

Kings Canyon to partially reopen Monday. Sequoia National Park likely to remain closed until 2022

By Joshua Yeager

Visalia Times-Delta, Friday, Oct. 15, 2021

Most of Kings Canyon National Park will reopen Monday after firefighters successfully contained the northern front of the still-active KNP Complex Fire, which has scorched 87,000 acres across California's sequoia country.

The announcement comes days after the Tulare County Sheriff's Office lifted evacuation orders for Grant Grove Village and Wilsonia, both located inside the famed park. The fire is 45% contained as of Friday afternoon.

Those wanting to visit Sequoia National Park will have to wait until at least 2022, park officials said. Firefighters and decades of prescribed fire saved General Sherman, the world's largest tree, but the KNP Complex severely damaged roadways and park infrastructure.

All developed areas of Sequoia National Park — including Giant Forest — will remain closed as a result, park officials said.

No running water will be available in Kings Canyon until its water systems are restored after damage caused by the KNP Complex. Visitors must bring enough water with them to meet their needs during their visit, Public Information Officer Rebecca Paterson said.

Restrooms with plumbing will also be closed until water lines are repaired. Portable restrooms will be available where there are no vault-style toilets.

Kings Canyon is initially opening for day use only. Camping will only be allowed in the park's wilderness areas. Rangers hope to open the popular Azalea Campground in Grant Grove in time for winter.

There is no timeframe for when Sequoia National Park may welcome visitors back, Paterson said. With fire still actively burning in many areas of the park, teams have not been able to assess the extent of the damages the KNP Complex has caused.

Park leadership hopes to have a reopening timeframe by mid-November. Sequoia will likely remain closed until at least January 2022, officials said. Landslides and dead trees falling on the roadway are key concerns that will have to be addressed before the park can open to the public, Paterson said.

"We are acutely aware that local communities rely on national park visitors to support their economies and countless livelihoods. When the parks are closed, this leaves many without or with a drastically reduced source of income," said Clay Jordan, the parks' superintendent, in a news release.

He added that park employees live in gateway communities and are personally invested in their success.

"We are extremely motivated to mitigate this crisis and reopen the parks as soon as it is possible to do so responsibly," he said.

These areas will reopen Oct. 18

- Big Stump Entrance Station on Highway 180
- The majority of Grant Grove, including the General Grant Tree
- Kings Canyon Visitor Center Information Desk (exhibits, shop, and theater remain closed)
- Cedar Grove
- Kings Canyon Wilderness except for Redwood Canyon
- Areas east of the Great Western Divide in the Sequoia National Park Wilderness
- South Fork in the Sequoia National Park Wilderness

The following areas and services will remain closed:

- All areas south of the intersection between Highway 180 and the Generals Highway, including Redwood Canyon
- All Grant Grove concessions including restaurant, market, lodging, and gift shop
- All NPS campgrounds in Cedar Grove and Grant Grove
- Park Ridge Trail
- Big Stump Picnic Area

High winds hit Tracy

By Press Staff Report

Tracy Press, Oct. 14, 2021

High winds rocked Northern California sending clouds of dirt into the skies above Tracy, knocking down trees and branches and fueling grass fires in the area.

The National Weather Service monitoring station in Stockton recorded an average wind speed of 20.9 mph on Monday with a high wind speed of 36 mph with gusts up 47 mph.

A wind advisory warning was in place through Tuesday afternoon as high winds were expected through the northern San Joaquin valley.

A Red Flag Warning was in place for much of Northern California including the northern section of the San Joaquin Valley below 1,000 feet with the combination of dry conditions, high winds and low humidity.

The high winds prompted Pacific Gas & Electric Co. to conduct a Public Safety Power Shutdown affecting 20 counties.

Power was turned off from Monday to about 25,000 customers with the outage expected to last in some areas through Thursday.