



**U.S. Forest Service  
Cibola National Forest and National  
Grasslands**

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# News Release

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## **Rain Showers and Forecasts Provide more Burning Opportunities**

**Mountainair, NM May 17, 2019:** Frequent rain storms continue to provide fire managers with windows to perform prescribed burning on the Mountainair Ranger District within the Manzano Mountains. If conditions are suitable, fire crews will be continue unfinished burns within the Thunderbird area including an area North of Forest Service Road #275, north of the Thunderbird private property. We are also planning to burn an area south and east of the Forest Service Roads #275 and #422 junction. The burns are located within the Thunderbird Ecosystem Management Project area. The total acreage for these two burns is approximately 380 acres. These two blocks have been previously thinned so fire personnel will be re-entering the area to burn excess material left behind.

The burns could begin the week of May 20<sup>th</sup>. Crews will be measuring fuel moistures, checking resource availability and working closely with weather forecasters to determine the best days and times to implement these and any other burns. Once ignited, fire crews will monitor the burns.

The goal of these burns continues to be to improve watershed and wildlife biodiversity and help protect private property in the event of a wildfire by reducing fuel loading (fuel available to burn). Our ecosystem depends on fire to promote new vegetation, enhance habitat and reduce the threat of large fire. It also improves public and firefighter safety by reducing the accumulated fuels that could otherwise contribute to more intense fire behavior under hotter and drier conditions.

During the prescribed burn, roads directly affected by the burn may be closed to the public. Signs will be posted in any areas with temporary road closures. Temporary road signs warning about smoke and activity on the roads will be posted on State Highways 131 and 55 along with Forest Roads #422, #253 and #275. Smoke may be noticeable throughout any of the local mountain communities and could include the Estancia Valley and the west side of the Manzano Mountains. Smoke may be seen as far north as State Highways 217 and 337 in the Tijeras area. Fire fighters will make every attempt to burn during times of the day when ventilation is optimal. Additional fire vehicles will be in the area patrolling and monitoring the roads. Please drive carefully when on affected roads as visibility might be impacted due to smoke. For further information contact Arlene Perea at 505-506-1959, 505-847-2990 or [atperea@fs.fed.us](mailto:atperea@fs.fed.us).