



Forest and Watershed Restoration Act

FY22 Annual Report

Prepared by the Energy, Minerals and
Natural Resources Department

December 2021



Executive Summary

The Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA or Act) is in its third year of implementation after being signed into law by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham on March 15, 2019. FAWRA allocates funding annually to the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division for the purpose of restoring forests and watersheds and directs the Forestry Division to administer, implement, and report on the projects. The Act also established a Forest and Watershed Advisory Board (Advisory Board) to evaluate and recommend projects to the Forestry Division.

This report summarizes the progress that has been made to restore New Mexico's forests and watersheds over the first three years of the program's existence, including new projects selected for funding in August of 2021 (FY22 projects) and updates on projects that were funded in the first two years of the program (FY20 and FY21).

Although challenges of the past few years have slowed or delayed some forest projects across the region, progress on FAWRA projects is picking up. In 2021 two projects, both funded in FY20, are now complete. These are the Encino Vista Landscape Restoration Project and the Gallinas Watershed Restoration Phase IV Project. Several additional projects are projected to be completed in early 2022.

Accomplishment Summary

- 22 projects are underway in high priority watersheds,¹ including partnerships with tribes and pueblos, municipalities, and multiple state and federal agencies.
- 4,480 total acres of forest restoration, including fuels treatments, thinning, invasive species removal, and prescribed fire are complete as of November 1, 2021.

¹ High priority watersheds are defined in the state Forest Action Plan. The plan was updated in 2020 with a science-based assessment, strategy development and stakeholder engagement. The assessment ranked the 12th code hydrological units, of which there are 3,219 in New Mexico, and assigned the high priority rank to 500 units based on the risk of wildfire transmission to communities, provision of water, and value as fish and wildlife habitat and to biodiversity.

Advisory Board and Public Engagement

A list of current Advisory Board members is provided in Appendix A. Advisory Board activities from three meetings in calendar year 2021 are described below. Meeting minutes are provided in Appendix B.

- **April 15, 2021** - The Advisory Board met and heard presentations about 10 projects proposed for FY22 funding. The Advisory Board had a chance to ask questions about the proposed projects before submitting its project scores before the deadline on May 14, 2021.
- **May 14, 2021** - The Advisory Board met to review the project scores and make recommendations for project funding to the Forestry Division. Eight projects were selected, including four that continued or expanded on anchor projects funded in FY20-21.
- **September 16, 2021** - The Advisory Board met to finalize the guidelines for FY23 project selection (Appendix C).

The Advisory Board meetings are open to the public to attend in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. All the meetings in 2021 were virtual. Typically, a few people attend, often representatives of non-governmental organizations. In addition, the Forestry Division hosts quarterly meetings of the statewide Forest and Watershed Health Coordinating Group, attended by where 50 to 100 agencies, organizations, and individuals, are provided and where the latest updates on FAWRA are provided.

The Forestry Division also hosted a few Advisory Board members on field trips to see project outcomes firsthand. The first field trip was on September 25 to the Turkey Mountains and the second was on October 22 to the Red Cabin project on the Mescalero Apache Reservation and the Sixteen Springs project on the Lincoln National Forest.

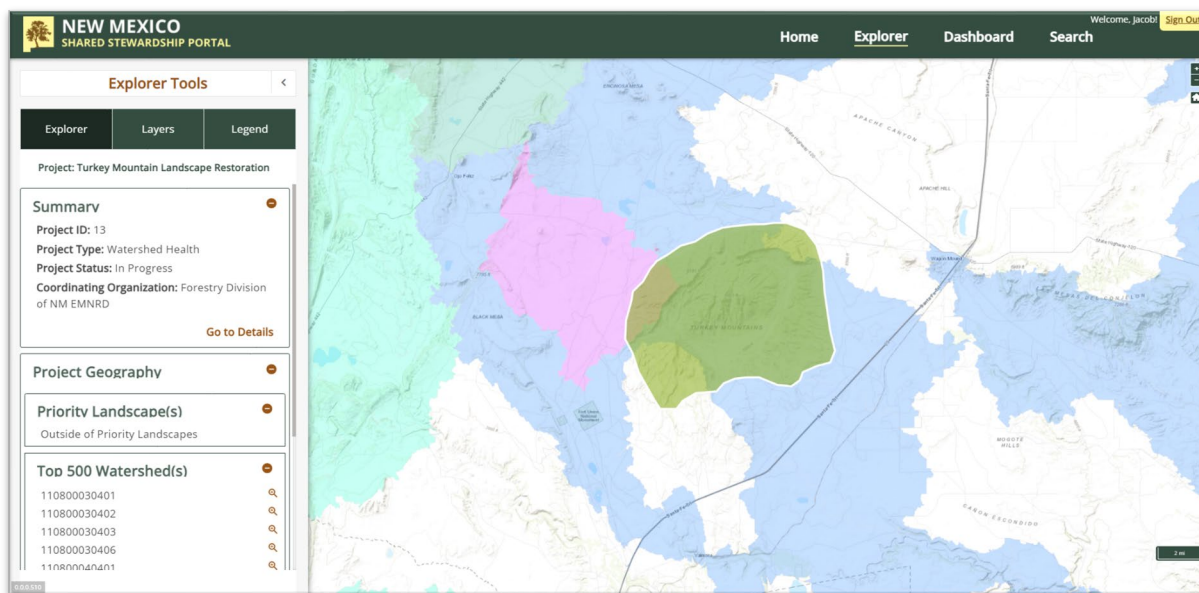


Advisory Board members visit the Turkey Mountains FAWRA Project area in September 2021.

The Shared Stewardship Portal

All FAWRA projects will now be tracked in the New Mexico Shared Stewardship Portal (NMSSP), which launched in October 2021. The NMSSP helps partners better plan and track critical forest restoration accomplishments on the ground. It combines project planning and quantitative analysis to efficiently develop high-value projects and provides the ability to track project status from planning through to implementation and monitoring.

The NMSSP also ensures all land managers in New Mexico who have interest in reduced wildfire and post-wildfire risk and increased landscape resiliency through active fuels reduction and vegetation management have tools to assist in coordination, collaboration, and identification of shared priorities on the landscape. Anyone may create an account to view FAWRA and other projects at [NMSSP.org](https://www.nmssp.org).



Exploring the Turkey Mountains Landscape Restoration Project in the Shared Stewardship Portal

Changes to FAWRA Submission Guidelines for FY23

After two years of FAWRA implementation, several proposals selected in FY21 and FY22 were extensions of previously funded projects. To accommodate multi-year projects and landscape-scale work the FAWRA board approved specific guidelines for “continuing projects” beginning in FY23.

Projects Selected for FY22 Funding

The Advisory Board recommended eight projects for funding on May 14, 2021. An overview of all project scoring is provided in Table 1.

ABQ Reach Bosque Treatments (Continuing Project, \$150,000)

Removal of invasive species within riparian corridors along the Middle Rio Grande bosque to reduce understory fuels and decrease catastrophic wildfire potential in populated areas with a high likelihood of wildfire transmission to homes and businesses. To date approximately 100 acres have been completed cumulatively with FAWRA, building on previous work by municipalities and tribes. Future work will benefit water systems across the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District.

Zuni Phase 1 Private Lands (Continuing Project, \$300,000)

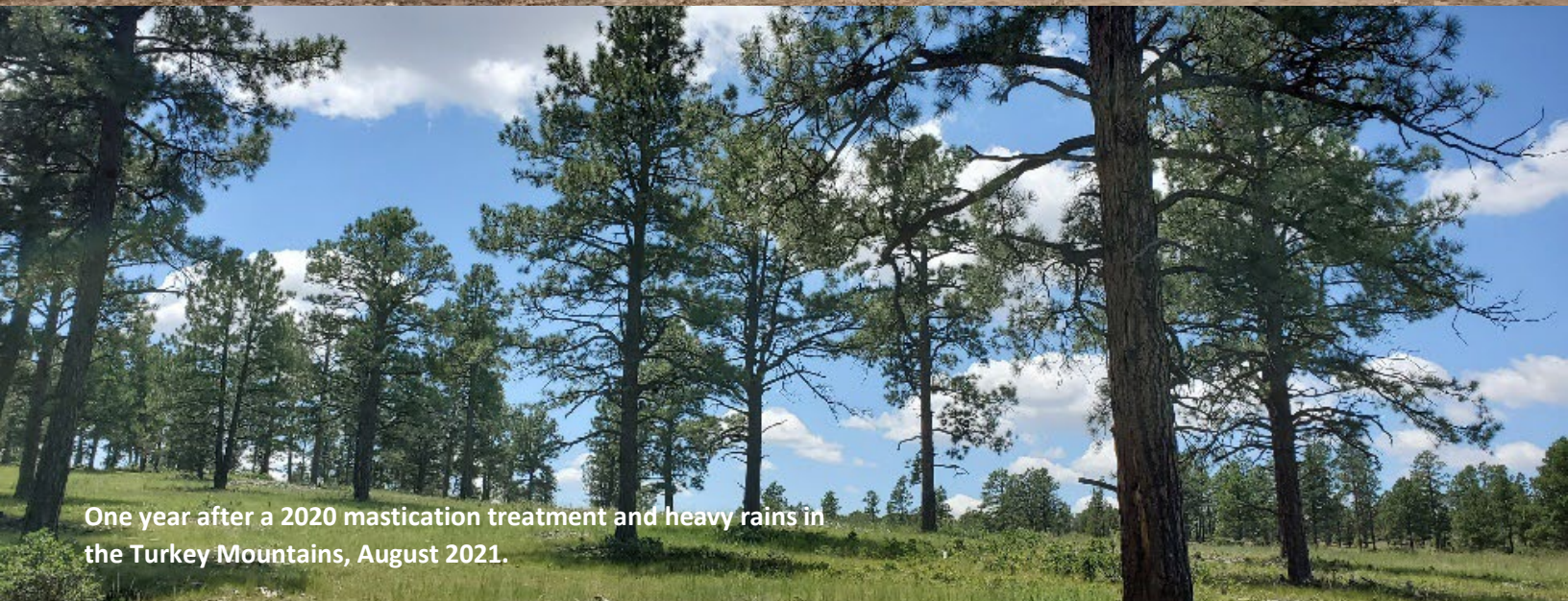
Restoring ponderosa pine and pinon piñon juniper forests in the Bluewater portion of the Zuni Mountains. The focus is on restoring the upper watershed to historic stand densities, increasing the productivity of ecosystems, and reducing the risk of stand-replacing wildfire. Among 4,500 acres identified for restoration, 330 acres were completed on this project in 2021 and 1,080 acres have been completed since the first year of FAWRA funding.

Hand thinning in the Middle Rio Grande bosque,
March 2021.





Fuelwood staged during a thinning project in the Zuni Mountains, March 2021.



One year after a 2020 mastication treatment and heavy rains in the Turkey Mountains, August 2021.

Turkey Mountains (Continuing Project, \$300,000)

Restoration treatments on Turkey Mountains continue toward the goal of 4,500 acres of prescribed burning and thinning. Originally planned for ten years, this large-scale, cross-boundary project is ahead of schedule. Approximately 2,250 cumulative acres have been completed, leveraging capital funding and a federal Landscape Scale Restoration grant in addition to FAWRA funding.

El Caso Restoration (Continuation Project, \$200,000)

Targeted thinning and other forest treatments to improve stand structure and provide wildfire protection in the Quemado Lake area of the fire-adapted Gila Mountain Range. The project links past restoration treatments on the Gila National Forest to a populated wildland-urban interface area and helps protect several natural springs that exist in the area. A total of 630 acres have been completed in 2021.



Zuni Landscape Cibola National Forest Puerco Area (\$150,000)

This project will accelerate the capacity and timeline for United States Forest Service watershed restoration in the 81,000-acre Puerco area in the Zuni Mountains. Approximately 31,500 acres will be treated with thinning and prescribed burning over the next ten years. A high-value wood utilization component will distribute firewood to local tribes and pueblos.

Trampas to San Cristobal (\$380,000)

A landscape-scale collaboration between Carson National Forest and the Forestry Division that will thin approximately 310 acres of ponderosa and piñon-juniper stands across multiple jurisdictions to support forest health and wildfire protection goals, contribute to water security in Taos County, and provide wood-cutting jobs and firewood in rural northern New Mexico communities. This project is an example of effective cross-boundary collaboration and shared stewardship within the Enchanted Circle Priority Area.

Cimarron Range (\$300,000)

This project will selectively thin approximately 10,000 acres of Ponderosa pine and mixed-conifer forests over ten years in the high-priority, high-risk Cimarron watershed. Following the Ute Park Fire there is high interest by among landowners and local conservation groups in maintaining forest treatments and reintroducing fire as a management tool in the landscape, creating opportunities for project leverage and increasing the sustainability of project outcomes.

Sixteen Springs (\$220,000)

This project involves fuel reduction treatments in mixed-conifer forests of the biologically diverse Sacramento Mountains. Treatments will focus on the densely populated and water quality impaired Sixteen Springs Canyon Watershed, with strong potential for follow-up, high-acre projects across the 48,000-acre planning area.

RANK	Proj#	Project Name	DGF	EDD	NMED	SLO	OSE	Holian	Hernandez	Racher	Average
1	6	Trampas to San Cristobal	95	80	89	90	78	95	100	82	88.6
2	3	Cimarron Range	50	100	71	90	95	100	85	96	85.9
3	1	ABQ Reach Bosque Treatments	50	100	69	80	91	95	100	54	79.9
4	9	Zuni Phase 1 Private Lands	67	100	70	90	72	90	95	53	79.6
5	7	Turkey Mountains	67	100	62	80	72	77	100	67	78.1
6	4	El Caso Private Lands	77	80	48	60	56	75	95	87	72.3
7	8	Zuni Landscape Cibola NF Puerco Area	75	75	68	85	62	80	86	44	71.9
8	10	16 Springs	75	80	69	65	67	70	94	45	70.6
9	2	Black Range Area 74 Arch Surveys	62	80	53	85	37	80	85	48	66.3
10	5	Socorro County Bosque	80	60	64	60	71	69	80	42	65.8

Figure 1. Revised/Final FY21 FAWRA Project Proposal Scores adopted at the May 14, 2021, Advisory Board Meeting

FAWRA Projects Under Construction

In addition to continuing projects that have received additional funding in FY22, work is progressing on the following previously funded FAWRA projects from FY20 and FY21.

Upper Coyote Creek, Elk Ridge – (\$100,000 in FY20 and \$400,000 in FY21)

Forest restoration project on state trust lands in the vicinity of White Peak, adjacent to communities, and in the upper reaches of the Cimarron, Mora, and Upper Canadian River watersheds. Work on this project began in late 2021, and ten out of approximately 262 acres have been completed.

Sandia Pueblo Bosque Restoration – (\$75,000 in FY21)

Riparian restoration of the Rio Grande bosque within Sandia Pueblo removing invasive species, reducing wildfire risk, and restoring riparian habitat. This project uses goats to browse salt cedar and Russian olive and reduce reliance on herbicides. 18.5 out of 70 acres have been completed, with remaining work expected to be completed in early 2022.

Red Cabin Mescalero, No Name Springs #1 – (\$500,000 in FY20)

Watershed restoration project located on the southern part of the Mescalero Apache Reservation. The project outcomes are to improve water reliability and provide wood supply for the Mescalero Apache Tribe and people in adjacent communities. 315 out of 682 total targeted acres have been completed under a contract administered by the Mescalero Apache Tribe. Cumulative completed restoration on this project now totals 1,477 acres since 2015, work that has been supported by a mix of Bureau of Indian Affairs, state funds, and Mescalero timber sales.

Santa Clara Creek Wetland Restoration – (\$44,400 in FY20 and \$158,150 in FY21)

Wetland restoration project that will work to restore seeps, springs, and riparian areas along Santa Clara Creek that were severely damaged by Las Conchas fire in 2011 and post-fire flooding. FAWRA funding has helped complete more than 1,200 acres of prescribed burning, to be followed by resprout treatment.

Completed FAWRA Projects

The following projects are either completed or projected to be completed by early January 2022.

