



# Forest and Watershed Restoration Act FY25 Annual Report

*Fuels reduction in the Cimarron Range. ©Adam Wisely*

Prepared by the Energy, Minerals and  
Natural Resources Department

December 2024





## Executive Summary

The Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA or Act) was signed into law by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham on March 15, 2019, and allocates \$2 million annually to the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division for the purpose of restoring forests and watersheds. The Act also directs the Forestry Division to administer, implement, and report on the projects and established a Forest and Watershed Advisory Board (Advisory Board) to evaluate and recommend projects to the Forestry Division.

This report summarizes the cumulative progress that has been made to restore New Mexico's forests and watersheds since 2019 through the Act.

Starting in Fiscal Year 2024, the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund began contributing toward funds available to support FAWRA projects. An additional \$1.4 million expected to be available annually in Fiscal Years 2025-2028, and total available funds for FAWRA projects in FY25 is \$3.4 million.

The FAWRA Advisory Board met at least three times in 2024 to review and recommend projects to enhance the adaptability and resilience of New Mexico's forests and watersheds to climate change and wildfires, improve water quality and support economic activity associated with wood harvest.

Two new projects were recommended and funded in 2024. The Marquez, L Bar Wildlife Management Area project focuses on restoration of approximately 6,000 acres in the state's largest wildlife management area, with an emphasis on tree thinning and meadow restoration. Another project ensures steady pace and scale for improved ecosystem resilience and wildfire risk reduction in the 107,000-acre Santa Fe Fireshed. This project reduces wildfire risk to critical watersheds and infrastructure for several communities, including the Pueblo of Tesuque and City of Santa Fe.

Project needs and requests continue to exceed the FAWRA budget, resulting in projects being supplemented with other funding sources. The needs for this program in New Mexico are vast. The additional funds secured through the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund and federal programs will accelerate our ability to meet the need of restoration funding long term.

Twelve projects of twenty-four are now considered completed (two within the last year).

## Accomplishment Summary

- 24 projects are underway or completed in high priority watersheds,<sup>1</sup> including projects based upon partnerships with tribes and pueblos, municipalities, and multiple state and federal agencies.
- 14,509 total acres of forest restoration, including fuels treatments, thinning, invasive species removal, and prescribed fire are complete as of November 26, 2024.
- \$5,739,862 in FAWRA funds expended on projects have leveraged over \$5 million in other state and federal sources.

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High priority watersheds are defined in the state 2020 Forest Action Plan. The plan included 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. Projects funded by FAWRA must be in a high priority watershed.

## Advisory Board and Public Engagement

A list of current Advisory Board members is provided in Appendix A. Advisory Board activities in calendar year 2024 are described below. Meeting minutes are provided in Appendix B.

- **March 14, 2024-** The Advisory Board met and heard presentations about two projects proposed for FAWRA funding. The Advisory Board had a chance to ask questions about the projects and were invited to submit scores for each.
- **June 13, 2024** – The Advisory Board met to discuss the status of existing projects and to adopt updated guidelines for the project submittal and review process. Considering project scores submitted by the Advisory Board and Forestry Division priorities, both new projects were approved for FAWRA funding in April 2024.
- **December 12, 2024** – Currently scheduled at time of report submission.

The Advisory Board meetings are open to the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. In addition, the Forestry Division hosted quarterly meetings of the statewide Forest and Watershed Health Coordinating Group (FWHCG), attended by anywhere from 50 to 100 agencies, organizations, and individuals, and provided updates on and solicited for new FAWRA projects. To learn more about the FWHCG, contact Erin McElroy at [erin.mcelroy@emnrd.nm.gov](mailto:erin.mcelroy@emnrd.nm.gov).

The Forestry Division hosted the annual FAWRA field trip on September 27, 2024, to learn about forest health concerns and treatment outcomes in the Santa Fe Fireshed on the east side of the Sangre de Cristos. Participants, including Advisory Board members (non-quorum), staff and other guests, viewed and discussed wildfire mitigation and forest restoration treatments in pinon-juniper woodlands and ponderosa pine ecosystems in Hyde Memorial State Park and the Santa Fe National Forest. The group also discussed active management needs in areas with homes at high-risk of wildfire, a critical theme throughout New Mexico.

