



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

PO Box 129  
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

928 638-7779 phone  
928 638-7609 fax  
[www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca)

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## Grand Canyon News Release

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Contact(s): Shannan Marcak  
Phone number: 928-638-7958  
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### **Grand Canyon National Park Converts Walla Valley Prescribed Burn to Wildfire Status**

**Grand Canyon, AZ.** – At about 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 25, Grand Canyon National Park fire management officials made the decision to convert the 160 acre Walla Valley Fire, burning on the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park, from a prescribed burn to a wildfire.

On Saturday, June 21, after predictive models and the behavior of a small test fire indicated that conditions were appropriate to burn, ignition operations on the Walla Valley Prescribed Burn began with blacklining to secure the perimeter of the burn unit. These ignition operations were suspended on June 22, after several spot fires occurred at distances farther from the blackline than anticipated, and after fire management officials determined that fire behavior was not within acceptable parameters to continue. All spot fires were suppressed, and firefighters began to focus their efforts on holding the fire within the burn unit and checking the spread of a portion of the fire that was active below the rim.

While efforts to hold the fire below the rim have been successful, the fire's edge is now approaching thicker, denser fuels where it will become much more difficult for fire fighters to continue successful holding operations. As a result, fire managers made the decision to convert the Walla Valley Fire from a prescribed fire to a wildfire and have begun suppression operations. Firefighters are currently building a fire line from the canyon rim to Kanabownitz Cabin, then onto Galahad Point (a length of approximately 2 ½ miles), which will create a containment line. Once the fire line has been completed, a burnout operation will be conducted in an effort to secure the containment line. The burnout operation is expected to begin later this evening.

There are currently approximately 90 personnel supported by five engines, one water tender and two light helicopters working on suppression operations. A heavy helicopter and four single engine air tankers have been requested to support these operations.

Visitors may continue to see smoke in the vicinity of the fire and helicopters working in the area. In order to assure visitor and fire fighter safety, sections of the W4 and W1 roads remain closed at this time.

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For the latest information on the Walla Valley Fire, visit the park's fire web site at [http://www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/fire\\_info.htm](http://www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/fire_info.htm) 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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