



River Point Prescribed Burns

Superior National Forest

Kawishiwi Ranger District
1393 Highway 169
Ely, MN 55731
218-365-7600

Date: Tuesday, October 06, 2015

Fire Information: 218-365-2093 or 218-343-3026

Project Names: River Point and River Point Unit 5

Location and project size:

This project consists of two burn units south of Ely, MN just off Highway 1.

- An 18 acre unit north of the highway will be referred to as River Point Unit 5 (Unit 5): Township (T) 62 North, Range (R) 11 West, Section (S) 30.
- The 111 acre unit runs along Highway 1, south a half mile along the access road for River Point Resort and west to Birch Lake: T62NR11WS31.

Today's message: We hope to complete River Point, the 111 acre unit, tomorrow. The weather looks favorable. Aerial resources including a helicopter may be used for ignition and for monitoring fire behavior.

Shorter days and increased moisture in fine fuels make finding weather windows for fall burns challenging. The smaller burn was scheduled to be ignited last Monday, October 5 but a light rain fell that morning, moistening the fuels. A prescribed burn today on the North Arm of Burntside Lake is going well.

Purpose: The Superior National Forest is planning to conduct two prescribed burns south of Ely along the Kawishiwi River to reduce hazardous fuels and wildfire threat to private lands and residences. These burns are the next step in an ongoing effort to reduce hazardous fuels. Balsam fir are highly flammable with low hanging branches—creating fire ladders into the crowns of surrounding trees. Historically, periodic fires kept the rate of balsam growth in the forest at a much lower percentage, but fire suppression during the last 100 years has allowed balsam fir to become much more prevalent in the understory. In these units, balsam and other fuels were harvested or crushed with machinery but burning is necessary to kill balsam seedlings and sprouts, giving pine and other native plants sunlight and room to grow. Slash was pulled back from the trunks of large pines to protect them from the understory fire. Mature white and red pine trees have thicker bark which resists fire damage.

Caution: Use extreme caution travelling on Highway 1, especially exiting the Kawishiwi River Bridge. Please slow down and be prepared for heavy smoke, fire fighters, and fire engines on Highway 1 between the Ely Airport and the South Kawishiwi River Campground.