

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Devils Postpile National Monument



Fire Management Plan Update

January 25, 2018

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

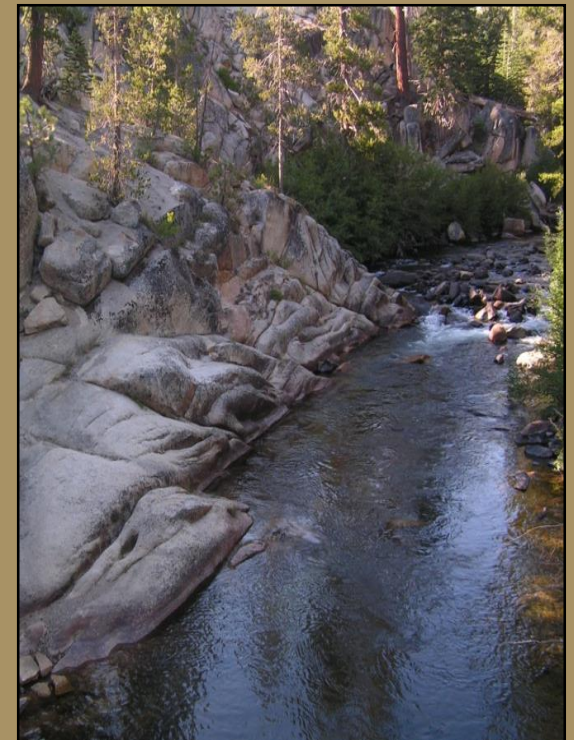
Overview

- Overview of NPS NEPA Planning Process
- Background
- Purpose and Need
- Proposed alternatives
 - Fire Management Zones
 - Fire Management Units
- Goal of scoping is to ensure that early in the NEPA process, public, agency and NPS staff concerns are considered when developing the scope of the FMP EA.



Park Purpose

- Devils Postpile NM preserves and protects the glacially exposed columns of the Devils Postpile, the scenic Rainbow Falls, and the wilderness landscape of the upper Middle Fork San Joaquin River in the Sierra Nevada for scientific value, public interest, and inspiration.



Overview of the NPS NEPA Planning Process

Step 1: Define objectives and formulate concepts for alternatives.

Step 2: Initiate public scoping: closes Feb 16, 2018

Step 3: Refine alternatives and analyze environmental impacts .

Step 4: Prepare Draft Environmental Assessment

Step 5: Public review of Draft Environment Assessment.

Step 6: Analysis of public comments .

Step 7: Release Decision Document

Step 8: Prepare Fire Management Plan.

Devils Postpile National Monument

National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior
Devils Postpile National Monument,
California



Fire and Fuels Management Plan

Approved April 2005

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FMP Projects Since 2005:

- Mechanical thinning along road and in developed area of park
- Collaborated with Mammoth Lakes FD on improving defensible space around buildings in day use and administrative areas by
 - thinning trees
 - clearing duff /surplus materials
 - replacing wood roofs with metal
 - relocating hydrants

THEN.....

