



NEWS RELEASE

Department of the Interior – Bureau of Land Management
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BLM To Set Preparatory Fires for Larger “Boot Heel” Burn

LORDSBURG – Crews from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management will start fires next week in the “boot heel” of Hidalgo County, according to Amy Lueders, BLM-Las Cruces field office manager.

A 10-member crew plans to burn about 200 acres and create a fire-safe perimeter (black line) for a larger burn of about 19,000 acres in the Big Hatchet Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA). The WMA is about 20 miles south of Hachita in Hidalgo County.

Smoke from the small fires March 20 may be visible along Highway 81, according to Ryan Whiteaker, a BLM fire technician. Whiteaker said the BLM crew will use drip torches to ignite the fires, weather permitting.

The “black lining” next week is a key step in preparing for the larger fire tentatively scheduled for late May. “Brush and tree cover have increased because large-scale fires no longer burn as they once did through the range in the WMA. After the burn in May, the bighorn sheep will have a better chance of avoid predators,” Whiteaker said.

The BLM manages about 13 million acres in New Mexico. The Las Cruces field office is responsible for about 5.4 million of those acres in six southwestern New Mexico counties.

Additional information about both controlled burns is available by calling Whiteaker at 505/525-4300.