

2001 Hoover Fire, Yosemite National Park

Lightning on July 10th ignited the Hoover fire located in the Illilouette Basin. Several large Wildland fire use fires have burned in this area over the past 20 years. The Illilouette Basin is characterized by large granite outcroppings interspersed with open brush fields, stringer meadows, and Jeffrey pine, red fir and lodgepole forests. Brush species include manzanita, chinquapin and Ceanothus dominating small patches less than 20 acres. The Jeffrey pine forests are typically open with large trees, relatively few smaller diameter trees, occasional brush and areas of decomposed granite. Dense thickets of small diameter trees, heavy fuel loadings, and heavy canopy cover characterize the red fir and lodgepole pine forests. Occasional brush and very little herbaceous cover comprise the forest floor.

Elevations of the fire perimeter range from 7100'-8800' with most active burning and significant growth occurring in the 7200-8000' range. Four creeks, Illilouette, Buena Vista, Red and the Clark Fork of the Illilouette run through the burn area.

The fire was monitored from the air until late July when it was staffed with monitors. By August 13, the fire had only grown to 160 acres with only low to moderate fire behavior. On August 17th, humidities dropped into the single digits and winds that had been typically out of the SW came from the SE and pushed the fire downslope increasing the size to nearly 800 acres. On August 18, SE winds and low humidities continued and the fire grew another 1100 acres. On August 19th, the fire grew another 2200 acres and a National Fire Use Team arrived and took over management of the fire. August 20th, the fire grew 1100 acres but only grew 300 on August 21st. From August 22 – mid September, the fire grew 300 acres a day on average. Yosemite Fire Management took over again when the Fire Use Team left the park on September 6. Activity was minimal in late September and October with the shorter days, cooler temperatures, some rainfall and higher humidities. The Hoover was declared officially out on November 15 after significant snow and rainfall. Total acreage was 9,126 with a cost of about \$800,000.

Illilouette creek drains directly into Yosemite Valley causing smoke to pour into the valley at night. In order to mitigate this problem, crews began cutting line August 18th on the northwestern edge of the fire to stop the fire from spreading further down the drainage. About 1 mile of line was cut for smoke mitigation on the northwestern flank but no other suppression actions were implemented. The line was rehabilitated in late October.