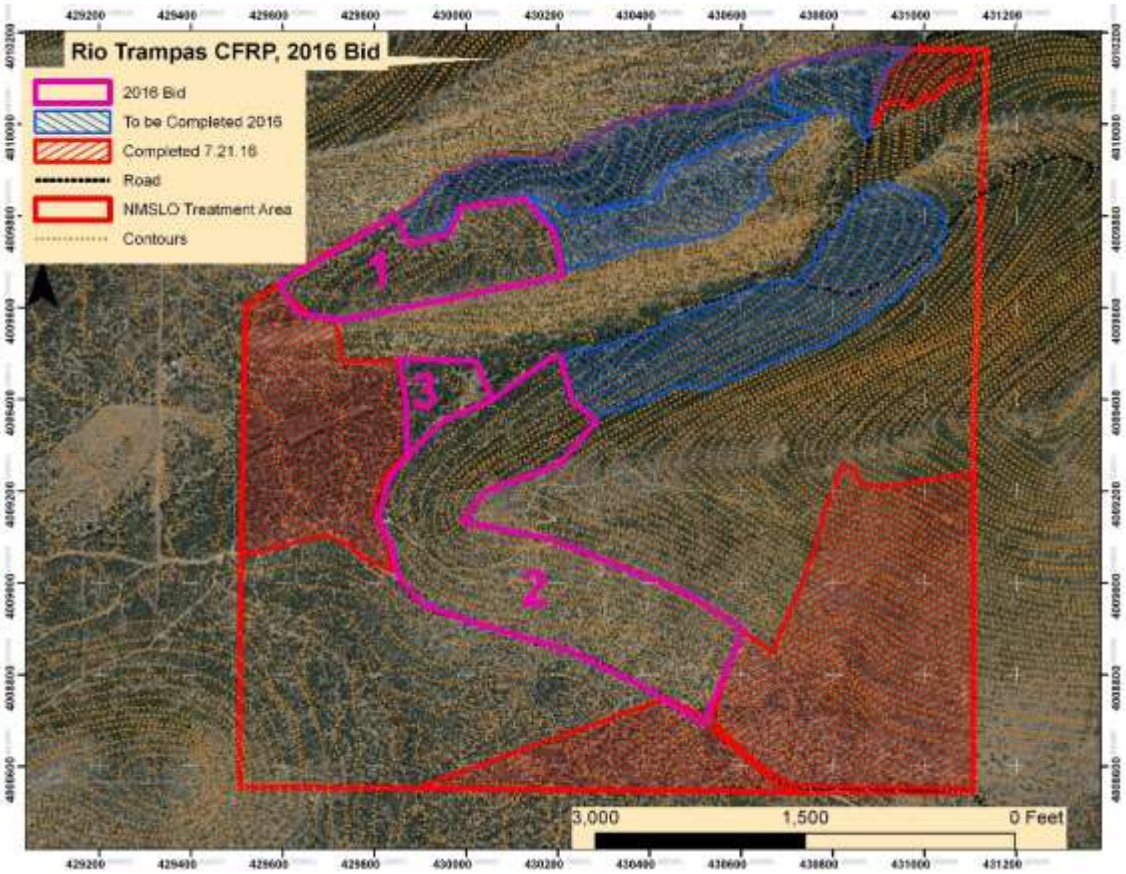
Rio Trampas Watershed
Collaborative Forest Restoration Program

Funded by the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP), of the USDA Forest Service

Thinning Plan, 89 acres.

Objective: To describe prescriptions and follow-up burn planning for treatment areas in project year 3.

