



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia & Kings Canyon  
National Parks

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## Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

For Immediate Release – June 19, 2012  
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### Whitaker Prescribed Fire Planned

Fire crews plan to begin ignitions on the Whitaker Prescribed Fire, weather and air quality conditions permitting, on Thursday, June 21, 2012. This is an interagency project being completed in cooperation by the National Park Service and the Center for Forestry, which is part of UC Berkeley's College of Natural Resources.

This 504 acre unit (429 acres on park land, 75 acres on UC Center for Forestry land) is in the Redwood Mountain Grove. The project is located south of the Whitaker Forest Road, east of US Forest Service Road 14S34, and takes advantage of the 2011 Redwood Mountain Prescribed Fire for control lines to the west. Ignitions will be completed over a four day period by National Park Service crews.

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 for both National Park Service and University of California land first studied the need for fire to sustain giant sequoia. Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks began using prescribed fires in 1968. By monitoring change following the Whitaker Prescribed Fire, scientists and managers will further improve our understanding of the complex relationship between fire and giant sequoia.

Historically, fire occurred in the mixed conifer forest of this drainage approximately every seven to fifteen years. Most of the park lands were last burned in the 1970s. However, the segment on UC Berkeley land has no recorded fire history. Because of the lack of recent fire and the opportunity for research, this area is of especially high priority for conducting a prescribed fire for UC Berkeley. This project will reduce the amount of forest fuels that could feed an unwanted fire and create conditions that are better suited for giant sequoia regeneration.

The western loop of the Sugar Bowl Trail Redwood Mountain will be closed during the project. All other trails including the Big Springs Trail and the Hart Tree Trail remain open. However, hikers should expect smoke in the area while ignitions are completed and the fire smolders down. Drivers on the Redwood Saddle Road may experience temporary delays due to smoke.

Fire managers work closely with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to select the best air quality windows and reduce local impacts. Visitors and residents should expect smoke impacts in the Redwood Canyon and Kings Canyon Overlook area in the day and towards Pinehurst, Dunlap, Eshom Valley and the North Fork of the Kaweah River at night. Those who are sensitive to smoke or have pre-existing respiratory problems should limit their outdoor activities, particularly in the morning, and keep windows closed during the fire. For more information about how to limit exposure to smoke, please visit <http://www.airquality.org/smokeimpact/>.

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