2011 Devils Windstorm!!

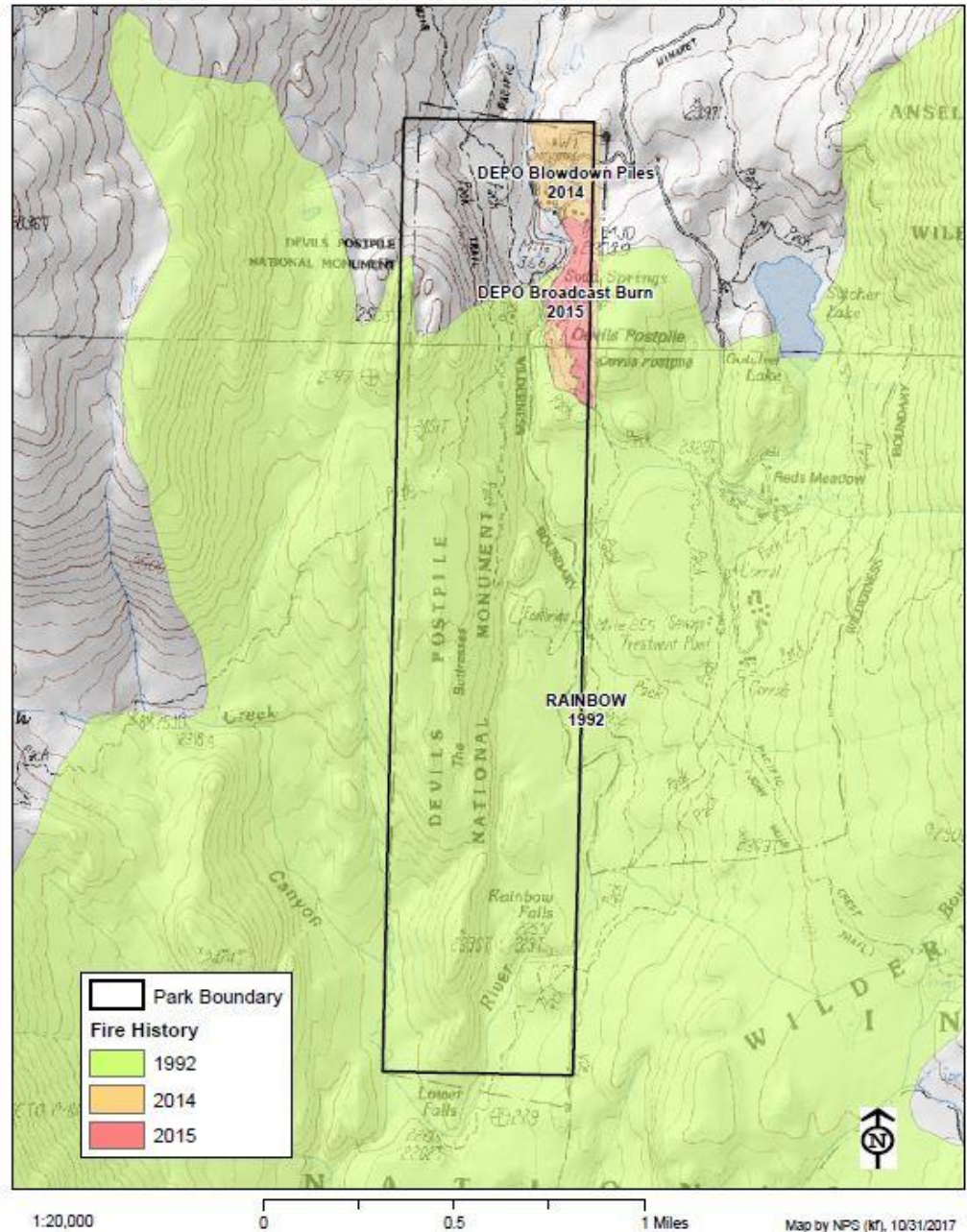


Devils Postpile National Monument - Fire History

**2011 Devils
Windstorm affected
approximately 25%
of trees in a
blowdown**

**Microbursts left
huge stacks of
downed trees**

**Required a
multipronged
response**



Progressive Response to Reduce Risk

2013 Pile Burning

Cutting, piling, curing and then burning the piles in winter



Oct 2015 USFS/NPS Interagency Prescribed Fuel Reduction Burn



Purpose and Need

- Existing plan is over 10 years old
- Changes to the environmental setting – blowdown
- Proposing fire and fuels management in designated wilderness
 - Update impacts
 - Update NEPA
 - Update NHPA
- Respond to the risk of wildfire
 - High concentrations of visitors during fire season
 - Vulnerable structures
 - Single road provides ingress/egress
- Respond to climate change and identify meadow refugia

. Opportunity to use a spatial format for the FMP.



