



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Bryce Canyon National Park News Release

August 22, 2008

For Immediate Release

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08-04

Bryce Canyon National Park and Dixie National Forest Coordinate Plans for the Puma Prescribed Fire

Open House Meeting on Tuesday, September 2 at Ruby's Inn from 4 -7 p.m.

Between September 2, 2008 and September 30, 2008 fire officials from Bryce Canyon National Park and the Dixie National Forest plan to ignite the Puma Prescribed Fire (Rx). The primary objective of this prescribed fire is to reduce wildland fire hazards to park and forest visitors and adjoining private lands. The park and surrounding forest lands are scheduled to remain open during this prescribed fire with the exception of some areas of being closed for short periods.

The Puma Rx will be completed in two phases. Phase 1 covering 234 acres will be treated on August 22, 2008. Phase 2 incorporates 1,893 acres on Bryce Canyon National Park on the west side of the main road from mile marker 13 to Rainbow Point. This phase will also incorporate up to 2,000 acres on the Dixie National Forest east of the East Fork of the Sevier River near the Podunk Guard Station.

An open house meeting will be held on **Tuesday, September 2** at Ruby's Inn (near the entrance to Bryce Canyon National Park) from 4 – 7 p.m. Park and forest officials will be on hand to discuss their respective prescribed fire programs and specific details of the Puma Rx.

At times, visitors to the park and forest and area residents will see or smell smoke from the fires. Smoke on park and forest roadways may be a hazard and scenic visibility may be reduced in certain areas. At night residents in the Bryce Valley region may experience some smoke because of atmospheric inversions.

The lack of fire on much of our public lands, mainly due to past suppression efforts, have contributed to high fuel accumulations and a change in forest structure. Prescribed fire is a way 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. These burns will be conducted safely with the health of area residents, visitors and wildland fire fighters at the forefront of operations. Burning will only be allowed under certain weather and fuel moisture conditions.

The future benefits of restoring the health of the ecosystem and reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires and threats to developed areas is vital to maintaining the integrity of the resources in the park and forest. By improving wildlife habitat and forest health these burns will sustain long-term appeal to the national and international visiting public and the economic benefits they bring to the tourism industry in the area.

For more information please contact:

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