



Forest Service News Release

Contact Title:

Mary Hamisevicz (541) 620-4750

Shawna Clark (541) 575-3008

malheur_public_information@usda.gov

www.fs.usda.gov/malheur

Prescribed Fire Operations Update

John Day, Prairie City and Hines, OR. – (July 15, 2021) Malheur National Forest Fire staff continue to patrol and monitor previously burned prescribed fire units.

There are no prescribed fire units on the Malheur National Forest currently planned for active prescribed fire ignition.

All 3 districts will have resources patrolling previously burned units. Public can expect to see smoke and low to moderate fire activity in Murderers Creek 6, Soda Bear 4, and Galena 30 on the Blue Mountain Ranger District. Smoke will be visible from the Elk 16 units on the Prairie City district, and on the Emigrant Creek district, in Silvies units 7 and 12.

Murderers Creek unit 6 will continue to consume unburned fuel along the north aspects of the unit boundaries. This burn was ignited the week of May 9th. When a prescribed fire is initiated, resources work from the outside of the unit to widen our control features to buffer these lines (roads and hand lines). This adds depth to our fire perimeter. Consuming fuels more completely in this manner makes it harder for a fire to move at high rates towards the perimeter, lessening the likelihood of the fire to escape (or exit) the unit. The intent is to let the fire consume the interior pockets of unburned fuels. It won't likely be put out and mopped up. The perimeters of the fire are patrolled daily by suppression resources and Flagtail lookout has a good view of the prescribed fire. Photos taken by the lookout will be uploaded daily on the Spring Prescribed Fire Operations Inciweb page: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7426/> No new images had been added to the page in the past week due to the holiday and changes to Public Use Restrictions and Industrial Fire Precaution Levels taking precedent.

Smoldering fire is exposed to the sun and heat, this could increase activity. Potential for slight increases in flame length which would result in additional smoke creation is likely to occur. Individual and group tree torching inside the unit may occur under certain conditions. This may cause additional smoke and be visible from distances further away. The majority of unburned islands are well interior of the boundary of the unit. Mosaically burned areas along any boundaries (of all units) will be patrolled on a regular basis. Public can expect to see fire resources in the unit areas burned this spring.

For the safety of firefighters and the public, roads and areas of prescribed fire activity will be signed. Please avoid these areas so as not to interfere with ongoing operations. For safety, roads, trails and areas may need to close temporarily as firefighter operations are taking place.

Smoky conditions may also reduce visibility to a level that would require additional temporary closures. During prescribed fire operations, there is potential for impacts to camping and hunting. Hunters are advised to plan ahead, for their safety they should not camp in or near an area of prescribed fire activity.

Spring operations reduce surface fuels, increase height of some canopy, reduce small tree densities, and help promote fire resilient trees, thereby improving our ability to protect communities from wildfire. Additionally, these prescribed fires improve wildlife habitat, promote long-term ecosystem integrity and sustainability by reducing the risk of high-severity wildland fire.

With the potential for smoke to settle in certain areas during active operations, the public can monitor the smoke and air quality in our area and across the state by visiting, <http://oregonsmoke.blogspot.com/>.

Additional information regarding prescribed burning on the Malheur National Forest is available on InciWeb at <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7426/> or by viewing the Prescribed Fire Activity interactive map at [USFS R6 Tri-Forest Prescribed Fire Map](#).

For further information on the Malheur National Forest, please visit us at www.fs.usda.gov/malheur or call the Supervisor's Office at 541-575-3000.



Figure 1. View of Murderers Creek 6 from Flagtail Lookout 7.13.2021.



Figure 2. The photo displays an example of the terrain and fuel conditions where one may see smoke and flame.