Encino Vista Landscape Restoration – (\$500,000 in FY20; slowed by Mexican Spotted Owl (MSO) injunction; funding reduced to \$300,000)

In the final phase of planning under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for an area of the Santa Fe National Forest that is adjacent to Rio Puerco de Chama and Abiquiu Reservoir, archeological clearances were completed on over 100,000 acres. Restoration work including thinning and prescribed fire can now begin on these lands.

Gallinas Watershed Restoration Phase IV – (Original allocation \$500,000 in FY20; halted by MSO injunction; restarted with \$188,000 in November 2020)

Watershed restoration was completed on approximately 122 acres in the Gallinas Municipal Watershed. Nearly 5,000 acres of treatment have now been completed in this area, protecting water supplies and residents in the Gallinas Wildland Urban Interface.

Delayed or Deferred Projects

Occasionally projects are delayed or deferred due to unexpected landowner access, title, or other issues. This year funding was redirected from the following three projects. In future years these projects may still receive FAWRA funding, or other state or federal funding.

- Northside-Rio Hondo Source Water Protection – (originally \$200,000 in FY21, seeking federal funding to complete the project because of potential state anti-donation clause conflict)
- Cebolla-Nutrias Watershed – (originally \$250,000 in FY21, working on landowner agreements and will seek federal funding)
- Rio Chama Watershed Restoration — (originally \$158,100 in FY21, success of the Rio Chama Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration application means federal funding may be a better fit)



New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
1220 South Saint Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

APPENDIX A: FOREST AND WATERSHED RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD – updated 09/15/2021

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources

Department

Forestry Division

Laura McCarthy, State Forester
1220 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-490-2954
Email: laura.mccarthy@state.nnm.us

Department of Homeland Security & Emergency

Management - Fire Service Support Bureau

John Kondratick
Interim State Fire Marshal
13 Bataan Blvd
Santa Fe, NM 87508
PO Box 27111
Santa Fe, NM 87502
Phone: 505-470-1044
Email: john.kondratick@state.nm.us

^

Economic Development Department

Tim Hagaman
Business Development Team
P.O Box 20003
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Phone: 505-862-2322
Email: tim.hagaman@state.nm.us

Environment Department

John Rhoderick
Acting Water Protection Division Director
1190 St. Francis Dr.
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-2855
Email: John.Rhoderick@state.nm.us

NM Office of the State Engineer

Julie Valdez
Bureau Chief
407 Galisteo St.
Santa Fe, NM 87501
P.O Box 25102
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Phone: 505-827-4304
Email: julie.valdez@state.nm.us

NM State Land Office

Mark Meyers
Forester
310 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-4453
Email: mkmeyers@slo.state.nm.us

Appointed Public Member, Conservation

Kathleen Holian
Email: kathleensholian@gmail.com

Appointed Public Member, Local Government

Steven Hernandez
Email: slh.lcnm@gmail.com

Appointed Public Member, Industry

Brent Racher
Email: racher@resource-management.us

NM Department of Game and Fish

Stewart Liley
Chief, Wildlife Management Division
1 Wildlife Way
Santa Fe, NM 87507
Phone: 505-476-8038
Email: stewart.liley@state.nm.us

APPENDIX B: 2021 MEETING MINUTES

Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) Advisory Board Meeting Minutes April 15, 2021

1. Call to Order

A virtual Teams Live Event meeting of the FAWRA Advisory Board (Board) was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on April 15, 2021 and presided over by Laura McCarthy, State Forester, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division.

- **Board Members and Delegates Present**

Laura McCarthy, State Forester, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair
Mark Myers, State Land Office (SLO)
Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)
Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)
Lucia Sanchez, Interstate Stream Commission (ISC)
Rebecca Roose, Environment Department (ED)
Abe Franklin, Environment Department (ED)
Mark Roper, Economic Development Department
Kathy Holian, Public Member
Steve Hernandez, Public Member
Brent Racher, Public Member

- **Board Members Absent**

Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Marshal's Office, Fire Service Support

- **Invited Federal Agencies Present**

Michiko Martin, Regional Forester, USDA Forest Service (USFS), Southwestern Region
Elaine Kohrman, Deputy Regional Forester, USDA Forest Service, Southwestern Region
Melanie Barnes, Acting Associate State Director, US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico
Kristin Graham Chavez, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Development, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

2. Welcome/Introductions

Laura McCarthy, State Forester and FAWRA Chair, recognized the Board, public members, and guests. Board members, non-voting participants, and members of the public introduced themselves via round robin.

3. Board Business

Approval of Agenda

Lucia Sanchez moved to approve the agenda and Rebecca Roose seconded the motion. The meeting agenda for April 15, 2021, was unanimously approved.

Approval of Open Meetings Act Resolution

Steve Hernandez moved to approve the Open Meetings Act resolution and Lucia Sanchez seconded the motion. The Open Meetings Act resolution was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

Julie Valdez moved to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2020 Board meeting and Rebecca Roose seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

4. State Forester's Update

Laura McCarthy provided a Forestry Division update on the following:

- Prescribed Burning Act passed during the 2021 Legislative Session.
- The 2020 Forest Action Plan was officially released the week of April 13, 2021.
- Under the Shared Stewardship Agreement the Forestry Division and USFS worked together with scientists at the Rocky Mountain Research Station to identify priority watersheds with significant wildfire risks that threaten communities, important water values, and important fish, wildlife, and biodiversity habitat. The next step was to identify 10 Priority Landscapes out of the top 500 watersheds. Forestry Division districts are working with the USFS and stakeholders in each of the 10 areas to discuss how each priority landscape is defined, including boundaries and focal areas. This could have bearing on future FAWRA projects and the work of the Board.

Rebecca Roose asked what, if any, interplay is there between the 2020 Forest Action Plan (FAP) and the 10 Priority Landscapes work taking place. Laura explained that the Forest Action Plan is strategies and action items that are independent of the place that they would be carried out. The Priority Landscapes are priorities places to receive funds that carry out the strategies and action items in the FAP.

5. Progress report on funded projects

Laura McCarthy provided an overview of the Project Ranking by Board and Outline for Project Reports list (as of April 12, 2021) generated by the Board in June 2020. The list includes the Joplin Ridge State Land Office (SLO) project, which was added during the Mexican spotted owl (MSO) injunction. This is one of several projects identified by the Forestry Division outside of MSO habitat that helped keep forest workers and local businesses that rely on restoration projects for wood supply from folding. The projects invest funding in priority places and ensure that contractor and workforce capacity to perform future projects remains intact. The Joplin Ridge SLO project, located in the southern Sacramento Mountains, was chosen strategically because it is on state land, provides a fire-buffer to the Sunspot Observatory and popular recreation areas, and has a major powerline running through it. The Otero County Rural Electric Cooperative Association is a partner in this project and is providing in-kind support, thereby implementing strategy 4 and associated action items.

6. Overview of scoring and spreadsheet

Laura McCarthy provided an overview of the FY22 FAWRA Project Scoresheet and Project Criteria for Ranking form. The Board developed and voted on the criteria during the October 6, 2020 virtual meeting.

7. Presentation and review of new projects

1. ABQ Reach Bosque Rio – Middle Rio Grande Bosque Proposal

- a. The ABQ Reach Bosque Rio project takes place in several critical watersheds within the Bernalillo District and covers a significant portion of the Middle Rio Grande Valley.
- b. FY22 Treatments will seek to further involve Sandia, Isleta and Santa Ana Pueblos within the direct area by leveraging funds.
- c. The project includes riparian restoration treatments to reduce invasive species and uncharacteristic wildfire; supplies irrigation for agriculture and drinking on nearly 200 miles of riverside levees; provides wood products for traditional community use, firewood to tribes, and ornamental wood products.
- d. Multiple cooperating agencies are involved and include leverage of fiscal and in-kind funding from Sandia Pueblo with a US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs grant; Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District in-kind funding; Village of Corrales in-kind funding; and Village of Los Lunas with \$450k projected for bosque improvement.

2. Black Range Area 74 Archeology Surveys

- a. The Black Range Area 74 project encompasses three units on the Gila National Forest, in the Black Range Ranger District in Sierra County.
- b. This FAWRA funding request would fund archaeological survey work to advance the effort of the USFS to use prescribed fire on more than 12,000 acres of a much larger 100K-acre Area 74 project. The project will improve water resources of the Gila and Rio Grande rivers, protect area communities from catastrophic wildfire, and restore the ecological balance in fire-adapted ecosystems.
- c. The public will benefit from preserving current and future wood resources for local businesses, maintaining firewood availability, and increasing tourism and hunting opportunities from improved habitat.

Brent Racher commented that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review is getting old on the larger project. Is there a reason why other partners haven't prioritized clearance on implementation sooner? James Anzalone, Socorro District Forester, stated that this has been an ongoing project for several years involving multiple partners, but it's not clear if there is an expiration on the NEPA. Stewart Liley said DGF has been contributing to this project for multiple years, including paying for prescribed burns. This is just one portion of the larger landscape where work is being conducted.

3. Cimarron Range

- a. The Cimarron Range project is located in Northeast New Mexico, Colfax County, within the Cimarron Watershed and Enchanted Circle Shared Stewardship Priority Landscape. The project will treat 10,000 acres over 10 years and involves three e landowners.
- b. Public benefits include reduced risks of stand-replacing wildfire, improved water storage potential, improved forest resilience, reduced debris flow risk, improved wildlife habitat, protection of Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas, and enhanced economic conditions.

Abe Franklin commented that the ED, Surface Water Quality Bureau is developing a watershed-based plan for American Creek to plan/prepare on how to address impairments for e. coli and aluminum for water quality in the area.

Cheryl Bada, EMNRD Deputy General Counsel, considering possible anti-donation issues, asked if there are other private property owners, besides the three shown on the map, within or related to the project area. Arnie Friedt, Cimarron District Forester, said a fourth landowner, the UU Bar Ranch, declined to participate possibly because they are currently in transition of ownership. There are still plenty of opportunities to meet current project goals without participation by UU Bar Ranch. Cheryl also asked how the Boy Scouts Bankruptcy may affect Philmont Scout Ranch's ability to commit to the long-term on this project. Arnie says Philmont is confident that it would not have an impact.

Laura McCarthy explained that the Luna Fire took place in October 2020 near this proposed treatment area and became a very fast-moving fire due to a lack of treatments in the area. This project could be a significant anchor point at the base of the American Creek watersheds for future wildfires in the watershed of the Cimarron River.

4. El Caso

- a. The El Caso Restoration (thinning) project is located in the northern Gila region, 15 miles south of Quemado – Quemado Lake Estates.
- b. The roughly 1,300-acre project includes thinning pinon/juniper (80%) and ponderosa pine (35%) to protect the surrounding Quemado Lake Estates community and the local watershed from catastrophic wildfire. The project will also improve water quality by increasing soil infiltration rates, increase water supply, and produce wood supply for local businesses.
- c. The project area is a priority in the Shared Stewardship and Forest Action Plans.

Andrew Frederick, Forestry Division Resource Management Bureau Chief, commented that this project is well positioned in the Priority Landscapes for actions that the Gila National Forest has planned for on the USFS side.

5. Socorro County Bosque

- a. The Socorro County Bosque project is located along the Middle Rio Grande in Socorro County.
- b. The project will remove invasive species, restore native vegetation, create suitable habitat for two endangered species, reduce the risk of riparian wildfires, increase water flow, improve soil infiltration, and provide fuelwood and woody material for local residents and businesses.
- c. This 847-acre project is listed in the 2020 Forest Action Plan under Riparian Areas At-Risk and builds on past projects: Tiffany Fire Rehabilitation, Central Socorro Bosque Phase 2, MRGCD Ribbon, and Escondida Fuels Reduction.

Laura McCarthy asked if the lands have already burned in the 2017 Tiffany Fire and is the goal to keep invasive species from taking over. James Anzalone said some work would be treatment and retreatment of invasive plants (salt cedar) and some would be mastication. Abigail Plecki, Socorro District Timber Management Officer, also said that yes, these areas were burned in the Tiffany Fire. The goal is to treat and manage the invasive species so that native species that burned can be restored and regenerated.

Kathy Holian asked how wildlife is being protected from the herbicide treatments. Abigail explained that scouting for habitat takes place before any work is done and the application of the herbicide is done as a spot treatment. Only foliage and the base of the salt cedar are treated. These are high priority areas that can also benefit from fuel breaks with mastication.

Cheryl Bada pointed out that the current plan only shows a certain number of landowners included with no explanation of why those properties were chosen. She said for future plans using state funds, the project must be planned out for multiple years and all private landowners with property that needs treatment must be included in the planning. Laura McCarthy explained that if the Board feels this is still a viable project, there are other funding sources available to do the work and Board members can include notes regarding this with their scoring sheet.

Abe Franklin asked if this project is something that has to be regularly maintained for multiple years (15 years). Todd Haines, Bernalillo District Forester explained that there are projects that will need follow-up treatments for a few years in order to completely eradicate invasive species regrowth, but not decades.

6. Trampas to San Cristobal

- a. The Trampas to San Cristobal project is located on public lands managed by the USFS, Carson National Forest, in Taos and Rio Arriba Counties (Cimarron and Chama Districts)
- b. This 314-acre project lies within the Enchanted Circle Shared Stewardship Priority Landscape. With a funding request of \$380,000, the project will reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfires, protect water resources, and improve forest and watershed resilience with the use of prescribed/managed fires.
- c. The project directly benefits eight mutual domestic water associations and multiple acequias that divert from the San Cristobal Creek, Rio Hondo, Rio de las Trampas, and the lower Rio

Embudo. Public benefit includes access to fuelwood and the creation of 20-25 full-time jobs with local contractors.

Brent Racher disclosed that there is potential for conflict of interest because he is the President and member of the NM Forest Industry Association, which is involved financially with this project. He said his name is on the master agreement and he'll leave it up to the Board to decide if he should recuse himself from scoring the Trampas to San Cristobal project. Laura McCarthy acknowledged Mr. Racher's disclosure.

Cheryl Bada asked if the state is under agreement with the USFS to fund the project how does that provide a match to their contractor.

Rebecca Roose commented regarding both questions saying the match could be related to whether there is a benefit and what type of benefit there may be to the NM Forest Industry Association, which might inform the consideration of recusal.

Brent Racher said the only financial benefit to the NM Forest Industry Association is occasional paid staff time for those working on the project. Their benefit is flow through funds to local contractors and not any profit.

7. Turkey Mountains

- a. FY22 would be the third year of FAWRA funded treatment for the Turkey Mountains project, located on private land in central Mora County.
- b. The 4,500-acre project will help protect the Mora and Canadian River watersheds, which provide water to significant irrigation systems and acequia infrastructure.
- c. This project is guided by five different plans that create a strategy for large-scale, cross-boundary restoration to achieve multiple objectives over 10 years. Approximately 1,300 acres are complete as of April 15, 2021 – 28% of the total project acreage.

8. Zuni Cibola Puerco

- a. The Zuni Cibola Puerco project is located in the northwest quadrant of the Zuni Mountains. This treatment is a continuation of the Bluewater Landscape Restoration Project and within the Zuni Mountain Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) footprint.
- b. Funding is proposed for the Campground Unit, which is within the Zuni Mountain Shared Stewardship Priority Landscape identified in the 2020 Forest Action Plan.
- c. The project will reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, restore key wildlife habitat for the Mexican spotted owl (MSO) and other species, benefit multiple water systems, provide firewood for local residents and the Navajo Nation, and supply timber to the local wood mill in Milan to help preserve local jobs.

Laura McCarthy asked if this project is in a strategic area. Todd Haines, Bernalillo District Forester explained that it is adjacent and complimentary to areas that the USFS is currently working on now and enhances those projects.

9. Zuni Phase 1 Private

- a. The Zuni Mountain Private Landscape Scale Restoration project is located in the central Zuni Mountains and connects private land treatments with federal land treatments within the Zuni Mountain Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP).
- b. The continuation of FAWRA funding for this project will help restore upper Bluewater Lake watersheds, increase resilience to uncharacteristic wildfire, and provide firewood and biomass energy production for communities in need.
- c. Projects in this area have served two separate sawmills under the MSO injunction along with multiple private contractors in need of work.

