

Controlled burn planned today near Highway 20, Sisters

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

SISTERS—Deschutes National Forest fire specialists plan to burn 99 acres today along Highway 20, three miles northwest of Sisters. The area being burned is located along FS road 2058 (Pine Street), about ¼ mile west of the Sage Meadows subdivision. The burn will reduce brush and woody debris that can feed wildland blazes, such as the 4,200-acre Cache Mountain Fire that forced the evacuation of the subdivision and damaged two homes before containment in July 2002. The burn is part of several strategic treatments intended to reduce woody debris, restore natural tree density in ponderosa pine stands, enhance Highway 20 scenic views, and protect against high-intensity wildfires. This is the first entry —“underburn,”— following behind thinning treatments and hand pile burns that were conducted several years ago in an effort to reduce the fuels. An underburn is a low-intensity burn under the forest canopy that consumes ground level fuels. Ground fuels often serve as fuel —“ladders”— for fire to move into the tree canopy, creating high-intensity wildfires. All controlled burns are weather-dependent and completed in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Forestry smoke management plan. Fire specialists will postpone burning if winds are not forecasted to disperse smoke to less-populated areas. Smoke may settle with cooler air in evening and morning hours -- even with favorable winds -- so nearby residents should close windows and doors to keep smoke out of structures.

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