

# Ochoco and Deschutes National Forests and Prineville District, Bureau of Land Management

## Office of Communications

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News and Information  
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### Spring Prescribed Burning Season is Starting in Central Oregon

CENTRAL OREGON - Central Oregon's federal land management agencies (the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and the Prineville District of the Bureau of Land Management) have initiated this year's prescribed fire and mechanical treatment hazardous fuels reduction program. Approximately 55,000 acres of public lands within a 4.5 million acre land base have been targeted for fuels reduction treatment in FY 09. Of those acres, the total approximate acreage targeted for prescribed burning is 29,000 acres. The remainder will be treated through mechanical methods such as thinning, mowing and piling.

"Our primary lesson learned from the Wizard Fire, is to ensure that existing procedures are properly followed, delegations of authority are clear, and responsibilities such as patrolling and monitoring are understood," said Central Oregon Fire Managements Services (COFMS) Staff Officer Chris Hoff.

A prescribed fire is one intentionally ignited to meet specific land management objectives, such as reintroducing the natural cycle of fire into the ecosystem, reducing hazardous fuels on public lands and improving wildlife habitat. These public safety and natural resource-based objectives help to protect communities and private property that lie adjacent to public lands while helping to restore and reinvigorate the health of our forests and rangelands.

How and when a prescribed burn can be successfully conducted is influenced by many conditions, such as type of vegetation, moisture levels of vegetation, topography, temperature, wind speed and humidity. Detailed burn plans are prepared by fuels specialists prior to any ignitions occurring. In the burn plans, all of the above factors, among many others, are considered. Fuels specialists maintain a lengthy list of potential burns to ignite each season. Burn prescriptions are very specific to appropriate local weather conditions and specialists must light burns during short "windows" of opportunity. The primary consideration that never changes in any prescribed burn plan is firefighter and public safety.

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Prescribed burning is implemented during optimal weather conditions at times that favor the best smoke dispersal possible, in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Forestry Smoke Management Program.

Spring burning generally runs from April through May, weather permitting. When burning is in progress, signs are posted along nearby roads. When smoke reduces visibility, motorists are advised to reduce speeds, turn on headlights and proceed with caution. Hunters and recreationists should avoid recently burned areas, as timber can weaken and fall and stump holes will likely cause burns if stepped in. Prescribed burning is discontinued during fire season and starts back up again in the fall, running from September through October on Prineville BLM lands and October-November on the Deschutes & Ochoco National Forests.

COFMS has prepared detailed maps showing all the project areas on public lands identified for fuels treatment in FY09. The maps will be available soon on the Deschutes & Ochoco National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon>

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