Laura McCarthy asked if local contractors have the capacity to continue work on both private lands and National Forest lands now that the USFS has resumed work that was on hold during the MSO injunction. Todd Haines said the contractors are able to do both and there is room for more.

10. 16 Springs

- a. The 16 Springs WUI project is located in Otero County, south of the Mescalero Apache Reservation, on the Lincoln National Forest-Sacramento Ranger District in Otero County. This project is included in the strategic planning for the southern Sacramento Mountains.
- b. The 700-acre thinning project is the next step in large-scale forest restoration in the Silver Springs Canyon watershed that feeds the declared Peñasco groundwater basin and 10 different wells/springs used for drinking water or irrigation purposes in the area.
- c. Treatments are designed to remove mistletoe infested and low vigor trees, reduce the overall tree density to help prevent catastrophic wildfire, increase the average tree size class, and build resilience in the forest. This project will also provide timber and firewood to residents and local businesses.

Stewart Liley commented that DGF has invested a lot of time and energy into the Sacramento Mountains, especially the southern area, and they consider it a priority for the species and potential loss of habitat from catastrophic wildfire.

Brent Racher asked if this is a continuation of the Red Cabin Springs project. Nick Smokovich, Capitan District Forester, replied it is not, but it is in the vicinity.

8. Timelines for scoring submittal before May 14, 2021 meeting

The deadline for Board members to submit scoring is by close of business on May 12, 2021.

Rebecca Roose asked what the total amount of funds are to be awarded this cycle. Laura McCarthy replied that it should be approximately \$2 million in FAWRA funds and \$3 million in capital funds. There may also be money left over from FY21 that can be disencumbered and applied to FY22 projects.

Brent Racher asked if the Economic Development Department asked about their status with Lance Forest Products in relation to the Cimarron Range project. Lance Forest Products is working with the State on the development of a new sawmill in Cimarron. Arnie Friedt, Cimarron District Forester said there will be material available to the new mill once built and to the current active mill in Raton.

9. Other Business

None to report.

10. Adjournment

Rebecca Roose moved to adjourn the meeting. Steve Hernandez seconded the motion. The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for May 14, 2021.

Draft Minutes submitted by: Wendy Mason on April 23, 2021.

Final Minutes approved by FAWRA Advisory Board on May 14, 2021

Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) Advisory Board Meeting Minutes May 14, 2021

1. Call to Order

A virtual WebEx meeting of the FAWRA Advisory Board (Board) was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on May 14, 2021, and presided over by Laura McCarthy, State Forester, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division.

- **Board Members and Delegates Present**
Laura McCarthy, State Forester, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair
Mark Myers, State Land Office (SLO)
Jacob Davidson for Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)
Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)
Lucia Sanchez, Interstate Stream Commission (ISC)
Rebecca Roose, Environment Department (ED)
Abe Franklin, Environment Department (ED)
Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)
Kathy Holian, Public Member
Steve Hernandez, Public Member

Brent Racher, Public Member

- **Board Members Absent**
Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Marshal's Office
- **Invited Federal Agencies Present**
Elaine Kohrman, Deputy Regional Forester, US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service (USFS), Southwestern Region
Melanie Barnes, Acting Associate State Director, US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), New Mexico
Kristin Graham Chavez, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Development, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

2. Welcome/Introductions

Laura McCarthy, State Forester and FAWRA Chair, recognized the Board, public members, and guests. Board members, non-voting participants, and members of the public introduced themselves via round robin.

3. Board Business

Approval of Agenda

Rebecca Roose moved to approve the agenda and Steve Hernandez seconded the motion. The meeting agenda for May 14, 2021, was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

Kathy Holian moved to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2021, Board meeting and Mark Myers seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

4. State Forester's Update

Laura McCarthy did not have a new update since information was previously provided during the April 15, 2021, Board meeting.

5. Progress report on funded projects

Laura McCarthy presented information and images for the following projects funded fully, or in part, with FAWRA funding.

- Turkey Mountains Project – Capital funding has been put toward this project in addition to FAWRA money. The project is moving quickly with a quarter of targeted acres already treated, so it may not take a full 10 years to finish.
- Upper Coyote Creek/Elk Ridge Project (State Land Office property) – This is a medium sized FAWRA funded project that has a big impact due to the significant amount of prior work that has taken place in the area.

- El Caso/Quemado Lake Project – This project provided wood and prevented job losses for the local forest products industry, forest operators, and contractors during the Mexican spotted owl injunction (MSO). The nearby Slaughter Mesa project lies to the east of this location with extensive landscape scale restoration of approximately 50,000 acres completed. National Forest lands located in between these projects cannot be treated due to five active spotted owl Protective Activity Centers in the area. This project has provided pulpwood and some saw timber, which helped to prevent layoffs at K & B Timberworks in Reserve.
- Socorro/Escondido Project (Department of Game and Fish wildlife management area) – Aerial images were provided to the Board showing piles of invasive salt cedar that are being removed as part of this restoration project.
- Santa Clara Pueblo – Images were shown to the Board of the wetland area that has been treated. This project was expanded recently to include work along the Rio Grande bosque.
- Red Cabin, No Name Spring #1 (Mescalero Reservation) – This project was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and then Mexican spotted owls moved into one of the treatment areas. Some work is now taking place.
- Taos Small Diameter Utilization – The report for this 2019 planning project is being finalized. The conclusion of the study showed that a sort-yard may reduce per-acre costs. The draft report is due at the end of June 2021.

6. Discuss new project rankings and make and adopt recommendations

The Board discussed the projects and recommended the following be funded for FY22.

1. Trampas to San Cristobal
2. Cimarron Range
3. ABQ Reach Bosque Treatments
4. Zuni Phase 1 Private Lands
5. Turkey Mountains
6. Zuni Landscape Cibola National Forest Puerco Area
7. El Caso Restoration
8. 16 Springs

The Board discussed whether it needs to rank multi-year projects after the first year of recommending approval or change its process so that the Forestry Division provides updates each year for those projects instead.

Brent reminded the Board of his possible connection to Trampas to San Cristobal project as president of the New Mexico Forest Industry Association (NMFIA). He wanted to make sure there is no conflict of interest. Looking at the relatively high scores he did not think it would matter. Funding is likely to go through the stewardship agreement with USFS that NMFIA has. He has no financial interest or signatory authority on the federal side only on the state stewardship agreement.

Cheryl advised it was up to the Board to decide, but to err on the side of extreme caution the Board could omit Brent's score and divide it by the rest of the Board members. The Board did not omit Brent's score.

BREAK

Laura McCarthy called for a 10-minute break. During this time, Laura and Susan Rich, Forest and Watershed Health Coordinator, created a revised table based on a few score that Board members asked to change based upon discussion. After the break, Laura presented the changed scores to the Board. The revised scoring brought El Caso up by one position and moved Zuni Landscape/Cibola Puerco Area down one.

Tim Hagaman moved to approve the revised scoring table and Julie Valdez seconded the motion. The revised scoring table was unanimously approved.

7. Review of FY22 guidelines

The Board discussed the following issues: how to monitor multi-year projects, broad scale ranking criteria, evaluating planning projects, and prescreening of ineligible projects. The Board suggested not scoring multi-year projects after the first year but instead monitoring the projects for meeting the project objectives through a separate questionnaire and yearly presentations.

8. Set date for fall 2021 meeting to adopt FY23 guidelines (timeline)

Laura stated that with the exception of eligibility issues, the current timeline worked really well. The Board agreed. Laura suggested moving project submittal one month earlier for pre-screening by EMNRD Office of General Counsel. The Forestry Division will complete the draft guidelines for FY23 by mid-August.

- Second week/mid-August is the target date to get the draft guidelines out to the Board
- Meeting to review and vote on guidelines – September 16, 2021, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
- Project submittal – February 1, 2022
- Board meetings – April 14, 2022, for presentations and May 19, 2022, for project ranking, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

9. Discuss field trips in fall 2021

Laura proposed two fall field trips – one to the Turkey Mountains on September 24, 2021, and one to 16 Springs on October 22, 2021. A visit to Red Cabin on October 22 could be added if the Mescalero Apache Tribe agrees to host.

10. Other Business

None to report.

11. Review the next steps

See above dates and action items.

12. Adjournment

Tim Hagaman moved to adjourn the meeting and Kathy Holian seconded the motion. The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:50 a.m. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for September 16, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

Draft Minutes submitted by: Wendy Mason on May 28, 2021.

Final Minutes Approved by FAWRA Advisory Board on September 16, 2021

Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) Advisory Board Meeting Minutes September 16, 2021

1. Call to Order

A virtual WebEx meeting of the FAWRA Advisory Board (Board) was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on September 16, 2021, and presided over by Laura McCarthy, State Forester, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division.

- **Board Members and Delegates Present**
Laura McCarthy, State Forester, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair
Mark Myers, State Land Office (SLO)
Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)
Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)
John Mumm, Interstate Stream Commission (ISC)
Abe Franklin, Environment Department (ED)
Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)
Kathy Holian, Public Member
Steve Hernandez, Public Member
- **Board Members Absent**
Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Marshal's Office
Brent Racher, Public Member
- **Invited Federal Agencies Not Present**
US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service (USFS), Southwestern Region
Bureau of Land Management (BLM), New Mexico
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

2. Welcome/Introductions

Laura McCarthy, State Forester and FAWRA Chair, recognized the Board, public members, and guests. Board members, non-voting participants, and members of the public introduced themselves via round robin.

3. Board Business

Approval of Agenda

Tim Hagaman moved to approve the agenda and Mark Myers seconded the motion. The meeting agenda for September 16, 2021, was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

Abe Franklin proposed that the minutes be changed to spell out Mexican spotted owl Protected Activity Center that had been abbreviated. Steve Hernandez moved to approve the minutes as amended and Abe Franklin seconded the motion. The minutes for May 14, 2021, were unanimously approved.

4. State Forester's Update

- A draft rule to implement the Prescribed Burning Act training and certification programs is expected to be ready by October 1, 2021. There will be a few weeks of soft outreach to get feedback before formal publishing in the New Mexico Register and setting up a public hearing. The rule is oriented to private land burning and not agency prescribed burns. Laura asked the Board if they would like to be part of the soft outreach and ultimately decided to send the draft of the rule to each member of the Board who can reach out to her or the Forestry Division if they have questions.
- U.S. Congress will debate two bills – an infrastructure bill and a reconciliation bill, both of which have money included for forest and watershed restoration. The funds will require a match, so the \$2 million per year of state money that comes from this program (FAWRA) will be highly leveraged. Any new Forestry Division staff added would be temporary and not full-time employees (FTEs), which must be approved by the legislature. It's potentially a timely opportunity as it coincides with the Forest Action Plan (FAP) and development of the Shared Stewardship Portal (demo available in spring). The Forestry Division is poised and ready to accelerate pace and scale.
- Additional state funding could come from the 30 by 30 Conservation Initiative that has a climate stabilization component. Climate stabilization is basically the working lands sequester carbon when they are well managed. The funding might go into existing programs like the Natural Heritage Conservation Act, which has a provision for forest and watershed restoration, although it's never received funding that's been used that way.

Laura asked Stewart Liley if DGF will also be getting funding through infrastructure and reconciliation bills. Stewart said possibly through different avenues. There are other bills in Congress that are big for DGF like the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), which would be \$28 million dollars to New Mexico in federal funds on an annual basis.

5. Progress report on funded projects

Laura McCarthy presented information and images of projects the committee recommended last year. The change in fiscal year, disencumbering and encumbering process, and timing of the transfer of funds from the Office of the State Engineer means the 2021 projects are not quite on the ground yet.

- Turkey Mountains Project – four photos show areas treated in 2020 and 2021. Some showed abundant new grass growing and tree snags for wildlife habitat.
- Red Cabin, No Name Spring #1 Project (Mescalero Reservation) – photos show current progress, forest utilization, and drought stressed trees. The project had been delayed due to pandemic closures and is now up and running again. Reducing the fuel loads will help improve resilience of the larger trees to drought by giving them more moisture.
- Upper Coyote Creek/Elk Ridge Project (State Land Office property) – before and after photos of treatment area show progress made.
- Santa Clara Pueblo Project – photos show pile burning conducted in the spring of 2021 in the bosque along the Rio Grande.
- Zuni Mountains/Elkins and Weaver Properties – photos show current progress of restoration treatment and remnants of an old railroad that once took lumber out from the area. Utilization of wood is significant for the area. Local sawmills are using the trees and the project helped to keep the wood products businesses going during the Mexican spotted owl injunction on federal lands.
- Cimarron Range, American Creek Project – photos showed the area awaiting treatment to give the Board a visual of what it looks like. The landowner agreements are still being worked on.
- Trampas to San Cristobal – photos show the San Cristobal area, where work has been ongoing, and community members learning about the project's importance. Local wood cutters are doing the thinning which reduces costs and gets firewood into the community.

The Board had no comments on the progress report.

6. Discussion and Approval of FY23 Guidelines

The Board reviewed the FY23 Guidelines.

Steve Hernandez asked if the infrastructure bill will impact FAWRA if it gets passed. Laura responded saying the timing of the infrastructure bill is uncertain and therefore states do not know if or when they will receive an allocation. Laura said the Board should stick with its current timeline because they are set up so that projects can be implemented as soon as possible in the fiscal year without creating a workload that falls on the Board members during state budget time. Laura asked Andrew Frederick, Forestry Division Resource Management Bureau Chief, if he saw any reason to modify the timeline. Andrew agreed that the timeline should stay as it is because it's synced to the funding timeline. It allows projects to start July first when the fiscal year begins.

Steve Hernandez commented that the Bureau of Reclamation may have a six-month timeline due to the significant amount of money that's expected to flow through them. It could be that we (Board) are ready to roll with matching funds by September (2022).

Cheryl Bada commented in the chat that she is not seeing all of her changes in the current guidelines draft. The Board moved on to other agenda items to give Cheryl time to make edits.

7. Prepare for Field Trips on September 24 and October 22, 2021

Laura McCarthy provided details of the September 24 field trip to the Turkey Mountains that includes Board members Tim Hagaman, Abe Franklin, Stewart Liley, and Kathy Holian. Other guests include EMNRD Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst, former NM representative Paul Bandy, staff from the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and congressional staff. There will not be a quorum for the field trip and a public notice is not necessary.

8. Other Business

John Mumm gave the Board a short overview of the status of the 50 Year Water Plan and posted links in the chat for further information:

- 50 Year Water Plan - <https://www.ose.state.nm.us/Planning/50YWP/index.php>
- In case you missed it - <https://www.ose.state.nm.us/Planning/50YWP/incase.php>
- Leap Ahead Analysis Assessment - <https://geoinfo.nmt.edu/ClimatePanel/report/>
- Assessment of 50 YWP page - <https://www.ose.state.nm.us/Planning/50YWP/advisoryteam.php>

Steve Hernandez provided information on the upcoming New Mexico State Bar Natural Resources Board Annual Conference. The conference titled The Science of Drought and Climate Change will take place in December and include five panels. One of the panel discussions will be on drought implications for New Mexico's state, national, and tribal forests.

Laura McCarthy discussed a second field trip planned for October 22, 2021, to the 16 Springs project on the Lincoln National Forest and projects located on the Mescalero Apache Reservation. Laura explained that planning to visit the federal and tribal lands is subject to change depending on current COVID-19 restrictions.

Laura McCarthy returned to Cheryl Bada to discuss her edits on the FY23 Guidelines. Cheryl said the private lands section and the last paragraph are where substantively edits were made. Cheryl pointed out that the edits are a clarification of whether a project includes private lands and that the Office of the General Council (OGC) doesn't approve projects, that's up to the Deputy Secretary. Cheryl also suggested a change to the timeline saying the dates for the Forestry Division to do project reviews with OGC, March 14 through March 31, 2022, may put them in a crunch. Laura proposed changing the dates to March 1 through March 31, 2022.

