



**Pacific Northwest Region**  
**Wallowa-Whitman National Forest**  
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# NEWS RELEASE

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## Wallowa Whitman National Forest Set for Prescribed Fire Season

**BAKER CITY, Ore. (Sept. 12, 2023)** — Fire management officials on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest are preparing to implement the Forest's fall prescribed burning which could impact camping and hunting opportunities in several hunting units across the Forest. Any associated temporary road and trail closures will go into effect prior to and during burn operations, which typically take 2-5 days to complete.

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has developed a [prescribed fire interactive map](#) displaying planned burning activities. The interactive map allows the user to zoom in on certain areas and click on a burn unit for more information (such as acreage, status, etc.). When burning operations begin the interactive map will be updated to display which burn units are actively burning. For specific information about a particular burn, a Forest Service contact can be found on the interactive map.

Frequent, low-intensity fire is essential for healthy forests and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire caused by excessive fuel buildup. Prescribed burning is an effective tool for removing excessive amounts of brush, shrubs, and trees, while also encouraging the growth of native vegetation.

Prescribed burning is also **highly dependent on weather conditions**, which must be within a narrow criteria window to use prescribed fire. Factors such as wind speed and direction, temperatures, relative humidity, and fuel moistures are all taken into consideration prior to implementing a prescribed burn operation. With the recent storm systems that moved through late August, higher humidity, and lower temperatures across the Forest, many areas are conducive to successful prescribed fire implementation in the near term.

The Forest Service recognizes that hunting season coincides with prescribed burning season and can impact hunters, but controlled burns are necessary to reintroduce fire to the landscape and encourage healthy vegetation that will ultimately improve landscape residency and forage for big game.

Hunters are asked not to camp or recreate in burned-out areas. Trees may be unstable and fall or drop large branches. This danger is heightened with high winds. Rocks and other debris can also be unstable and roll downhill or fall out from under a hiker's boot or the weight of an ATV. The ground itself may be unstable due to burned roots and a lack of ground vegetation.

Each prescribed burn follows a prescribed burn plan. These burn plans represent many years of analysis and preparation to ensure burn operations meet prescriptive conditions that allow for successful burns that provide multiple resource benefits and reduce the potential for adverse effects.

The forest works closely with the Oregon Department of Forestry and Washington Department of Natural Resources in accordance with the State's Smoke Management Plans to determine when, where, and how much is burned daily.

Potential smoke impacts are evaluated prior to each burn, and an effort is made to minimize impacts to communities. All burns will be monitored until a season ending rain or snow occurs.

Stay informed! Here are some other links that will help keep you aware of activities:

- Wallowa-Whitman National Forest [Facebook](#) and [X](#) Pages.
- Blue Mountains Prescribed Fire Council Blog:  
<https://bluemtnprescribedfire.blogspot.com/>

Or you can call the Ranger Stations directly:

- Whitman Ranger District: 541-523-6391
- Wallowa Mountains Office: 541-426-5546
- La Grande Ranger District: 541-962-8500
- Hells Canyon National Recreation Area:
  - Oxbow: 541-785-3395
  - Clarkston: 509-758-0616
  - Riggins: 208-628-3916

For up-to-date information about fire news in the Blue Mountain area and other resources, visit the [Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center](#).