

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary
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EMNRD Cabinet Secretary visits Turkey Mountains forest management project with partners

Albuquerque – Yesterday, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst joined a tour of the Turkey Mountains where EMNRD's Forestry Division has completed significant forest and watershed restoration work thanks to the Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) of 2019. The Secretary and EMNRD State Forestry officials were joined by representatives from the office of Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernández, our state partners, and current Forest and Watershed Restoration Act Board members.

The Turkey Mountains, located in Mora County, are a small, isolated mountain range with large landholdings that house the perfect location for a project under FAWRA. In the early 2000s the Forestry Division partnered with private landowners to create a joint fire-management strategy. The partnership evolved to coordinated thinning treatments and a prescribed burn training event for private landowners. The project was expanded thanks to FAWRA which allowed for landscape-scale treatment across ownerships and set the stage for more prescribed fire. The tour showcased the thinning treatment conducted in the area which will help manage our forests for hotter and drier conditions and improve watershed health.

"Seeing the benefits of our legislative wins in action was a rewarding experience and I'm glad we were able to share it with some of our supporters," said EMNRD Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. "Touring the Turkey Mountains thinning project was also the perfect way to recognize Climate Week as we were able to see effective forest management for climate change resilience."

"The year-to-year consistency of the FAWRA funding allows big projects like the Turkey Mountains to be carried out," said Department of Game and Fish, Wildlife Management Bureau Chief, Stewart Liley. "The result includes extensive areas of improved wildlife habitat."

Kathy Holian said, "I'm one of three public members appointed to the FAWRA Advisory Board, but I'm also a landowner who's done restoration projects on my own land. It is critical to protect our watersheds, and the forests, and the grasslands, and the wildlife that live here. They all require thoughtful and ongoing work, especially now."

The Turkey Mountains project has informed how new projects in the top 500 priority watersheds can be successful and were incorporated into the 2020 Forest Action Plan.



Forestry Division representatives explain the landscape-scale treatment taking place in the Turkey Mountains.



State Forester Laura McCarthy and EMNRD Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst hear about the impacts of drought on forests.



Post fire landscape.

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