Abe Franklin referred to page 6 in the guidelines under Requirements for Continuation and said that item 4-C could be clearer. It's written as "What are other sources of funding being pursued. Why not?" Abe suggested that the "why not" be removed and a separate item added as 4-D written as "What obstacles if any prevented proponents for pursuing other funding?"

Steve Hernandez moved to approve the FY23 Guidelines as amended, and Stewart Liley seconded the motion. The FY23 Guidelines were unanimously approved.

10. Review the next steps

Laura McCarthy reviewed the next steps, which include the following:

- Sending calendar invites for 2022 FAWRA meetings
- Organizing vehicles for the September 24 field trip
- Planning the October 22 field trip
- Sending out and posting the FY23 FAWRA Project Guidelines

Steve Hernandez had a go back and asked if we (FAWRA) does get funding from the Infrastructure Bill does anything change, or is it still covered under funding? Laura replied that she doesn't think it will change anything here. One of the things it could mean is that projects get finished faster. Steve asked if it would require anyone to go through this program or will you (Forestry Division) get discretion on spending the funds. Laura said she believes we would get discretion because it would come through state and private forestry programs. That's how it is structured in the bill right now.

12. Adjournment

Julie Valdez moved to adjourn the meeting and Abe Franklin seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 a.m. The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, April 14, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.

Draft Minutes submitted by: Wendy Mason on September 28, 2021

Draft Minutes approved by: Laura McCarthy

APPENDIX C: FY2023 FAWRA GUIDELINES

Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) FY23 Project Submission Guidelines

This document provides submission guidelines for new FY23 FAWRA projects as well as instructions for continuing projects, found on page 6. For additional background information on FAWRA, refer to the [FAWRA FAQ](#).

Eligibility for FY23 Project Proposals

The FAWRA defines an eligible project as “a large-scale forest and watershed restoration project on any lands in the state that increases the adaptability and resilience to recurring drought and extreme weather events of the state’s forests and watersheds; protects water sources; reduces the risk of wildfire, including plans for watershed conservation; restores burned areas or thins forests; and includes a related economic or workforce development project or a wildlife conservation or habitat improvement project.” This definition encompasses the following project types:

- on-the-ground restoration treatments,
- project planning,
- economic development programs to advance the use of small-diameter trees and wood biomass removed for hazardous fuel reduction and forest and watershed restoration, and
- workforce development for wood utilization projects.

The following sections provide additional guidance on key eligibility criteria contained within this definition.

Project Scale and Leverage

New Mexico’s fire-adapted forests need comprehensive changes in forest structure and fuel loading to significantly alter wildfire behavior, reduce wildfire losses, ensure firefighter and public safety, and improve landscape resiliency. Conducting small scale projects is not as effective as working at the large scale, but large-scale projects are oftentimes too expensive for any one agency or landowner to undertake. One of the goals of FAWRA is to create new opportunity for interagency relationships and coordination that will lead to project efficiencies and improved outcomes. Leveraging relationships with key partners allows us to conduct restoration work at a larger scale and increase project effectiveness.

FAWRA therefore targets projects that encompass geographical features such as ridge tops to valley bottoms or watersheds. Projects will often cross jurisdictional boundaries such as county, state, federal, tribal, or private lands. For evaluation purposes, the minimum planning area for a large-scale project is 20,000 acres, with justified exceptions considered. Additional considerations include the following.

- The proposed FAWRA project is part of a larger scale project or located within a comprehensive forest and watershed restoration planning area.
- Project size is designed to increase landscape resilience to natural disturbance (*e.g.*, fire, insects,

flooding).

- The project is strategically located to impact a large part of the watershed.
- The project is located and designed to implement or otherwise align with one or more existing landscape-scale plans, such as a state forest and watershed health plan or forest action plan, a community wildfire protection plan, or other comprehensive forest and watershed treatment plan or wildlife conservation improvement plan.
- Projects incorporate actions recommended by current plans or, where new plans are developed, seek to integrate forest, fire, and water management with community and economic development plans.
- Projects support watersheds that are a source for drinking or irrigation water. This includes the Rio Grande and its tributaries, as well as any watershed directly upstream of a reservoir or an irrigation or acequia system.
- Projects target an area at high or medium/high risk of catastrophic wildfire as defined in the State Forest Action Plan.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Projects requiring NEPA clearance will be considered “shovel ready” if:

- necessary state and federal permits and authorizations are completed (if other than a planning project);
- the Categorical Exclusion or Decision Memo is signed;
- located on National Forest System lands, they are:
 - outside of Mexican spotted owl (MSO) Protected Activity Centers (PACs), MSO critical habitat, and MSO recovery habitat; or if inside MSO PAC or critical or recovery habitat the necessary owl surveys are completed or started in the current fiscal year;
 - a prescribed burning project with no trees greater than 9” diameter at breast height cut in MSO PACs; or
 - are commercial firewood gathering projects outside of MSO habitat.

Project Planning, Readiness, and Leverage

FAWRA funds may be considered for planning projects with sufficient justification and commitment to project implementation (for example, projects that require a biological or archeological survey in order to fulfill NEPA requirements). When submitting a planning project, as much as possible, it should incorporate collaborative planning with partners. For instance, if a planning project is proposed for consideration to complete NEPA requirements, a collaborative partner (such as the State Land Office) may commit funding for implementation. This type of arrangement demonstrates collaborative planning, leverages resources, and strengthens partnerships, ultimately leading to stronger projects and more funding on the table for projects. It also reduces the risk that projects stay in conceptualization and fail to deliver treatment goals. To demonstrate strong planning, readiness, and leverage, project proponents are encouraged to submit letters of support from key partners with their proposals.

Private Lands

While projects may be located on public or private lands, all projects that include private lands must comply with Article IX, Section 14, the anti-donation clause of the New Mexico Constitution, and be administered by the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division (Forestry Division) through the applicable district office. Projects that include private lands, in whole or in part, must also be part of a larger

landscape planning effort to increase forest and watershed protection and resiliency. Phased projects will require multi-year commitment by the landowner(s) and EMNRD. The Forestry Division must submit projects proposals involving private lands to the EMNRD, Office of General Counsel for review prior to submittal to the FAWRA Advisory Board.

Project Evaluation Criteria

In recommending projects for funding, the FAWRA Advisory Board will score projects proposed for FAWRA funding using the ranking criteria listed below. In scoring planning projects, consideration should be given to whether the project will lead to these outcomes and the expected acres to be treated as a result of the planning.

1. **(30 points)** Project provides a public benefit and expands the scale of restoration, using the following measures of benefit by project category:
 - a. If the project includes thinning or prescribed fire, the public benefit is the extent of fire risk reduction.
 - b. If the project includes riparian restoration, the public benefit is the extent of improvement to hydrologic conditions and riparian habitat and, if applicable, the extent of fuels reduced.
 - c. If the project includes economic development, the public benefit is provision of economic values, for example jobs or raw materials, to a rural community or communities.
 - d. If the project includes planning, the public benefit is the degree to which state funding will expedite one or more required planning steps and build upon prior investment by other agencies.
2. **(30 points)** Project protects watersheds that are a source for drinking or irrigation water, taking into consideration the importance of the water source as defined in the State Forest Action Plan.
3. **(25 points)** Project addresses utilization of materials. Select one of the following:
 - a. Project is in an area with a wood supply that has potential utilization for one or more of the following:
 - i. traditional community uses (*e.g.*, firewood, fencing);
 - ii. small diameter commercial products (*e.g.*, pellets, mulch);
 - iii. conventional wood products (*e.g.*, dimension lumber, railroad ties);
 - iv. biomass energy production (*e.g.*, electricity, heat); or
 - v. burned area restoration or rehabilitation actions/activities utilizing green build techniques.
 - b. Project uses prescribed fire to restore or maintain resilience and does not include a utilization component. Points may be awarded if prescribed fire is the final step in a multi-entry project and previous treatments included a utilization component, or if the use of prescribed fire is required to protect valuable timber resources.
4. **(15 points)** Project leverages other funding sources and/or creates an incentive for others to make investments.

Submission Process for New Projects

Project proposals shall be submitted using the project recommendation template for new projects located at <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/forest-and-watershed-restoration-act-fawra/>. Proposal proponents or partners

shall submit project proposals to the applicable Forestry Division district office no later than February 1, 2022. Project partners must work with district staff to ensure the proposed project meets eligibility requirements. Ideally, the process would start far in advance of the call for project proposals, to allow for project development and secure partners' commitments (financial/organizational investments, or to meet logistical/operational needs). Project proposals may not be considered if not endorsed by a Forestry Division district office.

The Forestry Division will present eligible projects to the FAWRA Advisory Board. Presentations will be made using a pre-defined PowerPoint template. The Forestry Division may choose to partner with governmental entities and have them carry out the project when the project is on government owned lands. See timeline below.

Project Review Process

Forestry Division staff, in coordination with the EMNRD, Office of General Counsel, will review projects and resolve any outstanding issues before presenting eligible projects to the FAWRA Advisory Board. District Foresters and partners (if applicable) will present projects to the FAWRA Advisory Board at its April 16, 2022 meeting. Presentations should minimize text and incorporate maps, photos, and/or other images required to adequately describe the proposed project. Presentations will be subject to a 5-7 minute time limit.

The FAWRA Advisory Board will make final recommendations for project funding to the Forestry Division.

Timeline for Review Process

September 16, 2021	FAWRA Advisory Board meeting with vote on FY23 Guidelines
September 24, 2021	FY23 Guidelines are released with call for project proposals
January 14, 2022	Virtual Q&A session for potential submissions
February 1, 2022	Final date for project proposal submittals and continuing projects update. All submissions are made through the Forestry Division district offices
March 1-31, 2022	Forestry Division conducts review meetings for all projects with EMNRD Office of General Counsel
April 1, 2022	Final date for project proposal revision
April 10, 2022	Project packets delivered to FAWRA Advisory Board
April 14, 2022	FAWRA Advisory Board meeting with project presentations by District Foresters and partners
May 16, 2022	FAWRA Advisory Board project recommendation scoring deadline
May 19, 2022	FAWRA Advisory Board project recommendation rankings meeting

July 1, 2022 – FAWRA Funds Transferred by Office of the State Engineer to EMNRD

The Forestry Division will develop project work plans with the sponsor or partnering organization, if applicable. The Forestry Division will advertise and hire project contractors following the state procurement code or may establish agreements with other federal, state, or local government agencies or tribes, pueblos, and nations. Non-governmental project partners may not receive funds; however, funds may be used for project proponent match if the need for match is specifically detailed in the project proposal. Forestry Division staff will oversee and report on project implementation.

Reporting

The Forestry Division will provide an annual report to the FAWRA Advisory Board detailing year-to-date progress made on each project 90 days prior to the New Mexico Legislative Session.

Annual reports will include:

1. project name,
2. type of project,
3. project status (workplan/contract pending, ongoing, completed),
4. project location: geographic location, landownership, Forestry Division district,
5. project photos - before and after,
6. leverage (source and amount),
7. funding (expended to date, balance),
8. target metric (*e.g.*, acres or river miles treated, plans produced, feasibility study or survey completed),
9. metric accomplished (number or percent completion),
10. landscape priority factor (*e.g.*, fire risk, watershed productivity),
11. sponsor or partnering agency/organization,
12. best outcome delivered by this project achieved to date, and
13. narrative summary of challenges encountered and lesson learned.

(Items 1 through 10 are compiled quarterly. Items 11 and 13 are provided by the District Forester and partners once a year for the Annual Report. Item 13 is summarized by the Resource Management Bureau.

Guidelines for FAWRA Continuing Projects Update

In FY23 submission of a new project proposal is not required for continuing projects. However, an annual project review and update is required and shall follow the steps outlined below.

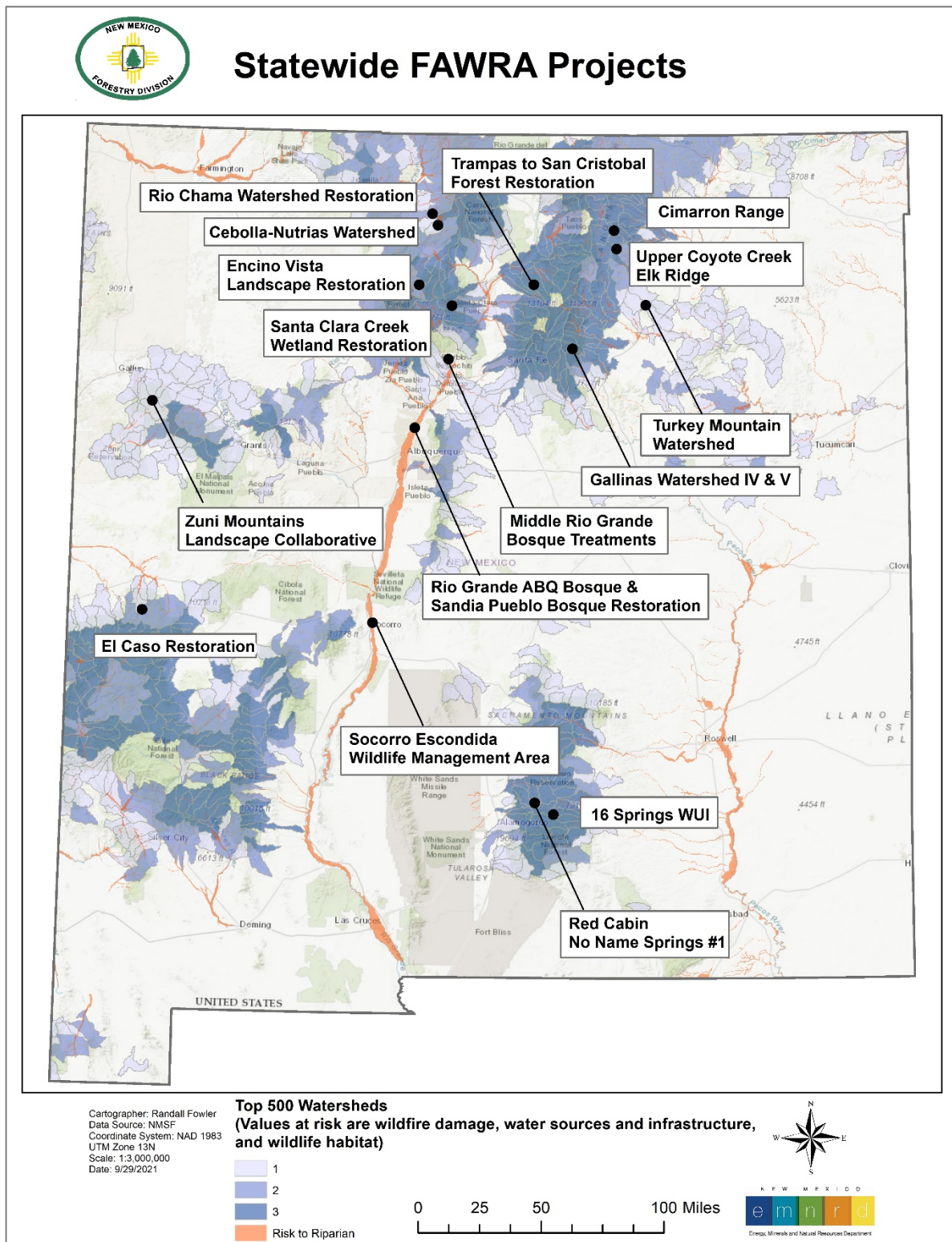
Requirements for Continuing Projects Update to FAWRA Advisory Board

1. Provide a map depicting project location within the state, total project acreage, treatment (with acreage) completed to date, and treatment (with acreage) remaining.
2. Provide a narrative update on the current status of the project including successes, challenges, and lessons learned.
3. Detail the total amount of funding spent to date from FAWRA and other sources.
4. Detail your treatment plan from present to project completion for each year.
 - a. How many acres do you plan for treatment each year until completion?
 - b. What amount of funding is needed each year until completion?
 - c. What are other sources of funding being pursued?
 - d. What obstacles if any have prevented proponents from pursuing other funding?
5. Is the project on track for completion? If not, what is needed to get it back on track or complete earlier/faster?
6. Have the objectives of the project changed? If yes, explain what has changed and why new objectives continue to meet the intended goals of FAWRA.
7. Spreadsheet breaking out project by year from start to anticipated completion.
 - a. each year listing estimated treatment and funding needed from FAWRA
 - b. listing of other potential funding sources that can contribute
 - c. must be updated monthly for each FAWRA funded project that is a continuation
8. This will be revisited monthly by the Forestry Division Project Coordination team and if significant progress is not projected by the end of the current FAWRA cycle – funding and project support may be pulled.

