



## Flathead National Forest

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## Media Release

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### Prescribed Fire Projects Planned on Swan Lake Ranger District

BIGFORK, MONT – The Swan Lake Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest is planning to conduct multiple spring prescribed fire projects when weather, fuel conditions, and air quality become favorable. Smoke will be visible from various places in the Flathead Valley and the Swan Valley depending on the location of the burn units and weather conditions.

The project areas include:

- Blacktail Mountain Area – Up to 72 acres of logging slash from previously logged areas will be treated with fire to reduce hazardous fuels as well as create favorable conditions for natural regeneration of plant and tree species.
- Haskill Mountain Area – This ecosystem burn project has targeted 128 acres of mid to upper elevation brush and conifer. Fire suppression has caused a change in species composition resulting in accumulations of woody material and an increased risk of stand replacement fire. Fire management will reintroduce fire to overall improve forest health and reduce the likelihood of intense wildfire.
- Crane Mountain Area – This work includes three units in the Estes Lake, Hunger Creek, and Crane Creek areas. Geographically the area is located several miles south of Ferndale, above Woods Bay, totaling 506 acres of under-burning. Objectives are to reintroduce fire to the landscape thus reducing hazardous fuels that have accumulated over the years. A temporary closure on Trail #96 into the Estes Lake Area may occur during burn operations.
- Meadow Smith and Cooney McKay– This project includes under-burning timber stands located within the Meadow and Smith Creek areas of the Swan Valley. These treatments will use prescribed fire for fuels reduction, vegetation regeneration, and wildlife habitat improvement.
- Holland Lake Area – This project includes under burning 135 acres of ponderosa pine stands as part of ecosystem health. Prescribed fire will be reintroduced to improve overall forest health and reduce the likelihood of intense wildfire.
- Pile Burning – Hand or Machine piles are located in several locations within the Swan Valley and Blacktail Mountain as a result of but not limited to: logging, hazardous fuels reduction in the wildland urban interface, hazard tree removal, and trail or road construction. These piles are burned to reduce the fuel loads in these areas. These piles are strategically burned based on their location, access, and weather conditions.

Each project follows a Prescribed Fire Burn Plan. The prescribed fire projects are located and designed to be controlled to reduce the potential for adverse effects, or to escape as a wildland fire. These projects will be in compliance with Montana air quality standards and coordinated with Montana State Department of Environmental Quality to reduce the impacts of smoke to our neighbors, cooperators, and surrounding communities.

For additional information about these projects contact the Swan Lake Ranger District in Bigfork at 406-837-7500.

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