

## Glenda Wiles

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**From:** McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 12, 2018 12:51 PM  
**Subject:** News Release: Fall Prescribed Fire Planned on the Bitterroot National Forest  
**Attachments:** Fall RX Fire.docx; Prescribed\_Fire\_BNF.JPG

### Fall Prescribed Fire Planned on the Bitterroot National Forest

Hamilton, Montana (September 12, 2018) – The Bitterroot National Forest is planning, weather permitting, to implement fall prescribed burning projects as early as this week. The burns planned consist of pile burning to reduce residual slash from thinning and timber harvest operations and prescribed burns to reduce forest fuels and restore characteristics of a fire-adapted ecosystem.

All total, fire managers plan to burn approximately 2,200 acres this fall. Smoke from the burns will likely be visible from West Fork Highway, East Fork Road, and Highway 93. Prescribed fire produces smoke, but the smoke is typically visible for a short duration, 1-2 days, and managed to minimize impacts to communities. Treatment areas include:

**Darby/Sula Ranger District** – 1,000 acres are planned:

- Tepee Face Ecoburn, near Tepee Lookout (*prescribed burn*)
- Nee Mee Poo, along Highway 93 south of Sula (*pile burning*)
- Como/Horse Lick, south of Lost Horse and north of Lake Como (*prescribed burn*)
- Downing Mountain Lodge & Observation Landings (*pile burning*)
- Trapper Bunkhouse, SW of Darby between Little Tin Cup & McCoy Creeks (*prescribed burn*)

**West Fork Ranger District** – 1,000 acres are planned:

- Lower West Fork Units north of Boulder Creek and south of Baker Lake Road (*prescribed burn*)
- Upper Nez Units near Watchtower Trailhead and Flat Creeks (*pile burning*)
- School Point Ecoburn, east of Nelson Creek and east of Halford Creek (*prescribed burn*)
- Lower West Fork Units near Troy and Pierce Creeks (*pile burning*)
- Piquett Ridge and One Creek (*pile burning*)
- Applebury Boat Launch (*pile burning*)

**Stevensville Ranger District** – 200 acres are planned:

- Three Saddle Units, east of Stevensville on Ambrose Road #428 in the Sapphire Mountains (*prescribed burn*)

The burns will only be ignited if operational safety, fuel moisture, weather conditions, and air quality parameters can be attained. All areas will be signed and notifications will be made to local residents. A mosaic pattern of burned and unburned areas will remain after treatments.

Low intensity prescribed fires have several objectives including:

- Maintain forest health and ecosystem restoration

- Improve wildlife habitat – many plants respond favorably to fire providing new food sprouts for wildlife.
- Reduce the potential of large, high intensity wildfires by reducing the amount of downed fuel to burn.
- Post-harvest slash treatment – reduce residual slash created by thinning operations and personal use firewood cutting.

Fall prescribed fire activities normally take place between September and November and burning is highly weather dependent. Planned treatment areas on the forest are at higher and wetter elevations, compared to the drier valley bottom. This will reduce the fire’s ability to quickly grow and spread. Fire crews will monitor all burns after ignition to ensure that they stay within prescribed boundaries.

For public safety, recreationists are asked to be aware of fire crews and vehicles in these areas. The public is also asked to avoid traveling in prescribed burn units as well as trails and roads directly adjacent to the units. Please take caution as roads and trails used as control lines for the burn could be temporarily impacted by low intensity fire and smoke.

Fire managers plan to conduct the burning quickly, with limited impacts to recreational users and the general public. Reminder, fire danger remains “High” and the vegetation in the valley is dry, especially the cured grass from this summer’s growth. Fires can grow rapidly, even in low winds in cured grasses.

While campfires are allowed, everyone should be sure all campfires and warming fires are cold to the touch before leaving them unattended. Please do your part to ensure there is One Less Spark as a result of your outdoor activities.

For more information or to be placed on a day-of-burning notification list, please contact your local ranger station.

For the latest burn announcements, burn updates, maps, and photos of project areas visit us at [www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot](http://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot) or [www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF](https://www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF) and [www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF](https://www.twitter.com/BitterrootNF)

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