Prescribed Burning Planned

Prescribed (controlled) fire is a useful tool for managing national forest land. Approximately 20,000 acres are scheduled for burning throughout the 650,000 acre Cherokee National Forest during 2017. A significant portion of the prescribed burning is planned for early spring.

Prescribed fire is used in the Cherokee National Forest for several reasons including:

- **Hazardous Fuel Reduction**: Fuels (vegetation) such as grass, leaves, brush, downed trees, and pine needles accumulate and create a fire hazard. By burning an area under favorable conditions these fuels are removed, decreasing the amount of vegetation that is available to burn during a wildfire. Reducing heavy vegetation build up helps protect communities from the threat of wildfire, as well as being beneficial to the forest.

- **Site Preparation**: Certain trees cannot tolerate shady conditions created by other species. In areas being managed for pines, prescribed fire reduces certain types of vegetation that compete for light, moisture, and nutrients. Prescribed fire also reduces the leaf litter on the forest floor which often prevents seed germination for natural reproduction of desirable vegetation, including native grasses.

- **Wildlife Habitat**: Prescribed fire promotes new sprout and herbaceous growth that serves as beneficial food and cover for many animals.

SCHEDULED PRESCRIBED BURNS—MARCH

South Cherokee National Forest (Ocoee & Tellico Ranger Districts)

March 3-6: Several sites in the South Cherokee National Forest (Polk & Monroe counties) may be burned, weather permitting, during this period. Smoke may be visible in some areas. Notices are posted in areas where burns are scheduled. For more information contact 423-338-3300.

North Cherokee National Forest (Unaka & Watauga Ranger Districts)

No prescribed burns are scheduled at this time. As weather conditions permit burns will be conducted throughout the North Cherokee National Forest.