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U.S. Department of the Interior

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## Grand Canyon News Release

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### **PRESCRIBED FIRE SCHEDULED TO OCCUR AT GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK – SMOKE MAY IMPACT THE COMMUNITY OF TUSAYAN**

**Grand Canyon, Ariz.** – A prescribed fire is scheduled to take place at Grand Canyon National Park on May 2, 2007, if conditions allow. The Lone Tree burn unit is located east of the South Rim Entrance Station; two air miles north of the community of Tusayan and three air miles south of the Grand Canyon Village.

Prescribed fires are ignited when environmental factors such as wind, temperature, and relative humidity are favorable, in order to meet specific resource objectives.

Prescribed fires are one of the most effective tools available to resource managers for restoring fire dependant ecosystems. These fires mimic natural fires by reducing forest fuels, recycling nutrients and increasing habitat diversity. Each prescribed fire is designed to meet specific objectives. For example, a prescribed fire might be implemented to improve wildlife habitat, or to create a more defensible space around a housing area. All prescribed fires are managed with firefighter and public safety as the first priority.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets standards to protect human health from fine particles in the air (PM 2.5), including those in smoke. PM 2.5 describes particles with an aerodynamic diameter smaller than or equal to 2.5 micrometers. The National Park Service uses portable monitors to measure PM 2.5 concentrations during fire activity. Smoke levels from past fire activity have prompted park officials to caution residents and visitors in the Tusayan area of potential smoke related health issues.

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Thorough planning is used to minimize smoke impacts; however, it is anticipated that during the night and early morning hours over the next couple of nights, smoke impacts in the Tusayan community may occur. PM 2.5 pollution conditions may reach unhealthy levels. A PM 2.5 health advisory may be issued for the night and early morning hours. If these conditions occur, residents and visitors should avoid strenuous or prolonged moderate exertion outdoors. Residents and visitors should limit their exposure and outside physical activities until healthy PM 2.5 levels have been achieved. The smoke should lift and dissipate as morning temperatures rise thus reducing the possibility of unhealthy conditions.

For additional fire information, please call 928-638-7819. You may also visit Grand Canyon's web site at <http://www.nps.gov/grca/>

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