

US Forest Service to Burn 2,365 Acres

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This may be a day of area fire departments chasing smoke reports as the U.S. Forest Service plans to conduct a prescribed burn in the Grandfather Ranger District of the Pisgah National Forest today. The agency will burn 2,365 acres off of Old NC 105, the Kistler Memorial Highway, in the Dobson Knob area of Burke County, meaning the smoke will certainly be seen from much of the High Country.

The Forest Service release says it is conducting the two-day burn as part of the Grandfather Restoration Project, a 10-year project designed to restore 40,000 acres of the Grandfather Ranger District. The project is restoring fire-adapted ecosystems by enhancing conditions for a variety of native plants and wildlife, controlling non-native species and protecting hemlocks against hemlock woolly adelgids. Old NC 105 will be closed from Wiseman's View in the north to the last private residence to the south. The 106 road (Dobson Knob) will be closed as well. The Mountains to the Sea Trail will be closed from the foot bridge over the North Fork of the Catawba River to the Pinnacle. The Over Mountain Victory Trail will be closed as well between Old 105 and Old Linville Road.

The release says safety of the public and firefighters is the highest priority during a prescribed burn. Toward that end, the public is asked to heed signs posted at trailheads and roads and to stay away from burn areas and closed roads and trails. A helicopter will assist in conducting the prescribed burn.

The Nature Conservancy, N.C. Department of Transportation and the N.C. Forest Service are assisting in the prescribed burn.