Project Update to FAWRA Board – [DOWNLOAD SLIDE TEMPLATE HERE.](#)

1. Map from above. Pre and post treatment pictures, current project pictures.
2. Update on current project status and anticipated treatment for next two years.
3. Project success – additional funding sources, other highlights of project.
4. Project issues encountered which are preventing the ability to meet expected outcomes or expending project funding in a timely manner (that may need to be brought up to the FAWRA Advisory Board for problem solving). Is there a circumstance(s) where project funding may not be needed for the coming year (*i.e.*, NEPA needs to be revisited, surveys have expired, or new ones need to be conducted, etc.)?
5. Projected treatment and funding need each year until completion.

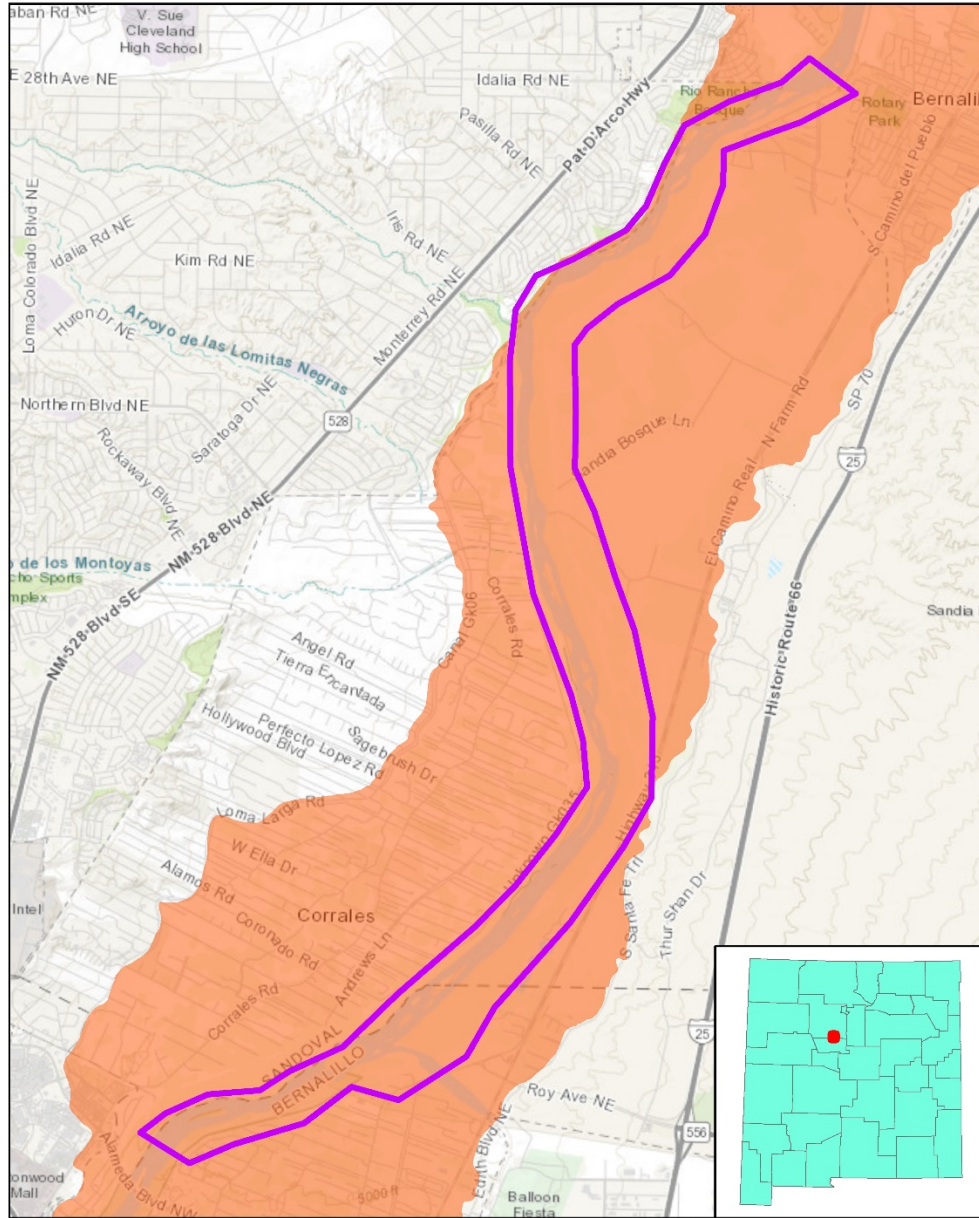
APPENDIX D: OVERVIEW MAP



APPENDIX E: PROJECT AREA MAPS



Sandia Pueblo Bosque Restoration & Rio Grande Bosque Albuquerque



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
Data Source: NMSF
Coordinate System: NAD 1983
UTM Zone 13N
Scale: 1:62,845
Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds
(Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

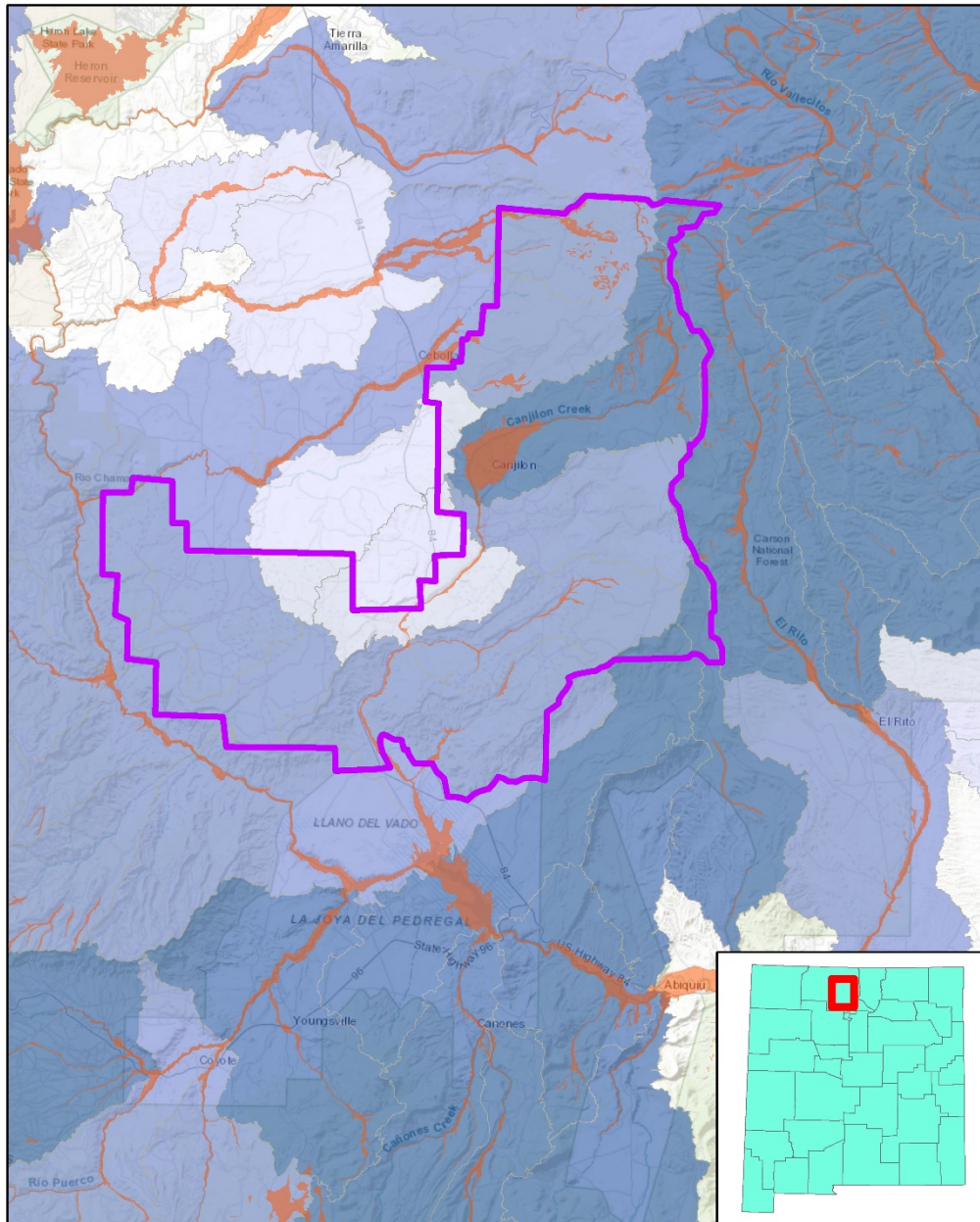
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.5 1 2 Miles





Cebolla-Nutrias Watershed



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
 Scale: 1:336,742
 Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

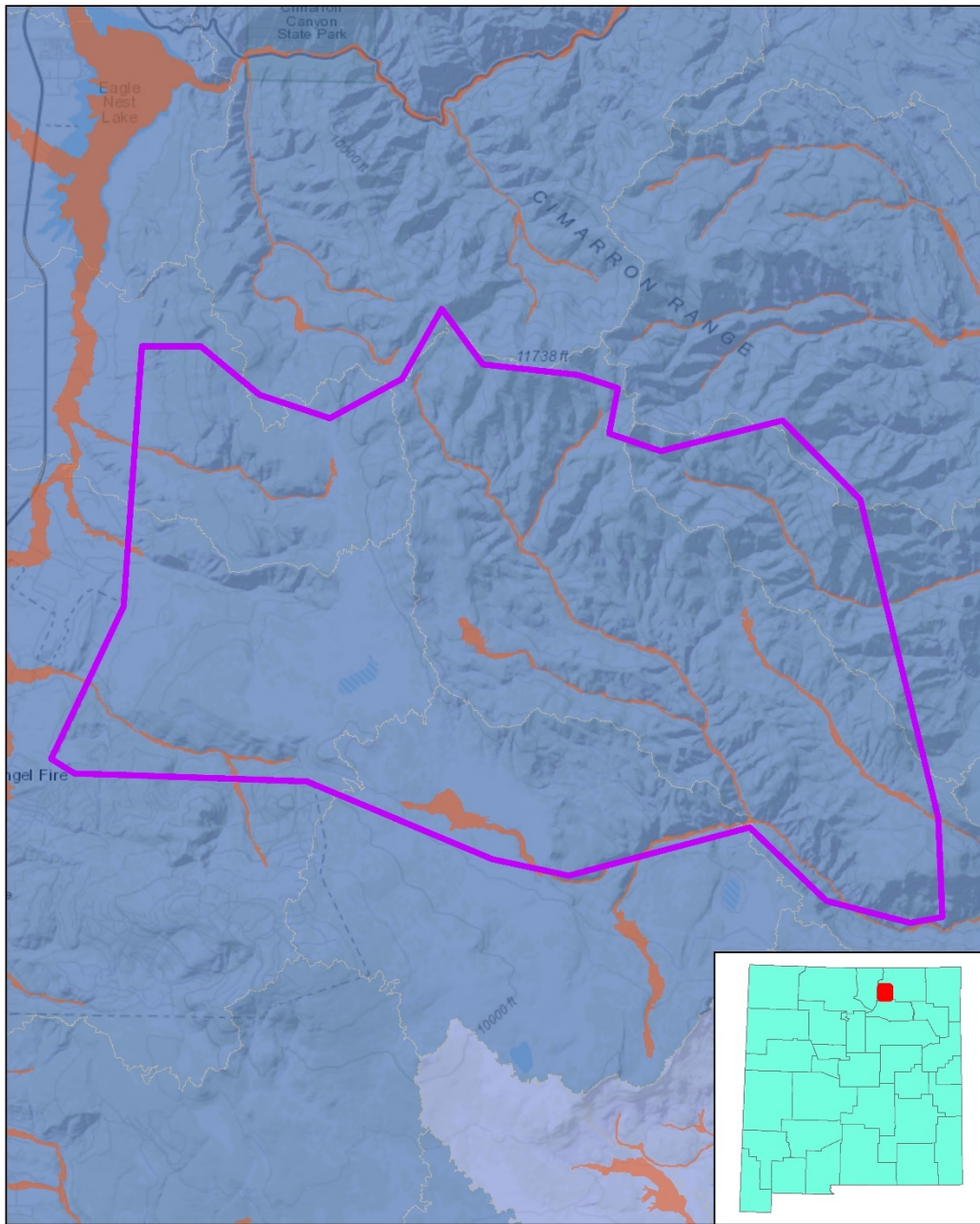
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





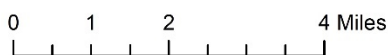
Cimarron Range



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
 Scale: 1:62,845
 Date: 11/13/2020

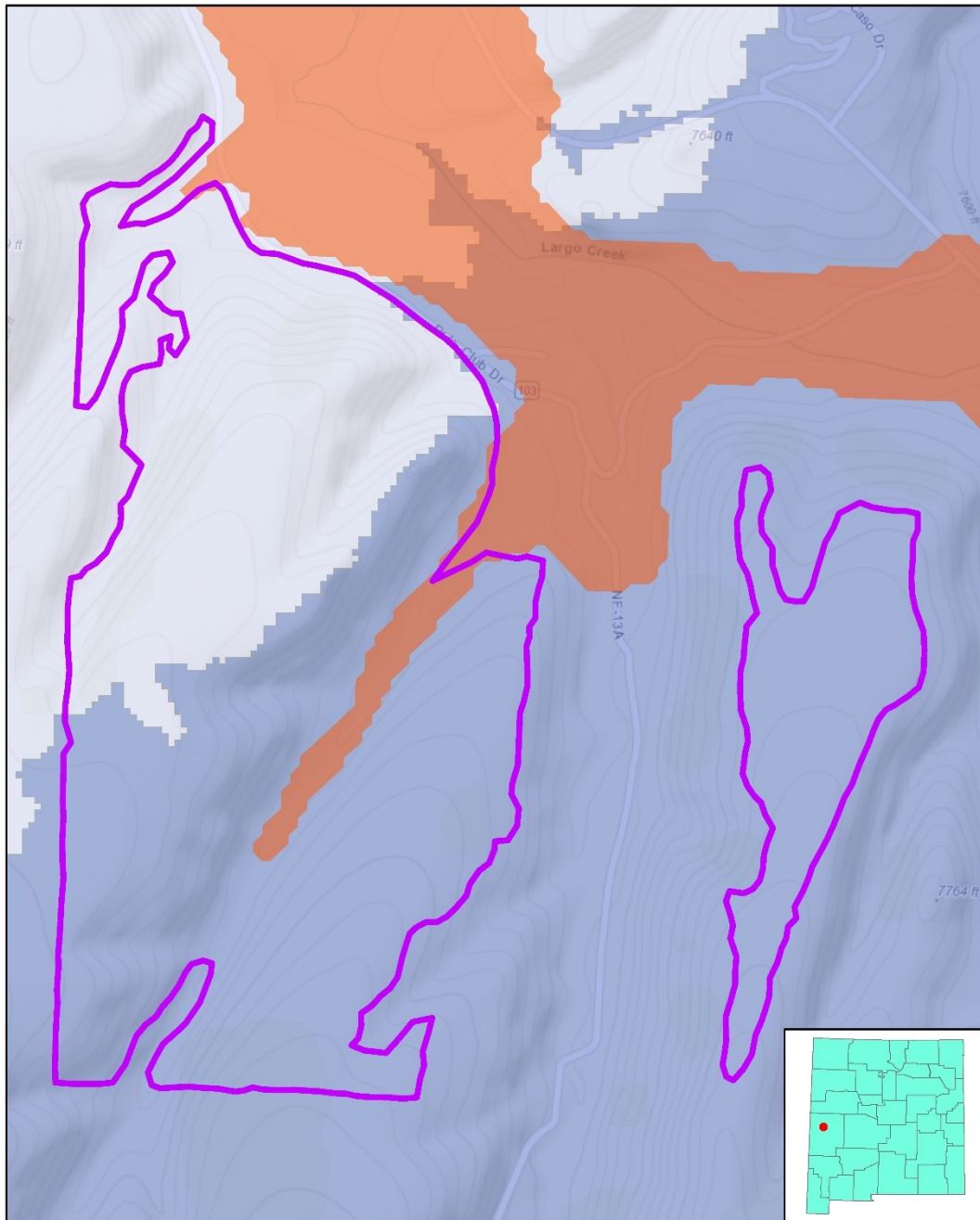
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian





