



## Forest Service News Release

Contact Title: Prescott Public Affairs

[sm.fs.prescottpao@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.prescottpao@usda.gov)

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/ro3/prescott>

### Prescribed Burning to Begin Along Highway 169 Starting May 25

*Favorable weather conditions in place for hazardous fuels reduction work*

**PRESCOTT, Ariz., May 15, 2026** — Fire managers on the Prescott National Forest will begin prescribed burning along Highway 169 as early as May 25, 2026, to reduce hazardous fuels and restore the landscape to more natural vegetation conditions. The project targets approximately 2,500 acres of dense woody species such as mesquite, catclaw, and juniper, improving rangeland health, supporting wildlife habitat, and lowering the risk of high-severity wildfires.

Ignitions are expected to last 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 heaviest during active burning, with lighter residual smoke possible in the days that follow. For detailed air quality information, visit [fire.airnow.gov](https://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](https://www.azdeq.gov)). Because the project is located directly along Highway 169—and may also be visible from I-17 and helicopters may also be used to support operations — motorists are urged to use caution and remain alert, as operations may be distracting. Drivers should use extra caution and expect smoke, personnel working near the roadway, and potential **single-lane closures** during periods of heavy smoke. There are no Forest Service road or trail closures associated with this project, however, the public is encouraged to avoid areas where crews are working or where active fire is present. 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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