

2007 Fire Stats

National

Wildland fires – 85,822 fires burned 9,321,326 acres

Prescribed burns – 24,069 burns treated 3,148,093 acres

Wildland Fire Use fires– 346 fires burned 430,529 acres

Montana

Wildland fires – 1,875 fires burned 778,079 acres

Prescribed burns – 441 burns treated 37,166 acres

Wildland Fire Use fires – 26 fires burned 44,732 acres



Firefighters lighting a prescribed burn in Colorado



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Paradise Valley Prescribed Burns

Gallatin National Forest
Livingston Ranger District



Fall 2008

Paradise Valley Prescribed Burns

Background: The Paradise Valley Prescribed Burns are part of the continuing implementation of the Paradise Valley Fuels Management and Prescribed Burn Project. Historically, the Forest Service has used prescribed fire to alter, maintain, or restore vegetative communities; achieve desired resource conditions; and to protect life, property, and values that would be degraded and/or destroyed by wildfire.

The objectives for the prescribed burns are:

- To reduce conifer encroachment on grass and sagebrush meadows and aspen stands to help maintain or improve big game summer and winter range habitat.
- Utilize fire to ecologically maintain fire adapted areas.
- Fuels management treatments would provide and/or maintain existing defensible spaces within the Sixmile and Big Creek drainages to facilitate fire suppression tactics and staging areas during a wildfire.
- Enhance firefighter and public safety in the event an unwanted fire occurs.



Firefighter lighting a prescribed burn on the Gallatin National Forest, spring of 2004

Details

- The Old Chico prescribed burn will treat approximately 300 acres in the Emigrant Creek area just south of the Old Chico community. The Lower Big Creek prescribed burn will treat approximately 400 acres in the Big Creek drainage.
- People will see smoke in the area for a couple of days. Little to no smoke inversions are expected near the burn area due to the drainage direction and the flow of the air out of the drainage.
- The units will be ignited by crews using drip-torches. Each burn will take approximately 1-2 days. Flame lengths are expected to be less than 4 feet with occasional flame lengths less than 7 feet.
- Ignition will only occur when the weather meets the predetermined parameters of moderate temperatures, favorable winds, and humidity above 20%.
- Area closures will be implemented starting the day before ignition. The areas will remain closed until the areas are clear of hazards.
- Fire crews have been working in the units during the year, thinning the fuels along the line to ensure control in those areas.
- To monitor real time weather conditions in the burn area, a portable weather station will be installed on the Big Creek unit.
- The Forest is working closely with adjacent landowners, Park County, Park County Rural Fire, Paradise Valley Rural Fire, and the Mountain Sky Guest Ranch.

Defensible Space

Treatment areas for portions of the Lower Big Creek project lie directly adjacent to wildland urban interface areas and private land inholdings within the Big Creek drainage. Fuels treatments would provide and/or maintain existing defensible spaces within the drainage and would also help facilitate more large-scale vegetative treatments in the mid- and upper regions of the Big Creek drainage in later years.

What to Expect After the Burn

Plant growth will be greatly increased in the area after the burn. This is mostly due to the sudden release of nutrients. This release will allow for grass and forbe seeds to become active and have greater access to mineral soil. The release of nitrogen into the system after the burn will act as a fertilizer.

Wildlife will be attracted to the area because of the increased forage. The removal of the conifers that are encroaching into the more open meadows will also benefit wildlife.

The aspen stands may have some mortality, but new shoots will increase dramatically in the following years.

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