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Kaibab National Forest
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National Park Service
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News Release

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Prescribed Fire Update: Favorable Conditions Allow Fire Managers to Continue Operations on North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park

Grand Canyon, AZ., Oct. 25, 2017 – For Immediate Release. National Park Service (NPS) and US Forest Service (USFS) fire managers, working together as the North Zone Interagency Fire Management Program, anticipate initiating more prescribed fire (Rx) treatments this week as weather and fuel moisture conditions allow on the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park.

Prescribed fires play an important role in decreasing risks to life, resources, and property. Fire managers carefully plan prescribed fires, initiating them only under environmental conditions that are favorable to assuring firefighter and visitor safety and to achieving the desired objectives.

Thompson Rx: Fire managers anticipate igniting up to 2,000 acres of the Thompson Rx unit. The unit is located on the east side of Arizona Highway 67, directly east of the North Rim entrance station, and adjacent to the northern boundary of the Park and Forest Service Road 610. The Thompson Rx unit is predominantly spruce, fir, and aspen, with some large ponderosa pine and small grassy meadows.

Specific objectives for the Thompson Rx include reducing dead and downed woody fuels, reducing potential future fire behavior, returning fire to a fire-adapted ecosystem, preventing adverse impacts to cultural and natural resources, aiding in the preservation of historic structures and archaeological sites, and protecting species habitat.

High Severity Edge Rx: The High Severity Edge Rx is in primarily ponderosa pine forest on the Walhalla Plateau, west of Cape Royal Road. Fire managers plan to treat approximately 500 acres this season. This protection project is a third-entry treatment for an area that recently had wildfires - the 2009 Aspen Fire and the 2001 Vista Fire. A specific objective of this Rx is to limit new high severity fires on the Walhalla Plateau.

Tipover East Rx Update: Fire managers completed ignitions on the Tipover East Rx and will transition operations to a Type-3 Incident Commander tomorrow. Anticipated operations on Tipover are to hold and patrol, and at least two engine crews will remain on site to monitor fire behavior within the unit. Specific objectives include reducing accumulations of hazardous fuels and protecting sensitive cultural and natural resources.

North Rim Slopes Rx Update: Fire managers treated approximately 800 acres yesterday within the North Rim Slopes Rx and plan to treat an additional 800 acres next week if conditions are conducive to

safely do so. Specific objectives include reducing accumulations of hazardous fuels by 25 percent and returning fire to a fire-adapted ecosystem.

Smoke Impacts: Smoke will be visible from various locations on the North and South rims, and Arizona Highways 64, 67 and 89A. Smoke may impact traffic and may also be present in the inner canyon and on the section of Arizona Trail near the Thompson Rx. If necessary, pilot car operations will be used on FR 610. Motorists are cautioned to please drive slowly with lights on, avoid stopping in areas where fire personnel is working, and follow directions of signs and personnel. Fire managers are working with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality-Smoke Management Division to reduce and mitigate potential smoke impacts.

Fire Information: Additional fire information about the North Zone Interagency Fire Management Program's fall prescribed fires can be found at <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5632/>; Kaibab National Forest Fire Information Phone Line 928-635-8311; or https://www.nps.gov/grca/learn/management/fire_info.htm.

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