

# NEWS Release

Bureau of Land Management • Forest Service

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News and Information  
For Immediate Release

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April 27, 2010

## Hazardous Fuels Reduction Efforts & Spring Prescribed Burning Season Has Begun on Public Lands in Central Oregon

CENTRAL OREGON –Federal land management agencies have targeted approximately 29,000 acres of federal land for hazardous fuels reduction projects in a variety of locations during the spring and fall of 2010. The projects are located in four geographic divisions that comprise the 4.5 million-acres of federal land managed by the Deschutes & Ochoco National Forests and the Prineville Bureau of Land Management.

Approximately 50% of the projects will be treated through mechanical methods such as thinning and mowing and the remaining 50% are “management-ignited” (prescribed fire or pile burning). The prescribed burns are conducted during the spring and fall seasons on an annual basis, typically running from April through May, weather permitting. This year, the burning season started later than usual due to wet weather conditions.

There is recognition among land managers that treating hazardous fuels with prescribed burning can be an annoyance to the recreating public and impact people who are sensitive to smoke.

“We understand that our prescribed burn treatments sometimes impact the public when smoke lingers in areas longer than we’d like it to. We make every effort to mitigate those impacts by igniting in weather conditions that allow for the best possible smoke dispersal,” said Fire Staff Officer Chris Hoff.

A prescribed fire is one that is 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. Land managers utilize prescribed fire as a tool to improve forest and rangeland health and resiliency.

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 at the time of ignition. Burn prescriptions are specific to very site-specific weather conditions and fuels specialists must light burns during short windows of opportunity. The objective that remains consistent every time a prescribed burn is ignited is keeping firefighter and public safety the top priority.

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Land management agencies conduct their planned prescribed burns in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) Smoke Management Program. If smoke generated by a prescribed burn exceeds air quality standards, burning operations may be discontinued. The ODF Smoke Management Program monitors burning activities on state, federal and private forest lands.

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 or injury if stepped in. The spring burning program generally ends in early June and the fall burning program generally runs from September through November.

Maps showing the hazardous fuels reduction project areas in Central Oregon for spring & fall of 2010 are now available on the Deschutes & Ochoco National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon>, the Central Oregon Interagency Dispatch Center website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/fire/conditions/prescribed-fire-news.shtml> and the Prineville BLM website at <http://www.blm.gov/or/prineville>

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