



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon
National Parks

47050 Generals Hwy.
Three Rivers, CA 93271

559 565-3341 phone
559 565-3730 fax

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Sintia Kawasaki-Yee, Chief of Communications

Phone Number: (559) 679-2866

E-mail: Sintia_Kawasaki-Yee@nps.gov

Social Media: @SequoiaKingsNPS

National Park Service Requests Public Input on Project to Plant Giant Sequoia Seedlings in Area Burned at High Severity in the 2020 Castle Fire within Sequoia National Park

SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS, Calif. February 22, 2022 – The National Park Service (NPS) is seeking public comment on a project to plant seedlings of giant sequoia within groves that sustained a significant loss of trees and their associated seeds and cones during the 2020 Castle Fire in Sequoia National Park.

The 2020 Castle Fire burned through 22 giant sequoia groves and burned 9.7% of the entire range of giant sequoias at high severity. In particular, three giant sequoia groves within Sequoia National Park: Board Camp, Upper Dillonwood, and Homer's Nose sustained contiguous acres of high severity fire which removed 75-100% of the overstory tree cover and killed a significant amount of monarch sequoia trees. The grove most heavily impacted was Board Camp Grove, a 48-acre grove of giant sequoia mixed conifer forest in steep remote wilderness within Sequoia National Park. Due to the loss of mature overstory sequoia trees in this grove and the short dispersal distance of sequoia seeds (600 feet), the NPS believes Board Camp Grove has a very low likelihood of recovering giant sequoia tree cover without management intervention.

In order to give sequoias the opportunity to re-establish to a similar density within these centuries old groves, the NPS is proposing to plant sequoia seedlings in Board Camp Grove as a pilot project in fall 2022. While most of these seedlings would be grown from sequoia cones collected from Board Camp and nearby groves, a small number of seedlings from seed collections held by a United States Forest Service nursery in Placerville would be planted in a select area to test for potential benefits of including drought-adapted sequoia seedlings.

The proposed action includes growing sequoia seedlings from collected seed, transporting the seedlings to the remote Board Camp Grove via helicopter, and planting 12,000 sequoia seedlings in the fall, just prior to winter precipitation. Given the location, roughly seven miles off-trail in remote wilderness, watering and post-planting care is not planned at this time. Seedlings would be monitored for percent of survivorship the following fall, and if deemed successful, the NPS would consider planting additional seedlings the following year. The NPS anticipates that planting would occur in October 2022 and may occur again in 2023.

To obtain supplemental information about the proposed project, or to provide comments, please visit the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/SEKIBoardCampSequoiaRestoration2022>.

Written comments may be sent via mail or hand-delivery to:

Superintendent
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
Attn: Board Camp Restoration Project
47050 Generals Highway
Three Rivers, CA 93271

All written comments about this project must be transmitted, postmarked, or hand-delivered by March 25, 2022. Comments that provide insights about the current proposed action and potential mitigations are particularly helpful.

Interested parties can also participate in a virtual public Teams Live meeting on Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. PST. For additional information about the virtual meeting visit the PEPC project website listed above.

Following the public comment period, the NPS will analyze and consider all feedback, will modify and evaluate the proposed action as appropriate, and will move toward finalizing environmental reviews in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and other applicable laws and policies.

If you have any specific questions regarding this proposal, please contact Elly Boerke, Environmental Protection Specialist, at (559) 579-0046.



An aerial image of Board Camp in Sequoia National Park, taken from a helicopter, reveals a forest stand that burned at high intensity during the 2020 Castle Fire, resulting in 100% tree mortality in places. *NPS Photo*

-NPS-

About Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

These two parks, which lie-side-by-side in the southern Sierra Nevada in Central California, serve as a prime example of nature's size, beauty, and diversity. Over 2 million visitors from across the U.S. and the world visit these parks for the world's largest trees (by volume), grand mountains, rugged foothills, deep canyons, vast caverns, the highest point in the lower 48 states, and more. Learn more at <http://www.nps.gov/seki> or 559-565-3341.

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