



# News Release

**U.S. Forest Service**  
**Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests**  
30 S Chiricahua Drive  
Springerville, AZ 85938  
[www.fs.usda.gov/asnf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/asnf)  
<https://www.facebook.com/apachesitgreavesnfs/>

**Media Contact: Iris Estes**  
928-333-6280  
[iestes@fs.fed.us](mailto:iestes@fs.fed.us)



## Prescribed Burns Planned on Black Mesa Ranger District

**Springerville, AZ—October 4, 2018—** The Black Mesa Ranger District on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests plans to conduct prescribed burns within the Nagel Forest Health and Rodeo/Chediski Prescribed Burn areas if weather conditions allow from October 15, 2018, through December 14, 2018.

Justin Gabler, District Fuels Asst. Fire Management Officer said, “Once ignition occurs, if the weather permits, there will be two or three days of ignitions in each of the burns and smoke will continue to be produced up to two weeks, each day after ignitions being significantly less each day”. Once ignition occurs, crews will be on scene from ignition until there is no longer a threat of escape from the project boundaries.

The Nagel Prescribed Burn will be along Forest Roads 717, 100, and 169. The burn blocks will encompass approximately 2,936 acres. Smoke may be visible along State Route 260, Heber-Overgaard and Forest Lakes areas. They are expecting light smoke impacts.

The Rodeo/Chediski Prescribed burn will be along Cottonwood Wash and Forest Roads 139, 46, and 9850E around the Ricochet Ranch area. The primary burn blocks will encompass approximately 4,742 acres. The smoke from this project may impact Clay Springs, State Route 260, Ricochet Ranch, and the Heber-Overgaard area.

Prescribed burning provides many benefits and is essential to maintaining healthy forest ecosystems. This prescribed fire is a follow up to previous mechanical treatments within parts of the units and within the old burn scar from the Rodeo/Chediski Fire in 2002. It provides habitat diversity, recycles plant nutrients into the soil and encourages new growth for a variety of plants used by wildlife and livestock. Prescribed burning of forest ground fuels also reduces the threat of large-scale wildfire impacts to private lands.

These projects are in partnership with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to provide forest restoration and health to the Rocky Mountain Elk, mule deer, antelope and other wildlife species that frequent the area.

Crews have been working throughout the summer and will continue to prep control lines and monitor the vegetation/fuels until the decision is made to move forward with the ignition operations.

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