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From: McKay, Tod G -FS [tgmckay@fs.fed.us]
Sent: Monday, October 29, 2012 1:07 PM
To: Undisclosed recipients
Subject: News Release: Fall prescribed burning to start
Attachments: Prescribed burns - fall 2012.docx



NEWS RELEASE

Bitterroot National Forest

www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot

United States
Department of Agriculture
Bitterroot National Forest
1801 N First St
Hamilton, Montana 59840

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tod McKay (406) 363-7122

October 29, 2012

FALL PRESCRIBED BURNING TO START

Hamilton, MT, – The Bitterroot National Forest is planning, weather permitting, to carry out fall prescribed burning beginning as early as this afternoon, Monday, October 29th. The burns will be mostly pile burning associated with reducing residual slash created by personal use firewood cutting and timber salvage projects. Smoke from some of the fires may be visible later this week in the valley.

Before a decision is made to ignite a prescribed fire, managers must confirm that weather and burning conditions meet specified criteria. Just as private landowners need to check with authorities prior to burning, so must the Forest Service. We submit burn requests by noon the day before wanting to burn to the MT/ID Smoke Management Unit in Missoula. Airshed Coordinators review all requests and look at weather forecasts and dispersion (wind) forecasts to make their decision on which burns get approved and which don't. Residents can view information about forecasts for burning at www.smokemu.org. Click on "burn map" to see individual burn locations.

Prescribed burns have several objectives including:

- Maintain forest health and ecosystem restoration
- Improve wildlife habitat – many plants respond favorably to fire providing new food sprouts for wildlife.
- Reduce the potential of large, high intensity wildfire by reducing the amount of downed fuel to burn.
- Post harvest slash treatment – reduce residual slash created by personal use firewood cutting and prepare sites for new tree regeneration.
- Promote favorable conditions and habitat for deer and elk forage.

The prescribed fire program will last through November. Please contact your local ranger station for burn information or to be included on their notification lists - Darby Ranger District (406) 821-3913, Sula Ranger District (406) 821-3201, West Fork Ranger District (406) 821-3269 and the Stevensville Ranger District (406) 777-5461.