

Wildland Fire Use in the Smokies Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee / North Carolina National Fire Plan – Rehabilitation

The lightning ignited Chilly Springs Wildland Fire Use (WFU) incident began on April 4, 2006. The fire burned a total of 913 acres over the course of two weeks in an area southwest of Cades Cove in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Three inches of rain within a 24-hour period effectively extinguished the fire.

Fire is a natural ecological process in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Fire allows the forest to be thinned, opening the canopy and allowing sunlight for sprouting and re-growth of plants, shrubs, and trees. Fire also allows recycling of nutrients to the soil while reducing the amount of dead, woody debris.

The Chilly Springs WFU is significant in that it is the largest Wildland Fire Use event, not only in the history of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, but also in all of the southern Appalachian Mountains.

Specialized resources assigned to the fire included a Fire Use Manager and Trainee, Fire Use Modules, and a Long Term Fire Behavior Analyst. Partner agencies included the Cherokee National Forest.

The Great Smoky Mountains wildland fire use program first started in 1998 with the 370 acre Forney Creek Fire. Since then the park has had Wildland Fire Use incidents ranging from 550 acres to an individual snag burning for over one month.

Contact: Mark Taylor, Fire Management Officer
Phone: (865) 436-1247



Aerial view of Chilly Springs Wildland Fire Use.



Fire backing through pink oak west of Parson High Top.



Burn mosaic along perimeter below Lynn Gap.