Prepared by NPS Management Office
1000 N. Hwy. Management/14_Tenning/0806_0101.jpg

Fire Management Units– Map Sheet 1 of x

Notes: This map sheet is a component of the Fire Management Plan for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The map sheet covers approximately 100,000 acres of the park. The map sheet is a component of the Fire Management Plan for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The map sheet is a component of the Fire Management Plan for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

July 2012

Fire Management Unit Objectives

Interface Fire Management Unit (FMU 1)

The Interface Fire Management Unit has been established to address the interface between the park boundary and adjacent lands. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

FMU 1 Strategic Objectives

The management objectives for this unit are to address the fire risk to the park and the surrounding area. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Manage the resource with appropriate fire management objectives. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Identified fire will be used to meet national and cultural resource management objectives and to meet fire reduction activities.

Historical fire treatment methods may be used to meet fire reduction in areas where active fire effects are identified. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Resource benefit from fire is not a consideration during the initial active response process in FMU 1. The effects of suppression may be considered during the assessment phase.

Control problems and disturbance integration factors. Normal fire behavior is expected with fuels from the park and the surrounding area. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Values at Risk. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Disturbance where mechanical fuels have had reduction impacts has previously been completed. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Sanctuary natural resource areas, such as natural forest stands, old-growth, the Dale, Bull Run area, and Spring Lake. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Natural Zone Fire Management Unit (FMU 2)

The Natural Zone Fire Management Unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Natural Zone (FMU 2) Strategic Objectives

The management objectives for this unit are to address the fire risk to the park and the surrounding area. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Identified fire will be used to meet national and cultural resource management objectives and to meet fire reduction activities.

Historical fire treatment methods may be used to meet fire reduction in areas where active fire effects are identified. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Resource benefit from fire is not a consideration during the initial active response process in FMU 2. The effects of suppression may be considered during the assessment phase.

Control problems and disturbance integration factors. Normal fire behavior is expected with fuels from the park and the surrounding area. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

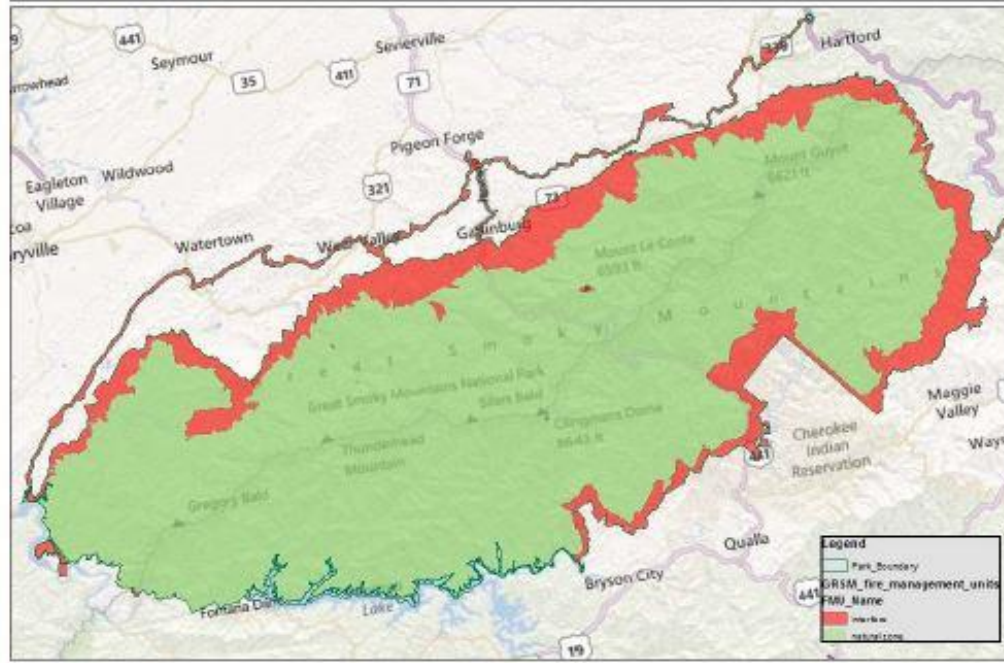
Values at Risk. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Area-wide Management Considerations

