

Dolores Prescribed Fire EA Proposal

(Mixed Conifer / Landscape Scale)

Planning Area: **320,000 acres**

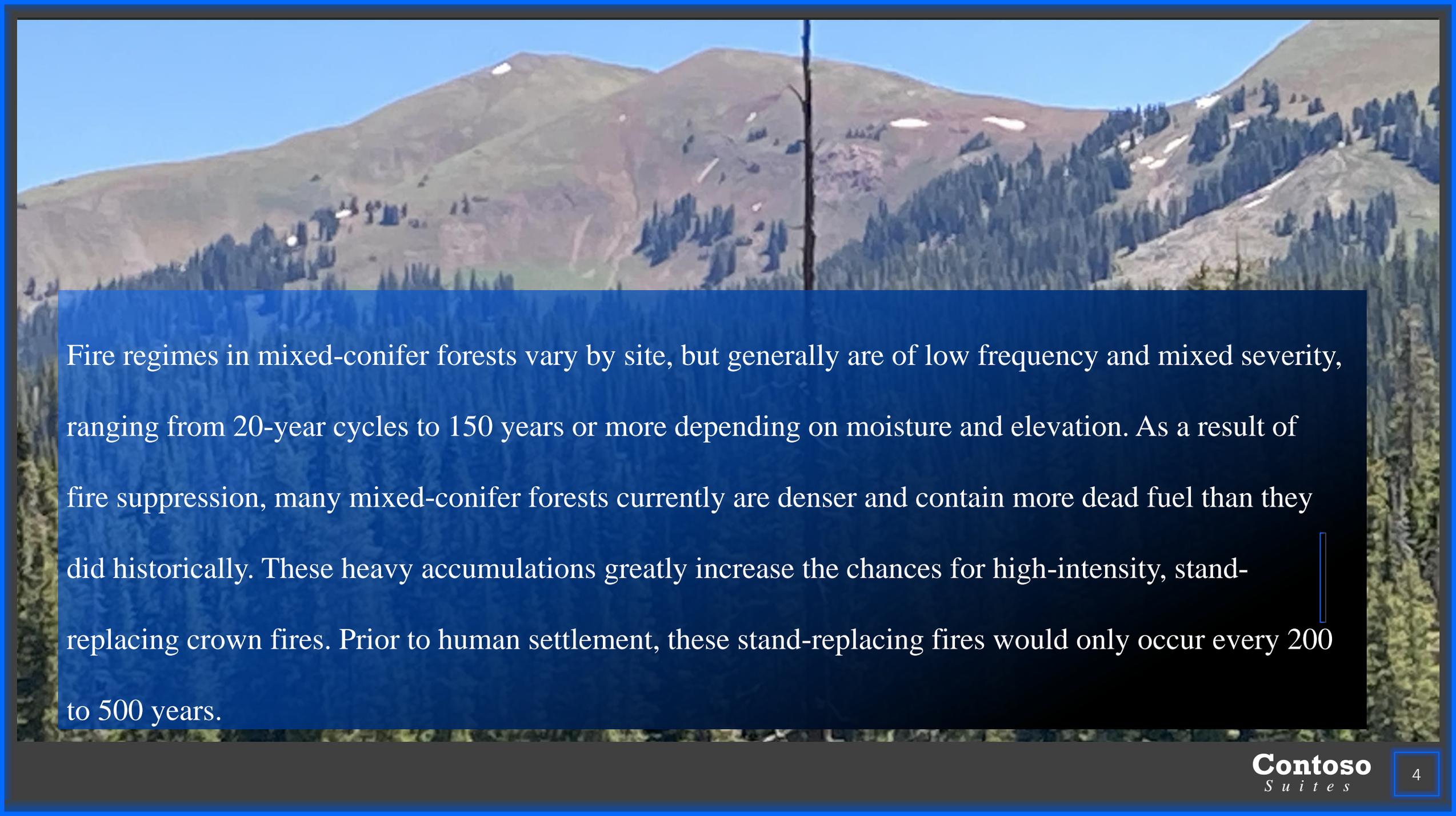


Purpose and Need

- This purposed EA would serve as an analysis for Prescribed Fire within the proposed planning area (**approximately 320,000 acres**) to achieve a balance of natural resources, improve wildlife habitat, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, to regulate/reduce fuel loadings, and maintain healthy ecosystems and vegetation conditions in areas where fire had a historic role in the ecosystem.
- Fire is an essential ecological process in many fire-dependent ecosystems. In large areas of the country, fire exclusion from these ecosystems has led to unhealthy forest, woodland and rangeland conditions. These areas are at risk of intense, severe wildfires that threaten communities and cause significant damage to key ecological components.
- As one component of fire management, prescribed fire is used to alter, maintain, or restore vegetative communities; achieve desired resource conditions; and to protect life, property, and values that would be degraded or destroyed by wildfire.
- Under the No Action Alternative, fuels would continue to accumulate, and fire intensity and severity would continue to increase and pose a risk to catastrophic (High severity) wildfires.

Mixed Conifer Disturbance & Desired Conditions

- Disturbances typically occur at two temporal and spatial scales; large scale infrequent disturbances (mostly fire) and
- Small scale frequent disturbances (fire, insect, disease, wind). This forest has an understory of a wide variety of shrubs grasses, and forbs depending on soil type, aspect, elevation, disturbance, and other factors.
- The Wet Mixed Conifer forest vegetation community generally occurs at elevations ranging from approximately 5,500 to 10,000 feet.
- The Wet Mixed Conifer forest vegetation community is a mosaic of structural and seral stages ranging from young trees through old.
- At the mid-scale, the size and number of groups and patches vary depending on disturbance, elevation, soil type, aspect, and site productivity.



Fire regimes in mixed-conifer forests vary by site, but generally are of low frequency and mixed severity, ranging from 20-year cycles to 150 years or more depending on moisture and elevation. As a result of fire suppression, many mixed-conifer forests currently are denser and contain more dead fuel than they did historically. These heavy accumulations greatly increase the chances for high-intensity, stand-replacing crown fires. Prior to human settlement, these stand-replacing fires would only occur every 200 to 500 years.