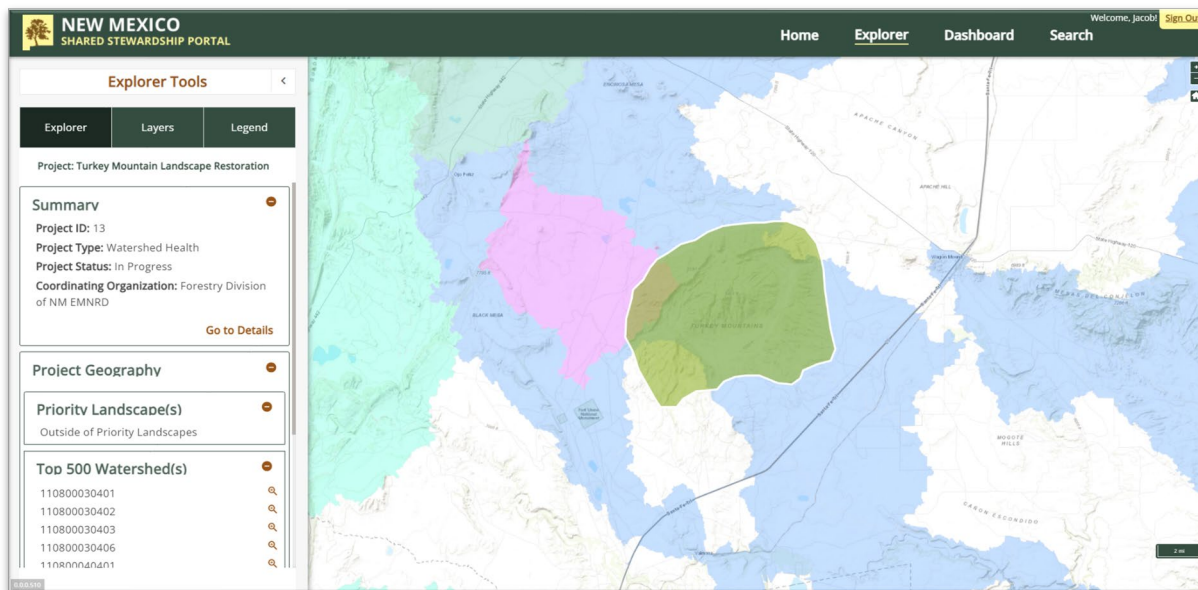


*FAWRA board members, staff and guests discussing the effects of Douglas fir tussock moth defoliation in Hyde Memorial State Park, September 2024.  
©Melissa McLamb*

# The Shared Stewardship Portal

FAWRA projects are tracked in the New Mexico Shared Stewardship Portal (NMSSP), which launched in October 2021. The NMSSP is a tool to improve collaborative planning 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 to implementation and monitoring.

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



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



## Two Projects Recommended for FY25 Funding

The Advisory Board recommended two new projects for funding in April 2024. Demand for FAWRA funds remains high, and the Forestry Division could fully budget the current FAWRA fund balance to existing projects, many of which require sustained funding over several years.

- **L Bar/Marquez WMA (FY25 request, \$1,500,000/year for five years)**

This project will improve forest stand health on up to 12,000 acres on New Mexico Department of Game and Fish L Bar/Marquez Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Over a 5-year period, activities will include required cultural surveys, road inventory and maintenance, development of a burn plan, and forest and meadow thinning. This project will strengthen outcomes of past and future adjacent projects to further reduce the risk of high-severity fire, improve forest and watershed resilience and enhance habitat for wildlife and improve recreational experience. *See Appendix D for project map.*

- **Santa Fe Fireshed (FY25 request, up to \$1,000,000/year for ten years)**

This project will build on over 20 years of planning and treatments to reduce stand densities, restore fire and improve forest resilience to wildfire in 107,000-acre landscape. The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition will continue building support with public outreach. The aim is to treat approximately 4000 acres over 4 years, increase ecosystem resiliency and restore fire as an ecological process within the Santa Fe fireshed. Project funds will be used for mechanical and hand thinning, cultural surveys, pile and broadcast burning. *See Appendix D for project map.*

## FAWRA Projects Under Development and Construction

The following projects have been recommended by the Advisory Board and are currently under development or construction. Dollar figures indicated account for both expended funds and funds currently budgeted to projects, including non-FAWRA dollars. Figures are subject to change.

