

# NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service Pacific  
Umatilla National Forest

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541-278-3722 (Joani Bosworth, Public Affairs)

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## **UMATILLA NATIONAL FOREST IMPLEMENTS FALL PRESCRIBED BURNING PLAN**

"Cooler temperatures and scattered rain showers have improved forest conditions enough to begin implementing the Umatilla National Forest's fall prescribed burning program," announces Brian Goff, Deputy Fire Staff Officer. Forest visitors can expect to encounter prescribed burning activities this fall and need to be cautious when hunting or camping near a treatment area.

Prescribed burning is highly dependant on weather conditions. "Conditions have to be within a narrow window in order to use prescribed fire," said Goff. "Wind speed and direction, temperatures, relative humidity, and fuel moistures are all taken into consideration." Fall and spring weather provide the best conditions for prescribed burning: moist soil, dry material and cooler temperatures. The fall prescribed burning program should be completed by the end of November.

Prescribed burns are used to achieve several goals. Most often the goal is to reduce the risk of intense wildfire by reducing dead fuel accumulation. "Our experience has shown that, in areas where prescribed burning has taken place, wildfires are more likely to stay in the surface fuels, close to the ground, and out of the tree crowns," said Goff. Prescribed burning is also used to significantly lower the risks that wildland fires represent to local communities.

The fall burn program includes burning both activity fuels and natural fuels. Activity fuels, such as "slash piles," are the non-merchantable material that remains after harvest activities. Natural fuels are the normal accumulation of dead and down material. Natural fuel burns, or "landscape burns," are low intensity burns and can sometimes take weeks to complete.

All prescribed burning will comply with federal, state, and local air quality and smoke dispersal guidelines to reduce the impacts of smoke on forest visitors and local residents.

"Now that weather conditions have changed, the public can expect to see several public land management agencies taking advantage of good burn days," said Goff. In addition to the Umatilla National Forest, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest will also implement a fall prescribed burn program. The Oregon Department of Forestry has suspended their regulated closure. Burning permits are required and will only be issued through their offices on a case-by-case basis.

For more information concerning the Umatilla National Forest Prescribed Burning program, contact Brian Goff in Pendleton at (541) 278-3748 or one of the following Ranger District contacts:

--Brian Spradlin	Heppner Ranger District	(541) 676-9187
--Mark Johnson	Walla Walla Ranger District	(509) 522-6290
--Scott McDonald	North Fork John Day Ranger District	(541) 427-3231
--Steve Carlson	Pomeroy Ranger District	(509) 843-1891

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