



Prescott National Forest

Forest Service News Release

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Prescott National Forest to Begin Prescribed Burns East of I-17

Six-week operation begins May 18 to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health

PRESCOTT, Ariz., May 12, 2026 — Fire managers on the Prescott National Forest will begin prescribed burning east of Interstate 17 on May 18, 2026, as part of an ongoing effort to reduce hazardous fuels and restore the landscape to more natural vegetation conditions. The project targets woody species such as mesquite, catclaw, and juniper, helping improve rangeland health, support wildlife habitat, and lower the risk of high-severity wildfires.

Ignitions may begin as early as May 18 and could continue for up to three days, depending on weather and fuel conditions.

Fire managers will conduct operations only when conditions allow for safe and effective burning. Crews will monitor the area throughout the project to ensure public and firefighter safety.

Smoke will be most visible during active ignitions, with lighter residual smoke possible in the days that follow. For detailed air quality information, visit [fire.airnow.gov](https://www.fire.airnow.gov).

The Prescott National Forest's land management strategy focuses on long-term forest health and reducing hazardous fuels. Prescribed fire helps reduce fuel loads and increase forest and community resilience. In the wildland-urban interface, prescribed fire lowers the risk of wildfire to communities by creating buffer zones where firefighters have a higher probability of safely stopping future unwanted wildfires.

All prescribed fire activity is dependent on the availability of personnel and equipment, weather, fuels, and approval from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (www.azdeq.gov). Although no closures or restrictions are associated with this burn, because the burn area is close to I-17, drivers should use extra caution, as smoke may be visible from the roadway and could draw attention away from traffic. Visitors are reminded to obey all traffic signs when traveling near prescribed fire operations, as firefighters and fire-related traffic will be in the area.

Stay up to date on Prescott National Forest news by visiting the [Prescott NF website](#) and following the forest on [Facebook](#).

About the Forest Service: The Forest Service has, for more than 100 years, brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation. Grounded in world-class science and technology — and rooted in communities — the Forest Service connects people to nature and to each other. The Forest Service cares for shared natural resources in ways that promote

lasting economic, ecological, and social vitality. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. The Forest Service also has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 900 million forested acres within the U.S., of which over 130 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.

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