



# SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 23, 2023**

### **Bear Dance Fire Burn Area Trail Reopening**

Southern Ute Indian Reservation – On June 3, 2022, the Bear Dance Fire ignited within Tribal Trust land, resulting in the burning of 89 acres north of the Bear Dance grounds and along the Los Pinos River. In the aftermath of the fire, the Environmental Programs Division (EPD) identified debris, including hazardous material, present on the ground in areas parallel to Ute Road. The presence of these hazardous materials raised concerns about public health and environmental integrity. Out of an abundance of caution, Tribal Council closed the Bear Dance Fire burn area, including the hiking trail along the Los Pinos River.

The EPD and various environmental professionals have conducted air, soil, and water sampling of the debris area and determined that there is currently minimal risk to human health and the environment from the material. With a commitment to safety and caution, the Tribe wishes to remove these surface materials and remediate this important area. Remediation will commence in 2024 and consist of debris pile removal and capping of any remaining material in place.

With the assurance that the potential risks are low, Tribal Council has made the informed decision to reopen access to the hiking trail and the Los Pinos River within the burn area. The debris piles will remain closed to the public and all signage posted must be abided by in the affected zone.

The area will undergo a temporary closure during the restoration process. Upon the conclusion of these restorative activities, the area will be reopened. Additional information will be shared at that time. If you have any questions, please contact Tribal Council at (970) 563.2319 or the Environmental Programs Division at (970) 563.2206.

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