



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# News Release

BLM Colorado San Luis Valley Field Office

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## **BLM plans prescribed burn to benefit wildlife at Blanca Wetlands**

**MONTE VISTA, COLO** - The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) San Luis Valley Field Office and BLM Rocky Mountain District Fire are preparing to conduct a prescribed burn at Blanca Wetlands, approximately 11 miles northeast of Alamosa.

The primary objective of the prescribed burn is to increase the quality and size of open water habitats by removing overgrown fuels and thick stands of cattails surrounding the ponds. Fire is the most effective method to accomplish these objectives. Up to 200 acres surrounding eight ponds will be burned to improve habitat for nesting and migratory waterfowl in the wetlands.

Pond shorelines within the wetlands are burned at five-to-ten-year intervals to maintain a balance between vegetated and open water habitats for the 150+ species of birds that use the area, while also improving angler access. Without periodic disturbance through burning, cattails would soon dominate the wetland landscape.

The burn is planned to occur between mid-January and mid-March 2022. The prescribed fire may occur over multiple days, or sets of days, during this timeframe. Specific timing of the operation will depend on favorable weather and fuel moisture conditions. Crews will be on site for the duration of the burn.

Smoke from the prescribed fire will be visible while the burn is occurring, mostly during the warmest part of the day. With cooler temperatures in the evening, smoke may linger and accumulate in low-lying areas.

Prescribed fire smoke may affect your health. For more information, please visit the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division's website: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health>.

Updates on the Blanca Wetlands prescribed burn will be available on the @BLMColoradoFire Facebook page. For additional information, please contact Scott Nilson, Fire Management Specialist for BLM Rocky Mountain District Fire at (719) 852-8150.

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*The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 11 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The agency's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Diverse activities authorized on these lands generated \$111 billion in economic output across the country in fiscal year 2020—more than any other agency in the Department of the Interior. These activities supported more than 498,000 jobs.*