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News Release



For Immediate Release
Date: March 12, 2010

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Prescribed Burning Scheduled for March–April on Units of The Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex

LAS VEGAS – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to conduct a number of prescribed burns in March and April 2010 on all four units of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Desert Complex) in southern Nevada. The planned fires will eliminate excess brush, grass, and other debris (fuel) in specific areas of the wildlife refuges to minimize the effects of wildfires that might occur in those locations in the future.

According to Glenn Gibson, Fire Management Officer with the Desert Complex, fire crews will burn approximately 340 acres of weeds, brush and cattails on the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Amargosa Valley in the second half of March. Piles of debris collected at Ash Meadows during habitat restoration work will be burned in April.

Prescribed burning is scheduled for the Pahrangat NRW south of Alamo in late March. Crews will burn approximately 25 acres of cattails on the southwest edge of the upper lake.

In April, crews will burn a pile of debris at the Moapa Valley NWR. The debris, consisting of palm trees and fronds, was collected during habitat restoration work at the wildlife refuge, which is located northwest of the town of Moapa.

A prescribe fire is tentatively planned in April on the Desert NWR north of Las Vegas. The Service plans to burn juniper and piñon trees encroaching beneath stands of large ponderosa pine to reduce fuel and help ensure the health of the ponderosa forest.

Crews from the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Nevada Division of Forestry, and individuals from rural fire departments will assist the Service with the prescribed burning.

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Timing of the burns depends on weather conditions. High or erratic winds can create problems for fire fighters — burn crews require relatively light winds in a desired direction to safely manage a prescribed fire. Prescribed burning cannot proceed if winds are blowing toward a sensitive area such as a community or major highway.

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.