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News Release

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Prescribed burns planned for this week on Coconino NF

Flagstaff, Ariz., April 4, 2016, For Immediate Release — Fire managers are planning two prescribed burns for Wednesday (April 6) to reduce forest fuel accumulation in an area north of San Francisco Peaks and also along state Route 89A near Griffith's Spring.

Pete Project: This burn was originally scheduled for March 28 but was cancelled due to weather conditions. Rescheduled for Wednesday, this burn includes approximately 300 acres located about two miles north of San Francisco Peaks and four miles west of U.S. Route 89. Good ventilation is expected to push smoke to the southwest during the day and will be visible to residents in the immediate area and motorists along U.S. Routes 89 and 180. During the evening, smoke could settle in low areas around the burn.

Woody Ridge Project: The Woody Ridge Project is scheduled to take place Wednesday and Thursday, depending on weather and wind conditions in the area. The burn includes a total of 800 acres adjacent to state Route 89A near Griffith's Spring. The burn will be broken up into two sections comprised of 400 acres each that may be burned on different days. Smoke is predicted to disperse to the southwest, and in the evening hours could settle in the community of Forest Highlands and the upper end of Oak Creek Canyon.

Prescribed fires are essential tools for restoring the forests in our fire-adapted ecosystem, and smoke is an unavoidable byproduct of these vital efforts. Fire managers strive to minimize smoke impacts to the community as much as possible. They burn when winds and other atmospheric conditions will push the majority of smoke away from homes; they'll burn larger sections at a time to ultimately limit the number of days smoke is in the air; and they work closely with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, partners in the Ponderosa Fire Advisory Council, as well as neighboring forests to monitor air quality.

Crews also seek opportunities to use slash from thinning projects around the community instead of burning it – it is often used as filler at the landfill and offered as firewood to community members. However, no matter how many mechanical means the Forest Service employs to restore forests, fire is a natural and necessary part of this ecosystem, and a restoration tool that cannot be replaced by any mechanical means. Forests need the frequent, low-intensity fire to remove accumulated smaller fuels and recycle nutrients into the soils to promote healthy vegetation and wildlife habitat. A healthier forest is a safer forest for firefighters and residents when wildfires inevitably occur.

Notifications of upcoming prescribed burns are provided regularly throughout the season. The public can find this information online through several resources:

- Inciweb: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/unit/303/>
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/CoconinoNF
- Coconino website: www.coconinonationalforest.us, (Under News and Events)

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