

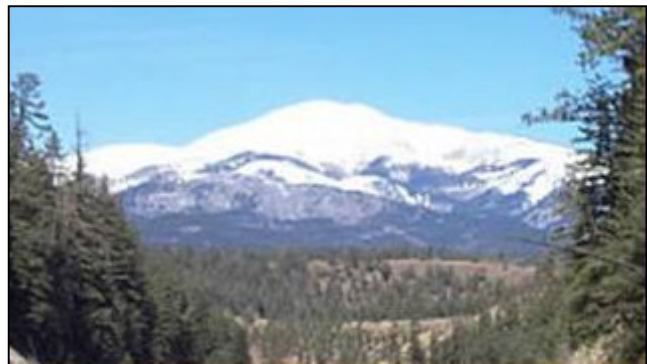
## Mescalero Project: Building Partnerships New Mexico - 2004

The Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation is spread across 460,000 acres of varied landscape, ranging from open desert to timbered mountains. There is a substantial risk of wildland fire, but mitigation efforts by the Mescalero Agency's Branch of Forestry and the Mescalero Apache Tribe's Division of Resource Management and Protection have helped to alleviate some of this threat, and may inspire others in Indian Country to adopt their collaborative approach.

The perimeter of the Reservation is surrounded by approximately 60 percent BLM and Forest Service land and about 40 percent privately owned land. Through a private assistance agreement with New Mexico State Forestry, a two-mile swath around the Reservation perimeter will be classified and mapped for vegetation and risk.

The data from these assessments will help secure funding from the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to expand fuels management projects to reduce fire risk.

In addition to gathering vegetation and risk assessment information, there is also an effort to establish ownership among stakeholders, and based on these findings, coordinate fuels management efforts for more effective treatments.



The most important element to the Mescalero Project is the cooperation between the BIA, the Tribe, federal agencies and the State of New Mexico, private landowners, and existing forest health restoration and wildland/urban interface groups. By creating partnerships among these interested parties, the capacity for information collection, fuels treatment, and public education has increased exponentially.

The Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation is the first site in the Southwest Region to initiate a project of this nature.

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