

Oregon State University To Assist With Prineville Controlled Burns

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Oregon State University scientists will help burn about 40 acres Friday or Saturday on the Prineville District of the Bureau of Land Management, four miles northwest of Mitchell.

The scientists and federal land management fire specialists plan to use the burn to study the effectiveness of controlled burning to reduce the dominance of western juniper in mountain sagebrush steppe communities. Central Oregon fire specialists routinely burn in late summer and early fall to mimic the natural role of fire in rangelands. Conditions are often too moist at other times to meet objectives.

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The burn will occur in grass, sage and juniper stands near the intersection of Highway 26 and Bridge Creek Road, about three miles southeast of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. It is also located in the federal Central Oregon Fire Management Service's Rivers Division.

Fire specialists worked with private landowners earlier this week to complete an 8,500-acre controlled burn. The burn will improve wildlife habitat, return the role of fire in rangeland ecosystems, slow the spread of invasive juniper woodlands and create a mosaic of ecological conditions. It was located about eight miles north of Hampton.

In fiscal year 2005, land managers reduced woody debris on more than 55,000 acres of federal land in Central Oregon with controlled burns, chainsaw thinning and mechanical mowing.

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