



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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Fire Management Officials Begin Walla Valley Prescribed Burn in Grand Canyon National Park

Grand Canyon, AZ. – Grand Canyon National Park fire management officials determined that weather, fuel, and air quality conditions were within acceptable parameters and began the Walla Valley Prescribed Burn on Saturday, June 21, at 6:21 p.m. The 6,000 acre Walla Valley burn unit is located on the North Rim in the Walla Valley and Point Sublime area, approximately 9 miles west of the North Rim developed area. A point source ignition technique is being used to mimic receiving a group of natural lightning ignitions over several days. Once the perimeter is secure, these interior ignition points will be allowed to burn in all directions in the same way a naturally ignited fire would burn. The fire is expected to burn over a period of at least three weeks.

During the burn, smoke columns will be visible for several weeks, but will be most visible during the first ten days of the project as the ignition points burn towards each other. After the ignition points have burned into each other, the smoke will become less noticeable.

Smoke impacts may be possible on Highway 67 and in the North Rim developed area. Since smoke settles when the air temperature cools and lifts during daylight hours when the air temperature warms, smoke impacts may also occur along the Colorado River and in the inner canyon at night and during the early morning hours. The park has worked closely with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to ensure that smoke from the burn will not exceed acceptable levels.

Sections of the W4 and W1 roads to Point Sublime will be closed for about three weeks during the burn in order to assure visitor and firefighter safety. Back-country visitors that could be affected by these closures are being notified in advance and when possible, are being accommodated elsewhere in the park.

Approximately 45 personnel from Grand Canyon National Park, Kaibab National Forest, Summit Fire District, Flagstaff Fire Department, Zion National Park and Carson National Forest are on hand to manage the fire. Six wildland fire engines, a water tanker and a Type 3 helicopter are available if needed. A fire camp has been established near the burn unit to support the firefighters.

Fire managers use prescribed fire to restore and sustain the fire-dependent ecosystems that surround the Grand Canyon. Benefits from these fires include reducing hazardous fuels that can lead to more intense wildfires, sustaining ecological processes like nutrient and biomass recycling, balancing plant regeneration and mortality and providing a diversity of habitats for native plants and animals.

For more information on the Walla Valley Prescribed Fire, visit the fire's website at <http://inciweb.org/incident/1330/> or call the Grand Canyon Public Affairs Office at (928)638-7958. For recorded information on the fire, you may call (928)638-7688.

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