



## Forest Service News Release

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### **Broadcast Burning on the San Jacinto Ranger District**

*Week-long project would treat approximately 2,500 acres on Thomas Mountain*

**San Bernardino, Calif.**, June 10, 2023 – The U.S.D.A. Forest Service, San Bernardino National Forest, San Jacinto Ranger District has planned a prescribed firing operation for approximately 2500 acres on Thomas Mountain; west of the community of Garner Valley and southeast of the communities of Idyllwild and Mountain Center. This operation will occur June 15 through June 22.

This project, as with many other fuels treatment projects undergo extensive analysis to best determine the proper treatment methods that will best benefit the landscape to meet the purpose and need of the treatment. In this case multiple treatment types have been used to prepare the area for broadcast burning. This includes hand thinning and piling of vegetation followed by the burning of piles, mastication, tree/oak limbing and thinning and the removal of fuels on the perimeter of the planned broadcast burn. Once the areas of thickest vegetation are either removed or thinned, broadcast burning is used to remove the understory of the timber canopy and/or areas of thick and decadent brush. This allows new and healthy vegetation to grow and prosper, enhancing the resiliency of the landscape.

There will be more than 100 firefighters from the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and partner agencies involved in active ignitions, which will last for five to seven days. These ignitions will be carried out through ground-based and helicopter aerial operations. After the active ignitions, there will be several additional days dedicated to mop-up, securement, and patrolling as needed.

During these operations certain areas will be temporarily closed to the public: Forest Road 5S13, Tool Box Springs Yellow Post Sites, Thomas Mountain Yellow Post Sites and the Ramona Trail. These closures are implemented for the safety of both the public and firefighters involved in the operations.

Broadcast burning can be beneficial for protecting and enhancing habitat and foraging areas of multiple species of wildlife by removing invasive species and promoting the growth of native vegetation. It can also help to reduce the risk of severe wildfires by reducing the buildup of forest fuels and improving the health and resilience of the ecosystem by reintroducing fire to the landscape at a planned interval.

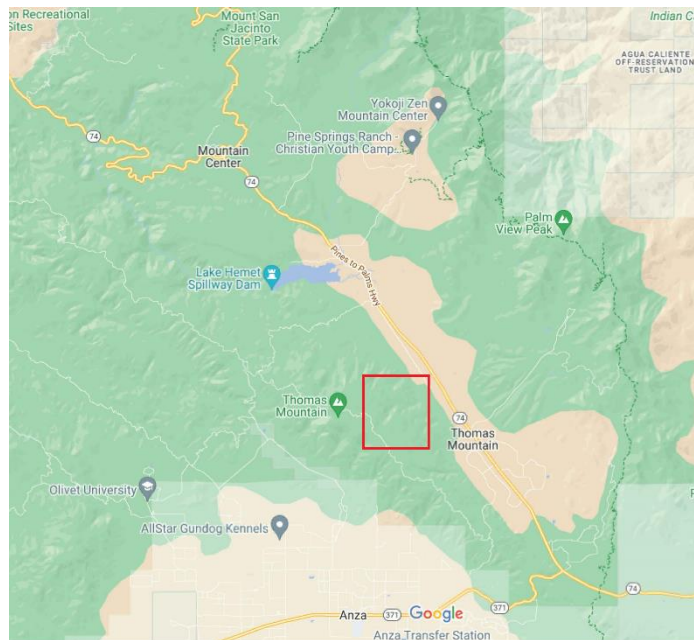
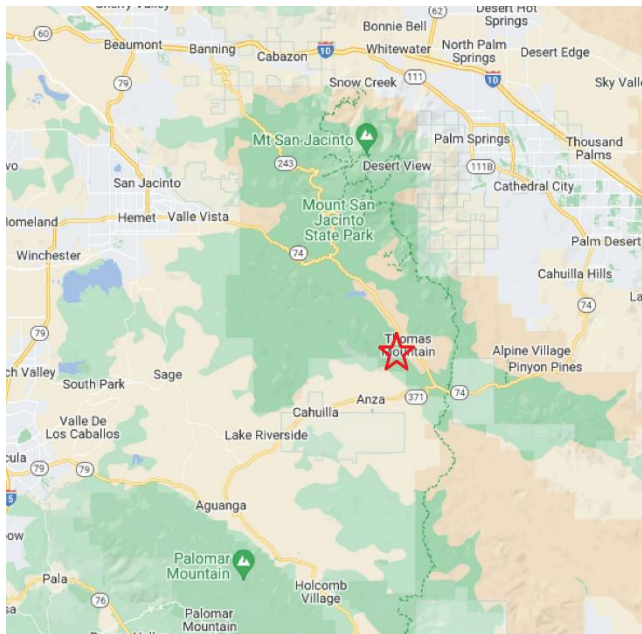
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During broadcast burning, fire is spread across the landscape in a controlled manner, typically using specialized equipment such as drip torches or aerial ignition devices. These fires are closely monitored to ensure that they remain within the designated area and do not spread beyond control.

Prescribed fire plays an important role in forest health and in reducing extreme wildfires and their negative impact. These fires also help reduce heavy fuel loads while simultaneously opening the conifer forest structure and maintaining the health of meadow habitats. Fire is also used to enhance native plant communities and cultural landscapes and wildlife habitats. Another goal is to provide defensible space for communities and developed areas within and surrounding the San Bernardino National Forest.

With all fire comes smoke, and the U.S.D.A Forest Service works to mitigate smoke impacts from prescribed fires on the communities in the area. While smoke may be visible in the area during the prescribed fire operation, individuals with respiratory issues or sensitive conditions should take precautions to avoid exposure to smoke. The San Bernardino National Forest will provide updates and information about the prescribed fire operation to the public as needed. Please visit the InciWeb page for updates <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/cabdf-2023-san-bernardino-national-forest-wildfire-crisis-response> or visit our social media pages at Twitter at <https://twitter.com/SanBernardinoNF> and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SanBernardinoNF/>.



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