



Operational Flexibility

How much time does it take to move from one prescribed fire operation to another? “When you’ve done all your pre-planning, it can happen in the blink of an eye,” said Dave Bartlett, Kings District Fire Management Officer.

The fire program at Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks proved its operational flexibility in June of 2004 when it switched gears between two burn projects in less than 24 hours.

On June 23, the parks were cleared to ignite the **Grant G Prescribed Fire** (in the Grant Grove area of Kings Canyon National Park) by the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District. While fuel moistures and temperatures were within prescription for the project, the test ignition exhibited unwanted fire behavior. As a result, fire managers made the decision to postpone the burn.

Since proper weather conditions for smoke dispersal are infrequent, it is important that the parks take advantage of an approved burning window. The decision to postpone **Grant G** meant that the parks were losing precious time to accomplish fire restoration goals.

With quick thinking and expert organization, fire managers moved people and equipment down the road to another burn unit that was also prepped and ready to ignite. By the following morning, the forty firefighters assigned to **Grant G** were given new assignments and briefed for the 133-acre **Buena Vista Prescribed Fire**.



Firefighters listen to new instructions for the Buena Vista Prescribed Fire in Kings Canyon National Park.

Unlike the **Grant G** project which was located on a west-facing slope, the **Buena Vista** unit had higher fuel moistures being on an east and north-facing slope. The burn was completed safely and successfully in three days.

For more information, call (559) 565-3703 or go to www.nps.gov/seki/fire/portal/portal.htm.