

< Public Announcement >

Albuquerque District Office

Contact BLM Albuquerque District Project Coordinator Jeff Fassett at (575) 838-1245

BLM announces vegetation management project in central and western New Mexico < < Low Flying Aircrafts in Area > >

Beginning now through Oct. 16, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), will treat approximately 6,000 acres in Cibola, Sandoval, Catron and Socorro counties where native bush and juniper tree densities have surpassed historic, naturally occurring levels.

For the treatment, a low-flying aircraft will drop Tebuthiuron pellets, a soil-applied herbicide that inhibits photosynthesis, on native brush and juniper trees.

Thinning treatments not only enhance native plant diversity, but also contribute to overall ecosystem health and wildfire resilience. To reduce costs and potential resource damage in manual reduction of vegetation, Tebuthiuron pellets have been chosen as a cost-effective treatment method that will provide for a low impact reduction of targeted vegetation.

This treatment will provide benefit in the event of wildfire by reducing potential for large fire growth. Reduced densities of sage and juniper allows fire managers a variety of management options if a wildfire does occur.

The herbicide will have minimal impact on desirable grasses and forbs, and because the herbicide is applied in pellet form, it will not drift from the treated areas. When the pellets dissolve during precipitation, they are absorbed into the ground to a depth of approximately two feet. They are then taken up by the target plants root system, eventually reducing the sagebrush and juniper tree density. The pellets will not be dropped near waterways or on slopes greater than ten percent.

The herbicide Tebuthiuron has been used to control sagebrush and juniper trees since the 1980s, and the benefits of its application are well documented. Various studies of successful treatments are documented by New Mexico State University and New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology and monitoring is ongoing. The BLM's goal is to decrease sagebrush and juniper trees densities and to not achieve eradication.

The objective of the thinning treatments is to improve native plant species diversity, which will benefit wildlife, rangeland and watershed health by reducing the density of sagebrush and juniper trees and result in an increase of native grasses, forbs and other herbaceous vegetation to hold soil in place and decrease erosion.