Developing Goals and Objectives

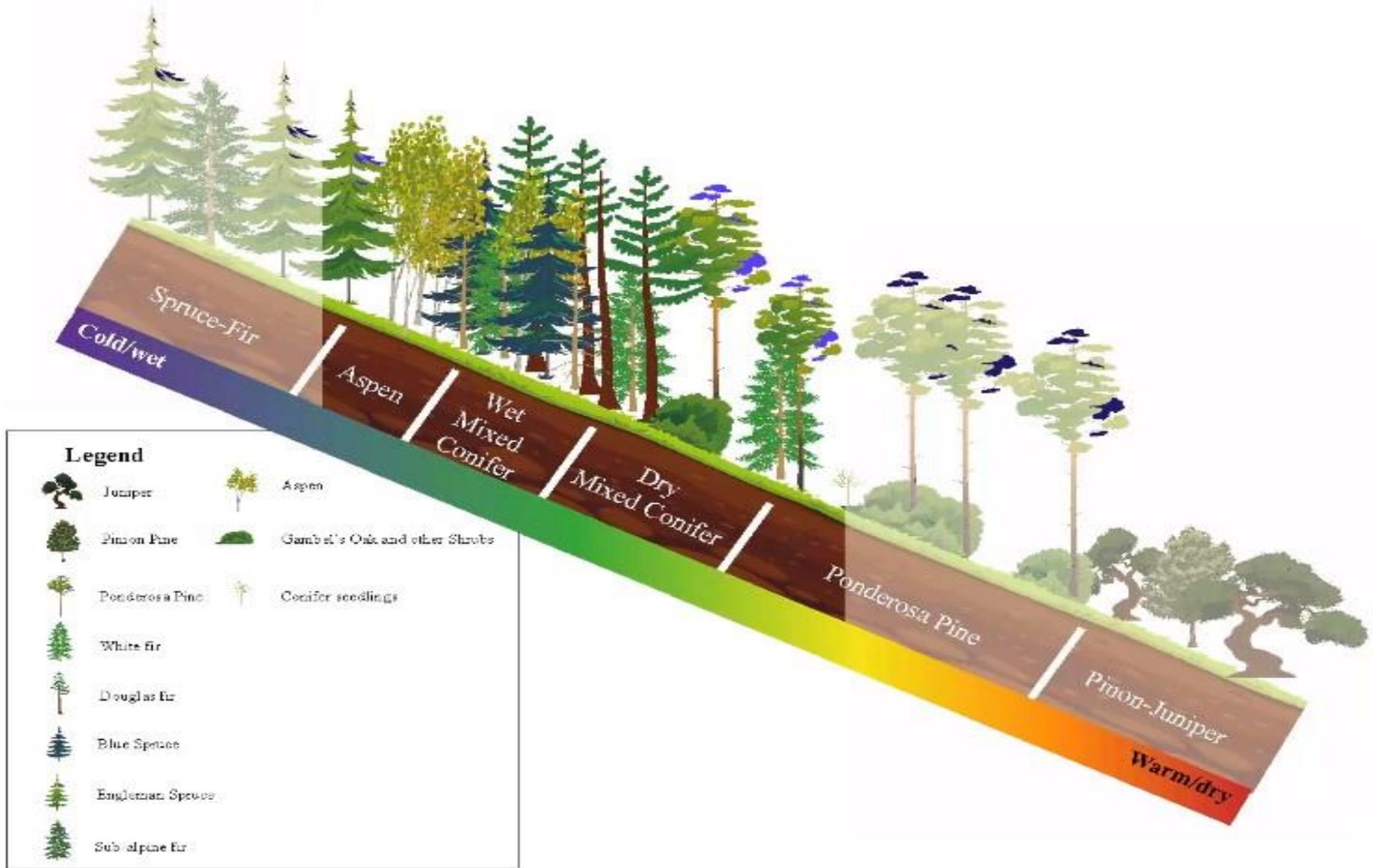
The following are the Goals and purpose of the prescribed fire treatment activities