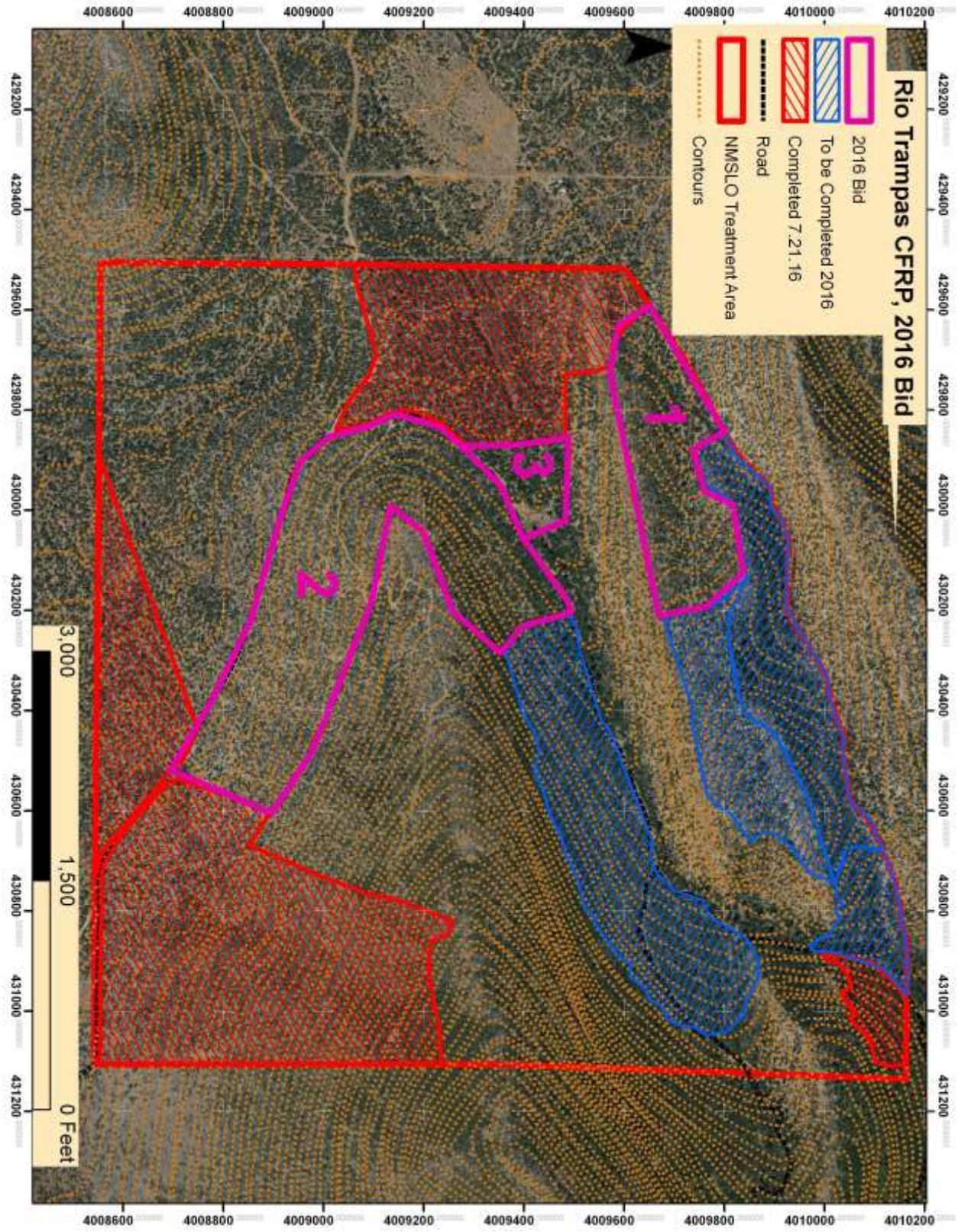


The project is in the Rio Trampas watershed, located off of NM 75 between Dixon and Rio Lucio.