National Park Service policy requires the preservation of Park resources including those whenever possible. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Adjacent Cherokee lands. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

GRSM Fire Management Units



Author: D. Loveland / GRSM PMO
Data Source: 8/20/2012 7:10:02 PM

Elements of the Environment Affecting Fire Management

Further discussion of the elements that have influenced the fire risk in the park is provided in the Fire Management Plan. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Development and Facilities. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

Wildland-Urban Interface. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park. The unit covers approximately 100,000 acres in the park.

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Sheets provide easy reference for fire managers and firefighters.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park
Tennessee and North Carolina

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Management of Wildfires – Map Sheet 3 of x

Prepared by: NPS Management Office
NPS 1011A_Management/Planning/2010/10/16/10

July 2012

Management of Wildfires



Author: David L. Johnson, WPA/PSO
Date Revised: 02/05/11 by WPA/PSO

Management of Unplanned Ignitions

"Wildfire will be safely managed to enhance resource protection, avoid life and loss, and maintain the natural and cultural values of the park and its resources."

The park will manage the wildfire risk to the greatest extent possible. The park will use a variety of strategies to manage wildfire risk, including the use of prescribed fire, fire suppression, and other risk reduction strategies. The park will use a variety of strategies to manage wildfire risk, including the use of prescribed fire, fire suppression, and other risk reduction strategies.

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Interdisciplinary teams will assess potential impacts on park resources resulting from either wildfire or suppression activities. Critical facilities, where essential, will be located outside of natural and historic areas. Suppression teams will choose methods and equipment commensurate with suppression needs and a strategy that will also take the landscape and other park resources. Generalized guidelines are found in the Incident Response Handbook (IRH). For specific NPS guidelines see the Incident Response Handbook.

Initial Action

The Chief of Resources and other personnel responsible for providing initial response to wildfires in Great Smoky Mountains National Park will adjust natural resource area plans to address the wildfire.

"The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for implementing a strategy, if one is used, to manage the wildfire. The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for implementing a strategy, if one is used, to manage the wildfire."

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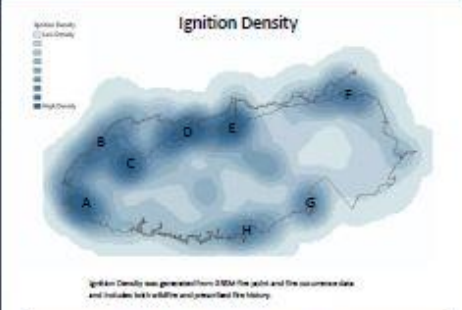
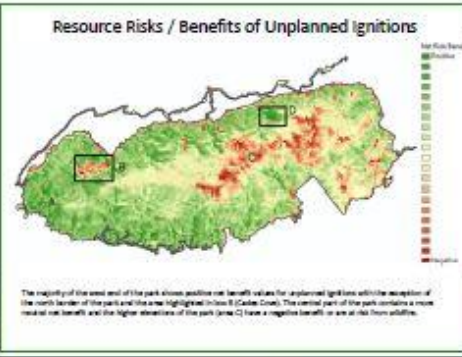
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Pre-Planned Wildfire Dispatch Action

Resource	Response Time	Response Method	Response Location
Fire Engine	15 minutes	Direct	Fire Station
Fire Engine	30 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	45 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	60 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	75 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	90 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	105 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	120 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	135 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	150 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	165 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	180 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	195 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	210 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	225 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	240 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	255 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	270 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	285 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station
Fire Engine	300 minutes	Indirect	Fire Station



Area Detail Operational Map Sets

The following map sheet pages contain detailed site information for the areas identified in the Ignition Density Map as having had an Increased Fire History.

