

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service Pacific

Northwest Region

Umatilla National Forest

Visit us at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/news.htm>



2517 SW Hailey Ave, Pendleton, OR 97801
541-278-3722 (Joani Bosworth, Public Affairs)

April 23, 2009

UMATILLA NATIONAL FOREST ANNOUNCES SPRING PRESCRIBED BURNING PLAN

Pendleton, OR: Umatilla National Forest Managers are hoping to complete their spring prescribed burning plan but the weather is not cooperating. “The snowpack from this winter is holding on and unsettled weather spring weather is significantly limiting opportunities for prescribed burning,” said Dale Boyd, Acting Deputy Fire Staff. Much of the Umatilla National Forest is still under snow and unavailable for both access and burning.

Opportunities to prescribed burn are highly dependant upon weather conditions and the potential for undesirable smoke conditions. “Conditions have to be within specific parameters in order to use prescribed fire,” said Boyd. Wind speed and direction, temperatures, relative humidity, and fuel moistures are all taken into consideration. “There are only a few days during the spring and fall that meet all the criteria for prescribed burning in a particular area,” said Boyd. When conditions allow, ignition will be done by hand crews with drip torches.

Prescribed burns are used to achieve several goals. While some burns are prescribed for the purpose of reintroducing fire into fire-dependent ecosystems, most burns are prescribed to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire by reducing dead fuel accumulation, rearranging fuel accumulations and modifying the live vegetation in the area.

This year’s spring burn program consists of both activity fuels and natural fuels landscape burns. Activity fuels such as “slash piles” contain the non-merchantable material remaining after harvest operations. These burns also reduce potential fire hazards and prepare the area for reforestation. Removing slash will stimulate plant growth for wildlife forage and reduce fuel accumulations. Landscape burning reduces the buildup of naturally occurring dead fuels in a specific area.

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

“Fire is a natural disturbance process in the Blue Mountains. Allowing fire to play a more active role can help to restore and stabilize forest conditions,” said Boyd.

For more information concerning the Umatilla National Forest Prescribed Burning program, contact Brian Goff in Pendleton (541) 278-3748. For information about specific Ranger Districts, the following persons may be contacted:

--Scott Wryn	Heppner RD	(541) 676-9187
--Scott McDonald	North Fork John Day RD	(541) 427-3231
--Steve Carlson.....	Pomeroy RD	(509) 843-4633
--Brett Thomas.....	Walla Walla RD	(509) 522-6284

Schedule of Spring 2009 Prescribed Burns

The Umatilla National Forest will soon begin work on the following spring program of prescribed burning as favorable weather conditions become available: (Editors, please use the information relevant to your area.)

Heppner Ranger District Prescribed Burn Plan includes:

- 2,300 acres in the Rimrock Project Area, approximately 9 miles NW of Monument, OR in the Sunflower Flat area.
- 500 acres in the Wildhorse Timber Sale area, approximately 9 miles NE of Spray, Near Bull Prairie Campground.

North Fork John Day Ranger District Prescribed Burn Plan includes:

- 300 acres in the Western Route Project Area, approximately 10 miles west of Ukiah, OR.
- 1,500 acres in the Meadow Brook Summit area, approximately 10 miles South of Dale.

Pomeroy Ranger District Prescribed Burn Plan includes:

- 150 acres in the Upper Charlie Creek Drainage, approximately 18 miles South of Pomeroy.

Walla Walla Ranger District Prescribed Burn Plan includes:

- 350 acres in the Lower Sheep project Area, approximately 8 miles North of Palmer Junction.