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News Release

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Tibble Fire

Spanish Fork Ranger District, Spanish Fork Utah, September 9, 2016 – Tibble Fire is currently two acres in steep, rocky terrain five miles northeast of Alpine, Utah. It is located in the 30,088 acre Lone Peak Wilderness burning in grass, brush and mixed conifers.

Smoke may be visible, at times, from the city of Alpine, and from the Tibble Fork are in the American Fork Canyon. The fire is not threatening any structures, campgrounds, or day-use areas.

Wildfires, like the Tibble Fire, are a natural component of the landscape and can be used as an important land management tool. When conditions are right, the Forest Service may manage all or part of some fires to reduce hazardous fuels, improve habitat, and achieve other natural resource management objectives consistent with Forest Service local Land Management Plan direction.

The public is reminded that fire conditions remain high throughout the forest. When hiking or camping in the Forest, please make sure your campfires are completely out and cold when you leave them. To date, nearly half of the forest fires that have been reported this season were caused by abandoned campfires that were still hot enough to burn. Remember, one less spark means one less forest fire!

Smoke may be visible throughout the area. People with respiratory problems should take necessary precautions. For air quality information please visit: airnow.gov.

WORKING WITH WILDFIRE

Tibble Fire

AGENT OF CHANGE

Historically, lightning-caused wildfires naturally burned in this area with a mixed severity about every 60-90 years. Today, wildfires are opportunities to restore and maintain this natural occurrence in the ecosystem, where fire has been excluded for over 100 years.

The desired result of fires in this vegetation type is a “mosaic” pattern where some areas experience surface fire that consumes small trees, litter, and dead and downed fuels; some areas burn with mixed severity, torching small groups of trees; and in other areas small pockets of high intensity fire creates larger openings in the canopy. This mosaic effect creates a more diverse landscape that is more resistant to insects and disease, promotes aspen regeneration, and improves wildlife habitat and watershed conditions, as well as reducing the risk of a high severity wildfire occurring in the future.

Fire managers carefully identify areas within which a wildfire can naturally move. As long as conditions allow **and** objectives are being met, crews can actively assist these lightning-caused wildfires by solidifying holding perimeters and keeping flames from moving into undesired locations.

A RISK INFORMED DECISION PROCESS

Fire managers, along with resource specialists take great care to evaluate multiple objectives when wildfires occur. Strategic and tactical decisions for fire incidents apply deliberate examination and assessment of public values and risk to firefighter and public safety. Steps important to this process include:

- identifying values important to the public and the Forest Service
- considering established land management plans
- utilizing pre-planned decision criteria
- employing fire behavior modeling programs
- considering economic and social impacts
- ensuring that decisions are flexible for changing incident complexity

Firefighter safety, public values and forest health are priorities when managing wildfires. To ensure success, decisions are continually evaluated by agency administrators, fire managers, and resource specialists.

SMOKE IN THE VALLEY

Smoke may hang low to the ground at night and in the early morning due to an occurrence known as a **temperature inversion**. This occurs when *warm* air “caps” *cooler* air, causing smoke to become trapped in valley bottoms—most often at night and in the early morning.

Trapped smoke generally lifts after the sun rises and heats the earth’s surface. Heat from the earth’s surface warms the air near the ground, which rises and mixes with the air above.

As fire moves through the landscape, smoke will be very noticeable. Expect reduced visibility along roads and watch for wildfire management personnel and traffic working on or near the road.

BENEFICIAL OUTCOMES

When accumulated fuels are removed by fire, the risk of uncharacteristically severe and difficult to suppress wildfire is reduced. This is good news for both the public and wildland firefighters!

Protecting forest health is important. So is protecting the life and values of the public—values like cultural and historical sites, communities, and recreation areas. Natural and cultural resource specialists are highly engaged in deciding where to suppress or assist the wildfire activity. **This ensures that fire management and resource management are one in the same.**

For fire updates, visit the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest Facebook page