El Caso Restoration



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
Data Source: NMSF
Coordinate System: NAD 1983
UTM Zone 13N
Scale: 1:62,845
Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds
(Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

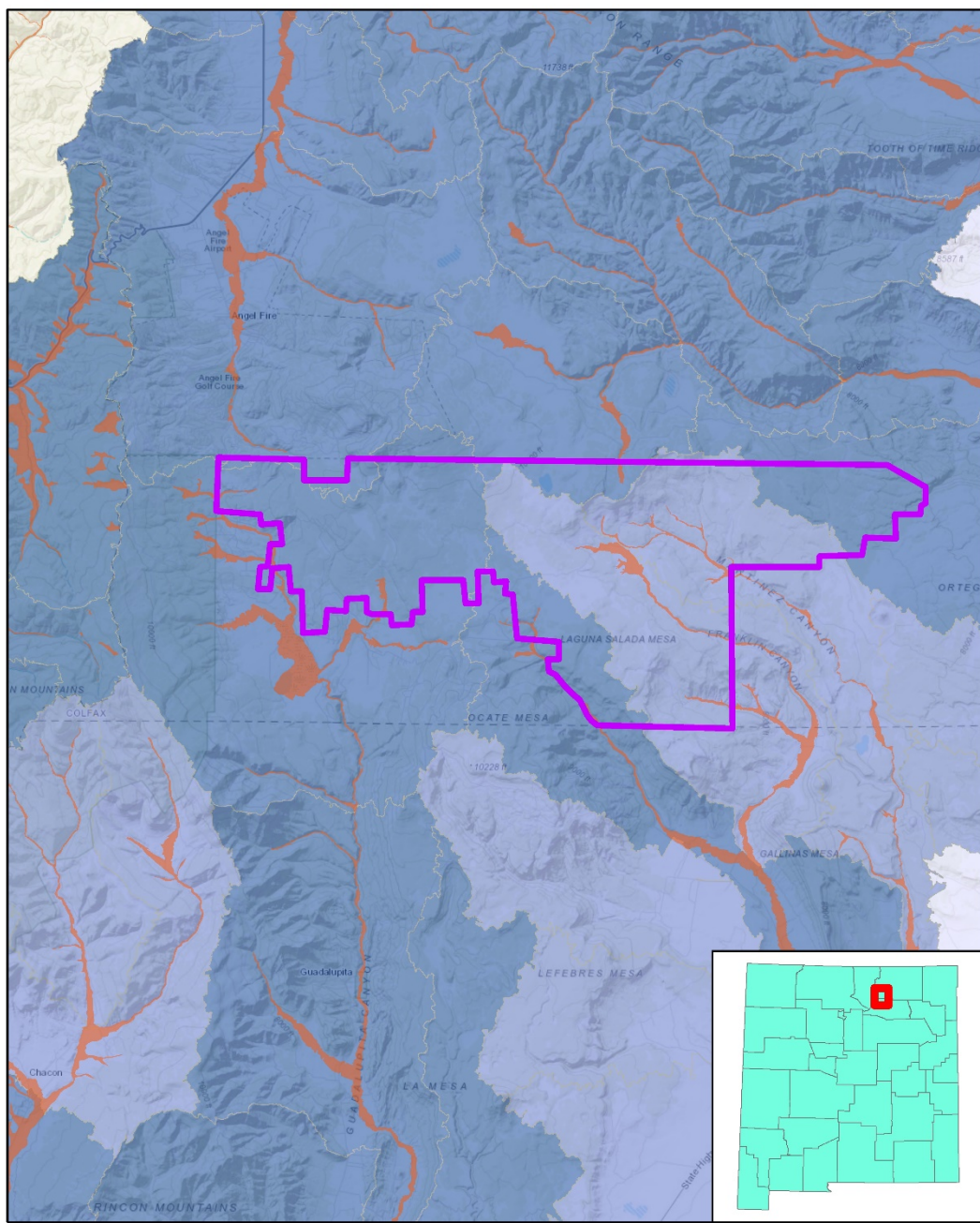
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.075 0.15 0.3 Miles





Upper Coyote Creek, Elk Ridge



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
 Scale: 1:1,500,319
 Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

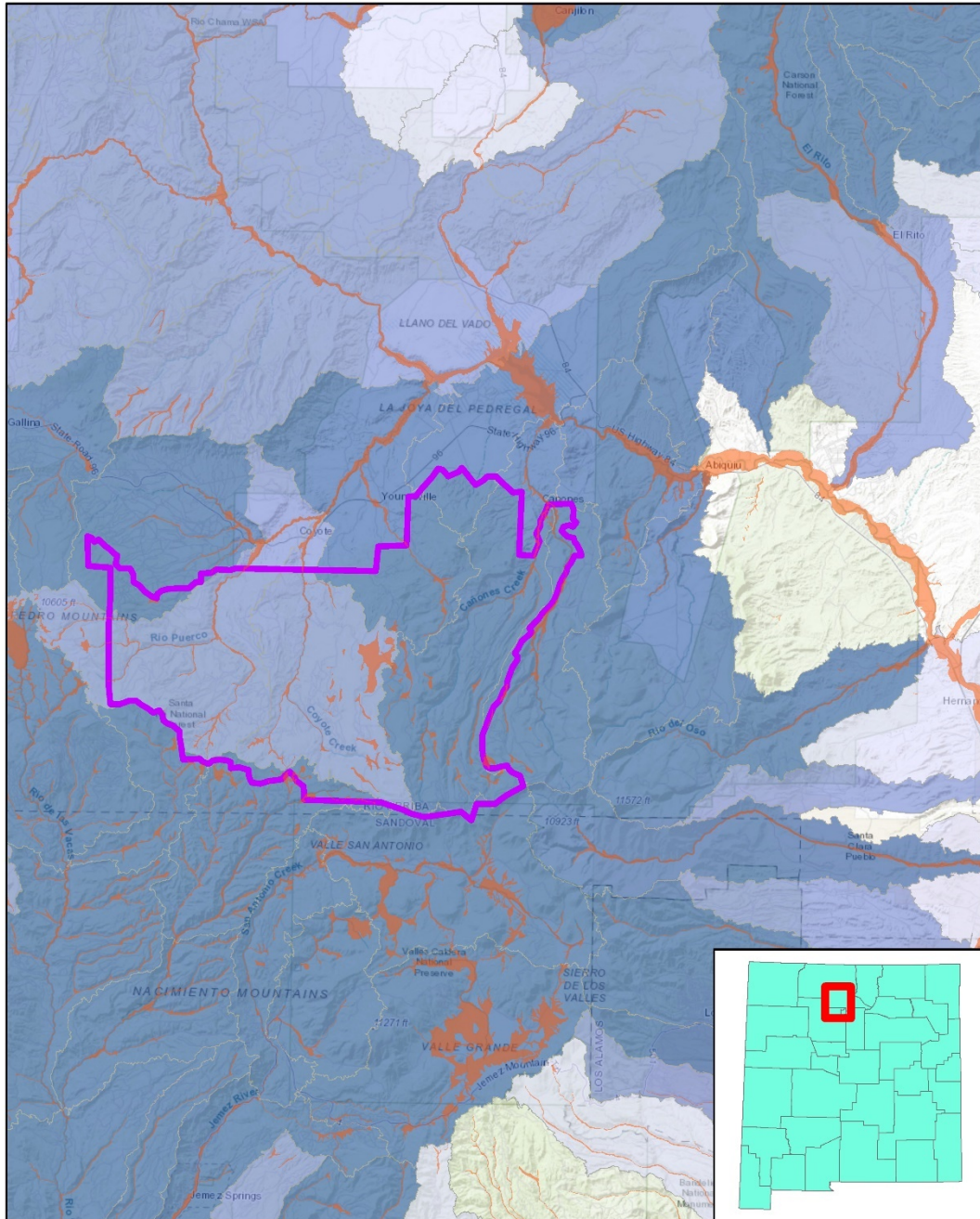
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles





Encino Vista Landscape Restoration



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
Data Source: NMSF
Coordinate System: NAD 1983
UTM Zone 13N
Scale: 1:384,716
Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

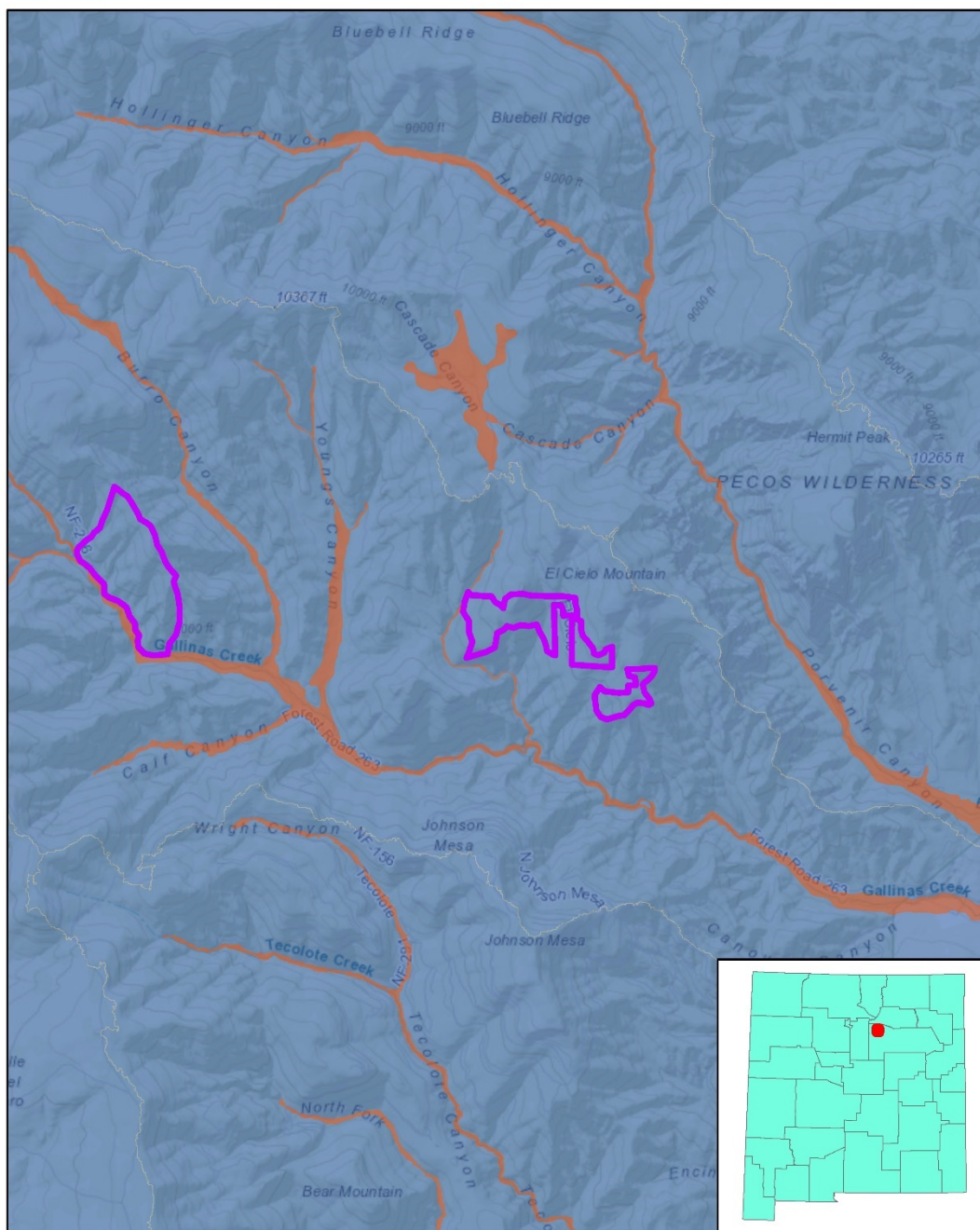
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





Gallinas Watershed Restoration Phase V



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
 Scale: 1:66,474
 Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

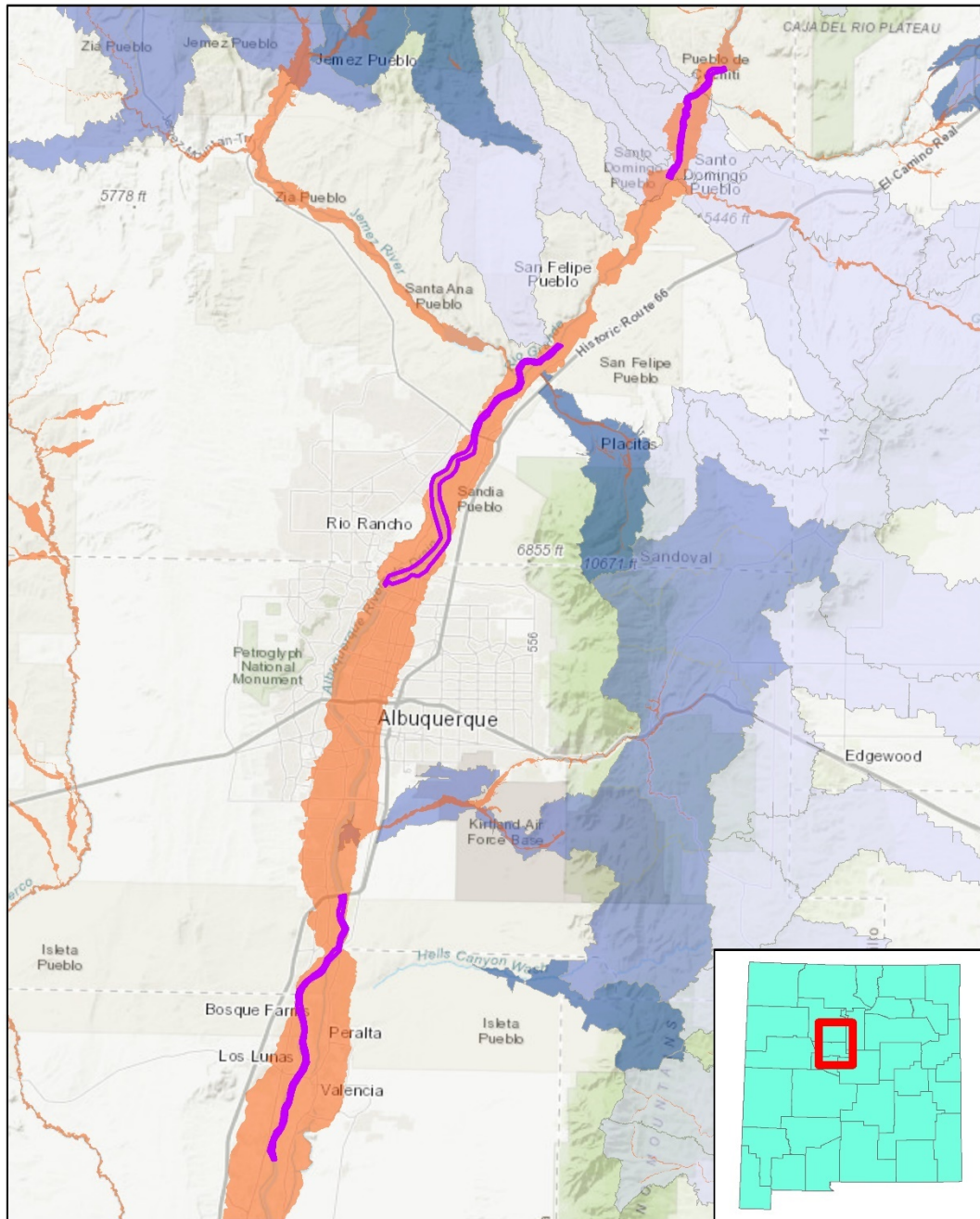
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.5 1 2 Miles





