

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

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PRESS RELEASE

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Forestry Division Partners with Inmates to Fight Fires

(Santa Fe)- Inmates from the New Mexico Corrections Department Central New Mexico Correctional Facility (CNMCF) in Los Lunas and fire crews from the State Forestry Division joined forces to extinguish the recent Dog Canyon Fire. It is believed that the fire originated on a piece of private land in the Guadalupe Mountains, fifty miles southwest of Carlsbad. The inmate fire fighters helped snuff the 3400-acre blaze that threatened public lands, as well as private property. Quick response by fire crews prevented damage to standing structures.

Eddie Tudor, Forestry Service Division captain, praised the work of the inmates on the Dog Canyon Fire. He said, "We were able to get the fire stabilized and under control with help from these inmates. The landowner was very impressed with the diligence and effort shown from the crews and is thankful that it was contained as quickly as it was without having devastating effects to his property."

In March, the Forestry Division and inmates from CNMCF will join efforts in a fire prevention project in the village of Corrales. The coordinated effort will reduce the amount of combustible material in the Bosque to diminish the risk of fires in the small community this fire season.

The program for training and using inmates to assist the State Forestry Division in fighting wildfires began as a pilot project at CNMCF in 1996 and was incorporated into the prison's community service mission in 1997. The prison currently has three fire crews with a total of 36 inmates participating in the program. This year, the State Forestry Division and the Corrections Department are planning to expand the number of crews to four by adding another twelve inmates.

For reporters interested in taking video or pictures of the inmate fire crews at work, please call Shannon McReynolds at 505-660-7967 or Dan Ware at 505-690-8210 to schedule a time.

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