



BLM Fact Sheet

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

New Mexico State Office

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Illegal Firewood Cutting

Illegal woodcutting activities have occurred in areas managed by BLM's Albuquerque and Farmington District Offices. These are popular areas for hiking and dispersed recreation and have scenic and resource values that are important to many people. In response, the BLM has initiated a number of actions and has future strategies in place to address the situation.



Actions BLM has taken to address illegal woodcutting near Cuba, New Mexico:

- Over 30 citations have been issued for illegal woodcutting in the past 9 months, and 70 citations over the past 2 ½ years including fines of \$500 and confiscation of chainsaws and other equipment. Farmington and Rio Puerco Field Office Law Enforcement Rangers have seen a decline in illegal woodcutting.
- The Rio Puerco Field Office has finalized an agreement with the US Forest Service Cuba Ranger District to sell BLM wood permits in Cuba, making it easier to be in compliance.
- BLM field staff has installed signs to inform the public of land ownership boundaries, fuel wood area boundaries, and regulations pertinent to forest resources. There are over 200 signs specific to forest resources in areas west of Cuba.
- A temporary closure of fuel woodcutting was instituted for the entire Rio Puerco Field Office area from December 2011 through April 2012. Legal firewood areas are now open on both Farmington and Rio Puerco Field Office areas.
- A toll free phone number (1-800-637-9152) is now available to the BLM Law Enforcement Dispatch Center, which allows the public the opportunity to call and report illegal woodcutting.
- Education and outreach meetings have been conducted in local communities to show how illegal woodcutting degrades natural resources. During the meetings, BLM conducted PowerPoint presentations concerning woodcutting policies, forest practices and a discussion of the proper utilization of permits on public lands.



BLM Forester inventorying illegally cut trees

Actions which are ongoing:

- The Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute at New Mexico Highlands University had student forestry crews conduct intensive forest inventory in the San Juan badlands areas affected by illegal woodcutting that have not yet been inventoried.

- Continued coordination with the Sandoval County Sheriff and New Mexico State Police (NMSPP) to enforce violations of the New Mexico Forest Conservation Act.
- Coordinating with the New Mexico Forestry Division and the State Land Office to address illegal woodcutting occurring on state and private lands in northwestern New Mexico.
- Legal firewood areas are being planned for fuelwood cutting in the Lindrith area north of Cuba and south of the Jicarilla Apache Reservation boundary.
- Two-track roads that woodcutters are using to conduct their illegal activities will be obliterated.
- As additional community outreach, the issue of illegal woodcutting will be addressed in the upcoming Rio Puerco Field Office Resource Management Plan workshops.
- More educational and outreach meetings and presentations within the Farmington Field Office are planned. These meetings will include the Farmington Field Office Tribal Program Coordinator, Law Enforcement Staff, and Fire/Fuels Staff.
- Educational Outreach meetings and presentations will also be expanded within the Rio Puerco Field Office.
- The Rio Puerco Field office is about to begin rehabilitation on the areas of illegal woodcutting in the San Juan badlands and Torreon areas, including low-cutting of stumps, scattering of slash in areas of bare ground and possible reseeding and planting of vegetation if needed. Any usable firewood resulting from the cleanup will be donated.

The BLM is committed to managing public lands in a responsible and sustainable manner in order to balance various needs. We will continue to implement enforcement and compliance activities as well as education and outreach to communities within this area to address the illegal woodcutting problem. Our field offices will actively engage with local communities, partner agencies, and affected stakeholders to meet the needs of rural communities while protecting our valuable woodland resources.