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Inyo National Forest Continues Prescribed Fire Projects

The Mammoth and Mono Lake Ranger Districts of the Inyo National Forest are planning to continue several prescribed fire projects for habitat improvement and hazardous fuels reduction. Fire crews are taking advantage of recent precipitation that has provided safe and favorable burning conditions.

The Aqueduct Prescribed Fire is planned to begin either Thursday, February 5 or Friday, February 6; conditions permitting. It should take two days to complete. This 120-acre project in the Jeffrey pine forest is east of Highway 395 near Bald Mountain (northeast of Deadman Summit).

Smoke from this project will be visible from Highway 395, Highway 158, Highway 120 East, June Mountain Ski Area, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, and the Bald Mountain Road.

If favorable conditions continue or if additional precipitation allows, fire crews will look to complete the 55-acre June Loop Prescribed Fire; also in Jeffrey pine forest. It is located one mile west of June Lake South Junction (the junction of Highway 395 & Highway 158 South) and one-quarter mile west of the Public Shooting Area on the north-side of the highway.

During burning operations, the shooting range will be closed for safety because of the proximity of the fire personnel and equipment to the range. This project provides critical fuels reduction for the community of June Lake that will help reduce the risk of higher intensity, more destructive fires that can occur during hotter and drier summer months.

Smoke from this project will be visible from Highway 395, Highway 158, Highway 120 East, June Mountain Ski Area, and the Town of June Lake. Residents of June Lake should expect smoke to settle in town, especially in the night and morning, when the smoke is held under the inversion layer.

Prescribed fires will be conducted when weather and fuel moisture conditions are within prescription to safely accomplish the project objectives. By prescribing the fire under optimum weather conditions, managers simulate the natural role of fire. This reduces forest competition, opens gaps in the forest canopy for sunlight to shine through, and recycles nutrients to the soil for re-growth. Fire was a frequent event in the Jeffrey pine forest, occurring naturally every 10-15 years.

All prescribed fire activities will be coordinated with Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District in accordance with air resource objectives.

Following the accumulation of snow from winter storms, pile burning will be conducted, and is expected to continue in the upcoming winter months.

For further information, please call Deb Schweizer at (760) 873-2427.

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