Area Key	Area Name	Map Sheet
Area A	Clayton	Map Sheet 1A
Area B	Top of the Smoky (TOSM)	Map Sheet 1B
Area C	Cades Cove (CC)	Map Sheet 1C
Area D	Great Cane Valley (GCV)	Map Sheet 1D
Area E	Old Smoky (OS)	Map Sheet 1E
Area F	Clayton	Map Sheet 1F
Area G	Cades Cove (CC)	Map Sheet 1G
Area H	Clayton	Map Sheet 1H

Weather Stations: Great Smoky Mountains National Park maintains two permanent stations at the weather stations: one on the North Carolina side of the Park (Cades Cove) and one on the Tennessee side (Cades Cove). Temporary stations may be set up as needed for various prescribed fire projects.

National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) will monitor both when there is danger and long-term drought conditions. Drought severity is indicated using the US Drought Index (USDI) which represents the difficulty suppression teams will have in controlling the drought. Drought severity is indicated by the US Drought Index (USDI) which represents the difficulty suppression teams will have in controlling the drought. Drought severity is indicated by the US Drought Index (USDI) which represents the difficulty suppression teams will have in controlling the drought.

Proposed Fire Management Goals and Strategies

1. Manage all fire actions to reduce risk to the public and firefighters, and to protect monument development and infrastructure, and adjacent Forest and community resources.

- a. Provide an aggressive response to unwanted wildfire.
- b. Manage wildland fire incidents in accordance with accepted interagency standards using appropriate management strategies and tactics and maximize efficiencies through interagency coordination.

2. Protect park visitors, staff, and firefighters and reduce the risk to natural and cultural resources from unwanted wildfire.

- a. Reintroduce low to moderate intensity fire as a disturbance process through understory prescribed burning to mimic the past fire regime and reduce the likelihood of high intensity fires like the 1992 Rainbow Fire.
- b. Use mechanical treatments (thinning, piling, limbing) combined with prescribed fire to reduce fuel loads, reduce risk of high severity fire, restore natural fuel conditions, and restore a more natural fire regime.
- c. Manage wildland fire incidents in accordance with accepted interagency standards using appropriate management strategies and tactics and maximize efficiencies through interagency coordination.

3. Restore a more natural fire regime and forest structure to increase resilience to the effects of wildfire and other stressors.

- a. Use a combination of prescribed burning and mechanical treatments to reduce fuel loading and restore forest structure.
- b. Manage naturally ignited wildfire to increase ecosystem resilience, provide ecological benefits, reduce fuel loading, restore forest structure, and restore a more natural fire regime.
- c. Use prescribed fire or fuel treatments to reduce conifer encroachment in meadows.
Develop adaptive fire management strategies for managing Soda Springs Meadow as a meadow refugium.

Proposed Fire Management Goals and Strategies

4. Collaborate with Inyo National Forest staff to develop interagency strategies, where appropriate, and to develop valley-wide wildland fire and fuels management activities.
 - a. Develop an agreement with the Inyo National Forest fire program to clarify roles and responsibilities in wildland fire response and delegation of authority from NPS to USFS.
5. Maintain ecosystem resilience and allow for the ecological benefits of wildfire as lands transition to the Wildfire Maintenance Zone.
 - a. Complete restoration projects to restore forest structure and ecosystem resilience
6. Promote public understanding of fire management program and objectives.
 - a. Develop and publish interpretive material regarding wildland fire, prescribed fire, and fuels management activities for the public, the NPS workforce, and cooperating agencies.
7. Minimize or avoid unacceptable environmental impacts to natural and cultural resources from fire management operations.
 - a. Identify sensitive areas and outline mitigations to minimize impacts.
 - b. Utilize Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) to protect wilderness character and natural and cultural resources.

Proposed Fire Management Goals and Strategies

8. Minimize air quality impacts of fire management activities.

- a. Provide Air Quality Advisories during wildland and prescribed fire events to inform the public and employees about current and expected conditions, and health concerns.
- b. Work with Great Basin and San Joaquin Air Districts during all prescribed fire and managed wildfire operations to minimize smoke impacts.

