



FACTSHEET

Lux Lake Prescribed Fire

Anticipated Dates of Burn: October of 2018

Location and Sizes: Lux Lake Prescribed Fire includes two units totaling 3,276 acres located inside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) approximately 18 miles north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Ranger District on the Superior National Forest in Cook County, MN.

LEGAL LOCATION: *Unit 1* (1,280 Acres) in Township 64N, Range 1W, Section 20, 21, 22, 27, 28 and 29. *Unit 2* (1,996 Acres) in Township 63N, Range 1W, in Sections 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 16 and 17.

Purpose: Superior National Forest managers plan to conduct the Lux Lake Prescribed Fire within the BWCAW to reduce the risk of wildfires that could threaten people, homes, cabins, camps, businesses and other resources outside of the Wilderness. This extreme wildfire risk resulted from the 1999 massive windstorm that affected nearly 500,000 acres on the Superior National Forest, including approximately 367,000 acres in the BWCAW. The storm caused thousands of acres of trees to be blown-down, creating the potential for large, difficult-to-control wildfires.

The Forest Service has been working to break up continuous areas of blowdown in the Wilderness with a series of strategically-located prescribed fires that include the Lux Lake Prescribed Fire. The Forest Service demonstrated over the past fifteen years, the use of prescribed fire under favorable conditions reduces the concentrations of hazardous fuels created by the storm. This improves public safety by creating conditions that will decrease fire intensities and the rate of fire spread in the event of a wildfire, providing firefighters time to implement suppression and containment activities as well as evacuations if needed.

Description: The Lux Lake Prescribed Fire plan delineates two ignition units which were identified as wildland fuels hazards by the BWCAW Fuel Treatments Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision completed in May 2001. The area containing both units was impacted by the 1999 blowdown storm and now contains high concentrations of balsam fir regeneration along with dead, blown-down trees. Many residences, camps, and businesses immediately outside the Wilderness boundary are within close proximity of the blowdown fuels in the planned prescribe fire units.

Based on monitoring and observed fire behavior, Forest managers have determined that fire behavior predictions outlined in the original FEIS are still valid for areas of untreated blowdown fuel. A recent example of this behavior was documented during the 2011 Pagami Creek Wildfire and again during an August 2013 wildfire near Knife Lake within the BWCAW. Post-wildfire monitoring and evaluation indicates that treatment of units containing blowdown has successfully reduced intensity and rate of spread of wildfires.

Managers will conduct the Lux Lake Prescribed Fire, under conditions specified (prescribed) in the burn plan and guided by the FEIS, the Supplemental Information Report completed in April 2016, Wilderness Management direction, and management objectives stated in the Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. To minimized impacts to wilderness character, implementation of the prescribed fire will follow recommendations in the Minimum Requirement and Minimum Tool Determination completed as part of the FEIS analysis and included in the Record of Decision.

Fall is the time of year expected to provide the most favorable weather conditions to meet defined management objectives and hold the fire within the planned project area boundaries. The burn plan identifies potential natural and human-created breaks in fuel that will help to hold the prescribed fire

within the planned area. Managers will use Helen, Horseshoe, Vista, Jake, Morgan, Little Trout, Slough, Iota, Dugout, Marshall, Bower Trout, Ram and Dislocation Lakes as the primary holding boundary used to keep fire within the project area. Creeks, natural wetlands, and portages as well as constructed “fire lines” staffed by firefighting personnel will also be used keep fire within the planned areas.

During ignition operations, people in the vicinity of East/West Twin Lakes, Lima Grade and the Mid-Gunflint Trail can expect to see smoke columns, helicopters and planes in the air. Many firefighters will be visible in the area during ignition and several days after burning is completed as they continue to monitor the prescribed fire area. Depending on wind direction, residents and visitors in Cook and Lake Counties may smell smoke from the prescribed fire.

Management Objectives:

The objectives of the prescribed fire is to improve public safety by reducing the potential for high-intensity wildland fires to spread from the BWCAW into areas of intermingled ownership, which include areas containing homes, cabins, resorts, other improvements and areas across the international border into Canada. This will be done by using low to high intensity fire to reduce the pre-burn fuel loading in the 0-3 inch size class dead fuels by 60-100%. Low intensity fire is targeted for areas where there is an overstory canopy with and understory of blowdown fuels.

Closure Information:

- For public safety, certain canoe travel ways, entry points, hiking trails and campsites will be closed one to two days prior to burning and will remain closed until it is safe for the public to be in the prescribed fire area.
 - Entry points that will be closed during prescribed fire operations include Bower Trout Lake (#43), Ram Lake (#44) and Morgan Lake (#45). Information will be posted at entries and travel routes.
 - Portages that will be closed prior to beginning burn operations include Bower Trout-Marshall-Dugout, Ram-Kroft-Rum-Little Trout-Misquah-Vista, Morgan-Carl-Lux-Jake, and Morgan-Jake-Vista-Horseshoe.
 - Campsites will be closed on Bower Trout, Ram, Little Trout, Misquah, Carl, Lux and Vista Lakes. Site #6 on the far-east side of Horseshoe Lake will also be closed.
- If burning occurs before the end of the wilderness quota permit season on October 1st, the Forest Service will notify BWCAW quota permit holders approximately one week prior to the anticipated project start date.
- Forest Service personnel will staff all closed entry points, in addition to Horseshoe and Dugout lakes, to provide public information and to re-open the travels routes upon completion of burn operations when it is safe.
- The Lima Grade may be impacted by smoke. This road may be closed for short periods of time if smoke is deemed to be a safety issue.

Fire Management Resources:

- Since heavy blowdown and conifer/brush regeneration makes foot travel unsafe for ignition on the ground by firefighters, helicopters equipped with ignition devices will be used to conduct ignition from the air.
- Holding crews of firefighters using hand tools, fire hose, portable pumps, boats, and canoes will be working around the perimeter of the prescribed fire units.
- Water delivery aircraft will also be on standby during the burn to support holding operations if required.

For more information on these burns, contact the USDA, Forest Service, Gunflint Ranger District at 218-387-1750.



Forest Service
Superior National Forest
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