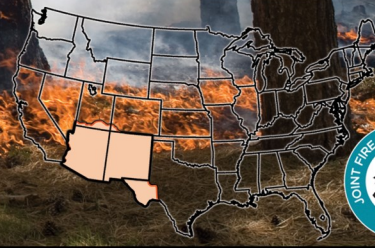




SOUTHWEST FIRE SCIENCE CONSORTIUM

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Slide Fire Suppression Effort

Due to its topographic variability, ruggedness and presence of water, Oak Creek Canyon is home to a large variety of tree and shrub species and wildlife (including Mexican spotted owl). It is also a popular recreation area for tourists and locals alike and for all of these reasons, fire within the canyon is extremely complex.

The Slide Fire started just north of Slide Rock State Park and was reported on May 20th at approximately 3:30pm. The fire was human-caused and is still under investigation. Initial response included local resources such as Sedona Fire Department, Hotshot crews, helicopters, air attack, and engines. A Type 3 Incident Commander was on site. 100 structures within the canyon were immediately threatened and residents were evacuated. By 7:30 that evening, approximately 100 fire personnel were on site and a Type 1 Incident Management Team was ordered.

On May 22nd, after the Type 1 Team arrived, due to the possibility of spread into a nearby drainage, Pumphouse Wash, pre-evacuations were ordered for two residential neighborhoods directly connected to it. Crews were able to prevent the fire's spread into Pumphouse Wash and evacuations were eventually lifted.

The Slide Fire could have been much more damaging, but pre-planning, forest thinning treatments, weather



Ariel view of the Slide Fire. Photo courtesy of USDA Forest Service.

Slide Fire At-A-Glance

Date: May 20, 2014 approximately 3:30pm

Cause: Human-caused

Total Size: 21,227 acres

Location: Oak Creek Canyon north of Slide Rock State Park and west rim side of Highway 89.

Vegetation types: chaparral, pinyon-juniper, ponderosa pine, some Douglas-fir on north-facing slopes, some riparian (wetland species).

Burn Severity	Acres	% of Area
High	3,115 acres	14%
Moderate	7,067 acres	32%
Low	10,415 acres	48%
Unburned	1,293 acres	6%



Effective use of defensible space created by a landowner. Photo courtesy of USDA Forest Service.

conditions, and effective use of “burnouts” allowed for no loss of life or property, no major injuries, and more than half of the fire falling into low severity or unburned categories according to the Burn Severity Reflectance Classification. Crews effectively mitigated fire intensity during “burnout” operations and much of the low severity fire is on top of the rim within the burnout areas. Not only were they able to contain the fire, but the areas that saw low intensity fire will be healthier and residents will be safer in the long run. Fire managers took full advantage of the opportunity to use fire that is beneficial while working within the parameters of safety, property and natural resource protection during this suppression event.

The Slide Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) assessment showed potential for damaging floods in the canyon and downstream as a result of the fire.