



United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service



Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 110
Lewistown, MT 59457
Office Phone: 406-538-8706

PRESS RELEASE

Prescribed Burning Planned at Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge and Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument

April 18, 2024

Lewistown, Montana — In a crucial step toward maintaining the health and resilience of our public lands, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are set to conduct prescribed burning activities on the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge and Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Weather permitting, these activities will commence on Monday, April 29, and are expected to cover up to 14,374 acres over three weeks. The burns will occur during daylight hours and be visible for several miles. The primary objective of these burns is to foster a more fire-resilient landscape, rejuvenate the growth of native prairie vegetation, reduce accumulated litter, manage efforts for weed control, and enhance wildlife habitat. Prescribed burns are also a vital tool to mitigate the risk of wildfire in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to better protect surrounding communities.

Interagency fire crews from the FWS, BLM, local fire departments, and other federal agencies will participate in the prescribed burns. Every burn is carefully planned to ensure the safety of the surrounding community, the public, and the firefighters. Smoke from the prescribed burns may reduce visibility in the area, posing challenges for drivers navigating Highway 191. Motorists are urged to use headlights, reduce speed, and maintain a safe distance from other vehicles to mitigate the risk of accidents.

For more information on potential health impacts of wildland fire smoke, see [Montana DEQ](#).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov or connect with us through any social media channels: [Facebook](#), [X](#) (formerly known as Twitter), [Flickr](#), and [YouTube](#).

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 western states, including Alaska, on behalf of the American people. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate throughout the nation. Our mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.