- **Tres Rios Watershed Coalition (FY24 – \$550,000)**

The Tres Rios Watershed Coalition project is conducting 2,500 acres of watershed restoration and hazardous fuels treatments through an existing partnership between Taos County and the Carson National Forest, with the majority of work occurring within the Rio Trampas National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) project area. Treatments are to reduce the likelihood of stand-replacing wildfire and improve ecosystem function in ponderosa pine stands that abut Picuris Pueblo and are adjacent to several small villages in the Peñasco area, employ local contractors, and make fuelwood available to the public through the dead-and-down fuelwood program.

- **Carson National Forest – Jicarilla Ranger District (FY23 - \$500,000)**

This project initiates a 10-year landscape scale treatment and restoration plan that is conducting 5,000 acres of archaeological surveys in this site-dense landscape. These initial surveys are to support planning and implementation of outyear forest thinning and treatments to improve plant diversity, tree stand structure, and when and where it is safe to do so, prescribed fire to efficiently reduce fuels. The Forestry Division's Chama District Office and San Juan Soil and Water Conservation District are managing the contracts.

- **Taos Valley Watershed Coalition (FY23 - \$400,000)**

This project focuses on a 320,000-acre landscape on the west slope of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in Taos County at high risk to catastrophic wildfire and where the post-fire impacts would be devastating to watersheds and communities. The project area includes all major tributaries to the Rio Grande in the Taos area, including the Rio Hondo, Rio Lucero, Rio Pueblo de Taos, Rio Fernando de Taos, and Rio Grande del Rancho. Combined, these rivers provide irrigation water to more than 120 tribal and non-tribal acequias, as well as drinking and domestic water for most residents of the Taos area, not to mention downstream waters users. Treatments are taking place on public and tribal lands. An initial 140-acre project on the University of New Mexico's D.H. Lawrence has been completed and adjacent projects are planned on the Carson National Forest.

- **Mimbres to Signal Peak (FY23 - \$600,000)**

Working collaboratively together since 2013, the Gila National Forest, Forestry Division, and other stakeholders identified Pinos Altos, Upper Mimbres, and Signal Peak as a shared priority for watershed restoration and fuel reduction in the wildland urban interface. Signal Peak is at the head of several critical watersheds that serve the Mimbres Valley, Silver City area, and surrounding communities. This project will complete 1,100 acres of archeological surveys per year for 10 years, resulting in 52,800 acres of land ready for thinning and prescribed fire. Initial surveys began in fall 2023.

- **Cimarron Range (FY22 - \$300,000)**

This project is selectively thinning approximately 7,000 acres of ponderosa pine and mixed-conifer forests over 10 years in the high-priority, high-risk Cimarron watershed. The 2018 Ute Park Fire was a catalyst for landowner and community interest in accelerating forest treatments and reintroducing fire as a management tool. The state funding is matched to two awards of Congressionally directed spending (\$1.3 million and \$1 million) that is increasing the scope and sustainability of project outcomes. Work began in summer 2023 and 325 acres have been completed thus far.



*Completed treatments in the Cimarron Range at Philmont Scout Ranch in 2024. ©Adam Wisely*



- **Sixteen Springs (FY22 - \$500,000)**

This is a project in a high-risk populated area to reduce fuels in mixed-conifer forests in the biologically diverse Sacramento Mountains in a populated area east of Cloudcroft. Treatments will focus on risk-reduction in the dense wildland urban interface and improved water quality in the impaired Sixteen Springs Canyon Watershed, with strong potential for follow-up and additional high-acre projects across the 48,000-acre planning area. 123 acres have been completed of the total 667-acre project.

- **ABQ Reach Bosque Treatments (FY21 - \$210,000)**

The project goal is to remove invasive tree 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 584 of 800 acres have been completed cumulatively with FAWRA funds, building on previous work by municipalities and tribes. Future work will benefit water systems across the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. The original acreage goal of this project has been met, but the project will remain open to take advantage of new partnership and project opportunities across complex land conditions and ownerships in the valley.

- **Upper Coyote Creek, Elk Ridge – (FY21 - \$600,000)**

This forest restoration project is on State Trust Lands in the vicinity of White Peak. The project is adjacent to several communities and in the upper reaches of the Cimarron, Mora, and Upper Canadian River watersheds, and near the Cimarron Range FAWRA project. Work on this project began in late 2021, and 224 out of approximately 262 acres have been completed.