Middle Rio Grande Bosque



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
 Scale: 1:62,845
 Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

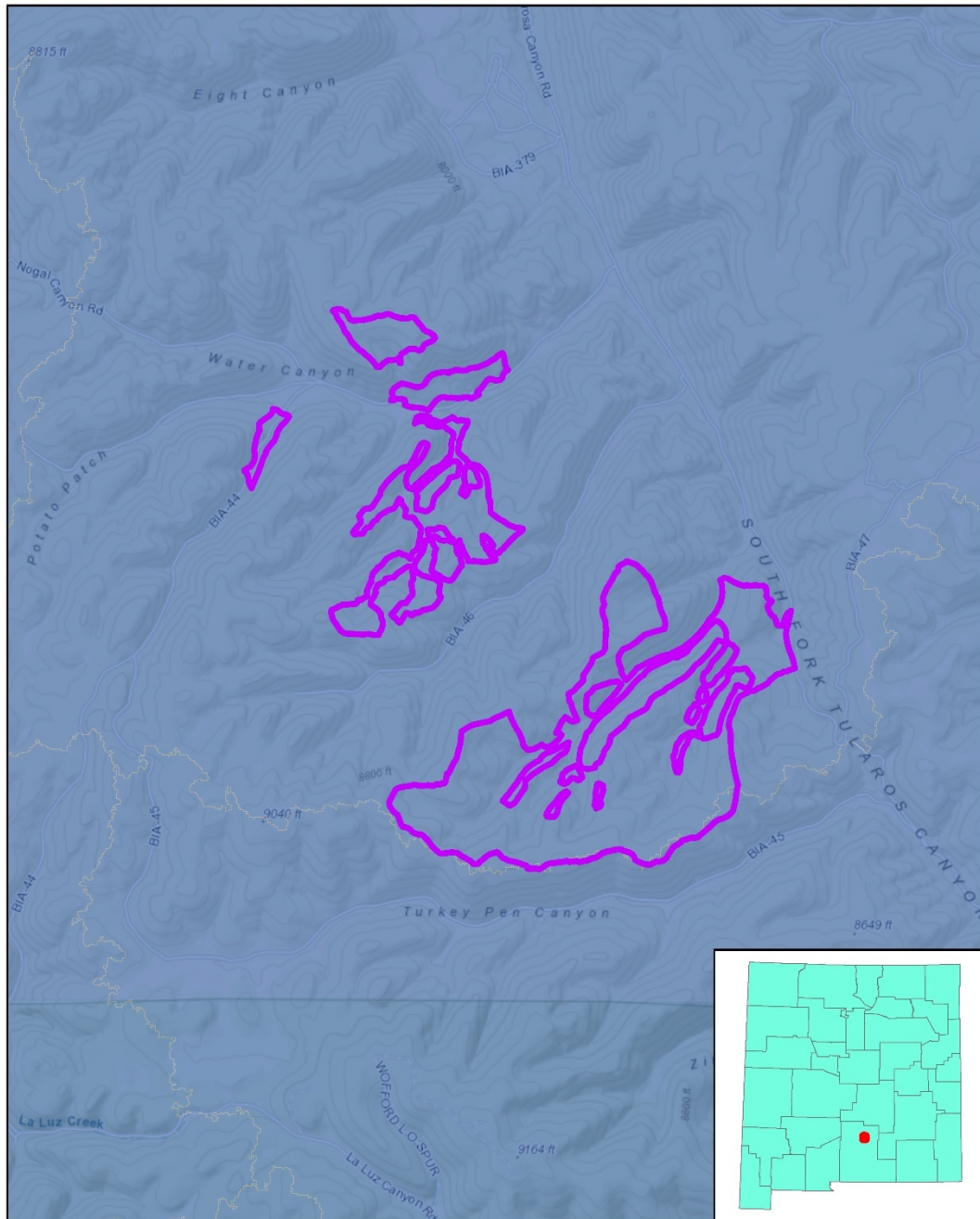
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





Red Cabin, No Name Springs #1



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
Data Source: NMSF
Coordinate System: NAD 1983
UTM Zone 13N
Scale: 1:40,000
Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

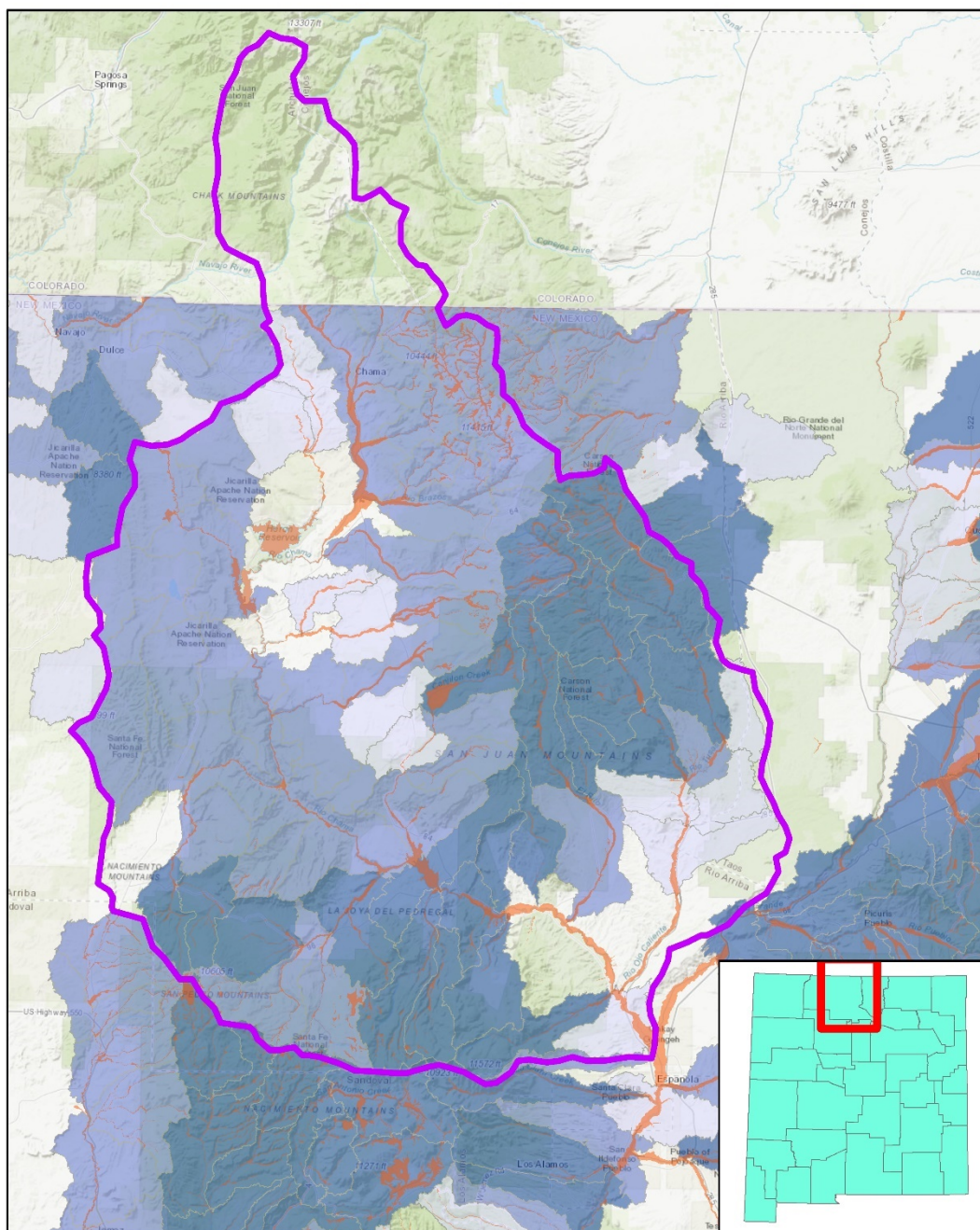
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





Rio Chama Watershed Restoration



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
 Scale: 1:834,895
 Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

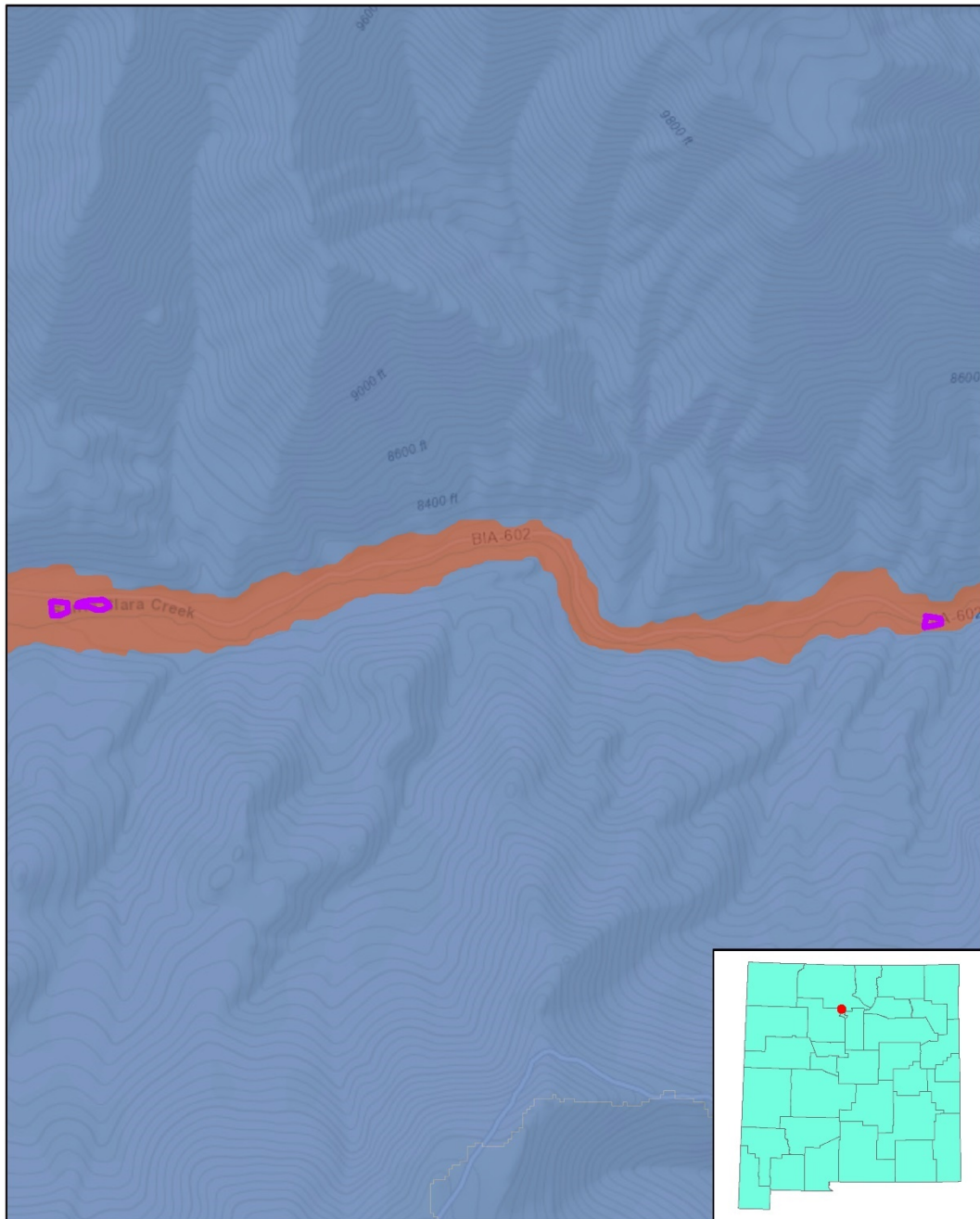
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 5 10 20 Miles





Santa Clara Creek Wetland Restoration



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
Data Source: NMSF
Coordinate System: NAD 1983
UTM Zone 13N
Scale: 1:336,742
Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds
(Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

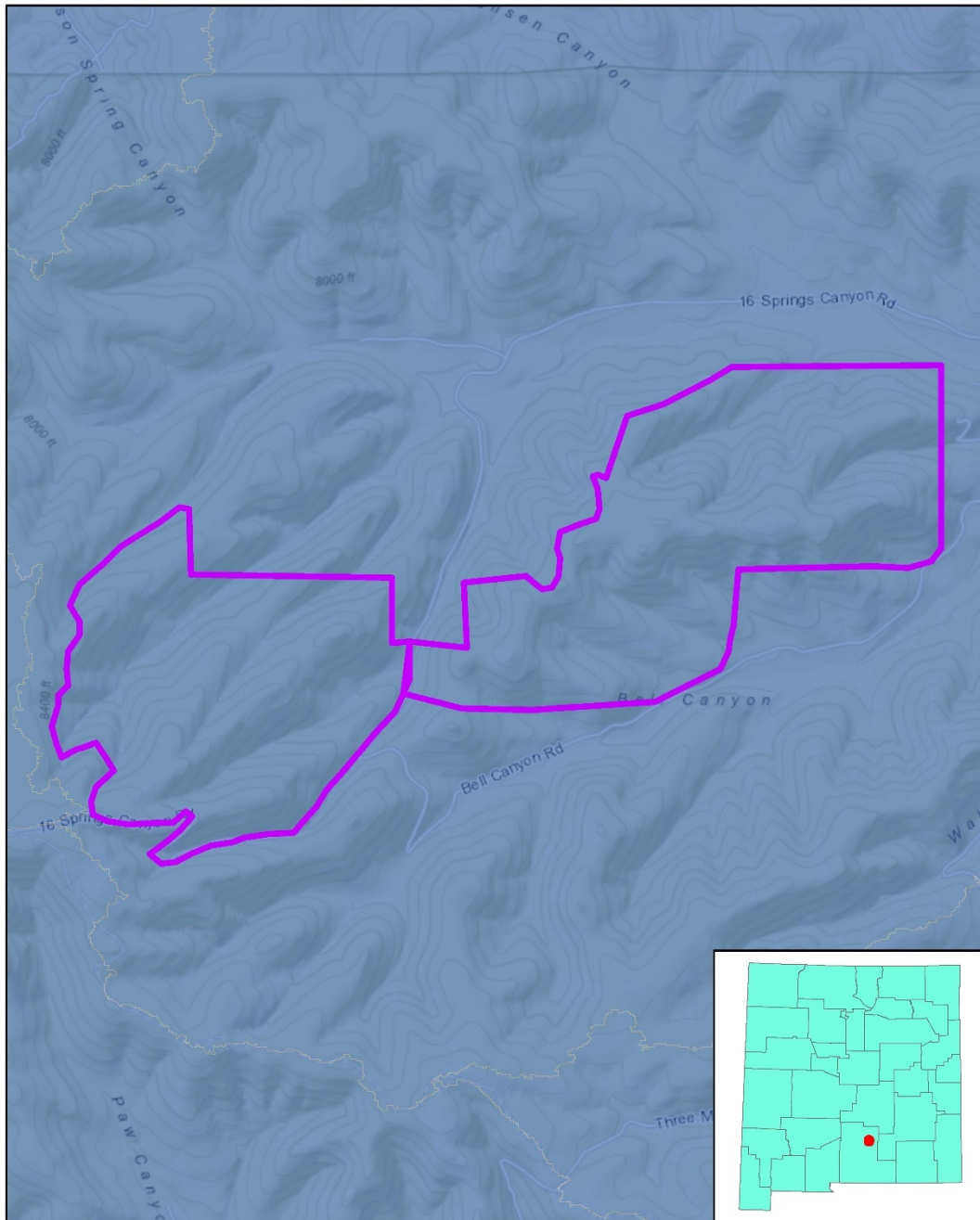
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles





