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Commissioner

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Department of
Natural Resources

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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Prescribed Burns Near Vista Gold Subdivision to Start Monday

(Fairbanks, AK) – The Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF) will burn hundreds of piles of black spruce trees cut down in recent years as part of a Fairbanks North Star Borough wildfire mitigation program. These efforts have created fuel breaks next to the Vista Gold subdivision, accessed via Pandora Drive off Goldstream Road, north of Fairbanks.

Weather permitting, DOF's Fairbanks Area office will start burning the "slash" piles as early as Monday, Sept. 25 and will continue while crews are available between fire season assignments. There are approximately 1,300 slash piles, each about 10 feet around and four feet tall. Local residents may see smoke from the prescribed burning.

"Burning the piles now when conditions are cool and wet will reduce chances of any escapement and minimize adverse impacts from smoke," Fairbanks Fire Management Officer Gordon Amundson said. "This will create fuel breaks that will enhance public safety and wildland fire response by removing large accumulations of flammable vegetation, primarily black spruce trees."

Part of the 2009 Fairbanks North Star Borough Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the fuel reduction project covers 26 acres. Funding to complete this project is coming from Alaska's portion of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Wildland firefighters from the Fairbanks Area DOF station, the White Mountain Fire Crew and the UAF Nanooks Wildland Fire Crew did the cutting over the last three years. Area Forestry Technicians and White Mountain crew will oversee the prescribed burning.

Pile burning will follow Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) guidelines. Signs will be posted in the neighborhood where burning will occur. DOF is working with ADEC and the National Weather Service to forecast and monitor smoke conditions to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal air quality regulations.

The Department of Natural Resources' mission is to develop, conserve, and maximize the use of Alaska's natural resources consistent with the public interest.

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