



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge Conducting Prescribed Burning

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) plans to implement a series of prescribed burns in the Mount Scott area of the Refuge. The burns will be located along Hwy 49 between the Medicine Park entrance and Meers Road, and east of Meers Road. If weather and other conditions permit, the Refuge plans to burn approximately 5,000 acres in this area. The intent of the burns is to improve wildlife habitat and to reduce the threat of wildfire on popular public recreation areas on the Refuge by removing hazardous fuels.

The prescribed burns are scheduled to take place over multiple days in late March. Smoke will likely be visible from a great distance during the burns, and residual smoke may persist in the area for a few days after completion of the burns. Highway 49 may be impacted by smoke for short periods. Prescribed burns are implemented under a strict set of guidelines and weather parameters to provide for public and firefighter safety and to limit potential smoke impacts to residents and visitors in the area. They will take place when wind conditions will avoid sending smoke into populated or smoke sensitive areas. If predicted and actual weather conditions do not meet the prescribed plan parameters, the burns will be rescheduled.

For safety precautions, closures of the affected public use areas, including Mount Scott, will be implemented the evening before the burn. Major access points into the burn areas will have closure signs and will remain closed throughout the burn operation. Public roads may be closed for short periods during the burns. Maps and additional information on potential road or trail closures will be available on the Refuge website at www.fws.gov/refuge/wichita_mountains or by contacting the Refuge Visitor Center at 580-429-2197.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service.

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