



Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands

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Mountainair Ranger District to Conduct Capilla Prescribed Fire

Pile burning starting as early as Jan 31

ALBUQUERQUE, NM – January 26, 2023 – Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands fire crews are preparing this month to strategically implement 8 acres of piles within the Capilla Fuels Reduction and Restoration Project in the Manzano Mountains. The pile burn area is located near the Red Canyon Recreation Site approximately 6 miles northwest of the town of Mountainair in the southern half of the Manzano Mountains, in Torrance County New Mexico. **See map attached.** Smoke may be visible in the surrounding areas of Mountainair, Punta de Agua, Manzano, or the Estancia Valley.

Ignition start will depend upon agency administrator approval and conditions within the ranges outlined in burn plan. Optimal conditions will result in effective smoke ventilation and dispersal and help achieve the desired effects needed to accomplish the burn plan objectives. Pending suitable conditions, winter is an optimal time to burn piled slash and woody debris from earlier forest restoration work since snow on the ground keeps fire from spreading to adjacent vegetation.

Prescribed fires are utilized to remove hazardous fuels, return nutrients to the soil and improve forest health. Fuels specialists write prescribed burn plans that identify – or prescribe – the best conditions under which trees and other plants will burn to safely optimize results. Burn plans consider temperature, humidity, wind, moisture of the vegetation and optimal conditions for smoke dispersal.

Generally, pile burns produce less smoke and burn with less intensity than broadcast burns across a larger landscape. Fire personnel will monitor the burn perimeter until it is completely out. Smoke may be visible periodically from local communities for the duration of the project until the burning vegetation is out. However, firefighters take measures to reduce smoke impacts as much as possible. Information on air quality and protecting your health can be found online at the www.airnow.gov/

Our land management strategy is centered on long-term forest health which includes reducing forest fuels and using prescribed fire on the landscape. A healthy forest is a resilient forest that undergoes fire occurrences on a regular basis. After prescribed fire is completed, if a future wildfire reaches this area, the fire behavior will likely be modified to a less intense, more manageable surface fire due to the absence of accumulated debris and ladder fuels.

Implementation announcements and updates on prescribed fire projects will be posted on [InciWeb](#), [New Mexico Fire Information](#) and on the [Cibola NF & NGs website](#), [Cibola Facebook](#) and [Cibola Twitter](#) sites.

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