9. Apply the best available science and monitoring to inform and prioritize fire and fuels management.

- a. Continue monitoring fire effects and forest regeneration plots.
- b. Continue long term meteorological monitoring.
- c. Continue monitoring particulate matter (PM2.5) during the summer months.
- d. Identify information gaps that hamper science-based decision making and solicit fire research to help fill these gaps.
- e. Investigate past and expected fire effects to better anticipate vegetation community change.
- f. Investigate the effects of fire on potential meadow refugia
- g. Investigate the effectiveness of fire or fuel treatments on reducing conifer encroachment in meadows.
- h. Investigate the effectiveness of fire type and timing on reducing invasive plants in meadows.

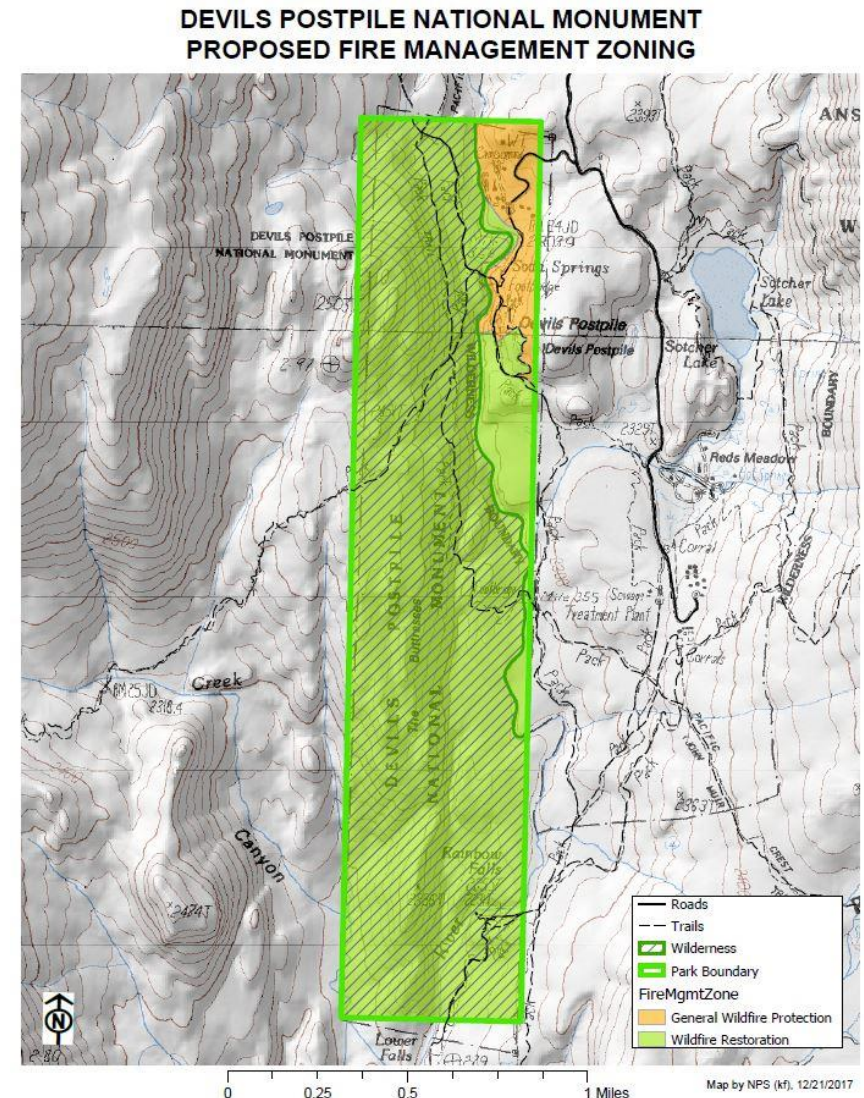
Proposed Fire Management Zones

Wildfire Protection Zone (Orange) is proposed for the developed area, and high density visitation area of the Postpile including the trails.

