



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia & Kings Canyon
National Parks

47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271

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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks Fire Update

For Immediate Release - September 28, 2004
Jody Lyle (559) 565-3703

Grant West Prescribed Fire Begins Today

Today, fire crews will use hand-held drip torches to ignite 60 acres of the **Grant West Prescribed Fire** in Kings Canyon National Park. The unit is located in the northwest corner of the Grant Grove area, with 12 acres excluded from the project perimeter around the Grant Tree. While forecasted weather conditions only allow for a one-day ignition at this time, the parks will finish the remainder of the 330-acre project when weather conditions are again favorable in the future. For now, firefighters will hold the burn at 60 acres using an existing trail.

Project Benefits - The area for the **Grant West** project is a combination of smaller burn units that were ignited between 1990 and 1995. This year's burn will consume the dead and down material created by the first fires and will mimic the frequent natural fire cycle in this area. Prescribed burns are designed to restore natural forest conditions and create a defensible barrier for Grant Grove communities from wildfires both inside and outside the park.

Trail Closures - The North Grove Loop Trail will be closed during the project. It will remain closed until the area receives significant snowfall. No park roads will be closed as a result of the burn, but temporary traffic delays may occur along Highway 180 or on the access road to the Grant Tree. ***The Grant Tree Trail and its parking area will remain open during the prescribed burn.***

Smoke Management -Visitors traveling through the area will possibly see and smell smoke during the burn. Please use caution while driving and plan your outdoor activities for times and places with low smoke levels. Park residents and visitors in the area who are sensitive to smoke or have pre-existing respiratory problems, should limit their outdoor activities and keep windows in buildings closed during the burn.

Educational Opportunities - The parks believe prescribed fires are wonderful educational opportunities. Visitors are encouraged to talk to park staff at Visitor Centers, acquire free park publications about fire management, or observe the burn itself. Depending on the time of day, the fire may be visible from the Grant Tree Parking Area. If walking, stay on the trail at all times and observe all posted signs or instructions from firefighters on scene.

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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks Fire Update

For Immediate Release - September 29, 2004
Jody Lyle (559) 565-3703

Crews Successfully Complete First Phase of Prescribed Fire

Yesterday, fire crews ignited 60 acres of the **Grant West Prescribed Fire** in Kings Canyon National Park. "It is gratifying to be a part of this prescribed burn project and know that we are maintaining fire's natural role and protecting communities," said Brit Rosso, Superintendent of the Arrowhead Hotshot crew assigned to the Grant West project. Rosso was also present when this unit was burned in 1992.

After ignitions were complete in the early evening, a small dry thunder storm moved through the area. The resulting erratic winds caused a ½-acre spot fire approximately 1,000 feet from the burn unit boundary. Firefighters responded quickly and contained the small fire within one hour of discovery. Firefighters will remain on scene today patrolling the burn unit and working to completely extinguish the spot fire.

The total size of the Grant West Prescribed Fire is 330 acres. It is located in the northwest corner of the Grant Grove area, with 12 acres excluded from the project perimeter around the Grant Tree.

Over the next few days, fire managers will coordinate with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to finish the rest of the Grant West project. It is possible that weather conditions might permit further ignitions this weekend or early next week.

Trail Closures - The North Grove Loop Trail remains closed.

Smoke Management -Visitors traveling through the area will possibly see and smell smoke during the burn. Please use caution while driving and plan your outdoor activities for times and places with low smoke levels. Park residents and visitors in the area who are sensitive to smoke or have pre-existing respiratory problems, should limit their outdoor activities and keep windows in buildings closed during the burn.

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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks Fire Update

For Immediate Release - October 1, 2004
Jody Lyle (559) 565-3703

Parks Plan to Complete Prescribed Fire This Weekend

This weekend, fire crews plan to ignite the remaining 270 acres of the **Grant West Prescribed Fire** in Kings Canyon National Park. With approximately 70 personnel assigned to the burn, ignitions should take three days beginning Saturday, October 2. Fire crews ignited the first 60 acres of the project on September 28. The 330-acre unit is located in the northwest corner of the Grant Grove area, with 12 acres excluded from the project perimeter around the Grant Tree.

Project Benefits - The area for the **Grant West** project is a combination of smaller burn units that were ignited between 1990 and 1995. This year's burn will consume the dead and down material created by the first fires and will mimic the frequent natural fire cycle in this area. Prescribed burns are designed to restore natural forest conditions and create a defensible barrier for Grant Grove communities from wildfires both inside and outside the park.

Trail / Road Closures - All trails in the North Boundary Trail system west of Highway 180 will be closed. The North Grove Loop Trail is already closed from operations earlier this week. These trails will remain closed until the area receives significant rain or snow. No park roads will be closed as a result of the burn, but temporary traffic delays may occur along Highway 180 or on the access road to the Grant Tree. ***The Grant Tree Trail and its parking area will remain open during the prescribed burn.***

Smoke Management -Visitors traveling through the area will possibly see and smell smoke during the burn. Please use caution while driving and plan your outdoor activities for times and places with low smoke levels. Park residents and visitors in the area who are sensitive to smoke or have pre-existing respiratory problems, should limit their outdoor activities and keep windows in buildings closed during the burn.

