite imagery, the team trekked to these low, moderate and high severity burned areas; ground-truthing the overall picture, gathering field data and focusing mainly on the burned areas where the probability of adverse fire effects will most likely be at its highest. These assessments then help the team determine what BAER actions will be most appropriate to protect and encourage the recovery of these areas. Natural recovery of an area post fire is the BAER preferred alternative unless unacceptable risks to critical values are identified and effective treatments are determined to be warranted.

"We intend to assess post fire conditions within both wildfire areas, the Stina has been assessed and once activity within the Cat fire settles down we will assess those areas as well" said Micah Kiesow, soil scientist with the Kaibab National Forest and part of the Burned Area Emergency Response team on both the Stina Fire and Cat Fire. "Our goal is to field verify the BARC map and once verified produce the soil burn severity map. The soil burn severity map will then be used to assess watershed conditions and response to critical values within the post fire environment."

Stina Fire Overview:

Start date: July 26, 2018 **Size:** 2,770 acres
Strategy: Full containment **Containment:** 90%
Location: The Stina Fire is 23 miles southwest of Jacob Lake and about 2 miles east of Fire Point on the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest.

Situational Update: Suppression repair operations are being finalized. Hot spots interior to the fire may still be present.

Closures: There are no closures associated with the Stina Fire.

Cat Fire Overview:

Date reported: August 6, 2018 **Size:** 4,108 acres
Strategy: Confine and contain **Containment:** 0%
Fuel: Mixed conifer
Location: Wildcat Canyon about 25 miles southeast of Jacob Lake in the Saddle Mountain Wilderness on the North Kaibab Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest.

Situational Update: The Cat Fire continues to slowly show growth toward Forest Road 610 and 219. Mainly dry and warm conditions will persist over northern Arizona today and Tuesday. Near-critical fire weather conditions are possible Wednesday afternoon over northwest Coconino County with wind gusts up to 35 mph. The confine and contain strategy will continue when and where firefighters have the high probability to successfully do so. Crews will continue to reinforce indirect line, focusing efforts west and south of the Saddle Mountain Wilderness to halt the fire's progression toward public and private infrastructure and concentrated visitor use areas.

Closures: Fire managers plan to re-implement area, road, and trail closures. This new closure information will be provided separately upon final approval of the closure order.

Potential risks in any area recently burned by wildfire include the following:

- Storms resulting in flash flooding that could wash out roads, initiate debris flows, and entrap people at flooded stream courses.
- Unsound burned trees (snags) that could fall or shed large limbs.
- Eroded and very rough roads resulting in dangerous driving conditions.
- Unstable terrain with potential for rolling debris (logs, rocks, boulders, etc.).
- Burned out stump holes that could cause injury if stepped in.
- Blowing dust on roads and hillsides.
- Fire weakened trees adjacent to roads and campsites.

In order to improve safety on the North Kaibab Ranger District, forest visitors are advised to follow these outdoor safety best practices:

1. Know the weather forecast and check it frequently as conditions can change in a very short timeframe.
2. Let someone outside of the area know exactly where you are and where you will be going daily.
3. Do not park vehicles or camp in areas with burned snags or where potential flood waters would prevent escape. Know where you are in relation to drainages.
4. During windy conditions, remain in open areas that are free of trees (both live and burned) as much as possible.
5. If an area seems unsafe for any reason, leave.
6. Have good maps and know where you are at all times.
7. Keep a well-charged cell phone with you and check it frequently so you know when you're in an area where there is no coverage.
8. Understand that there are many areas on public lands that are remote. It can take a very long time before responders can arrive if a rescue is required. The North Kaibab area is very remote.

For fire information on the Kaibab National Forest, visit www.fs.usda.gov/kaibab and Inciweb under the name of the fire at https://inciweb.nwcg.gov or visit us on Facebook and Twitter @KaibabNF or call (928) 635-8311 for recorded fire information.

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Micah Kiesow, soil scientist with the Kaibab National Forest and part of the Burned Area Emergency Response team on both the Stina Fire and Cat Fire, leads the BAER team through low, moderate and high severity burn areas on the Stina Fire. 8-29-2018. IMG_9250. Credit the U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Kaibab National Forest.

Micah Kiesow, soil scientist with the Kaibab National Forest and part of the Burned Area Emergency Response team on both the Stina Fire and Cat Fire, conducts a soil water repellency test to assess burn severity of soils and assess the viability of roots to help mitigate erosion from potential damaging rain events. 8-29-2018. IMG_9303. Credit the U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Kaibab National Forest.

Micah Kiesow, soil scientist with the Kaibab National Forest and Resource Advisor-District Silviculturist Garry Domis, both part of the Burned Area Emergency Response team on both the Stina Fire and Cat Fire, assess the viability of roots to help mitigate erosion from potential damaging rain events, and scope out the conditions of roads, historic sites, hand and dozer firelines post suppression-repair operations. 8-29-2018. IMG_9261. Credit the U.S. Forest Service, Southwestern Region, Kaibab National Forest.