



Forest Service

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News Release

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Aerial reconnaissance and transition of the Castle Fire

FREDONIA, Ariz., August 14, 2019— Aerial reconnaissance of the Castle Fire, late yesterday, showed the fire has spread across most of the 19,368 acres of the pre-determined planned area, exhibiting low to moderate fire behavior. Smoke will be visible from the Castle Fire as it continues to burn interior pockets of dead and down trees, along with debris from previous fires.

On Thursday, the Type 3 Incident Management Team with IC Brandon Allen will transition command of the Castle Fire to a smaller Type 4 Incident Management organization that will continue to oversee and monitor the Castle Fire.

Fire Managers will start releasing firefighting personnel and resources no longer needed. Assessment and removal of hazard trees, rehab and cleanup work will also resume today.

The weather forecast calls for mostly clear skies and no precipitation and is expected to continue until Thursday. Smoke will be visible as fire behavior increases during the peak burning period which is mid-day to late afternoon.

Soon after the Castle Fire started on July 12th, fire managers pre-identified the 19,632-acre planning area where the lightning-caused wildfire would be allowed to fulfill its natural role within a fire-dependent ecosystem. Better mapping of the pre-identified planning area has indicated a decrease in acreage from 19,632 to 19,368. The fire has burned through 96% of the planning area, burning through a significant amount of dead and down trees and some mixed conifer species. 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:** One crew, four engines, a helicopter, a dozer, two masticators, one skidder, and miscellaneous fire management personnel. Total personnel: approximately 86.
- **Current Size:** About 19368 acres and it has spread across about 96% of the 19,368-acre planning area.
- **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:** 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:** Wildland fire crews plan to continue improving roads and other designated perimeters within which the fire can move. Current weather conditions may influence the use of firing operations which may be conducted as needed in order to strengthen control lines. 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
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/KaibabNF
- Flickr: <http://bit.ly/CastleFire2019>

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