



PRESCRIBED FIRE

What is Prescribed Fire?

Two types of prescribed fire are commonly used: (1) pile burning, and (2) broadcast burning. Pile burning is a debris disposal method – it is conducted when slash (branches and tree-tops) cannot be removed or utilized cost effectively. Broadcast burning is implemented under precise conditions to achieve both fire risk reduction and ecological benefits.

Capabilities

- Pile burning effectively eliminates or reduces excess debris: generally, piles are burned during wet conditions (rain or snow).
- Broadcast burning is generally a low intensity surface fire that creeps through the forest burning accumulated forest litter (pine needles, branches, pine cones, etc.): it simulates natural historic fire regimes (historically, ponderosa pine forests carried low intensity ground fires across the landscape every 4-10 years).
- Pile burning is done after harvesting activities have occurred; broadcast burning may be done either before or after harvesting activities.

Limitations

- Environmental conditions (current and expected weather, fuel moisture and arrangement, etc.) may limit it's use.

Advantages

- Critical component of ecological health of the forest; promotes regrowth of grasses, wildflowers and shrubs, ultimately increasing the plant diversity in the forests.
- Smoke impacts are minor when compared to that produced by high severity wildfires (duration, volume, timing).



"Drip Torch" used to start fires

Costs

- Prescribed fire is the least expensive forest treatment technique alone, but is often a component of the overall process, often following other forest treatments.



"Prescribed fire" in progress

FWPP Project

- All areas that are thinned/harvested will receive prescribed fire treatments. Approximately 870 acres (10% of the treated acres) is planned for broadcast burning without any other associated forest treatment.



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