

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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WHITMIRE PRESCRIBED FIRE **Peloncillo Mountains in Southwestern New Mexico**

(TUCSON, AZ, November 15, 2007) – During the week of November 26th, the Douglas Ranger District of the Coronado National Forest plans to implement a prescribed fire project in the Peloncillo Mountains in southwestern New Mexico. Weather and other conditions permitting, 155 acres of National Forest Land will be burned as part of a study led by the Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station.

Scientists will use the burn to investigate the impacts of prescribed fire within this watershed ecosystem, including changes in soil nutrients, movement of side-slope soils and stream channel deposits, as well as effects on plants and animals in the study area.

This research is a joint partnership effort by the USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, in cooperation with the Coronado National Forest, the Animas Foundation, and local ranchers who are members of the Malpai Borderlands Group.

The study has two main objectives: 1) to scientifically establish the desired future conditions for the area using the highest quality biological science, and 2) to implement a long-term program of applied research and coordinated monitoring to integrate past and future research findings.

This prescribed fire is designed to minimize smoke effects by using south to west winds to channel smoke away from urban or smoke sensitive areas. Four 30-acre to 60-acre units will be burned over a four day period, resulting in little if any residual smoke after each unit is burned.

While impacts to Forest users will be minimal, members of the public are asked to avoid the area during prescribed fire operations. For current information about the prescribed fire, the public should call the Douglas Ranger District at 520-364-3468.

For additional information about the project, please contact Kris Condos or Ruben Morales at 520-364-3468.