Wildfire Restoration Zone (Green) is for most of the monument, where the goal is to promote forest health through ecological structure as :

A healthy forest is more resistant to catastrophic fire and more resilient to medium/low intensity fire.

Restoration would reduce risks and be implemented with prescribed and/or managed fire that is shorter duration, lower smoke intensity than catastrophic fire.



More resistant to catastrophic fire

More resilient to moderate fire

Restoration would be implemented with prescribed and/or managed fire that is shorter duration, lower smoke intensity than catastrophic fire.



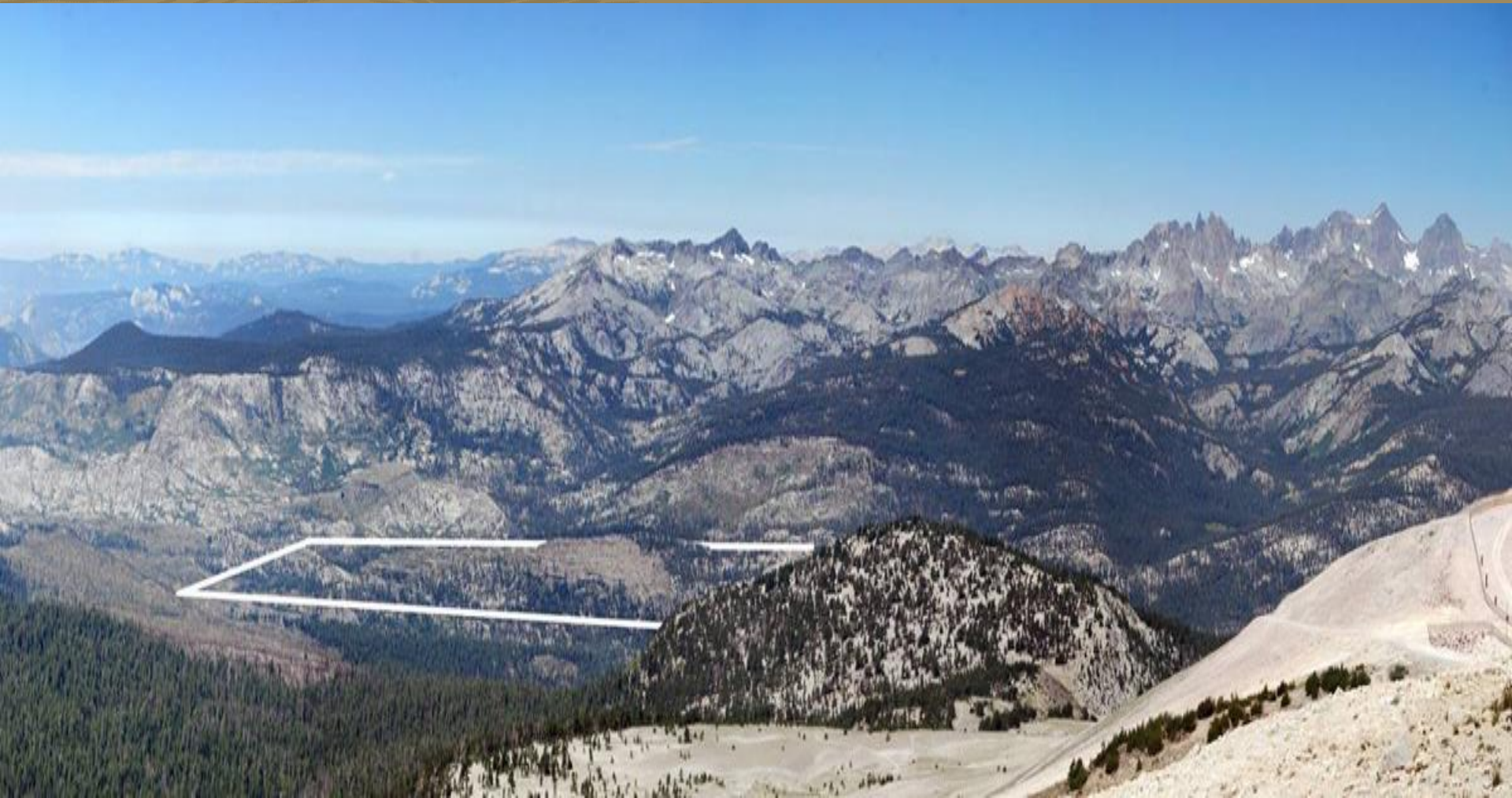
Devils Postpile National Monument -- Proposed Strategic Wildfire Zones

