

NEWS RELEASE

**USDA Forest Service
Caribou-Targhee National Forest
1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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06-13

Contact: **Lynn Ballard / Joanna Wilson**
Phone: **(208) 524-7500**

Comment Period Open for the Raynolds Pass Prescribed Fire Project

Island Park, ID: The Ashton/Island Park Ranger District, in collaboration with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, propose to burn approximately 1,535 acres between the Kelly Creek and Raynolds Pass area of the Henrys Lake Mountains. This burn project will be implemented as burning conditions allow starting in June of 2006 and conclude by November 2007. The project area has been broken into 3 units as follows: Raynolds unit with 800 acres, Upper Staley unit at 270 acres and the Staley unit covering 465 acres.

A 30-day comment period on this project will end on May 15, 2006. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection under the Freedom of Information Act. Written comments must be submitted to: Bryan Aber, Island Park Ranger Station, 3726 Hwy 20, Island Park, ID 83429. Electronic comments must be submitted in rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to comments-intermtn-caribou-targhee-ashton-islandpark@fs.fed.us.

Only those who submit timely and substantive comments will be eligible to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215. Each individual or representative from each organization, submitting substantive comments must either sign the comments or otherwise verify identity in order to attain appeal eligibility.

The objective of this project is to enhance wildlife habitat in the general vicinity of Raynolds Pass through aspen and mountain brush regeneration. This will be achieved using prescribed fire. The target is to burn the aspen and brush areas with encroaching conifer within the three units identified. The Forest Service will not be targeting the late seral conifer stands within the Raynolds unit.

Some portions of the units may require some pretreatment of fuels to help carry the prescribed fire through aspen stands to ensure project objectives will be met. Pretreatment of fuels would be in the form of felling individual conifers with chainsaws to create jackpot fuels to facilitate burning. No commercial timber harvest would occur as part of this project.

(more)

This habitat enhancement project is in collaboration with Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Mule Deer Initiative and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Both of these programs encourage aspen enhancement as part of their goals in managing deer and elk habitat.

An open house will be held on Friday, May 12, 2006 starting at 7 p.m. at the Island Park Ranger District office at 3726 Highway 20, Island Park, Idaho. This meeting will be held for the public to come learn, discuss and comment on the proposed project.

For more information about this project or further instructions on submitting comments, please call the Ashton Office at (208) 652-7442 or the Island Park Office at (208) 558-7301. To download the scoping document, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/caribou-targhee/>, click on "Raynolds Pass Prescribed Fire Project".