



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia & Kings Canyon
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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

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Redwood Mountain Prescribed Fire Completed

Fire crews have completed ignitions on the Redwood Mountain Prescribed Fire. Because this area was burned under cooler conditions, visitors will continue to see smoke from the Redwood Mountain area as pockets of vegetation continue to smolder. There are no holding or control issues.

This 626 acre unit is located south of the Redwood Saddle parking area and uses the Sugar Bowl Grove Trail and the northern segment of the Big Spring Trail as its boundaries.

Redwood Mountain is home to one of the largest giant sequoia groves in the world and is also the birthplace of prescribed fire in the western United States. Starting in 1963 and 1964, researchers discovered that giant sequoias are adapted to fire and use fire for regeneration. Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks began using prescribed fires in 1968.

This unit was last burned in 1977. At the time, fire managers believed that this area burned too hot. However, an extensive crop of sapling sequoias demonstrated that these trees thrive in a relatively hot fire that opens the canopy, thins competing vegetation, and releases the tiny seeds to the nutrient-rich ash and mineral soil below.

Historically, natural fires occurred in sequoia forests approximately once every 10-15 years. Therefore, this area is not yet returned to its natural fire cycle. Naturally occurring fires would consist of frequent low intensity fires that would slowly burn for extended periods of time. In order to better simulate the natural effects of fire, the area encompassed within the Redwood Prescribed Fire Unit will continue to consume dead and down fuels for some time. This consumption will provide the required mineral soil base necessary for sequoia germination.

The Sugar Bowl Trail remains closed for this project. The Hart Tree Trail and the Big Spring Trail, is now open. Hikers can complete a loop hike using the Hart Tree Trail and the Big Spring Trail. Hikers should anticipate limited smoke impacts on this hike as well as uneven footing in recently burned areas.

-- <http://www.nps.gov/seki/naturescience/current-fire-information.htm> --