



News from the Forest Service

Edited on: February 24, 2006



WILDLAND FIRE SEASON IS HERE!



Some Key Messages from the Regional Forester

Based on our dry winter and projections for continued dry weather over much of the Southwest, it is shaping up to be a very dangerous fire year. However, the root of the problem is unnaturally dense and unhealthy forests and woodlands created as a result of effective fire suppression over most of the last century. The Forest Service and its federal, tribal, and state agency partners are working to restore forest conditions so that fire can once again play the role of ecosystem “restorer” rather than catastrophic destroyer across the Southwestern landscape.

To accomplish this, our near-term efforts are focused in three areas. First, to reduce the amount of fuel in forests immediately adjacent to communities. Second, to help create a more conducive environment for the success of businesses that can use the mostly smaller-diameter material that must be removed, thereby reducing the cost of forest restoration. Third, to put into place fire management plans that identify where and under what conditions we can allow naturally ignited fires to burn to produce the desired environmental results—avoiding the “double jeopardy” of spending scarce resource to put out fires that would help meet our restoration objectives. Wildfires not meeting these criteria will be aggressively suppressed to limit threats to life, property, and natural resources. We will pre-position firefighting resources to those areas where the risks are greatest.

Protection of our forests and adjacent communities is dependent upon assistance from the public. Those living in forests and shrub lands need to take actions on their own lands to reduce fire risk. (Information on the simple steps necessary can be found on the Internet at <http://www.firewise.org>. Those visiting public lands need to exert extreme care in disposal of cigarettes, not parking their vehicles over dry vegetation, and in operation of equipment that may generate sparks.

If dry conditions persist, we expect to make more extensive use than usual this year of area closures and restrictions to reduce the risk of human-caused wildfires. We recognize the impacts these closures and restrictions create, so we doubly appreciate the great cooperation we get from the public.

- For Fiscal Year 2006, the Forest Service has \$690 million appropriated for fire suppression and an additional \$394 million for emergency supplemental funding of fire suppression.

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Please take note that the Coconino National Forest and the Tonto National Forests have already gone into area restrictions along the Mogollon Rim. This was prompted by the recent February fire, the extreme behavior that it exhibited and very dry conditions.

Please call us at 477-2518 if you have further questions.

If You Are Concerned About the Health of Your Trees READ THIS!

By Darryl Atchison, Fire Prevention and Education Specialist

Our trees, shrubs and bushes will be put to the test of survival this year. Unfortunately some of the larger older ponderosa pines will not have a very good chance of surviving the drought. Nature has once again decided there are too many trees for this Southwestern landscape to support. Nature's first tool to kill trees is DROUGHT. Dr. Tom DeGomez who is Northern Arizona's forest health expert spoke last week encouraging property owners to start watering your trees. He recommended not to water the trees at the trunk of the tree but beyond the canopy drip line where the feeder roots lay. A good rule of thumb is one gallon of water per foot of tree height, if possible do this several times a week. If you can not afford to use that amount of water than you must consider the alternative, thin your trees again.

A second tool that Nature will be using this year to kill your trees will be the bugs. They're back! Bark Beetles boring into your trees, along with caterpillars which build white web tents in the tops of some pine trees. The best way to protect your trees from bark beetles is to water or thin them. When you thin them leave approximately 8—10 feet of space between the trunks. Caterpillars are not so easy to remove due to their height in the trees. I have used a straight stream of hot water to kill and knock them out of the nest. If you can not reach them it is possible they may kill or deform the tops of the trees.

The third tool Nature will use this year and has already begun to use, is fire. This is already proving to be a most horrific fire season. We have already begun to experience wildfires on a weekly basis, some being caused by carelessly tossed cigarettes! To protect your trees from fire, thin them and prune the branches at least 6 to 8 feet from the ground.



This year is going to prove the test of all of our preventative efforts here at Blue Ridge. Those wise home owners who have prepared will have a far better chance of surviving this years fire season. For more information contact Darryl Atchison at Blue Ridge Ranger Station, 928-477-2255.



William (Bill) M. Pascoe, 81

. . . Passed peacefully on January 24, 2006. Bill was a model American Patriot. Having joined the United States Marine Corps at the age of 16, he faithfully served his country in World War II with a Marine Detachment aboard the USS Saratoga. Proud to be an American, Bill fought in the Korean War. He recruited for the Corps until his separation from service in 1962. Bill attempted to re-enlist in 1964 to serve in Vietnam. Bill played a vital role in the production of the movie "The Sands of Iwo Jima" and was cast as a part of the landing troops. Bill entered the private business sector in sales of mechanical and plumbing supplies for a firm in Phoenix. In later life, Bill served his country as a volunteer for the U.S. Forest Service. He warmed many a campfire on the Prescott and Coconino National Forests where as a camp ground host he attended to the many details with keeping a camp ground presentable for the public. He dodged high waters during a flood in the 90's while at Clear Creek Campground east of Camp Verde. Later, he moved north to the Long Valley and Blue Ridge Ranger Districts hosting a Clints Well Campground where he continued to be ever helpful to recreationists. He moved into a cabin at Happy Jack Ranger Station where in 2003 he was acknowledged with the Senior Outstanding Volunteer Service Award by the Washington Office of the Forest Service. Bill enjoyed his life and its rich experiences. Unfailing in his love for this country, he continued working into his 80;s at the South Gateway Visitor Center in the village of Oak Creek. We will keep a fire burning for Bill as rarely are we blessed with a more dedicated American. Should you feel inclined to remember Bill, please do so to a charity that benefits needy children. A memorial service is planned for later this year. Please contact Henry Brill at 928-354-2216 for information.