



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 Paria Prescribed Fire

Bryce Canyon National Park Fire Management personnel recently completed the Paria Prescribed Fire as part of their ongoing fire management program. This burn is part of the federal government's Wildland Urban Interface program as directed by the National Fire Plan of 2000. Project goals include the protection of communities and structures located near public lands from the impacts of wildfire and the restoration of fire as a natural process to ponderosa pine and grassland communities. Bryce Canyon fire personnel are planning other similar burns in the future under the guidance of their Fire Management Plan.

The 1000+ acre Paria Prescribed Fire Burn Unit is located to the south of Bryce Canyon Lodge and Bryce Viewpoint, in the northern portion of the park. The burn was designed to reduce the wildfire hazard to the lodge and adjacent historic structures, campgrounds and other developments in or near this area of the park. The area has been identified by state and federal land management agency administrators as one of six wildland urban interface focus areas requiring priority fuels treatments in this part of Utah. This area was treated with prescribed fire once before in 1994.

The prescribed fire was a cooperative effort between state, local and federal agencies and was carried out over a period of four days. Bryce Canyon Fire Management personnel utilized the assistance of over 50 individuals and associated equipment including the Arrowhead Hotshots (a 20-person National Park Service fire crew), fire personnel from other national parks, federal wildland engine crews, and a helicopter operations module from Mesa Verde National Park.

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Once all the conditions were within predetermined prescription levels, ignition of the unit began. Initial blacklining around sections of the unit boundaries were accomplished by hand ignition using drip torches. The interior of the unit was ignited by aerial ignition from a helicopter utilizing a Plastic Sphere Dispenser machine. Holding crews and engines were stationed at critical points along the burn unit boundary to ensure the fire stayed within the planned unit. Once the ignition phase of the operation was completed, crews continued to monitor the burn until it was declared out. Monitoring plots established prior to the burn will be evaluated in the future to measure the fire's effects and determine if pre-burn goals and objectives were met.

The dispersal of information before, during, and after the prescribed fire was critical to its success. Local citizens and business owners were contacted and made aware of the park's proposed burns through a public meeting, press releases, phone calls and personal visits. Public input concerning smoke issues and the burns' effects on visitation were utilized in the formation of the final planning documents for the burns.

One of the things the park did to address the smoke issue was to install a DataRam monitoring device in the local town of Tropic, prior to and during the burn, to measure the particulate concentration. This device uses scattered light to measure the average and maximum concentration levels of particulates, particle size, humidity, and temperature, with time information for all. It was found that the particulate levels in Tropic during the burn were very low. In fact, the levels were approximately the same as for days preceding the burn.

The lack of fire in Bryce Canyon (due mainly to past suppression efforts) has contributed to high fuel loadings and a change in forest 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.



Paria Rx Morning Briefing



Roadside sign used during the Paria Rx