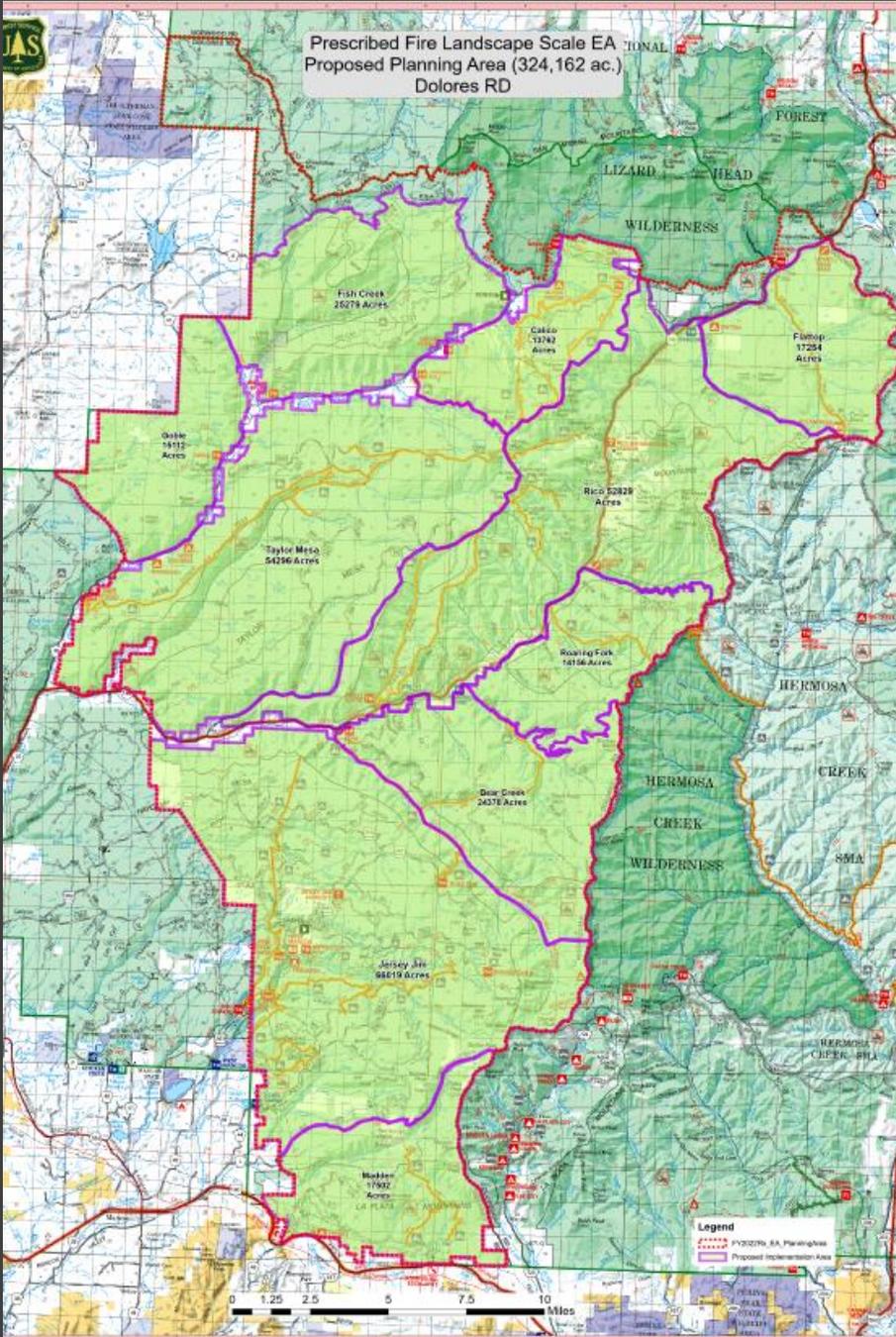
- Regulate fuels and maintain forest ecosystems in desired conditions (2.11.3).
- Maintain or promote the historic range of variation of fire frequency and intensity (2.11.6).
- Increase resiliency and diversity across vegetation types (2.11.7).
- Increase the resistance and resiliency of the warm-dry mixed conifer and ponderosa pine forest types (2.11.8) and increase the frequency of low elevation fires burning upward into spruce-fir to promote the heterogeneity of spruce-fir forests (2.11.9).

Prescribed Fire (Mixed Conifer) Prep & Implementation

- Control features: Utilize natural barriers, existing roads and system trails to the extent possible when planning burn unit boundaries to reduce ground disturbance.
- Ignition methods: Ground ignition and aerial ignition (helicopter and/or UAS Drone).
- Aspect burning: Target south facing slopes while utilizing snow as a natural control feature.
- Develop Prescribed Fire Prescription parameters: Temperature, Relative Humidity, wind speed, fuel moistures.

Transition of Warm/dry to Wet Mixed Conifer Fuel types





A publication of the
National Wildfire
Coordinating Group



Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide

PMS 484 JULY 2017



**FOREST SERVICE MANUAL
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS (WO)
WASHINGTON, DC**

FSM 5100 – WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER 5140 – HAZARDOUS FUELS MANAGEMENT AND PRESCRIBED FIRE

Amendment No.: 5100-2020-1

Effective Date: April 2, 2020

Duration: This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

Approved: JOHN PHIPPS
Deputy Chief, S&PF **Date Approved:** 04/01/2020

Programmatic Burn Plans

10 – Individual Prescribed Fire Burn Plans encompassing the 320,000 acres proposed planning/project area boundary.



Questions?

