United States Department of Agriculture

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland
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News Release

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Pile Burning to Begin Soon on Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests

(LARAMIE, Wyo.) Nov. 10, 2016 – Despite a warm, dry fall across the Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests in Colorado and Wyoming, shorter days and imminent winter weather are prompting fire personnel to begin preparation for slash pile burning.

Hundreds of piles are estimated to remain on the two National Forests, even after many years of this type of work. Forest users and the public should be aware of and expect to see smoke, as many piles will be burned near communities, travel routes, and popular recreation areas. The burning of highly visible piles will be advertised closer to the date of ignition and questions should be directed to your local Ranger District Office.

"Burning piles is a proven way of removing fuels and is a staple in our annual program of work," said Vern Bentley, Fire Management Officer for the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland. "Our crews are well trained and proficient in this type of work."

In recent years, the two Forests have completed many forest management projects, including removing dead trees from travel corridors and recreation areas, as well as reducing hazardous fuels generated from the bark beetle epidemic. Fuels remaining in these areas have been gathered into piles, either mechanically or by hand. The main objective of the pile burns is to reduce the remaining dead fuels, which is in the best interest of long-term public safety.

Fire managers will monitor weather forecasts prior to igniting piles. Burns are only initiated if conditions are within established parameters for safe, effective fires. Predicted weather needs to allow for safe burning and the elimination of any threat of fire spreading to surrounding vegetation. Pile burning will take place during fall and winter, as long as weather permits access.

Each prescribed burn planned by the Forests has gone through an environmental analysis and has a detailed burn plan developed in advance.

Signs are often placed on adjacent roads notifying the public of the prescribed fires, and closures are rarely necessary.

Smoke from all prescribed fires is closely monitored to ensure that the conditions for smoke dispersal, developed in collaboration with the Colorado Air Pollution/Control Division and Wyoming Air Quality Division, are being met. These conditions reduce the likelihood of undesired smoke impacts.

Prescribed fire smoke may affect your health. For more information see: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health.

For more site-specific information contact the following Forest Service Offices, visit our website at **http://fs.usda.gov/mbr**, or follow the MBRTB on Twitter, **@FS_MBRTB**.

- Forest Supervisor's Office, 2468 Jackson Street, Laramie, WY, (307) 745-2300
- Brush Creek-Hayden Ranger District, 2171 Highway 130, Saratoga, WY, (307) 326-5258
- Douglas Ranger District, 2250 E. Richards Street, Douglas, WY, (307) 358-4690
- Hahns Peak-Bears Ears Ranger District, 925 Weiss Drive, Steamboat Springs, CO, (970) 870-2299
- Laramie Ranger District, 2468 Jackson Street, Laramie, WY, (307) 745-2300
- Parks Ranger District, 100 Main Street, Walden, CO, (970) 723-2700
- Yampa Ranger District, 300 Roselawn Avenue, Yampa, CO, (970) 638-4516

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