



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Park of
American Samoa

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National Park of American Samoa News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ofu National Park Rangers Help Extinguish Wildland Fires

OFU ISLAND, American Samoa—On Thursday, September 22, several wildland fires broke out in the Mafafa area on Ofu Island after a work crew lost control of debris fires. Roughly four acres burned before a National Park of American Samoa crew contained the fires. No lives or homes were threatened.

As a result of vegetation loss from the fires, many large rocks tumbled onto the road and resulted in short-term closures for their removal. The fires were partially within the boundary of the national park and threatened to expand in the direction of additional park acreage due to winds.

Park rangers Mike Toke and Carlo Caruso improvised a fire truck using components of the park's research lab's experimental seawater system and the park's pickup truck. Toke, Caruso, and local national park trained wildland firefighter Pulou Tauanuu used pumps, tanks, and hoses to extinguish fires along the roadside Thursday night. Police officer, Ina Ulberg coordinated the local response and provided direct assistance to park staff.

National park trained firefighter, Misaita Leama was also on the scene and assisted by making an early fire line. Public works employees helped identify burn areas and moved the hoses into position. However, they did not have proper equipment to attack the fires away from the road in the dark. Operations were suspended after the roadside area fires were extinguished.

National park staff returned Friday morning to extinguish the remaining fires on the slope. More than 1,200 gallons of seawater was trucked to the fire sites.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

“During these dry conditions we’re experiencing throughout the territory, it’s important that everyone closely monitor their burning activities,” said Superintendent Mike Reynolds.

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The National Park of American Samoa was established in 1988 to preserve the coral reefs, tropical rainforest, archeological and cultural resources, the habitat of fruit bats, and to provide educational opportunities for visitors and residents. National park lands and waters are leased from villages and the American Samoa Government through a long-term agreement with the National Park Service.

For more information about visiting the National Park of American Samoa, call 699-3982, email NPSA_Info@nps.gov, or go to www.nps.gov/npsa. Also, visit the national park’s Facebook and Twitter pages.

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