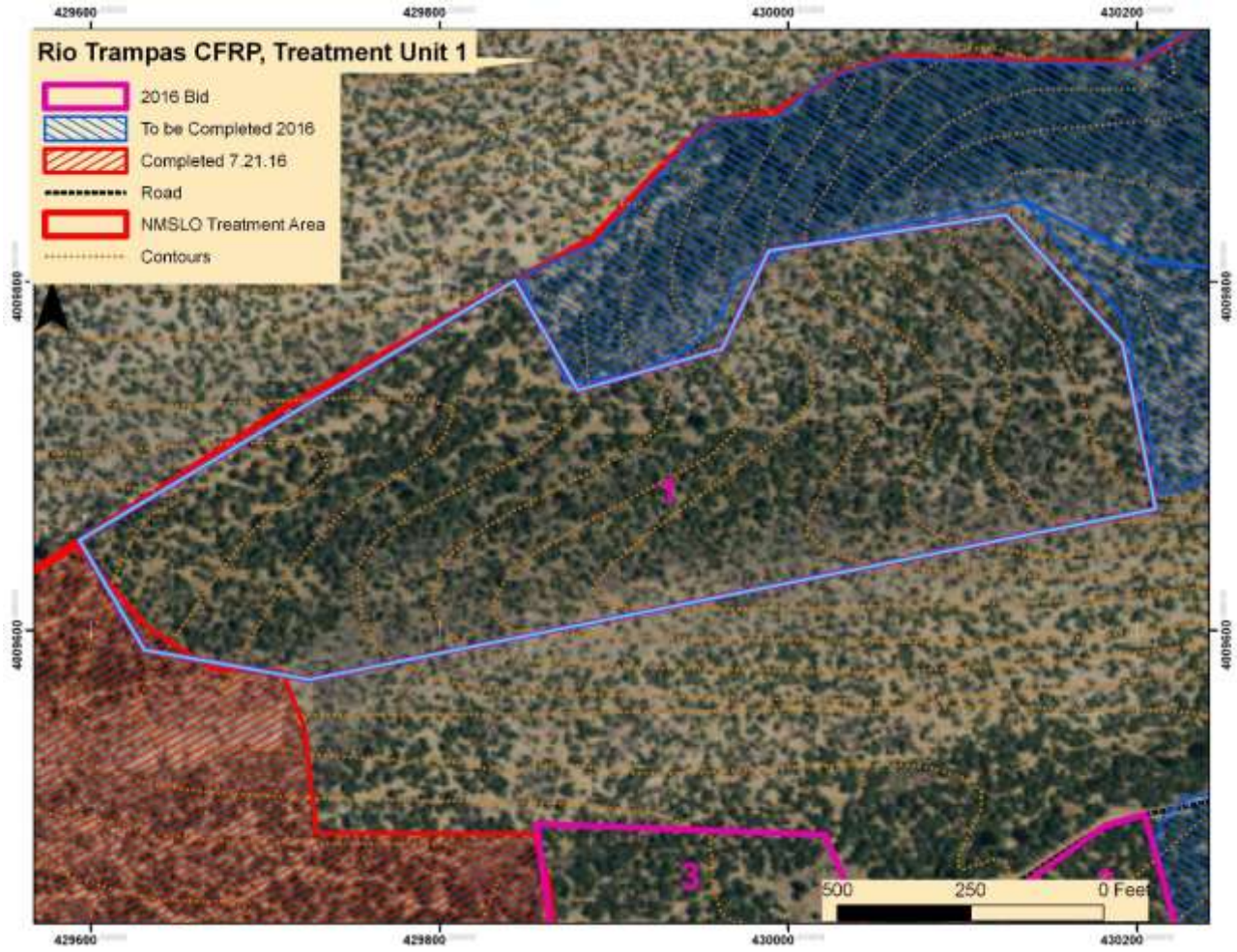
Unit 1: Ponderosa pine stand, 23 acres (not flagged as of 07/25/16). Piling of slash planned for this unit.

Unit 2: Piñon-juniper woodland with some ponderosa pine patches, 60.4 acres (not flagged as of 07/25/16). Northern aspects have a higher component of ponderosa pine. Slash should be piled on northern aspects. Southern and western aspects are predominately piñon juniper woodlands. Slash should be evenly distributed in piñon-juniper woodlands to protect soils and promote understory growth. Slash height should not exceed 2'. This unit has the greatest potential for fuelwood.

Unit 3: Piñon-Juniper woodland, 6.1 acres (not flagged as of 07/25/16). No piles planned for this unit.