- **Turkey Mountains (FY20 - \$2,100,000)**

Restoration treatments on Turkey Mountains continue toward the goal of 4,500 acres of prescribed burning and thinning. Originally planned for 10 years, this large-scale, cross-boundary project is ahead of schedule. Approximately 3,500 cumulative acres have been completed, leveraging the FAWRA funding with state capital funding and federal funding through a Landscape Scale Restoration grant.



*Log deck from Fort Union Ranch, Turkey Mountains FAWRA project. ©Shannon Atencio*

## Completed FAWRA Projects

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

This watershed restoration project was located on the southern part of the Mescalero Apache Reservation. The project outcomes were to improve water reliability and provide wood supply for the Mescalero Apache Tribe and people in adjacent communities. Work was conducted under a contract administered by the Mescalero Apache Tribe. Cumulative completed restoration on this project totaled 2,954 acres. The work was completed in 2024 and supported by a mix of United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs funds, state funds, and Mescalero timber sales.

- **Trampas to San Cristobal (FY23 - \$355,877)**

This was a landscape-scale collaboration between Carson National Forest and the Forestry Division that thinned 318 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 was an effective cross-boundary collaboration within the National Forest's Enchanted Circle Priority Area and a predecessor to the multi-year Taos Valley Watershed proposal recommended for funding in 2022. Work was completed in 2023 and served as an effective precursor to the long-term Taos Valley Watershed Coalition Project.

- **El Caso Restoration (FY22 - \$1,051,575)**

This project 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 linked past restoration treatments on the Gila National Forest to a populated wildland-urban interface area and helped protect several natural springs. A total of 642 acres were completed.

- **Zuni Landscape Cibola National Forest Puerco Area (FY22 - \$164,000)**

This project accelerated the capacity and timeline for Forest Service watershed restoration in the 81,000-acre Puerco area in the Zuni Mountains, setting up approximately 31,500 acres for thinning and prescribed burning over the next 10 years. A high-value wood utilization program distributed firewood to local tribes and pueblos. Work was completed in 2022 with 164 acres treated.

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

This riparian restoration project was in the Rio Grande bosque within Sandia Pueblo. The project focus was removing invasive species, reducing wildfire risk, and restoring riparian habitat. The treatment was accomplished with goats that fed on salt cedar and Russian olive trees and shrubs, thereby reducing reliance on herbicides in the bosque. A total of 69 acres were treated.

- **Santa Clara Creek Wetland Restoration (FY21 - \$418,000)**

This wetland project restored 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 helped complete more than 3,706 acres of prescribed burning, followed by resprout treatment.

- **Zuni Phase 1 Private Lands (FY21 - \$949,400)**

This project restored 1,180 acres of ponderosa pine and piñon juniper forests in the Bluewater portion of the Zuni Mountains. Work focused on the upper watershed to restore the historic stand densities, increase ecosystem productivity, and reduce the risk of stand-replacing wildfire.



- **Socorro Escondida Wildlife Management Area (FY23 - \$811,000)**

This project addressed wildfire danger and ecosystem restoration needs on State Game Commission properties within the Middle Rio Grande Conservation Opportunity Area. A total of 118 acres were treated for nonnative invasive species, including tamarisk, and replanted with native shrubs and grasses.

- **Encino Vista Landscape Restoration (FY 20 - \$162,568)**

This project on the Santa Fe National Forest adjacent to Rio Puerco de Chama and Abiquiu Reservoir completed archeological clearances on over 100,000 acres. Restoration work including thinning and prescribed fire can now begin on these lands.

- **Gallinas Watershed Restoration Phase IV (FY20 - \$237,900.00)**

Watershed restoration was completed on approximately 122 acres in the Gallinas Municipal Watershed. Nearly 5,000 acres of treatment were completed in this area. The treatments reduced – but did not prevent – damage from the Hermits Peak and Calf Canyon fires to in the Gallinas Wildland Urban Interface.

- **Taos Small Diameter Wood Products Business Plan (FY20 - \$25,000)**

In a partnership with Taos County, this project funded a business plan and market analysis for small-diameter wood product utilization that serves as a blueprint for the creation and operation of for-profit businesses that add value to small-diameter wood and other forest products produced through forest restoration and fuels reduction projects.

