



News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland
<http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>

Media Contact: Aaron Voos, (307) 745-2323

Plowing Occurring to Prep for Prescribed Burning on Pole Mountain

(LARAMIE, Wyo.) March 2, 2016 – Laramie Ranger District fire crews will soon be taking advantage of favorable weather conditions to begin prescribed burning at various locations on the eastern half of the Pole Mountain unit. The burning could begin as early as this week and will continue to take place as conditions allow over the next few months.

The burn areas will vary in size consisting of anywhere from a couple acres to 100 acres at a time. The work is part of the ongoing Pole Mountain Vegetation Project on the Medicine Bow National Forest in eastern Albany County.

Forest Service staff will need to plow sections of some roads in order to reach the prescribed burn units. The plowing is for administrative use of Forest Service employees during this project. The seasonal closure of all Pole Mountain roads to motorized public use remains in place.

Crews will primarily use drip torches to carry out the burning. For safety and effectiveness, fire operations will not be initialized if weather conditions are unfavorable. Unit access and fuel conditions will also be factored into daily decisions to burn. Necessary smoke permits will be obtained from the State of Wyoming before burning begins as well.

Smoke may be visible from nearby areas and Wyoming Highway 210 (Happy Jack Highway) during burning operations. When necessary, signs will be placed on adjacent roads notifying the public of the burns. U.S. Forest Service fire crews will routinely monitor the burned areas following operations.

Chainsaw work and mastication began in 2014 and the overall Pole Mountain Vegetation Project will take place over a period of approximately 7-10 years. As a whole, nearly 9,000 acres have been authorized to be treated through a variety of methods, with the goal being a resilient, diverse and historically healthy forest. Area vegetation consists of sagebrush, aspen, pine, and a mix of shrubs and grasses.

Currently, the condition of native vegetation for wildlife and livestock on Pole Mountain is in decline. Conifers are encroaching in sagebrush habitats, fuel loading is occurring, and resiliency of the range and forest is a concern.

Prescribed burning is a versatile forest management tool that can mimic historically natural fire disturbances, reduce hazardous fuels buildup, and improve habitat for a variety of wildlife.

For more information about this project contact the Laramie Ranger District at (307) 745-2300. You can also visit our website at <http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>, or follow the Medicine Bow National Forest on Twitter, [@FS_MBRTB](https://twitter.com/FS_MBRTB).

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