



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Bryce Canyon National Park

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Bryce Canyon National Park Fire Management



Bryce Canyon Completes East Creek Meadow Prescribed Fire

Bryce Canyon National Park Fire Management personnel recently completed the East Creek Meadow Prescribed Fire as part of their ongoing fire management program to reintroduce fire as a natural process, following years of exclusion. Bryce Canyon fire personnel are planning other similar burns in the future under the guidance of their 2005 Fire Management Plan.

The 400 acre East Creek Meadow Prescribed Fire Burn Unit is located near mile marker 4, along the main park road. The burn was designed to maintain meadow lands and ponderosa pine stands within the park and to enhance potential habitat for the threatened Utah Prairie Dog. This area was treated with prescribed fire once before in April 2000.

The prescribed fire was a cooperative effort between the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and utilized the assistance of 25 firefighters and two wildland engines. Ignition began on June 8 and was carried out over a two day period. This window of opportunity was chosen for green up conditions to ensure maximum mortality in nonnative smooth brome and to provide a nutrient flush for the native perennial grasses. The burn unit was ignited using a strip-head hand firing technique and was carefully controlled to reduce the chances of an escape. The park had a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFS to operate on their lands since part of the burn unit bordered them. Preliminary observations indicate that the objectives of the burn were successfully met.

The lack of fire in Bryce Canyon (due mainly to past suppression efforts) has contributed to high fuel loadings and a change in forest and grassland structure. Prescribed fire is a treatment to reverse these changes brought on by fire exclusion. The policy of using fire as a tool will help decrease risks to life, property and resources and will help perpetuate the values for which Bryce Canyon National Park was established.