



# FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## Yreka Interagency Coordination Center



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### Fires Bring New Opportunity for Forest Managers

Yreka, CA – Klamath National Forest firefighters are responding to several small fires throughout the Forest started by thunderstorms over the past two days. Currently none of the fires are over a half-acre and are not threatening structures. However, the Forest does have its' first ever "Wildland Fire Use" opportunity with the Island Fire located in the southeast area of the Marble Mountain Wilderness.

The fire is currently burning in a large snag, but may spread to the surrounding stands of trees. In fact, this is exactly what forest managers would like to see this fire do. "While this fire is very small right now, there is a large stand of trees nearby that if fire does get into it, flames could have a natural effect of thinning trees and burning of the debris accumulated on the forest floor," said Ray Haupt, Klamath National Forest Wildland Fire Use Coordinator. "We've waited for this opportunity for a number of years and it looks like our first experience is exactly the fire that we have hoped for."



The Island Fire, shown here on the morning of June 29<sup>th</sup>, is the first Wildland Fire Use event in the history of the Forest.

Wildland Fire Use is a management opportunity whereby forest managers can choose to manage a naturally ignited fire in order to provide for natural resource benefits. The management of a naturally ignited fire is designed to replicate fires that once burned across the landscape of our forested ecosystems. In accordance with ecosystem management, fire is a primary force of nature - fire shaped the vegetation in our forested ecosystems, dictating the types of plants and animals that would inhabit these areas. Management of a Wildland Fire Use event is much

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more complex than the commonly-used media created term "let burn" implies. "It is key to note that we go to great lengths to manage these events," added Haupt. "We assign resources to the Wildland Fire Use events just like we do for any other fire that occurs on the Forest."

Resources are assigned based on the level of work that is needed in order to keep the fire within the Maximum Managable Area (MMA). The MMA is a carefully designated boundary that the fire will be managed within. If the fire threatens to cross the MMA, full suppression activities are taken. Suppression activities are also taken if the fire begins to burn with a higher than desired level of fire intensity.

The Island Fire, just like all future Wildland Fire Use events, will be evaluated on a daily basis. Fire managers and resource specialists will continue to examine fire behavior, smoke conditions, the regional and national fire situation, and many other factors. If the situation changes, forest managers will determine whether to allow this fire to continue meeting resource benefits, or to declare it a wildland fire that needs an appropriate suppression response.

On the Klamath National Forest, the 227,000 acre Marble Mountains and the 12,000 acre Russian Wilderness Areas have been designated as areas where Wildland Fire Use is an option for forest managers. While three other wilderness areas exist on the Forest, further coordination and planning is necessary before these wilderness areas will be considered.

For further information about the Island Fire and Wildland Fire Use, please visit the Klamath National Forest web site at [www.fs.fed.us/r5/klamath](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/klamath).

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