

Forest Service schedules prescribed burn

Written by Staff Reports
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Fire managers on the Cibola National Forest & National Grasslands may implement a Copperton prescribed fire on the Mount Taylor Ranger District.

The Copperton prescribed fire is part of the Redondo RX project. Crews are looking to burn the following units in the project: 1,907 acres on the Copperton unit three miles west of Post Office Flats in the Zuni Mountains. The Cibola NF & NGs manages all prescribed fires in compliance with New Mexico state regulations on air quality and smoke management.

The decision to proceed depends on multiple factors, including resource availability, fuel moisture levels, air quality and forecast weather. Prescribed burns are designed to meet specific objectives and are always managed with firefighter and public safety as the first priority.

Prescribed fires are one of the most effective tools available to resource managers for restoring fire-adapted ecosystems and reducing the risk of high-severity wildfire. Fire managers use prescribed fire to improve forest health, remove hazardous fuels, increase firefighter safety, enhance wildlife habitat, and protect communities and watersheds.

With fire there is smoke, but compared to wildfires, prescribed fires are shorter in duration and are conducted under weather conditions to minimize the impact of smoke on the public. Fire crews use tactics such as starting early in the day and ending ignitions early in the afternoon to allow for the most ventilation possible throughout the burn and dividing blocks into smaller units

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to minimize smoke impacts as much as possible.

Smoke may be visible in the surrounding areas of Ramah, Gallup, Thoreau, Bluewater, Grants, and Milan. Smoke may be visible periodically from local communities and the surrounding areas for the duration of the project, until the burning vegetation is extinguished.

***Information on air quality and protecting your health can be found online at the New Mexico Department of Health Environmental Public Health Tracking website.
<https://www.nmhealth.org/about/erd/eheb/epht/>***

All fire updates will be posted on the Cibola NF & NGs website, New Mexico Fire Information website and on the Cibola Facebook & Twitter pages. For more information on the Copperton prescribed fire, contact the Mount Taylor Ranger District Office at (505) 287-8833 or Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands Supervisor's Office: (505) 346-3900.