



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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News Release

Great Meadows

National Wildlife Refuge

Eastern Massachusetts National Wildlife Refuge Complex

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http://www.fws.gov/refuge/great_meadows

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For Immediate Release.

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CONTROLLED BURN AT GREAT MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE TO PROTECT PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Northeast Regional Fire Program, with support from partner agencies, plan to conduct a controlled burn on the O'Rourke Unit of the refuge off of Maple Street in Carlisle, MA to reduce the risk of wildfire to nearby homes, clear fields of debris and to improve wildlife habitat. The 48 acre grassland located on Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) along both sides of Piggery Lane off of maple Street has been divided into six burn units ranging from 1 to 13 acres. Residents and visitors in the area may see or smell smoke during the burn. The exact date of the burn depends on having the right weather conditions and proper fine fuel moistures. If this burn cannot be executed this spring, the burn will be rescheduled for the fall of 2014.

"The primary purpose of this controlled burn is to protect people and their homes from wildfires, facilitate solid waste cleanup of refuge lands. A secondary goal is to improve wildlife habitat for grassland dependent species by mimicking natural fire conditions. Burning in a controlled manner under predetermined weather conditions safely reduces build-up of thatch and other plant material that could otherwise fuel a wildfire and make it burn dangerously fast.

A team of trained wildland firefighters will keep the controlled burn safe. They will monitor wind direction and other weather statistics and will not start a burn if wind would blow smoke towards homes or roads or if conditions would not allow smoke to lift. They will post signs along Rt. 225 and Maple Street to warn motorists of a burn in progress and possibly send a reverse 911 message the day of the burn to alert residents. Firebreaks surround the entire burn area and have been created to divide the entire unit into smaller subunits. Burning will be done under conditions of permits from The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Air Quality Division and Town of Carlisle. For more information on Fire Management on National Wildlife Refuges in the Northeast visit: www.fws.gov/fire

Great Meadows NWR is one of more than 556 refuges in the National Wildlife refuge System administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Roughly 85 percent of the refuge's more than 3,800 acres is comprised of valuable freshwater wetlands stretching along 12 miles of the Concord and Sudbury Rivers. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service protects and manages Great Meadows as nesting, resting, and feeding habitat for wildlife, with special emphasis on migratory birds. The diversity of plant and animal life visible from refuge trails provides visitors with excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing and nature study. 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. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.