



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia & Kings Canyon
National Parks

47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271

559 565-3341 phone
559 565-3730 fax

Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

For Immediate Release – July 24, 2008
Deb Schweizer (559) 565-3703
Alex Olow (559) 565-4287

Tehipite Fire Discovered in Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks

Fire managers detected the lightning-caused *Tehipite Fire* in Kings Canyon National Park wilderness on a reconnaissance flight after a series of lightning storms passed through the parks.

The *Tehipite Fire* is located approximately one-half mile west of Tehipite Valley and Crown Creek and one mile east of Tombstone Ridge. It is approximately 62 acres in size and burning in mixed conifer and live oak between 5,400 - 6,400 feet in elevation in steep bluffs and cliffs.

As with all fires, managers make a determination on how to handle each fire based on its location, elevation, potential for spread, fuels, and other variables. Firefighter safety, cost, threats to park developments and infrastructure, smoke impacts to visitors and residents, and the ecological benefits of a natural fire cycle are among the issues considered.

Fire fighter safety, cost containment, location, smoke, and the ecological benefits of fire are key factors in the management of this fire. Steep terrain and inaccessibility make direct fire response unsafe. However, the parks must also consider the fire's proximity the park boundary and will take indirect containment actions above the cliffs to keep the fire within the park.

The observed fire behavior includes a slow backing ground fire spreading primarily through burning vegetation rolling down the slope. The top of the fire is currently holding at a rocky band and shows occasional torching. The west and east flanks have natural barriers which will limit the fires spread in that direction. It has moderate to high potential for growth.

Periodic helicopter overflights will be used to observe the fire. Since the fire is in the wilderness, fire managers will limit these overflights when possible. Two on-site firefighters/monitors are assessing the fuels and potential fire behavior and spread.

Five other fires have been detected in the parks. These fires are lightning-caused fires and are less than 1/10 of an acre in size and consist of a single tree or spot. Three of these fires have been declared out. The other two are being monitored and have shown little or no activity to date.

Fire managers will continue to look for possible ignitions from thunderstorm activity as lightning-ignited fires may not be visible immediately after the storm.

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

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

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