## Delayed or Deferred Projects

Occasionally projects are delayed or deferred due to unexpected landowner access, title, or other issues.

Funding has been redirected from the following 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 constitution 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).

## FAWRA Projects Summary

PROJECT	Land Ownership	Forestry Division District	FAWRA Board Recommendation Date	Target Acres	Acres completed	Status	FAWRA Funds Expended	Leveraged Funds Expended
Red Cabin, No Name Springs	Tribal	Capitan	8/6/2019	2,400	2,954	Completed	\$ 500,007.09	\$ 355,460.00
Encino Vista Landscape Restoration (Heritage Surveys)	Santa Fe National Forest	Chama	8/6/2019	N/A	N/A	Completed	\$ 162,567.55	
Santa Clara Creek Wetland Restoration	Tribal	Bernalillo,	8/6/2019	3,706	3,706	Completed	\$ 202,550.71	\$ 217,803.22
Gallinas Watershed Restoration	Santa Fe National	Las Vegas	8/6/2019	122	122	Completed	\$ -	\$ 237,900.00
Small-Diameter Wood Products Business Planning (Cimarron)	N/A	Cimarron	11/13/2019	N/A	N/A	Completed	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -
Zuni Landscape Restoration	Private; Cibola NF	Bernalillo	6/6/2020	1,280	1,133	Completed	\$ 532,795.50	\$ 416,604.00
Sandia Pueblo Bosque Restoration	Tribal	Bernalillo	6/6/2020	106	359	Completed	\$ 128,499.08	
NMDGF Socorro Escondida WMA	NM Game and Fish	Socorro	6/6/2020	118	118	Completed	\$ 196,972.50	\$ 614,000.00
Trampas to San Cristobal	Carson National Forest	Cimarron	5/14/2021	310	318	Completed	\$ 355,877.45	
Zuni Landscape Cibola National Forest Puerco	Cibola National Forest	Bernalillo	5/14/2021	164	164	Completed	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 14,000.00
Timmons - Shared Stewardship Portal	N/A	All	Administrative projec	N/A	N/A	Completed	\$ 13,110.00	\$ -
Joplin Ridge Right of Way	State Land Office	Capitan	Administrative projec	113	113	Completed	\$ 35,312.00	\$ 100,000.00
Northside/Rio Hondo Corridor Restoration	Private	Cimarron	11/13/2019	0	0	Delayed/Deferred	\$ -	\$ -
Rio Chama Watershed Restoration	Private	Chama	6/6/2020	0	0	Delayed/Deferred	\$ -	\$ -
Cebolla Nutrias Watershed	Private	Chama	6/6/2020	0	0	Delayed/Deferred	\$ -	\$ -
Turkey Mountain Watershed	Private	Las Vegas	11/13/2019	4,500	3,504	Ongoing	\$ 1,629,476.84	\$1,462,808.62
Upper Coyote Creek - Elk Ridge	State Land Office	Cimarron	6/6/2020	262	224.35	Ongoing	\$469,238.92	\$0.00
Rio Grande ABQ Bosque Restoration	Municipal	Bernalillo	6/6/2020	800	744	Ongoing	\$ 740,944.00	\$ 40,087.50
El Caso Private Lands	Private	Socorro	5/14/2021	1,300	762	Ongoing	\$ 422,521.00	\$ 743,106.43
16 Springs	Lincoln National Forest	Capitan	5/14/2021	667	123	Ongoing	\$ 128,951.38	\$ -
Cimarron Range	Private	Cimarron	5/14/2021	7,000	325	Ongoing	\$ -	\$ 857,381.74
Taos Valley Watershed Coalition	Carson National Forest	Cimarron	5/11/2022	500	140	Ongoing	\$279,187.14	\$ -
Mimbres to Signal Peak	Gila National Forest	Socorro	5/11/2022	N/A	N/A	Ongoing	\$ -	\$ 123,760.00
Tres Rios Watershed Coalition	Carson National Forest	Cimarron	5/17/2023	4,500	70	Ongoing	\$ 210,852.00	\$ -
Santa Fe Fireshed Restoration	Santa Fe National	Bernalillo	4/14/2024	3,500	118	Ongoing		
Carson National Forest - Jicarilla Ranger District	Carson National Forest	Chama	5/11/2022	N/A	N/A	Pending	\$ -	\$ -
Marquez/LBar Forest and Meadow Restoration	NM Game and Fish	Bernalillo	4/14/2024	9,000		Pending		
				40,348	14,997		\$ 6,183,863.16	\$ 5,182,911.51
				Remaining acres to complete:				
Total FAWRA budget (all years):					25,351			
Unexpended FAWRA budget:								





