



Saguaro National Park News Release

14-50

For Immediate Release July 29, 2014 11:30am

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MONSOON LULL MAY INCREASE FIRE BEHAVIOR IN SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK

Tucson, AZ – The lightning-ignited Deer Head Fire, named for nearby Deer Head Spring, is burning in the Rincon Mountains of Saguaro National Park. Yesterday's helicopter GPS survey update indicates it has grown to 550 acres. Fire behavior was light yesterday, due to high humidity and cool overnight temperatures. Rainfall at the fire has been minimal with no precipitation recorded yesterday. Today and tomorrow the weather forecast calls for lower humidity and increased temperatures. These conditions are expected to lead to increased fire activity.

Firefighters will conduct additional burnouts today to provide safety zones for firefighters and protect Manning Camp cabin. These actions, along with decreased humidity, may produce smoke columns visible from Tucson, Vail, Benson and other areas around the perimeter of the Rincon Mountains.

The fire is being managed to allow its natural role in the wilderness. Photos of the fire from firefighters on the ground are posted at two sites available to the public. These are: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3999>, and <http://Facebook.com/SaguaroNationalPark>. These photos reveal the fire to be mostly a ground fire, consuming pine needles, grass, dead branches, logs, and shrubs. As the fire continues to progress, it will vary in intensity, spread and duration with variations in topography, vegetation, and weather. All of these effects are beneficial to this wilderness ecosystem as it replicates conditions before European settlers enacted fire suppression efforts in previous centuries. It is anticipated the fire will gradually grow until the area receives significant precipitation. Rincon Mountain District backcountry closures will remain in effect for the duration of the fire to ensure public safety.

Normal morning temperature inversion may cause some smoke to settle along the San Pedro Valley and eastern Tucson but should clear by mid-morning. Observers may notice increased fire activity today and tomorrow with warmer and drier temperatures, however meteorologists predict additional monsoonal moisture this weekend.

Saguaro National Park's phone system was malfunctioning most of the day yesterday. Technicians have worked to have it operational today so our fire information line, (520) 733 5150 should now be available.

Additional information related to the Deer Head Fire is available at: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3999/>, <http://Facebook.com/SaguaroNationalPark> or call the Fire Information Hotline at (520) 733-5150.