

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service

Kaibab National Forest
Williams Ranger District

www.fs.fed.us/r3/kai



For Immediate Release
April 17, 2003

Contact: Jackie Denk
928-635-5607

Forest Service To Open Cinder Pits For Use By Local Residents

WILLIAMS, Ariz. – The Williams Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest will team with three volunteer fire departments to provide local residents the opportunity to dispose of woody materials from their private property.

On May 3 and June 7, residents can deposit forest debris such as tree limbs and pine needles at Moonset Pit, a cinder pit located on National Forest just west of the Parks community off old Route 66. Parks-Bellefont and Sherwood Forest Estates volunteer fire department personnel will staff the pit from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each of the Saturdays in order to ensure access and prevent disposal of unauthorized materials.

On May 17 and June 21, residents can dispose of their woody materials near the Williams community at Three Sisters Pit, located off Forest Road 124 near the Williams Country Club just past Holden Lake. The Williams Fire Department will staff the pit from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days.

“We strongly encourage residents to prepare for the fire season by cleaning up pine needles and other debris around their homes,” said Williams District Ranger Susan Skalski. “A lot of people have also been removing trees that have either been killed or infested by bark beetles. By opening these pits, we are giving them the opportunity to dispose of those trees at no charge.”

For the last two years, the woody debris deposited by residents has been piled and burned by the fire departments in the fall or winter with the cooperation of Kaibab National Forest fire officials. This year, however, burning during the early summer months will be done with the use of an Air Curtain Destructor owned by Coconino County so that the material does not go unburned for a long period of time.

“Because of the bark beetles, we want to try to burn woody material brought to the pit as soon as possible rather than waiting as much as six months until winter to burn it as one large pile,” Skalski said. “The Air Curtain Destructor will allow us to burn the debris soon after residents have disposed of it. The goal is to try to prevent the beetles from escaping from the downed material and attacking healthy trees near the pits.”

The Air Curtain Destructor is about the size of a 40-foot van and burns woody debris quickly and effectively with very little smoke production. While use of the device is much more costly than igniting a large pile, Skalski said using it was important this year because of the bark beetles.

“We are trying to do what we can to avoid any further infestations on the forest,” Skalski said. “We are thankful that the county has been supportive of this program, and we are hopeful the Air Curtain Destructor will allow us to burn as much material at the pits as possible this summer.”

For further information, please contact Jackie Denk at 635-5607.

-USFS-