



Saguaro National Park News Release

14-48

For Immediate Release

July 27, 2014 - 10:00 am.

Contact: Andy L. Fisher at (520) 820-2567 , Andy_L_Fisher@nps.gov,
or Fire Information Hotline at (520) 733-5150

DEER HEAD FIRE IN RINCON MOUNTAINS CONTINUES TO GROW SLOWLY

Tucson, AZ – The lightning ignited Deer Head Fire has slowly grown to 229 acres this morning. Increased humidity and a light rain have kept fire behavior mild. Many areas in southeastern Arizona received substantial amounts of rainfall last night and early this morning, while the Rincon Mountains received only a light sprinkle.

Today and tomorrow observers might notice an increased column of smoke as the day progresses due to drier conditions. Also some fire activity might occur from anticipated strategic burn outs to increase safety zones for fire fighters along the northern perimeter of the fire between Mica Mountain and Reef Rock. The burnouts will be small and are in an area that was scheduled for prescribed burning later in the year. Currently, the fire is not threatening any historic structures in the Rincon Mountains.

The fire is burning in wilderness, where it is functioning in its natural role, helping reduce fuel loads and maintain wildlife habitat. Smoke impacts continue to be monitored closely.

Lightning-ignited fires are important in maintaining healthy forests in the mountains of southern Arizona. Fire historically burned through the high elevation ponderosa pine forests of southeastern Arizona every few years, but past fire suppression has created unnatural conditions with a build-up of downed trees and dense underbrush in many places. Periodic low to moderate intensity wildfire helps prevent large, intense wildfires, recycles nutrients, and fills many other roles.

For the safety of hikers and campers, the following temporary backcountry trail closures remain in place, including Italian Spring (south of Park boundary), Cowhead Saddle, North Slope, Fire Loop, Spud Rock, Switchback, Mica Mountain, Mica Meadow, Bonita, Devils Bathtub, East Slope trail, Deerhead Spring, Turkey Creek (west of Park boundary), Miller Creek (west of park boundary), Heartbreak Ridge, and Manning Camp (east of Douglas Springs intersection). This includes a segment of the Arizona Trail: Italian Spring Trail at the park boundary extending to the Douglas Spring-Manning Camp Trail intersection). Campground closures within the park include Manning Camp, Grass Shack, Happy Valley, and Spud Rock. All off-trail areas within Saguaro National Park east of Douglas Spring Trail and Manning Camp Trails are also closed.

The Deer Head Fire was first detected late morning on July 24, 2014. The fire is burning within the Saguaro Wilderness, in steep, rugged terrain. The bottom of the fire is at about 7,000 feet elevation and extends upward to 8,400 feet. The area is primarily ponderosa pine and oak woodlands and has burned six times since the 1940s, and most recently during the 1994 Rincon Fire. The fire is moving into areas burned by prescribed fires in 1993- 2010. Part of the area was planned for a prescribed fire this summer or fall.

For updated information please visit <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3999/>, <http://twitter.com/SaguaroNPS>, or call the park's Fire Information Hotline at (520) 733-5150. Additional images are available at: <https://www.facebook.com/saguaronationalpark>, For information about the natural role of fire, visit the park's website: <http://www.nps.gov/sagu/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm>.

www.nps.gov