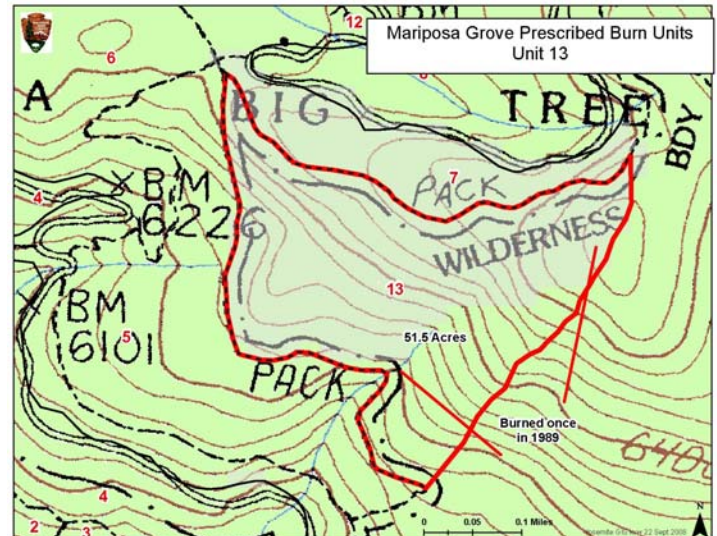
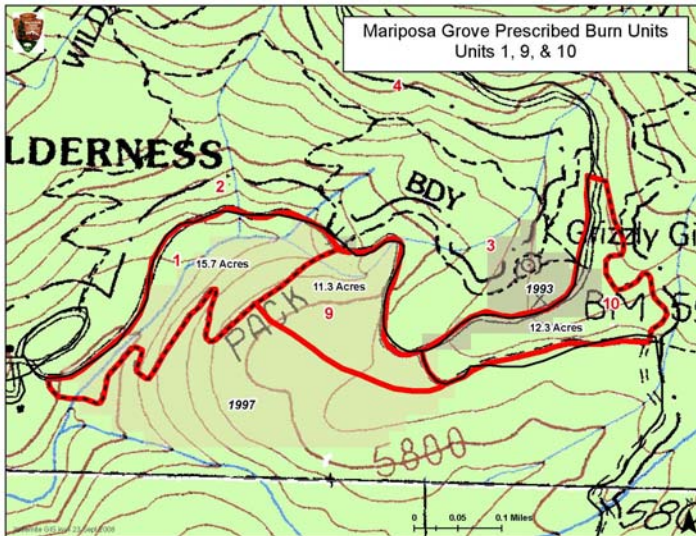




Mariposa Grove of the Giant Sequoias Prescribed Fire October 2, 2008 - Update



The National Park Service is conducting a prescribed fire in the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias. Weather and air quality is favorable and continues to allow for completion of this prescribed fire. It is anticipated that an additional day of ignition will be necessary through Friday, October 3, 2008. The Grove is located in the Wawona area of the Park and near the southern entrance gate, in Mariposa County. This burn consists of 4 units depicted above. Approximately 90 acres are planned to be burned. Fire Information Officers and Interpretive Rangers will be present daily to answer visitor questions.

Research indicates fires burned in Sequoia groves approximately every 10 years. The Giant Sequoias are adaptive to fire, with thick fire – resistant bark. Fire produces the optimum conditions for Giant Sequoia reproduction and propagation. Fires not only removes the accumulated layers of dead woody debris exposing nutrient rich mineral soil, but dries the cones allowing the seeds to shed. Fire also creates holes in the forest canopy while eliminating shade tolerant competition. Each of these units has been burned at least once, and are comprised primarily of White Fir and other mixed conifers. Fire Managers first began prescribed fire in the Groves in the early 1970's.

A number of trail closures are in affect and are flagged, and visitors are urged to use caution in the areas affected. Daily tram tours and access to the Grizzly Giant will continue. The museum is open at the top of the Grove. Visitors will experience diminished air quality due to smoke accumulations. Park fire managers will monitor smoke on a consistent basis. People with respiratory problems should use caution when exerting themselves in smoky areas.

Fire has a natural role in maintaining healthy ecosystems in Yosemite. Decades of fire suppression have altered the park's natural fire regime. The forests have become dense continuous stands of shrubs and trees increasing the risk of uncontrollable Wildland fires. Prescribed fire is designed to thin forests and reduce unnatural fuel loads in areas that are in close proximity to visitor use areas as well as public and private structures.

For further information:

- Yosemite's Fire Information Office: (209) 372-0480
- Yosemite's Prescribed Fire Office: (209) 375-9574 or 9576
- Yosemite Fire Management Website: <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/2008fire.htm>