

## Glenda Wiles

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**From:** McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 26, 2017 10:48 AM  
**Subject:** News Release: Prescribed Burns Planned for Sula & West Fork Areas  
**Attachments:** Spring RX Fire - South Zone.docx; Prescribed\_Fire\_BNF.JPG

### Prescribed Burns Planned for Sula & West Fork Areas

Hamilton, Montana (April 26, 2017) – The South Zone of the Bitterroot National Forest is planning, weather permitting, to implement spring prescribed burning projects beginning this week. Intermittent pile burning is scheduled today on the Darby/Sula Ranger District up the East Fork below Tepee Point and near Swift Creek. Fire crews plan to burn 70 acres of piles to reduce residual slash from recent thinning and timber harvest operations. Smoke from the burning is expected to be visible from East Fork Highway.

Today's burning is one of several prescribed fire projects planned this spring on the West Fork and Darby/Sula Districts totaling approximately 2,000 acres. Over the next several weeks, fire crews will be conducting low intensity, understory burns to reduce fuels and restore characteristics of a fire-adapted ecosystem. Treatment areas include:

#### Darby/Sula Ranger District

- Middle East Fork Units, east of Colvert Creek and west of Guide Creek (Prescribed fire)
- Tepee Face Ecoburn, south of Tepee Point (Pile burning & prescribed fire)
- Swift Creek Units, east of Echo Gulch and in Swift Creek (Pile burning)
- Guide TSI Units – north of Guide Saddle (Pile burning)

#### West Fork Ranger District

- School Point Ecoburn, east of Nelson Creek and east of Halford Creek (Prescribed fire)
- Lower West Fork Units, north of Lavene Creek and south of Baker Lake Road (Prescribed fire)

The burns will only be ignited if operational safety, fuel moisture, weather conditions, and air quality parameters can be attained. Fire crews will monitor all burns after ignition to ensure that they stay within prescribed boundaries. All areas will be signed and notifications will be made to local residents.

Low intensity prescribed fires 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 wildfires by reducing the amount of downed fuel to burn.
- Post harvest slash treatment – reduce residual slash created by thinning operations and personal use firewood cutting.

For public safety, recreationists are asked to be aware of fire crews and vehicles in these areas. The public is also asked to avoid traveling in prescribed burn units as well as trails and roads directly adjacent to the

units. Please take caution as roads and trails used as control lines for the burn could be temporarily impacted by low intensity fire and smoke.

Fire managers hope to conduct the burning quickly, with limited impacts to recreational users and the general public. For more information or to be placed on a day-of-burning notification list, please contact your local ranger station.

For the latest burn announcements, burn updates, maps, and photos of projects visit us at [www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF](http://www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF) and [www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF](http://www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF)

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