



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia & Kings Canyon
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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks Fire Notice

For Immediate Release – October 2, 2009
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Azalea Prescribed Fire Planned

Fire crews plan to begin ignitions on the *Azalea Prescribed Fire* in Kings Canyon National Park on Sunday, **October 4th**, weather and air quality conditions permitting.

This 64 acre unit is located south of the community of Wilsonia and east of Highway 180. Ignitions will likely take one to two days to complete.

There is no recorded fire history within the burn area; therefore, this prescribed fire is considered to be a restoration burn. Historically, the fire return interval in the mixed conifer vegetation type in this area is approximately once every ten to fifteen years.

The *Azalea Prescribed Fire* is one in a series of concerted steps that fire managers have taken to reduce hazardous fuels in Grant Grove. Multiple mechanical thinning projects around Wilsonia and Grant Grove employee housing, prescribed fires over the last ten years, and coordinated efforts to create a “fire safe” community in Wilsonia have demonstrated that fire managers have been dedicated to reducing the fuels, involving the community, and achieving the ecological benefits of fire.

Fire managers will be re-introducing fire to help restore the role of naturally cycling fire into the area. Fire allows forest to be thinned, opening the canopy and allowing sunlight through. It recycles nutrients to the soil while reducing the amount of dead, woody debris. This aids the sprouting and re-growth of plants, shrubs, and trees. Prescribed fire also helps to create a mosaic of diverse habitats for plants and animals.

Highway 180 will remain open with delays possible due to smoke. Visitors should expect to see smoke in the area during ignitions. Drivers must obey posted speed limits near the fire operations for their own safety as well as the safety of firefighters. The Azalea Trail will be closed during the *Azalea Prescribed Fire*.

-- www.nps.gov/seki/fire/fireinfo/current.htm --