Unit 1

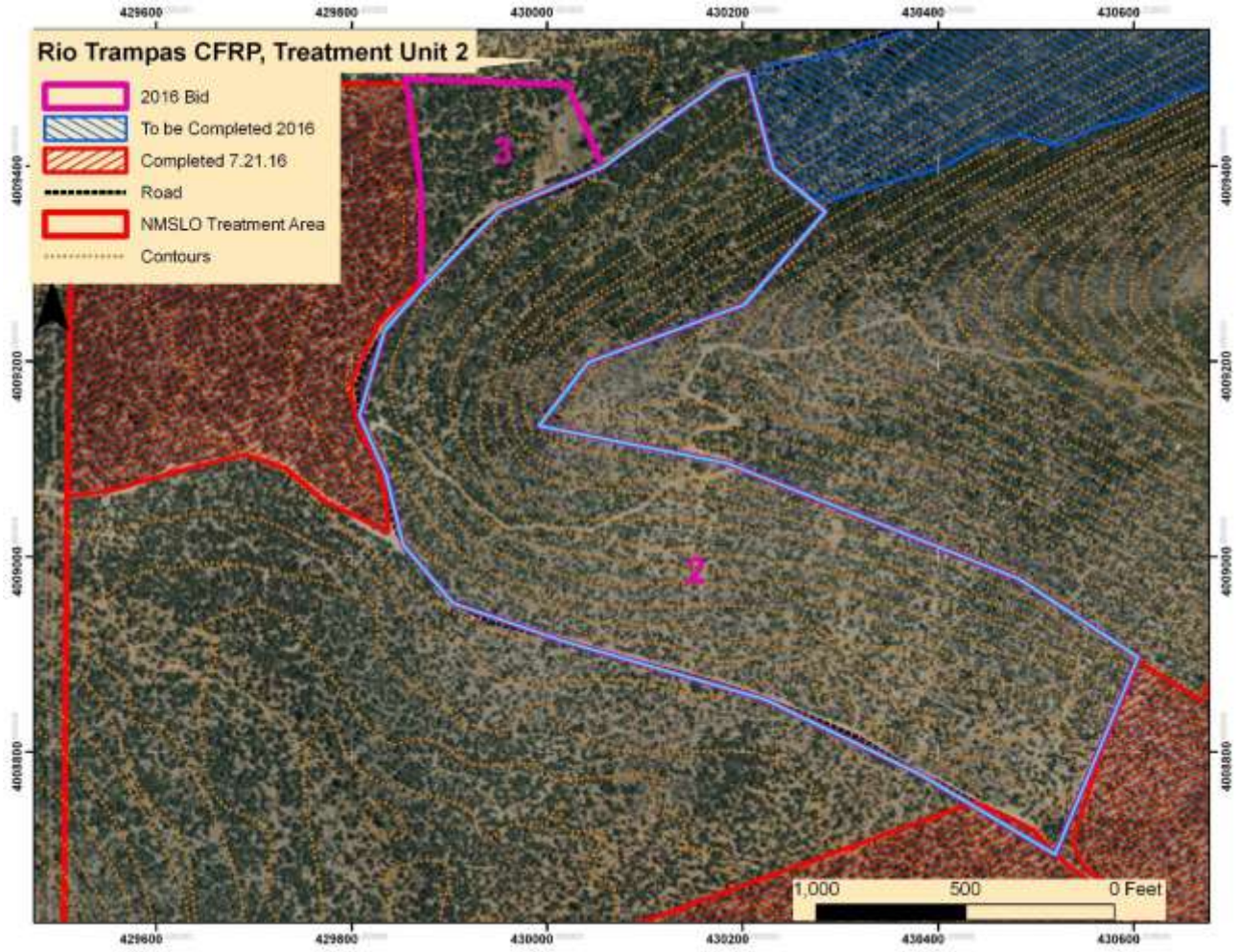


Unit 1 is approximately 23 acres dominated by ponderosa pine in drainages and on north facing slopes. The soil structure is mostly sandy with a deeper organic pad where ponderosa is present. The unit borders a piñon-juniper stand to the west that was treated by Caros General Works in 2015. The unit borders a larger stand to the east and north that Caros General Works is currently treating. BLM land borders the land to the north. Piñon-juniper woodlands border the unit to the south that is too steep and rocky to treat.

