

San Pedro mine closure and woodland thinning projects

The USDI, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently awarding contracts to close approximately 200 abandoned mines in the San Pedro Mountains. In addition, BLM will be managing contracts to thin the woodlands located on BLM lands on the south side of NM Highway 344, approximately one mile east of the intersection of NM Highway 14 and NM Highway 344.

Work to close the abandoned mines will begin mid-September on BLM lands located within Township 12N Range 07E portions of Sections 28, 29 and 30. Crews will work east through the San Pedro Mountains over the next few months and finish in mid-2019. Expect to see crews and equipment on the ground during this time. Also, helicopters will be used to transport materials to mines that are inaccessible by road.

Mine closures will occur first followed by hand thinning and piling on 139 acres of BLM lands. Thinning and piling will be conducted on Township 12N Range 07E portions of Sections 28, 29 and 30. Work crews will target dense woodland fuels that have accumulated, potentially reducing the threat of wildland fire. Firewood permits will be available from the BLM Taos Office (575-758-8851) for \$10.00/cord.

Slash piles from thinning operations will be burned by BLM fire crews in the following 12-24 months during times of cooler temperatures and higher moisture. During the temporary closure, when work crews are onsite, target shooters will be unable to use the areas where crews will be working. The whole project is expected to take between 12 to 24 months; however, the exact timing is subject to weather, fuel and ground conditions.