Zone Name	Goal	Park Resources	Fire Management Strategies	
			Wildfire	Fuels Management
P GENERAL WILDFIRE PROTECTION	Protect park visitors and reduce the risk to natural and cultural resources from unwanted wildfire.	Majority of park infrastructure, high visitor concentration, access roads, recreational resources, natural and cultural resources.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide an aggressive initial suppression response to wildfire. 2. Use wildfire on a limited basis to increase ecosystem resilience and provide ecological benefits when conditions allow. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use mechanical treatment and/or prescribed fire to reduce hazardous fuel loads.
R WILDFIRE RESTORATION	Restore a more natural fire regime and forest structure to increase resilience to the effects of wildfire.	Wilderness and non-wilderness forests, wildlife habitats, watersheds, riparian corridors, meadows, ecological processes, nationally significant trails, and cultural resources.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suppress unwanted wildfire. 2. Allow wildfires when conditions provide opportunities for fire management to increase ecosystem resilience and to provide ecological benefits. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use mechanical treatments combined with prescribed fire to reduce fuel loads and restore a more natural fire regime, and for management of special resources including Soda Springs and cultural resources.
M* WILDFIRE MAINTENANCE	Maintain ecosystem resilience and allow for the ecological benefits of wildfire.	Wilderness and non-wilderness forests, wildlife habitats, watersheds, riparian corridors, meadows, ecological processes, nationally significant trails, and cultural resources.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suppress unwanted wildfire when conditions warrant. 2. Use wildfire to maintain ecosystem resilience and provide ecological benefits when conditions allow. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use mechanical treatment combined with prescribed fire where necessary to reduce risk of damage from unwanted wildfires and/or maintain a natural fire regime.

***Note:** At present, no park lands are proposed for inclusion in the “Wildfire Maintenance Zone”. However, over the life of the Fire Management Plan, the intent is that some park lands currently in the “Wildfire Restoration Zone” would, following fire management treatments, transition to the “Wildfire Maintenance Zone” as ecological conditions in these areas come into conformance with more natural fire regimes. The Zone reassignment would occur once monitoring results, and resource specialists and park managers determine that those acres are sufficiently restored to tolerate wildfire as a primary management tool.

Proposed Zoning focus:

- Minimizing the probability of catastrophic fire**
- Reduce risks to manageable level**



Recognizing that Healthy Forests: More Resistant, More Resilient



Ways to Comment

Give us your comments on the scope of the FMP Environmental Assessment. During this initial “scoping” phase of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning process, the National Park Service (NPS) would like to know what issues you believe would be important to address in the environmental assessment to be prepared for the proposed update to the Fire Management Plan for Devils Postpile National Monument. Here are the choices for commenting:

- You may fill out this comment form and mail it back to us **or**
- You may fill in this same information online at the NPS Planning, Environmental and Public Comment website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/depofireplan> **or**
- You send a separate letter with your comments to Fire Management Plan, Devils Postpile NM, P.O. Box 3999, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546.

The comment period extends through February 16, 2018. We hope that you will remain involved throughout the planning process. Below are some questions to help you focus your comments:

1. **Are there specific issues, impact topics or questions that you feel should be addressed in the EA for the Fire Management Plan update?**
2. **Are there fire management strategies for the Monument you would add or change and why?**

Devils Postpile National Monument

Questions? Comment?



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