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News Release

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Tres Piedras Ranger District Prescribed Burn

Taos, N.M., April 17, 2017—The Tres Piedras Ranger District of the Carson National Forest plans to conduct a prescribed burn on a total of 4,587 acres in the Tio Gordito Project Area during the month of May, contingent on favorable weather and vegetation conditions. Available resources, wind, relative humidity, and temperature requirements must be met in order to conduct this prescribed burn. The broad range in dates is due to wetter than normal conditions on site.

Prescribed burning is done to achieve a variety of objectives including reducing hazardous fuels in the wildland-urban interface, reducing activity slash, reducing the risk of large-scale wildfires, enhancing wildlife habitat, and restoring fire as a disturbance factor on landscapes.

The goal of the Tio Gordito prescribed burn is to begin to restore forests, specifically dry forest types such as ponderosa pine, by reducing forest densities, improving wildlife habitat diversity, and revitalizing meadows and aspen groves.

Prescribed burning removes some trees while retaining the largest, healthiest trees of the most fire-resistant species, such as ponderosa pine. Smaller trees (ladder fuels) are removed leaving stands less susceptible to crown fires.

This project is being implemented with cooperation with the New Mexico Dept. of Game and Fish.

Prescribed fires are one of the most effective tools available to resource managers for restoring fire-adapted ecosystems. These fires mimic natural fires by reducing forest fuels, recycling nutrients and increasing habitat diversity thus improving forest health.

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Prescribed fires are managed with firefighter and public safety as the first priority.

Smoke may be visible from the communities of Tres Piedras, Questa, Des Montes, Arroyo Seco, Taos, Espanola, Pojoaque, and Tesuque, as well as Antonito and Alamosa, Colo. Smoke may also impact U.S. Highway 64 and U.S. Highway 285.

Smoke from the prescribed burns will be monitored and documented. Lingering smoke may be present for approximately two weeks after ignitions are complete. Smoke-sensitive individuals and people with respiratory problems are encouraged to take precautionary measures. Information on air quality and protecting your health can be found, at the New Mexico Department of Health website at <https://nmtracking.org/fire>.

For additional information about these prescribed burns, please contact the Tres Piedras Ranger District at 575-758-8678.

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