The target basal area for the ponderosa pine patches is 50-60 ft2/acre, favoring healthy ponderosa pine, protecting old and large trees. Slash within 0.5 – 1 chain of the northern boundary should be piled. Slash should be piled away from the crowns of remaining trees. Piles should be conical in general with a 6-8' diameter footprint.

In the rest of the unit, slash should be lopped and scattered. Slash height is not to exceed 2' and stumps are not to exceed .5'. The goal is to burn these piles in the fall/winter of 2016 with a broadcast burn in spring or fall 2017. Handline is needed along the north boundary. The rock outcropping and a sparse piñon-juniper woodland to the south will serve as holding features.

Unit 2



Unit 2 is a large and variable unit that is approximately 60.4 acres and is comprised of a northern half and a slightly larger southern half. The northern half is bounded by a road to the north and a ridge to the south while the southern half is bounded by a ridge to the north and the road to the south.

The northern half of the stand has a northern aspect with a significant element of ponderosa pine and gamble oak in the upper elevations. Ponderosa pine is still present at lower elevations on northern aspects, but dense piñon-juniper woodlands gradually become the dominant forest type.

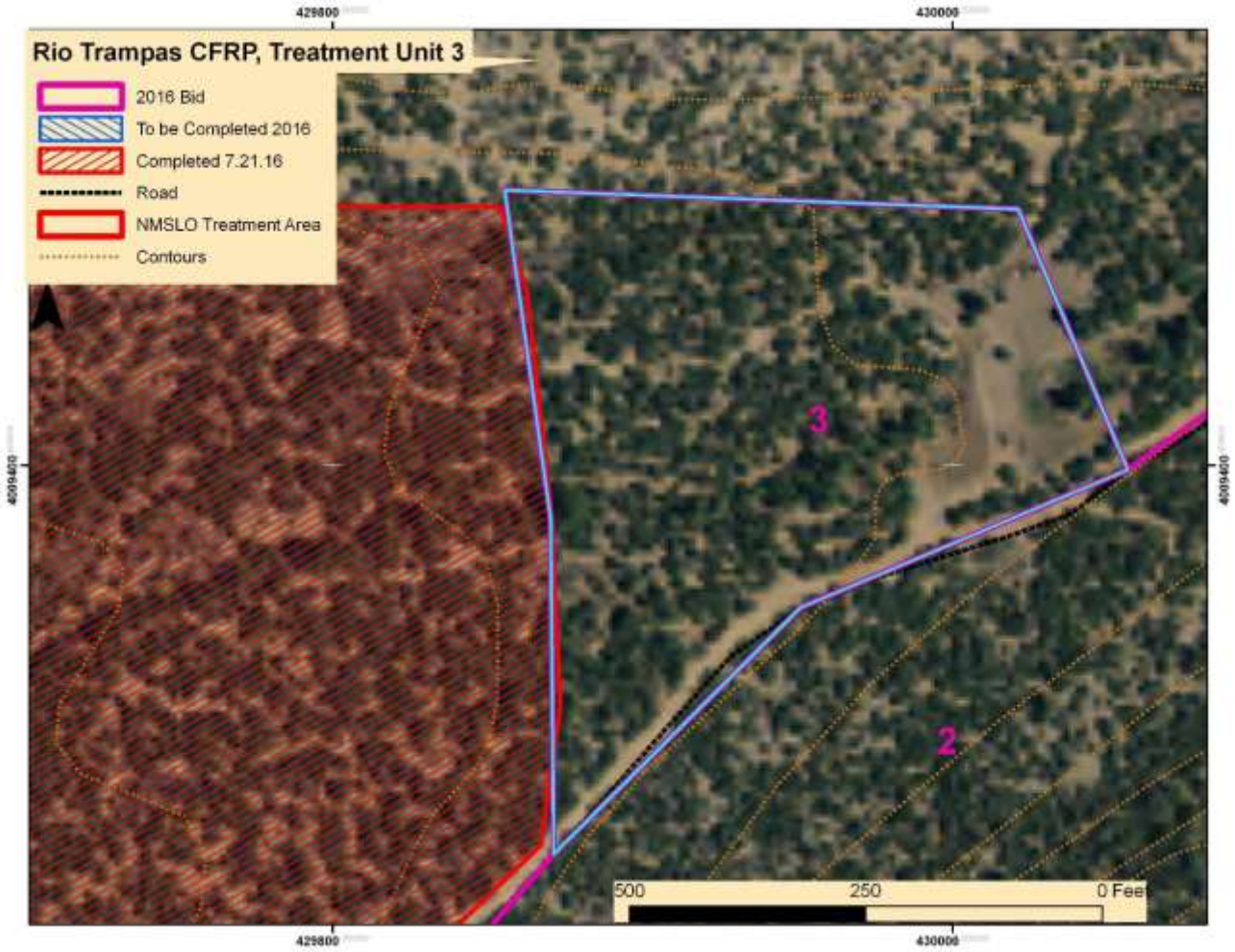
The southern half of the stand is characterized by sparse piñon juniper woodlands and is drier than the northern aspects. The soil is mostly silty and actively eroding in many places. The stand borders piñon-juniper woodlands that Caros General Works treated in 2015 to the west and to the southeast. Caros General Works is scheduled to begin treatment of the ponderosa pine stand along the north-facing slopes to the northeast of the unit. Other areas will remain untreated for now.

