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Route To: (Resource Specialists)

Subject: Clarification of Targhee RFP Wildland Fire Use Direction in Mgt Prescription Areas 2.6.2 and 5.1.x

To: District Rangers, Branch Chiefs

During development of the Wildland Fire Use Guidebooks, there have been several questions regarding application of wildland fire use in specific management prescription areas. This letter clarifies the intent of the direction in several management prescriptions, 2.6.2, 5.1, 5.1.3, and 5.1.4.

The RFP is generally permissive unless specific activities are curtailed or not allowed by forestwide guidance or management prescription guidance. At the time the 1997 RFP was adopted, the term wildland fire use had not been coined. The RFP, however, does have goals to use prescribed fire and managed natural fire “to achieve desirable soil and habitat characteristics, improve forest health, and create or maintain diversity in vegetative structure, composition, and patterns” and to “restore fire as an ecological process”. There are no standards or guidelines specific to wildland fire use or managed natural fire. However, the RFP does contain direction to use vegetation treatments that “emulate natural ecological processes to maintain or restore properly functioning ecosystems”. (RFP, III-6 and III-12)

Management Prescription 2.6.2: Grizzly Bear Core Area

The primary emphasis for this prescription is to provide secure habitat for grizzly bears. The prescription direction does not mention managed natural fire or wildland fire use. There are two standards for fire in Rx 2.6.2, one which prohibits prescribed fire and one that states “in the event of a fire that warrants suppression, only minimum impact suppression techniques will be allowed.” This implies that there are fires that do not warrant suppression. The prescription also contains an objective to develop a fire management plan in coordination with any adjacent wilderness fire plans to address wildfires. The Jedediah Smith Wilderness Fire Management Plan (1997), allows managed natural fires. (RFP, III-99)

Since the prescription direction does not prohibit managed natural fire or wildland fire use, it can be applied in this prescription area as described in the Wildland Fire Use Guidebook.

Management Prescriptions 5.1, 5.1.3, 5.1.4: Timber Management

The primary emphasis for these prescriptions is on scheduled wood-fiber production and use. Goals are to manage the lands to promote the production of commodity and noncommodity resources. The prescriptions also contain goals to “establish fire