



Forest Service

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News Release

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Plan for prescribed burning in Pagosa Ranger District

PAGOSA SPRINGS, Colo., April 8, 2019 –The Pagosa Ranger District in San Juan National Forest is planning to conduct several prescribed burns near Pagosa Springs. Burning operations will take place over several days beginning mid-April. Work may continue through June depending on weather and fuel conditions.

Burn units are located in the following areas northwest of town; adjacent to Turkey Springs (FSR Road 629), East Monument (FSR 630), Brockover (FSR 919) and Newt Jack roads (FSR 923). These burn units are within the Brockover I & II, Turkey Springs Piles and Devil Creek II Burn Plans. This year's efforts expand upon prescribed burning which took place in August/September 2016. It is part of an overall fuels reduction project involving both mechanical treatment and prescribed fire, encompassing approximately 5,000 acres.

Additional burn units are located in Fawn Gulch, Mill Creek and the Piedra River areas. Fawn Gulch are adjacent to Archuleta County Road 113/FSR 666, an area mowed in 2017. Mill Creek are adjacent to Mill Creek Road (Archuleta County Road 302), Nipple Mountain Road (FSR 665) and Echo Canyon Road (FSR 029). These burn units vary in size from 100 to 500 acres. The Piedra River burns include the Horsefly burn units and the Lower Piedra Campground piles.

Burning operations will be conducted by Forest Service personnel, assisted by fire resources from cooperating agencies. The purpose is to reduce hazardous ground fuels, reduce the risk of unplanned large scale wildfires, restore ponderosa pine ecosystems and improve wildlife habitat.

Vegetation in the burn units consists of ponderosa pine, Gambel oak, grass, and small pockets of logging slash. All of the units have received previous fuels-reduction treatments such as mowing of shrubs and small trees, thinning and piling, and timber harvest. Ponderosa pine forests are a fire adapted ecosystem, which historically experienced frequent, low intensity fires on a large scale. Prescribed fire replicates that fire regime under controlled conditions.

Prescribed fires will only be ignited when all weather, fuels and smoke requirements are met. For additional information, please contact Fred Ellis, Assistant Fire Management Officer (Fuels), Pagosa Ranger District (970) 264-1541. Maps of the prescribed burn units can be found online <https://www.fs.usda.gov/news/sanjuan/news-events>

Prescribed fire smoke may affect your health. For more information, please go to: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health>.

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