

Deep Fire

Tuesday, April 28 2009

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Big Cypress National Preserve
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Conditions yesterday provided good conditions for a very successful burnout operation. Special attention was paid by the fire crews to minimize impact in the oak hammocks, which are an important food source for wildlife. The Deep Fire has burned approximately 24,000 acres since April 22nd and is 30% contained. Safety of the firefighters and the traveling public is a top priority as fire officials are working with closely with Florida Highway Patrol to monitor and assess the impacts of the fire on I-75.

Today

Fire Size: 24,000
Containment: 30%

Crews will continue burnout operations as a suppression strategy to reduce the duration of this incident. Reopening the I-75 corridor is a priority, but until smoke and fire activity diminishes, safety concerns are paramount. Alligator Alley (I-75) was again opened this morning and will close again at 7:00 p.m. State Highway 29 remains closed to ensure the safety of firefighters of the public along the roadway.

Agency Partners

There are many cooperating agencies working collaboratively in this incident. Some of those are Florida Highway Patrol, Florida Department of Transportation, Fakahatchee State Park, Collier County Sheriff Department, Florida Division of Forestry and many others.

The Role of Fire & Management



Fire is a natural and necessary component of the habitats of the Big Cypress region. Pinelands and freshwater prairies require periodic fires to control the spread of shrubs and trees. Occasional burns help provide open habitat for the proliferation of herbaceous plants and the wildlife that depend on them. Big Cypress National Preserve serves as important habitat for a variety of wildlife. These floral and faunal species have evolved in coexistence with wildlife in the ecosystem.

The fire management team of Big Cypress National Preserve actively utilizes fire to maintain the integrity of several local ecosystems, reduce fuel loads in susceptible areas, and create buffers to hamper wildfires.

Area and Road Closures

In the interest of safety, Big Cypress National Preserve has enacted some recreational access closures. These are necessary to ensure the safety of visitors and fire personnel. All areas in the Bear Island Unit, and all areas north of Fire Prairie Trail, including the trail itself, in the Deep Lake Unit are closed. State Road 29, along the western border of the preserve, remains closed. Florida Highway Patrol anticipates opening I-75 mid-morning—subject to change based upon fire activity and smoke. State Highway 29 will remain closed.