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Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary
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Public comment period open for proposed Prescribed Burn Manager Certification Program Rule

Santa Fe, NM – The public can now weigh in on a proposed rule to implement the prescribed burn manager certification program under the state’s new Prescribed Burning Act. An Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) priority bill in the 2021 legislative session and passed with bipartisan support, the act focuses on managing our forests for a changing climate and aims to prevent future catastrophic fires.

The proposed rule addresses standards to become a New Mexico Certified Prescribed Burn Manager. The public comment period on the proposed rule began November 11 and runs through December 14 at 9:00 a.m. A negligence standard reducing liability for private landowners from strict liability is contained in the act and applies to all prescribed burning on private lands. Training and certification are optional, and not required.

“The Prescribed Burning Act gives the Forestry Division another important tool to keep our forests and ecosystems healthy,” said EMNRD Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. “Prescribed burns are a proven way to improve watershed health, enhance wildlife habitat, and reduce hazardous fuels that can increase the chances of a catastrophic wildfire.”

Those wishing to comment on the proposed rule may make oral comments during the virtual rule hearing scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 14, 2021. Written comments may be submitted by mail to Wendy Mason, EMNRD, Forestry Division, 1220 South Saint Francis Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505, or email wendy.mason@state.nm.us. All comments must be received by 9:00 a.m. on December 14. Information and links to the virtual hearing can be found on the Forestry Division Public Meetings and Hearings page at <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/public-meetings-hearings/>.

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