

Umatilla National Forest announces spring prescribed burning plan

Umatilla National Forest managers hope to apply fire to over 6000 acres of National Forest this spring, announced Brian Goff, Deputy Fire Staff. When conditions allow, ignition will be done on the ground by hand crews with drip torches and possibly from the air with a helicopter, according to Goff.

Prescribed burns are used to achieve several goals. While some burns are prescribed for the purpose of reintroducing fire into fire-dependent ecosystems, most burns are prescribed to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire by reducing dead fuel accumulation, rearranging fuel accumulations and affecting the live vegetation in the area. "Research has shown that, in areas where prescribed burning has taken place, wildfires are more likely to stay on the surface, close to the ground, and out of the tree crowns," said Goff. Previous forest thinning and prescribed burns on Umatilla National Forest Lands played a significant role in stopping the progress of the 2006 Columbia Complex Wildfire and the 2005 School Wildfire.

Opportunities to prescribed burn are very dependent upon weather conditions and the potential for undesirable smoke accumulation. "Conditions

have to be within the narrow criteria window in order to use prescribed fire," said Goff. Wind speed and direction, temperatures, relative humidity, and fuel moistures are all taken into consideration. "Weather conditions relate to how much dead organic material is consumed by the fire, how much live vegetation is affected, how much smoke is produced and where that smoke goes. There are only a few days during the spring and fall that meet all the criteria for prescribed burning in a particular area," said Goff.

The spring burn program includes burning both activity fuels and natural fuels. Activity fuels, or slash, consist of the non-merchantable material remaining after timber harvest activities. Activity fuel burns also reduce potential fire hazards and prepare the area for reforestation. Removing slash stimulates plant growth for wildlife winter forage and reduces the amount of fuel available for a wildfire.

Natural fuels are created by the normal accumulation of grass, branches, and logs and can be compounded by insect and disease mortality. Natural fuel burns, or "landscape burns," are low intensity burns covering up to several thousand acres and can take weeks to complete.

All prescribed burning will comply with federal, state, and local air quality and smoke dispersal guidelines to reduce the impacts of smoke on local communities.

"Prescribed burning is a natural disturbance process for the Blue Mountains. Allowing fire to play a more active role can help to restore and the forest," said Goff.

For more information concerning the Umatilla National Forest Prescribed Burning program, contact Brian Goff in Pendleton (541) 278-3748. For information about specific Ranger Districts, the following persons may be contacted: Scott Wryn, Heppner RD (541) 676-9187; Mark Johnson, Walla Walla RD (509) 522-6290; Scott McDonald, North Fork John Day RD (541) 427-3231; or Steve Carlson, Pomeroy RD (509) 843-1891.

The Umatilla National Forest is ready to begin work on the following spring program of prescribed burning as favorable weather conditions become available: Heppner Ranger District Prescribed Burn Plan includes approximately 4,000 acres of natural fuels landscape underburn in the Big Wall Creek area.

Walla Walla Ranger District Prescribed Burn Plan includes approximately 160 acres of activity fuels

near Long Meadows and approximately 100 acres of activity fuels near Phillips Creek.

North Fork John Day Ranger District Prescribed Burn Plan includes approximately 600 acres of activity fuels near Fivemile Creek and 400 acres of activity fuels near Kelsay Creek.

Pomeroy Ranger District Prescribed Burn Plan includes approximately 800 acres of natural fuels underburn near Charley Creek.

Justice Court Report

Judge Charlotte Gray, Heppner Justice Court, has released the following report:

-Pedro Avila Bedolla, 26, Lexington, DWS violation, driving uninsured, \$673 fine.

-Charles M. Little, 50, Echo, parking illegally, \$76 fine.

-Chet Alan Dubry, 33, Heppner, violation of the basic rule 85/55, \$244 fine.

-Charene Ann Bracher, 30, Pendleton, illegal parking, \$76 fine.

Senior Center lunch menu

Hope/Valby/All Saints church members will be serving lunch on Wednesday, April 25. The menu will consist of Swiss steak, mashed potatoes with butter, green beans, rolls, and cookies.

Ione mayor presents plaques



Ione Mayor Mark Bruno presents a plaque to Jim Swanson.



Ione Mayor Mark Bruno presents a plaque to Dennis Stefani.

Ione Mayor Mark Bruno presented plaques to Jim Swanson and Dennis Stefani for their long years of service to the Ione City Council, the Ione community and the Ione School for their "sacrifice," said Bruno. In addition to long years of service on the council, the two men have been active in numerous community events and also donated their time to coaching sports teams at the Ione School. The plaques were presented at the Ione Council meeting April 10.

Why You Should **VOTE YES** On The Morrow County Road Levy

QUESTION: Why can't the current road dept. budget pay for proposed projects?

ANSWER: The road budget has been cut 20 percent over the past 15 years while costs have increased nearly 50 percent.

Is reconstruction necessary?

Yes! High traffic connector roads do not meet State minimum requirements for safety due to narrowness, curves and shoulders.

Is paving necessary?

Yes, on these major connector roads (the four projects). Besides, returning to gravel requires all-weather reconstruction which is more than 70 percent of total cost.

What does our present budget fund?

Most of our present funding goes to existing road preservation.

Who is going to benefit from this Road Levy?

The entire county transportation system, including safety and emergency services, all commerce, including industry and agriculture, school buses and the general public.

Are county officials unanimous about the need?

Yes - past and present county court commissioners, road committee members, public works staff, and road dept. staff all are saying there is an urgent need.

Will cities benefit?

Yes! By state law, they receive a portion of the funds for city road projects - in this case, \$1,635,967.

Why not get funding from grants?

State funding is very limited for regular county road needs. Over \$11.5 million has been received in the past 10 years for specific projects, such as the Bombing Range Road (Finley Buttes funding), airport (Federal Aviation funds), and bridges (ODOT).

Has the OHV Park been a positive fiscal endeavor for the road dept.?

Yes! The Oregon Parks and Recreation agency has our OHV entirely funded (over \$3 million funded to date).

How long does this levy last?

It starts in 2007 and ends in 2012 (five years). It's a small 92¢ increase in present taxes.