



2023 Spring Prescribed Burn Season Summary

The Deschutes National Forest's 2023 understory prescribed burn season occurred over the span of eight weeks starting at the end of April and wrapping up in mid-June. All of the prescribed burns occurred within the Central Oregon Landscape, one of 21 focal landscapes identified within the Forest Service's Wildfire Crisis Strategy. The implementation of these prescribed burn operations support the Deschutes National Forest's commitment to addressing the Wildfire Crisis Strategy which aims to reduce severity of wildfires, protect communities and improve the health and resiliency of fire-dependent forests. The Central Oregon Landscape includes the #1 at-risk fireshed in Oregon, the Sisters Fireshed, and the Sunriver Fireshed, which is the #6 at-risk fireshed in Oregon.

In the spring of 2023, the Deschutes National Forest treated **4,044 acres** with understory burning, including **1,781 acres in the Sunriver Fireshed** over 8 operational periods, and **654 acres in the Sisters Fireshed** over 7 operational periods.

Sisters Prescribed Burn Tour For Key Stakeholders

On Friday, May 12, the Deschutes National Forest hosted a prescribed burn tour for elected officials, local stakeholders, partners and media on the SAFR (Sisters Area Fuels Reduction) 188 Prescribed Burn just west of Sisters adjacent to Hwy 242 & Edgington Road. The 128-acre prescribed burn unit was located directly adjacent to the Sisters High School and Middle School.

The prescribed burn tour gave participants an opportunity to experience a prescribed burn from the operational briefing through ignitions. The tour increased awareness around Central Oregon's fire-adapted ecosystem, the planning behind the implementation of a prescribed burn and the process used to apply low-intensity fire to the landscape.

Attendees included members of the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project, the Sisters Mayor, local municipal fire department leadership, and Deschutes County Commissioner Phil Chang.



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Courtesy photo by Kirk Metzger





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Ann's Butte Prescribed Burn Units

Firefighters completed **763 acres of understory burning within the Ann's Butte Prescribed Burn units**. The prescribed burn units are located immediately adjacent to the River Meadows subdivision with a little over three miles of operations directly bordering private property and homes.

In 2022, firefighters conducted 280 acres of understory burning in this project area. The acres burned in 2022 and 2023, total **1,043 treated acres** and complete the understory burning component for the Ann's Butte Prescribed Burn project area. This work is part of the Upper Deschutes River Wildland Urban Interface Fuels Reduction Project, a multi-year project to protect the Upper Deschutes River Communities from catastrophic wildfire, and the Upper Deschutes River Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Numerous partners, including the Upper Deschutes River Communities, Project Wildfire, La Pine Rural Fire District, Bureau of Land Management - Prineville District, Deschutes County and Oregon Department of Forestry worked together to reach this stage of community protection. The prescribed burn units were treated through commercial harvesting, thinning, and pile burning prior to prescribed burning.

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Oregon Department of Forestry Cross-Boundary Prescribed Burning –



Firefighters on the Crescent Ranger District conducted **150 acres** of prescribed burning within the Gilchrist State Forest approximately six miles southeast of Crescent and east of Highway 97. The work was conducted on Walker Range Fire Patrol-protected lands through the North Walker Cross Boundary Prescribed Fire Agreement.

Forest Service firefighters worked with Oregon Department of Forestry firefighting resources to conduct the prescribed burn operations.

Left: Oregon Department of Forestry provided firefighters and a forester to assist with burn operations. The prescription for the units required exceptionally low intensity fire effects. *USDA Forest Service*

Clackamas Crew 30

Clackamas County Fire District No. 1 established a 20-person hand crew in 2021, which is the first organized municipal hand crew in the state of Oregon. This crew is not intended solely for the suppression of wildland fire, but also for the mitigation of hazardous fuels that have the potential to negatively impact communities.

The Deschutes National Forest has entered into an agreement with the Clackamas County Fire District No. 1 through the *Wildfire Crisis Strategy*. The agreement provides increased opportunity for both parties to engage in prescribed fire and fuels reduction projects with a large element of cross training while completing important fuels reduction projects in an interagency collaborative environment further facilitating effective collaboration across organizational and jurisdictional boundaries.

Shared work, bolstered personnel capacity, and enhanced training allows the Deschutes National Forest to increase capacity to reduce wildfire risk and impact to life, property, and economic assets within the Central Oregon Landscape while also transferring those skills to other locales across the state.

Clackamas Crew 30 traveled to the Deschutes National Forest this year to provide support for **9 days of prescribed burn operations**, including **5 days on the Ann's Butte Prescribed Burn units**.

Courtesy photo by Chris Santos, Crew 30



Courtesy photo by Chris Santos, Crew 30



Deschutes National Forest

Central Oregon Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TRES)

The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with the Deschutes National Forest, hosted the 2023 Central Oregon Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TRES). 40 participants from various agencies, non-profits, and higher education institutions, from across the United States, Tribal Nations, and Canada participated in the two-week training. TRES provides opportunities for local, regional and international fire practitioners, scientists and managers to work side by side while building experience in prescribed fire practices, fire effects, and other conservation and restoration efforts. Participants **implemented 936 acres of prescribed burning** across the Deschutes National Forest during the two-week program.

Participants came from 15 different organizations spanning ten states/provinces in the United States and Canada. Eight attendees completed NWCG taskbooks in qualifications including Fire Effects Monitoring, Engine Boss and Firefighter Type 1. Over the course of the two-weeks, individuals completed 158 separate position taskbook training days.



Courtesy photos by Central Oregon TRES

Hosted by The Nature Conservancy, the TRES program is a component of the national *Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together Cooperative Agreement* between The Nature Conservancy, the Forest Service and the Department of Interior.

Courtesy photos by Central Oregon TRES



Women-Led Prescribed Burn on the Crescent Ranger District

This spring, for the first time, the Crescent Ranger District conducted a prescribed burn operation in which all overhead positions were held by women, include the burn boss (qualified), burn boss (trainee), firing boss (qualified), firing boss (trainee), and holding boss. The prescribed burn operation took place on a cross-boundary prescribed burn conducted within the Gilchrist State Forest.

Right: (Left to right) Prescribed Burn Boss - RXB2 Wendy Detwiler, Firing Boss Trainee - FIRBt Nichole Vaillant, Prescribed Burn Boss Trainee - RxB2t Kathy Reed, Holding Boss Magen Dufurrena, and Firing Boss - FIRB Taylor Gatliff
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