

NEWS RELEASE

**USDA Forest Service
Caribou-Targhee National Forest
1405 Hollipark Drive
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: **March 17, 2004**
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PRESCRIBED FIRE PLANNED FOR THE WESTSIDE RANGER DISTRICT

Pocatello, Idaho: The Westside Ranger District of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest will be conducting a number of prescribed burns in the Gibson Jack and Cinnamon Ridge areas beginning the end of the week of March 15 and continuing into April. Three units are planned to be burned, ranging in size from 25 acres to 500 acres for a total of 590 acres to be treated.

These burns are part of the Portneuf Westbench Project which the White House announced last December as one of ten nationwide pilot projects using the accelerated environmental analysis process proposed by the President's Healthy Forests Initiative.

Besides reducing threats on public lands, both to improve the overall health of the land as well as to reduce fire risks, the Gateway Interagency Fire Front agencies also recognize a need to reduce fuels on private property as well.

The purpose of this project is to reduce fuel loads by removing the grass, mature sagebrush, snowberry, serviceberry bitterbrush and juniper that could cause extreme fire behavior with a wildfire event; create natural fuel breaks and improve vegetation condition and age class diversity.

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Ignition of the burn units will proceed when proper weather and fire behavior conditions are met. Smoke will be noticeable from the south end of town, particularly in the Gibson Jack and Johnny Creek areas. These burns, if weather permitting, will be completed by mid April.