



Flathead National Forest

Media Release

September 11, 2006

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Paint Emery Prescribed Burn Planned

The Hungry Horse District of the Flathead National Forest is planning to manage up to 4,000 acres of the Paint Emery Project with prescribed fire this week. If conditions are suitable, such as the weather, burning conditions and available resources, the forest plans to initiate the burn Tuesday or Wednesday, September 12 or 13. The location of the burn is on the east side of the Hungry Horse Reservoir and adjacent to the Great Bear Wilderness, extending south from Mount Murray to the Paint Creek area. A column of smoke will be visible across the Flathead Valley and East Glacier area. Smoke is anticipated to be visible until significant long-duration moisture is received, which is predicted for the area on Thursday or Friday. The area of the project is comprised of high elevation forest and shrubs. There are no trails and roads in the planned burn area

Hungry Horse District Ranger Jimmy DeHerrera said, “Now is the time for us to be successful with this type of prescribed burn. Our window of opportunity is limited for this project, and the recent observed fire behavior on local fires and the significant moisture predicted later this week provides a window.”

DeHerrera continued, “We have been very successful in the last few years using prescribed fire as a management tool, burning approximately 3,000 acres to date on the east side of the reservoir with the Paint Emery Resource Management Project.” The environmental assessment on the project was completed in 1999 and included stream, fisheries and road improvements, timber harvest activities, road decommissioning, as well as approximately 7,000 acres to be managed with prescribed fire. Flathead Common Ground, a diverse collaborative group, provided input to the Forest Service on this project.

The objectives of the burn are for wildlife and ecosystem management. Forage will be enhanced for wildlife. The burn will recreate a mosaic vegetative pattern and rejuvenate the area. Fuel loading and tree densities will be reduced.

Aerial ignition will be used on this project. A helitorch attached to a helicopter will ignite the vegetation. This project does not impact resources for fire suppression efforts on the forest, region or nation. Due to the wildland fire activity across the nation, permission to conduct this burn was requested from the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC). The forest is working with the Montana State Department of Environmental Quality to follow state air quality guidelines.

Hunters- please be aware of fire activity across the forest. Hunters are encouraged to call a local forest service office prior to traveling to the forest for updated information.

MEDIA ONLY- if interested in photo or video opportunities, or interviews, please contact Denise Germann at 249-1714. It is anticipated that between 1-3pm Tuesday or Wednesday, a viewing vantage point will be available.

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