



NEWS RELEASE

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BLM Plans Prescribed Burns in McKinley, Sandoval and Cibola Counties Beginning March 22 through April 14, 2007, Conditions Permitting

The BLM's Rio Puerco Field Office will conduct a series of prescribed burns on public lands in McKinley, Sandoval and Cibola Counties beginning as early as March 22, extending through April 14, 2007. The prescribed burns, referred to as the Medio Tank, Chain of Craters, and Headquarters projects, will treat about 6,300 acres of ponderosa pine, pinon and juniper, restoring areas that were originally a mosaic of woodlands and grasslands, benefiting a wide variety of wildlife.

The projects involve the use fires set and controlled by BLM fire crews to reduce tree stand densities, 'ladder fuels,' and hazardous fuel build-ups that under the right conditions could contribute to high-intensity crown fires. The work, co-funded by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish via Sikes Act funding, will also benefit mule deer in the Medio Tank area, plus elk, mule deer and turkey in the Chain of Craters and Headquarters areas.

The Chain of Craters and Headquarters prescribed burns will occur within the El Malpais National Conservation Area south of State Highway 53 about 30-35 miles southwest of Grants on County Road 42. The Chain of Craters burn will cover about 3,800 acres while the Headquarters burn will consist of about 1,000 acres.

The Medio Tank prescribed burn area is 15 miles northeast of Mt Taylor in an area known as Mesa Chivato, and will consist of 1,500 acres. The dominant fuel type within all three burns consists of ponderosa pine, pinon, and juniper.

For the Chain of Craters and Headquarters projects 'Prescribed Fire in Progress' signs will be posted along County Road 42, and the Continental Divide Trail Head during the days of the burn and the smoke may be visible from State Highways 53 and 117. For the Medio Tank project 'Prescribed Fire in Progress' signs will be posted along County Road 279 and BLM road 1103 during the days of the burn and the smoke may be visible from State Highway 550.

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