



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

1.A

To: Fire Management Office, Interior Regions 8, 9, 10, and 12
Attention: Regional Burned Area Emergency Response Coordinator

From: Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks CLAYTON JORDAN Digitally signed by CLAYTON JORDAN
Date: 2020.12.08 16:14:40 -08'00'

Subject: Castle and Rattlesnake Fires Emergency Stabilization Request

Please find attached an Emergency Stabilization plan for the Castle and Rattlesnake fires in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI). These fires were both ignited by lightning the week of August 16th. The Castle fire, which started on the Sequoia National forest burned onto park lands on September 13th. Ultimately, the Castle fire burned 170,643 acres of land, 19,460 of it within SEKI. The Rattlesnake fire burned 8,077 acres within the Kern River Canyon and associated drainages. These figures are based on October 26, 2020 fire perimeters, both fires continued to burn at the time of the assessment and the Rattlesnake continues to slowly advance at this time.

An inter disciplinary Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team, led by Jack Oelfke, and assisted by multiple members of the SEKI staff, performed an assessment of the fires' impacts and post-fire threats. Both fires within the park were contained primarily to areas managed as wilderness. Due to access restraints and continued fire activity the BAER team was not able to conduct much of their assessments in the field. As such, many of the emergency stabilization specifications include further assessments of the minor infrastructure and resources impacted.

The BAER team identified post-fire risks to public safety due to the fire, and treatments are proposed to mitigate these risks with a focus on trail and hazard tree work to make areas accessible and safe for park visitors again. Increased agency presence and gates have been identified as a need by the BAER team while the fire area remains closed. The biggest impact of the Castle fire was to the parks' natural resources. Eleven giant sequoia groves in SEKI, plus an additional spot fire in a twelfth, saw a mixture of fire severity much of which will be ecologically beneficial. Unfortunately, three groves (Homers Nose, Board Camp, and Dillonwood) experienced high severity patches that more than likely killed 470 monarch sequoias. Additionally, this area is also critical denning habitat for the Pacific Fisher and the plan includes emergency stabilization specifications to minimize further losses to this habitat.

As detailed in the plan, we request a total of \$432,277 to perform Emergency Stabilization actions on these fires for FY21 through FY23. In addition, there are 3 Burned Area Rehabilitation specifications totaling \$240,049 for FY22 through FY23. Paul Hardwick, Information Resources Branch Chief at SEKI, will serve as implementation leader for these efforts. Furthermore, these parks will be seeking partnerships and funding to assess the impacts to the sequoia groves and better understand how to lessen the effects of high severity fire burning into the groves.

Thank you for consideration and please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Clay Jordan
Attachment