



## TWIN HILLS PRESCRIBED BURN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q. Why burn now?**

**A.** In order for fire to give us good results, we need drier conditions. The conditions necessary for this burn require lower fuel moistures, lower relative humidity, higher temperatures, and 10-15 mph winds.

### **Q. You are in fire restrictions, yet you are burning. Why?**

**A.** The Caja Del Rio area of the Forest has no fire restrictions. Unlike the timbered slopes of the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo mountains where fire restrictions are in place, the risks and hazards in the Caja Del Rio do not warrant restricting public use at this time. Rather than thick forests, the open, patchy vegetation on the plateau means a fire would be very difficult to spread.

### **Q. How can you be sure this fire will not escape?**

**A.** Any use of fire has an element of danger. There is a hazard to not burning. We have taken all precautions to ensure we can burn safely. We will not burn until we meet all the conditions, including weather, and having adequate firefighting resources on site. Because of the fuel type in the area, and the planning we have done, we feel there is an acceptable level of risk.

### **Q. Didn't someone say the same thing before Cerro Grande?**

**A.** All prescribed fires go through a planning process. A burn plan was followed then. There can be no guarantees when dealing with nature. However, we have all learned a lot from Cerro Grande.

To lessen the risk of an escaped fire, fire managers have divided the total project area into smaller blocks with roads, natural boundaries, and constructed pre-burned (blackline) firelines to serve as fire control lines around the burn area.

As always, the primary consideration of all wildland fire activities—including prescribed fire—is firefighter and public safety.

### **Q. What happens if after starting the burn, winds change or increase dramatically?**

**A.** If that happens, we will stop creating new fire with the helitorch and engines, crews, and helicopters on site will start fire suppression. We have additional crews already identified and available to come to assist if needed.

### **Q. What if you have all these people and resources committed to this fire and another fire starts somewhere else on the forest. You can't just walk away from this one.**

**A.** We still have adequate resources to start initial attack on anything else that starts. Even though we will have the people we need to burn safely, only a small percentage of our available resources will be used on this fire. We have pulled in engines and crews from other areas to assist us in our fire prevention and suppression due to the fire situation we are in now. This is standard procedure. Fire fighting resources across the United States are available to respond anywhere on a moments notice.

The National Interagency Fire Center in Boise coordinates this and has procedures in place. Every geographic area of the country is part of this network. The fire fighting capability in this country is set up to respond and has done this successfully for years.

**Q. I know there is a large power line that goes right by that area. What have you done to protect that?**

**A.** We have identified the power line and plan to avoid it. The power line is a distance away from burn area and prevailing winds are in the opposite direction.

**Q. This area has a lot of archeological sites. What have you done to protect them?**

**A.** We have already surveyed the area and done necessary steps to protect any sites we found.

**Q. Can I go out to the site and see what you are doing?**

**A.** If you are interested in learning more about the prescribed burn and would like to see the burn project area, the Española Ranger District will offer a 3-hour Educational Field Trip on Friday, May 12. Anyone interested should meet at 12:00 p.m. at the Santa Fe Municipal Recreation Complex - Pitch Parking Lot and be prepared to drive their personal vehicles. The road to the burn project area, which is a 30-45 minute drive into the Caja Del Rio Plateau, is rough and individuals are advised to drive high clearance vehicles.

**Q. Where can I learn more about this project and others on the Forest?**

**A.** Check the Santa Fe National Forest website to stay up to date on ongoing and future land management projects. <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/>.