Sixteen Springs WUI



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
Data Source: NMSF
Coordinate System: NAD 1983
UTM Zone 13N
Scale: 1:62,845
Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

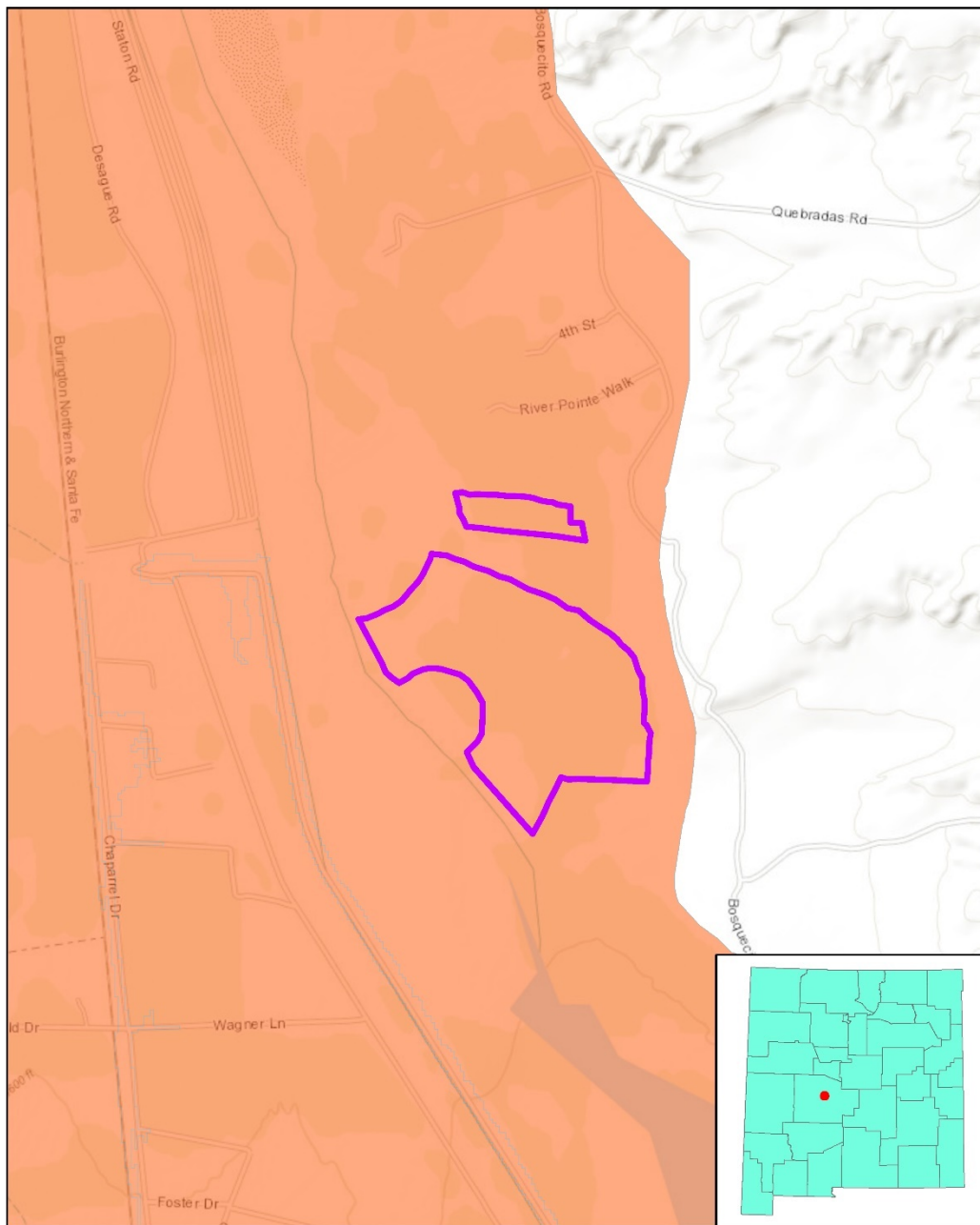
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.275 0.55 1.1 Miles





Socorro Escondida Wildlife Management Area



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
Data Source: NMSF
Coordinate System: NAD 1983
UTM Zone 13N
Scale: 1:17,917
Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

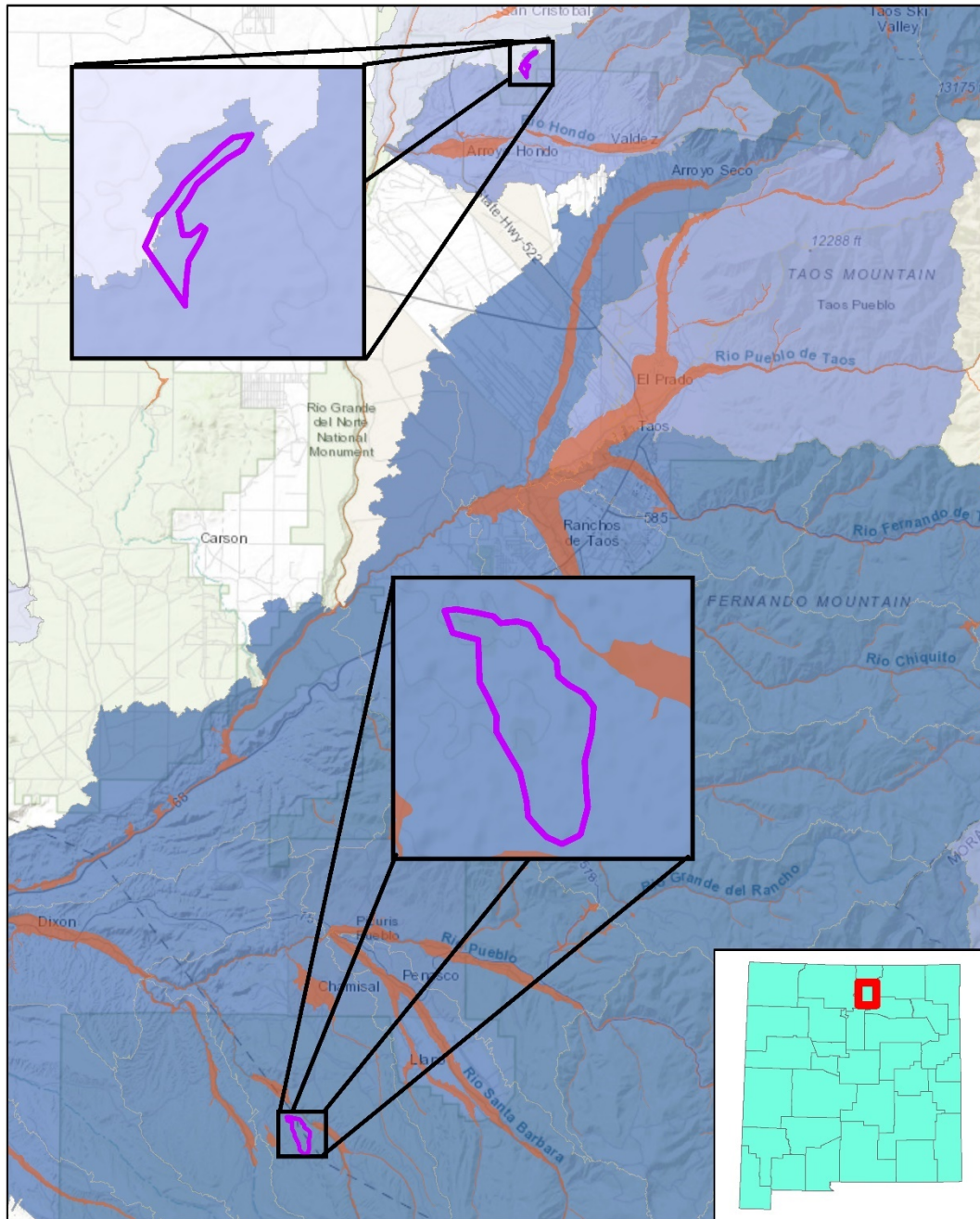
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles





Trampas to San Cristobal Forest Restoration



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
Data Source: NMSF
Coordinate System: NAD 1983
UTM Zone 13N
Scale: 1:62,845
Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds
(Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

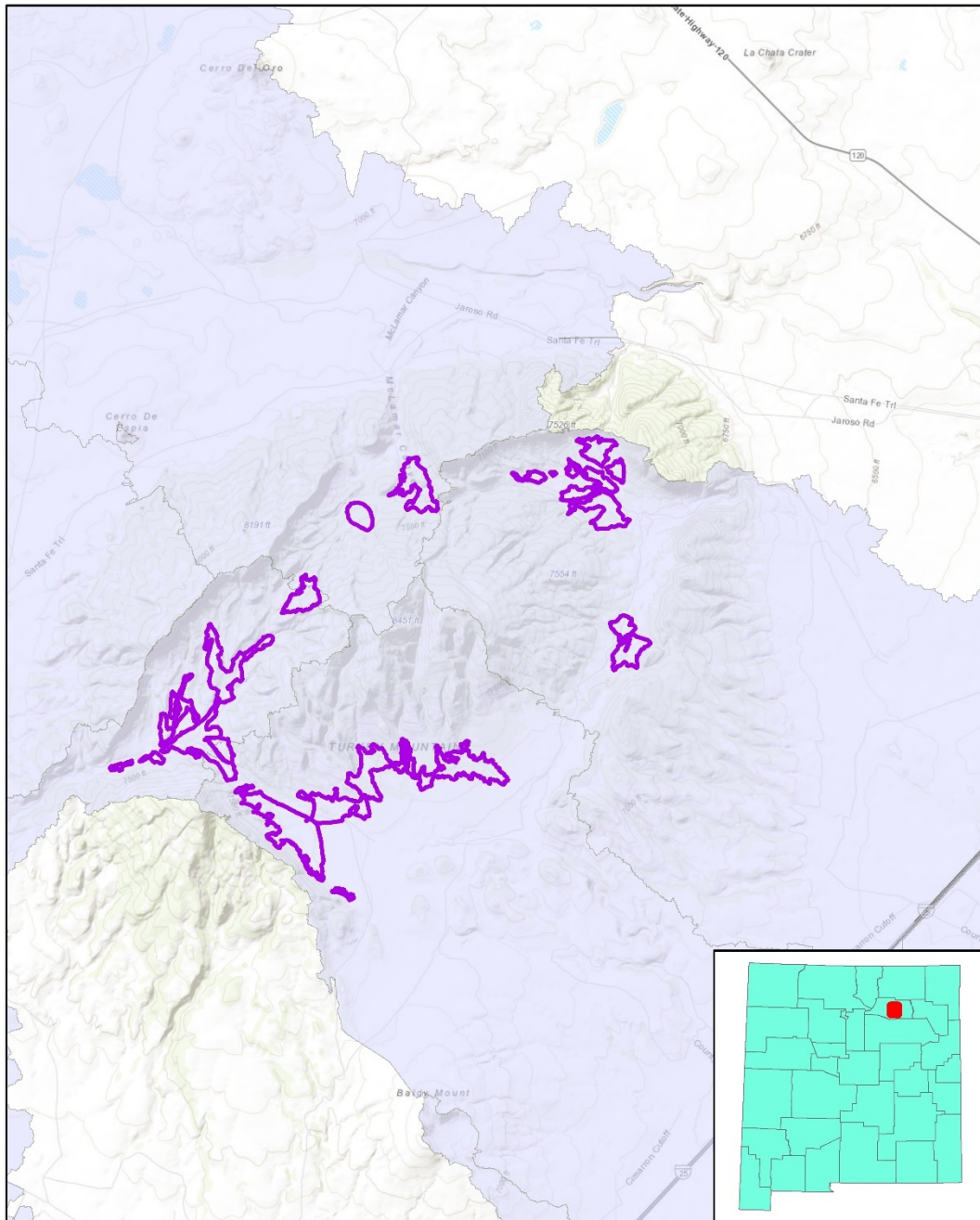
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 2.25 4.5 9 Miles





Turkey Mountain Watershed



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
Data Source: NMSF
Coordinate System: NAD 1983
UTM Zone 13N
Scale: 1:107,960
Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

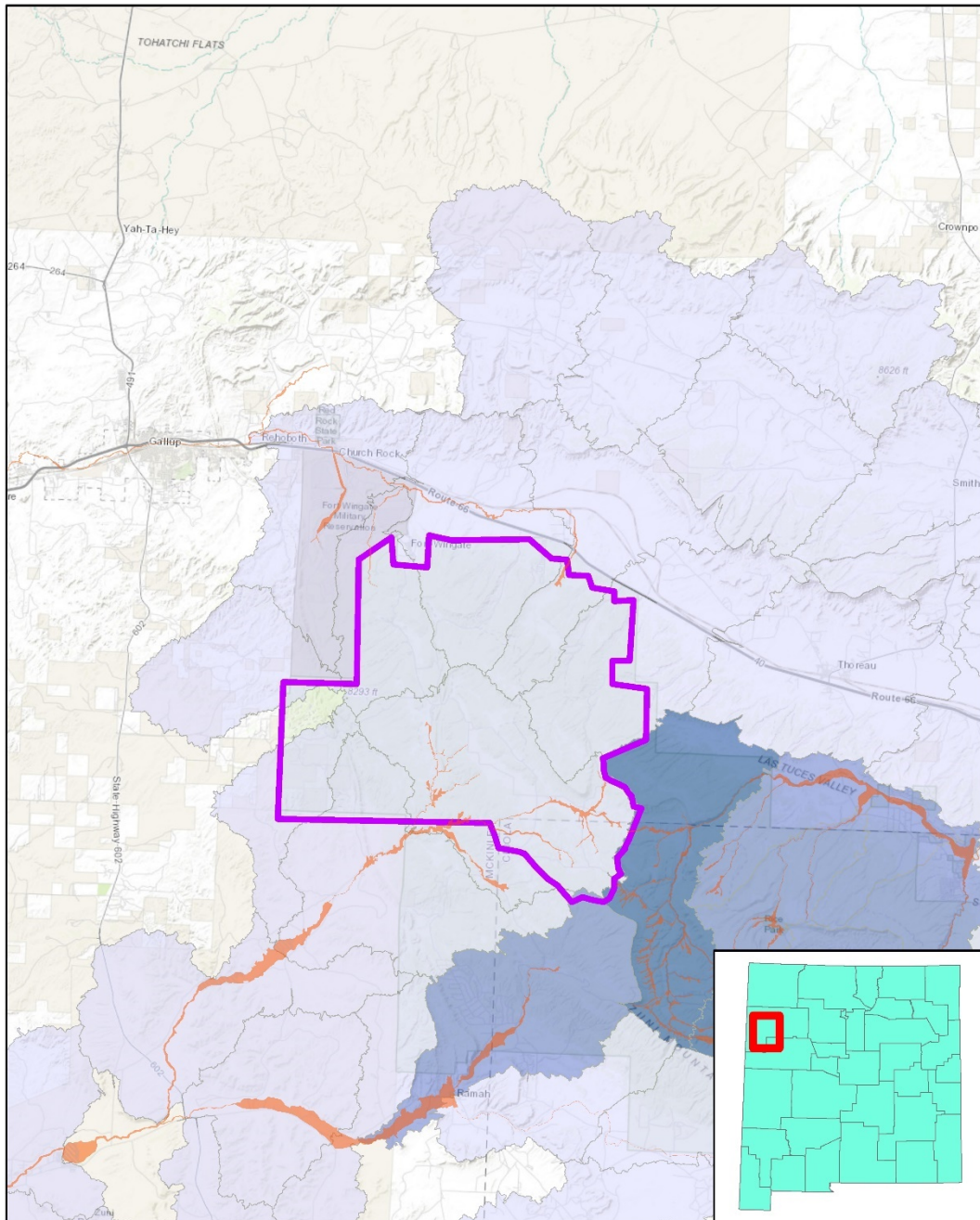
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.5 1 2 Miles





Zuni Landscape Restoration



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
 Scale: 1:396,083
 Date: 11/13/2020

Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 2.75 5.5 11 Miles

