

Prescribed Fires for Fuels Management

Fuels management is an important part of the Forests and Grasslands. Fuels management is done to reduce wildfire risk to communities; improve ecosystem health and diversity; and increase forest and watershed resilience and recovery when wildfires happen. Implementation of projects can include thinning and removal of trees and overgrown vegetation, typically followed by prescribed fire.

Prescribed Fire Type: Pile Burning

The USDA Forest Service burns piles of woody debris (slash) to reduce hazardous fuels. These piles are made from branches and limbs left after thinning or cutting of trees in the forest. Typically piles need to dry out for a year or two before they can be burned. Some piles may be left on the landscape for wildlife habitat benefits.



Slash piles burning in the snow.

Conditions for Burning

Certain criteria must be met for piles to be burned, including wind for smoke dispersal, and snow or forecasted precipitation in the immediate burn area. These conditions are outlined in a burn plan that is thoroughly reviewed before implementation. The decision to light piles is made by managers daily based on site-specific weather forecasts and observations as well as staffing and resource availability.

Moisture, namely snow, helps contain the piles and firefighters monitor the area during and after the burn. Monitoring continues until the piles are considered out. While the use of planned fire to reduce fuels is not without risk, public and firefighter safety is always the number one priority in burning operations.

Smoke

Smoke, flames, and glowing embers are often visible, and are a normal part of pile burning operations. This can be visible throughout the night.



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Prescribed fire smoke may affect your health, however the degree and duration of impact can be managed during a planned burn, unlike an unplanned wildfire. All pile burns are conducted within the requirements of a smoke permit issued by the State.

Stay Informed

For information on the Arapaho & Roosevelt pile burning projects, point your smart phone camera at the images below, and follow us on Facebook and Twitter @usfsarp.

INTERACTIVE MAP



usfs.maps.arcgis.com

PILE BURNING INFO



inciweb.nwcg.gov

NEWS & INFO EMAIL SIGNUP



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KNOW BEFORE YOU GO



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