Northern Half: In the ponderosa pine-gamble oak forests, remove trees below and adjacent to favorable (large, yellow platey bark, good form) ponderosa pine trees with a target basal area of 50-60 ft2/acre. Old and large piñon pine and juniper trees should be retained as well. This stand supports small patches unique high-value piñon pine woodlands below the ridge with a continuous grass understory. These areas will only need a light thinning. A mix of age classes is desired across the current species mix. Do not cut oak taller than 5' with a DRC greater than 6".

Southern Half: The southern half of the stand should also use a thin-from-below prescription. In these piñon-juniper woodlands, the treatment should create openings and leave clumps of trees, favoring ponderosa pine, pinon pine, Rocky Mountain juniper, and one-seed juniper in a mix of age classes while preserving old and large trees. Openings should be perpendicular to the slope and not aligned with the dominant southwest winds to help limit erosion. Openings should be .25 – 1.25 of an acre in size with an irregular shape.

Fuelwooding is planned within 2-3 chains south of the road. The goal is to burn piles in the winter of 2016 and treat the ponderosa pine areas with a broadcast burn in spring or fall 2017.

Unit 3



Unit 3 is approximately 6.1 acres dominated by a piñon-juniper woodland. Caros General Works thinned the stand to the west in 2015. The southern boundary is scheduled to be thinned as part of this prescription. The northern boundary is a steep hillside with piñon-juniper. The stand is too steep to reasonably treat. The western boundary is seasonal wash.

The unit should be treated using a thin-from-below prescription. The treatment should create openings and leave clumps of trees, favoring ponderosa pine, pinon pine, Rocky Mountain juniper, and one-seed juniper in a mix of age classes while preserving old and large trees. Openings should be perpendicular with slope and not aligned with the dominant SW winds to help limit erosion. Openings should be .25 – 1.25 of an acre in size with an irregular shape.

Fuelwooding is planned within 2-3 chains north of the road.

Photo 1. A ponderosa pine patch that has been treated in the Rio Trampas Watershed. Note the selection for large, mature pines and that the piles are located away from the tree canopies. This is similar to the treatment in Unit 1 and the northern half of Unit 2.

Photo 2. A treated piñon-juniper woodland on a southern aspect in the Rio Trampas Watershed. Note that vigorous trees remain and the gaps created between leave trees. Also, though difficult to see in this photo, one may also no light strips that have been cleared along the hillside in the upper left corner perpendicular to the slope. These perpendicular gaps help decrease canopy continuity and increase structure diversity. This is similar to the treatment in Unit 3 and the southern half of Unit 2.