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## Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument For Immediate Release

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### **Slash Pile Burning Operations to Begin At Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument**

Fire crews hope to take advantage of favorable winter weather conditions to burn piles of slash produced from forest thinning projects conducted over the last two summers. Pile burning operations are scheduled to begin along the north western boundary of Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument as early as March 22, if weather and snow conditions permit. This session will last one to two weeks, which will include burning and monitoring after the piles have burnt to ash. It is difficult to project exact dates in advance, as crews must depend upon weather conditions to conduct any burning activities. This pile burning project, like the one that took place in past years, is part of a multiple session project that will take place throughout the spring until the project is complete.

No road closures or other visitor impacts are anticipated. Signs will be posted along Teller CR1 with fire staff available to provide assistance and vehicle escorts if smoke impacts visibility. For safety purposes, park visitors are urged not to stop along the roadway or enter the area while burning operations are being conducted. Since these are scheduled events, it is not necessary to report these fires to Monument staff or the Sheriff's Office.

Exclusion of fire for the past century has resulted in unnaturally thick vegetation in some areas of the Monument, which increases the risks from wildfire. Excess vegetation has been cut and piled by fire crews along the boundary and is now dry enough to burn. These projects will help fire managers to restore the natural role of fire to the ecosystem and reduce the threat of fire moving from the Monument onto private lands.

These projects are being conducted in association with the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership, an interagency program with the Colorado State Forest Service and United States Forest Service, designed to reduce wildland fire risk through sustained fuel treatments along the Colorado Front Range

Safety factors, weather conditions, air quality and environmental regulations are continually monitored as part of any fire management operation.

**If you are interested in learning more about pile burning, hazardous fuels reductions, or prescribed fire please contact Jeff Wolin or Rick Wilson at Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument at 719-748-3253.**

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