Educational Opportunities - The parks believe prescribed fires are wonderful educational opportunities. Visitors are encouraged to talk to park staff at Visitor Centers, acquire free park publications about fire management, or observe the burn itself. Depending on the time of day, the fire may be visible from the Grant Tree Parking Area. Observe all posted signs or instructions from firefighters on scene.

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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks Fire Update

For Immediate Release - October 2, 2004
Alexandra Picavet (559) 565-3131

Firefighter Fatality in Kings Canyon National Park

Superintendent Richard H. Martin regrets to announce that a member of the Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks employee family was killed today while working on the Grant West Prescribed Fire. The name of the deceased is being withheld pending the notification of family.

An investigation team will be in the park tomorrow. Further details will be released after they submit their initial report.

Ignitions were halted on the Grant West Prescribed Fire after the accident. The prescribed fire is currently in patrol status and staffed by neighboring U.S. Forest Service crews. All staff assigned to the fire at the time of the accident have been released from the fireline and will have the opportunity to meet with critical incident stress debrief counselors over the next few days.

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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks Fire Update

For Immediate Release - October 3, 2004
Jody Lyle (559) 565-3703

National Park Service Grieves For Wildland Firefighter

Wildland firefighter Daniel Holmes, age 26, of Bellingham, Washington was killed yesterday when he was hit by a falling dead tree on the Grant West Prescribed Fire in Kings Canyon National Park. Daniel's family has been notified.

The accident occurred shortly after operations began at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 2. With four acres ignited, the top of a 100-foot white fir tree unexpectedly fell where firefighters were working, striking Holmes. Approximately 20 firefighters witnessed the accident and provided immediate medical assistance. Holmes was carried to a waiting ambulance by his fellow crewmembers, but passed away while being transported to a Lifeflight helicopter landing zone in the park. Daniel never regained consciousness after the accident and was pronounced dead by the Lifeflight medical crew.

A three-person accident investigation team has already arrived in the park. Teams like this one are routinely dispatched for the Department of the Interior following serious accidents. Over the next few days, they will complete a standard investigation, interviewing witnesses and gathering documentation.

"The National Park Service is heartbroken over this loss," said Superintendent Richard H. Martin. "My two priorities now are providing help for Daniel's family and supporting our park family here at Sequoia and Kings Canyon."

Holmes was a crewmember on the Arrowhead Hotshots, an elite firefighting crew that responds to large fires across the country. The National Park Service has two such crews: Arrowhead Hotshots at Kings Canyon and Alpine Hotshots at Rocky Mountain National Park. For more information about the crew, go to www.arrowheadhotshots.org.

(A digital photo of Daniel Holmes is attached to this email and/or available at <http://www.nps.gov/seki/fire/fireinfo/pressrel.htm>.)

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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks Fire Update

For Immediate Release - October 3, 2004
Jody Lyle (559) 565-3703

Prescribed Fire Postponed

Plans to finish the **Grant West Prescribed Fire** in Kings Canyon National Park have been postponed. Of the original 330 acres, located in the northwest corner of the Grant Grove area, fire crews ignited 60 acres of the project on September 28 and an additional four acres on October 2. Fire personnel will continue to patrol and monitor these areas.

All trails in the North Boundary Trail system west of Highway 180, including the North Grove Loop Trail will remain closed. These trails will remain closed until the area receives significant rain or snow. No park roads will be closed as a result of the burn, but temporary traffic delays may occur along Highway 180. ***The Grant Tree Trail and its parking area will remain open during the prescribed burn.*** Visitors traveling through the area will possibly see and smell smoke during the burn. Please use caution while driving and plan your outdoor activities for times and places with low smoke levels.

The purpose of the **Grant West** project is to consume the dead and down material from earlier fires, as well as to mimic the frequent natural fire cycle in this area.

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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks Fire Update

For Immediate Release - October 5, 2004
Jody Lyle (559) 565-3703

Funeral for Daniel Holmes in New Hampshire

The family of Daniel Holmes in Rochester, New Hampshire has finalized plans for a funeral this Thursday, October 7, 2004. Services will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church located at 34 South Main Street, Rochester, New Hampshire.

National Park Service employees, including the entire Arrowhead Hotshot Crew, will be present for the funeral.

Dan's family, the National Park Service, and the interagency wildland fire community are considering a memorial service for Dan in California. If such an event takes place, details will be provided in the future.

Wildland firefighter Daniel Holmes, age 26, was killed on Saturday, October 2. He was struck when the top of a dead tree fell during the Grant West Prescribed Fire in Kings Canyon National Park. For more information, please go to www.arrowheadhotshots.org.

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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks

For Immediate Release - October 6, 2004
Jody Lyle (559) 565-3703

Serious Accident Investigation Team Update

The following is a progress report from the Serious Accident Investigation Team (SAIT) at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, which is analyzing the circumstances around the death of wildland firefighter, Daniel Holmes (see previous press releases for details).

The purpose of the SAIT is to determine what happened during this tragedy and to learn what can be done to prevent it from happening again.

The effort is coordinated by Team Leader Jim Loach, Associate Regional Director of the Midwest Region. The team's work is broken down into three main functions: investigation, safety evaluation and documentation.

Team members began arriving on Sunday and began learning the scope of their task. Interviews began Monday and will continue through this week.

The team is responsible for producing three separate reports. The 24 hour report has been issued, and the more detailed 72 hour report will be issued today. Both of these documents will be found at <http://safenet.nifc.gov/notice.nsf> , and click on either "all notices" or "safety advisories."

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