



NEWS RELEASE

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Pile burning reduces wildland fire risk

Residents of Timberon in Otero County can expect smoky skies for the next few months.

Smoke will be highly visible beginning August 18 and continuing through December 2004, as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) begins a pile-burning campaign in the Timberon area.

The 220 acre fuelbreak is adjacent to the southern boundary of the community of Timberon. The fuelbreak is located on Bureau of Land Management lands that have been withdrawn by the US Army for military purposes on McGregor Range.

Heaped together pinyon and juniper limbs, called slash piles, have been ageing in the fuelbreak from three months to two years. The piles were created from a hazardous fuels reduction project consisting of thinning pinyon and juniper trees in overgrown areas. This effort will help to reduce the overall risk of catastrophic wildland fire within the Timberon urban-wildland interface area.

“Right now is a safe time to burn these piles,” said BLM Fuels Management Specialist Ryan Whiteaker. “The surrounding fuels are light, the piles are safer to burn because they have been ageing and there is minimal likelihood of escape because of the monsoonal weather pattern and moist ground conditions.”

Burn operations will be conducted in conjunction with wet weather conditions, which will limit unplanned ignitions and smoke impacts to the public and local residences.

The BLM will notify local, State and federal fire departments and the Sheriffs Office on all days that burning is conducted. Please feel free to contact your local fire departments with concerns of smoke in the area.

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