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Chadrad Communications, Inc.
226 Bordeaux St - Chadron, NE 69337
308-432-5545 fax 308-432-5601
E-mail: kcsr@chadrad.com



(Neb)-Rankin Fire At Wind Cave NP Now At 500 Acres



By: John Axtell Posted at: 09/13/2017 02:30 AM

WIND CAVE N.P. - Firefighters from multiple agencies are continuing to work toward containing a lightning-caused fire burning since Monday afternoon in the northern part of Wind Cave National Park, east of Highway 87 and south of road NPS 5 about a mile south-southwest of the Highland Creek Trailhead

Wind Cave Chief of Interpretation Tom Farrell says the Rankin Fire was estimated at about 500-acres last night with no estimate on the amount of containment.

Farrell says the fire is burning toward the south in steep, rocky terrain...fueled by grass and timber. A Type III incident management team is overseeing the work of approximately 85 firefighters and support staff, including a single-engine aerial tanker.

Crews yesterday used roads, trails, and a mow line to successfully conduct a burn-out operation to aid line construction and increase the safety of firefighters.

Farrell says the only current fire-related closures are the northern segment of NPS 5 and all backcountry hiking trails north of Wind Cave Canyon. The park visitor center remains open on its regular early fall hours.

Wind Cave Superintendent Vidal Davila says September and October are historically the time of the biggest fires in the park, so officials are encouraging everyone to be extra cautious with their outdoor activities during the hot and dry condition.

The Rankin Fire is one of 6 burning in the region, all caused by lightning. In South Dakota, the East 40 Wildfire near Badlands National Park was contained yesterday at 152 while the #6 fire on Slim Buttes Road mile south of Highway 18 is in mop-up with no current size estimate,

In northwest Nebraska, the Rock Wildfire 7 miles south of Crawford was contained at 2.6-acres while quick response controlled the Coffee Wildfire near Sioux County at a tenth of an acre. The Pasture 16 Wildfire 22-miles northwest of Crawford was listed at 51 miles late yesterday afternoon.