



News Release

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

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Small-Scale Prescribed Burning Continues on Pole Mountain

(LARAMIE, Wyo.) June 7, 2016 – A wet spring and summer has provided Laramie Ranger District fire crews with the fuel conditions they need to conduct small-scale prescribed burning this week on the eastern edge of the Pole Mountain unit.

Smoke from the burning should be minimal, but will likely be visible to the public, as the burn units are near the well-traveled intersection of Happy Jack Highway (Wyo Highway 210) and Forest Road 700 (Vedauwoo Road).

Crews are targeting tree wells, which is the area directly under stands of large ponderosa pine, and the subsequent layers of dead needles and branches. Those tree wells are currently surrounded by green, moist vegetation, which acts as a fire break and is necessary to conduct these types of prescribed burns.

Similar operations took place at other locations on Pole Mountain in mid-May.

Dispersed recreation in the area may be temporarily affected by the burning pending the location of nearby camps. Crews will be making personal contact with recreationists regarding any temporary closures. 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.

The work is part of the ongoing Pole Mountain Vegetation Project on the Medicine Bow National Forest in eastern Albany County.

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. Fuel conditions will also be factored into daily decisions to burn. Necessary smoke permits have been obtained from the State of Wyoming.

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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