



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 27, 2023

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Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions and collaborative partners to implement a broadcast burn at Gulch Basecamp property near Thoreau, NM as soon as October 3rd.

Santa Fe, NM – Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions is partnering with the Forest Stewards Guild (the Guild), The Ember Alliance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program, The Nature Conservancy, McKinley County, and a diverse group of collaborators to implement a prescribed broadcast burn on up to 120 acres of private land in McKinley County beginning as soon as October 3rd. Ignitions are expected to take place over 2 - 3 days with potential smoke impacts lasting approximately 4 days. The burn area will be patrolled from time of ignition until the fire can be declared fully contained to ensure community protection and prevent potential escapes. Exact ignition days will be determined by daily fuel moistures and local weather combined with future forecasts. The burn team is wildland fire-qualified and has many decades-worth of experience. The team will operate within the parameters of a reviewed and approved burn plan, in close coordination with local fire officials, and will have plentiful resources on site to contain and patrol the burn to ensure that it is secured within pre-identified control lines.

Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions is an outdoor education non-profit offering youth expeditions and school programs rooted in the culture and landscape of the American Southwest. They have been an active land management partner in the Zuni Mountains for more than 15 years. Cottonwood Gulch has collaborated with the Guild to successfully implement cooperative prescribed burns at the Basecamp in 2015 and 2016.

Prescribed broadcast burns are part of a long-term process that makes SW forests and watersheds more resilient to disturbances. These forests are adapted to fire and require recurrent low intensity burns to remain healthy. Burning during the cooler and wetter fall season allows land managers to reduce build-up of flammable litter and branches (hazardous fuels) before the next fire season and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires reaching nearby communities. Prescribed burning promotes forest health, safeguards water sources, improves habitat for wildlife, and protects communities by mitigating the potential intensity of future wildfires.

The team will actively use emissions reduction techniques to minimize smoke impacts. Potentially affected communities include Thoreau, Bluewater Acres, Bluewater Village, Grants, Prewitt, Milan, San Rafael, Coolidge, and Continental Divide.

Learn more about Fire Adapted Communities New Mexico at www.facnm.org. More information on smoke, human health, and a HEPA Filter Loan Program can be accessed by visiting <https://facnm.org/smoke>.

Media representatives, elected officials, and community leaders interested in observing the burn are encouraged to contact Rachel Bean, acting PIO, at rachel@forestguild.org as soon as possible to coordinate.

For more information call 505-919-9062

The burn is supported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partner's Program. The Forest Stewards Guild is an equal opportunity provider.