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NEWS RELEASE

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Prescribed burn planned for Safford Ranger District

TUCSON, AZ – February 27, 2019 – The Safford Ranger District of the Coronado National Forest expects to conduct the Fourmile Prescribed Fire as early as March 1, 2019. The project area consists of National Forest System lands in the northwest portion of the Galiuro Mountains in southeastern Arizona, and is included in the Forest's Galiuro FireScape Project.

The project boundaries lie between Rattlesnake Creek on the east and the Forest Boundary on the west and contains portions of the Fourmile, Rattlesnake and Pipestem drainages, including both wilderness and non-wilderness lands in rugged terrain.

Approximately 11,500 acres are planned for the project. Burning may continue for several days or be intermittent, with ignitions occurring as fuel and weather conditions become suitable during March and early April.

Fire has played an important ecological role in the history of the grassland and woodland ecosystems of southeastern Arizona. Regular intervals of naturally-occurring fire restricted the growth of shrubs in grasslands, thinned forests of fire-intolerant trees, increased stream flows, and renewed wildlife habitat. A decrease in the frequency of natural fire has resulted in areas of dense, overgrown vegetation and the accumulation of fuel available for wildfires.

The project is designed to reduce the accumulation of hazardous fuels, improve range and watershed conditions, improve wildlife habitat, return the ecosystem to a more fire-resilient state, and reduce the likelihood of future high-intensity wildfires within the project area. By reducing the probability of extreme fire behavior in future wildland fires, the intent is to subsequently reduce threats to firefighter and public safety as well as reduce costs and natural resource damage due to wildfires.

Smoke will be visible periodically from Sulphur Springs Valley and Bonita, Willcox, Benson, San Manuel, Oracle, Klondyke and the surrounding areas for the duration of the project. Temporary road and trail closures will go into effect as prescribed fire activities progress. Closure orders will be posted as appropriate.

Partners include Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, Bureau of Land Management and The Nature Conservancy.

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