*Pile burns in Angel Fire, NM, February, 2024. ©Chris Romo*

# APPENDIX A: FOREST AND WATERSHED RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD – updated 11/26/2024

## Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department Forestry Division

Laura McCarthy, State Forester  
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## Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management - Fire Service Support Bureau

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State Fire Marshal  
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## Economic Development Department

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Business Development Team  
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## Environment Department

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## Office of the State Engineer

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## State Land Office

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## Appointed Public Member, Conservation Vacant

## Appointed Public Member, Local Government Vacant

## Appointed Public Member, Industry

Brent Racher  
New Mexico Forest Industry Association; Racher  
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## NM Department of Game and Fish

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# APPENDIX B: 2024 MEETING MINUTES

## Forest and Watershed Restoration ACT (FAWRA) Advisory Board Meeting

### Meeting Minutes (FINAL)

Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 1:00 PM

OFS Conference Room, 1220 S. St. Francis Drive

#### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

A meeting of the FAWRA Advisory Board (Board) was called to order at 1:04 pm on March 14, 2024, and presided over by Laura McCarthy, Director, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division.

- **Board Members and Delegates Present in person**  
Laura McCarthy, Director, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair  
Mark Meyers, State Land Office (SLO)  
Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)  
Brent Racher, Public Member for Industry  
Kathy Holian, Public Member for academic or non-profit organization  
Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)
- **Board Members Present online (non-voting)**
- **Board Members Absent**  
Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)  
John Rhoderick, Environment Department (ED)  
Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Marshal's Office  
Steven Hernandez, Public Member for Local Government (resigned; awaiting seat to be filled)
- **Others Present o Jacob Pederson, EMNRD, Forestry Division**  
Erin McElroy, EMNRD, Forestry Division  
Gabe Wade, EMNRD, Acting Deputy General Council  
Brock Lorenzen, Department of Game and Fish  
Caitlin Ruhl, Department of Game and Fish  
Marissa Goodwin; EMNRD, Forestry Division  
Lawrence Crane; EMNRD, Forestry Division
- **Other Present Online:**  
Coleen Cunningham, NM Interstate Stream Commission  
Mary Stuever, EMNRD, Forestry Division,  
James Anzalone, EMNRD, Forestry Division,  
Nick Smokovich, EMNRD, Forestry Division,

## **2. Roll Call**

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. Approve Agenda**

Brent Racher moved to approve the agenda and Stewart Liley seconded the motion. The meeting agenda for March 14, 2024, was unanimously approved.

## **4. Adopt Open Meetings Act Resolution**

Kathy Holian moved to approve the Open Meetings Act resolution and Brent Racher seconded the motion. The Open Meetings Act resolution was unanimously approved.

## **5. Approve Minutes of September 13, 2023**

Tim Hagaman moved to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2023 meeting and Kathy Holian seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

## **6. State Forester's Update**

Laura McCarthy provided a Forestry Division update on the following:

### **• Legislative session:**

- The Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund received \$350 million for the permanent fund, resulting in an additional \$1.4 million for Forest and Watershed Restoration Act funding in addition to the reoccurring funding of \$2 million.

- An additional \$5 million of capital funds were received for Forest and Watershed Restoration, bringing the Forestry Division's state funding for FY25 to \$8.4 million.

- The New Mexico Forest Industry Association (NMFIA) together with the Forestry Division and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) have scheduled a meeting to deep dive into contracting and agency communication issues. The Forestry Division has also been hosting a consistency of work subgroup meeting with NMFIA and USFS participation.

- The NM Forest and Watershed Health Coordinating Group held an in-person meeting in October.

- The Forestry Division is working on updating the Forester job series to help create opportunities for job advancement through a tiered series.

- Jacob Pederson is the Resource Management Bureau Chief. The Bureau is working on improvements to internal processes to ensure compliance and efficiency as we work to increase pace and scale.

- The Resource Management Bureau is working on a green island analysis in the Hermit's Peak- Calf Canyon burn scar to help prioritize work to protect unburned areas from increased threats of insects, disease, and reburn. If successful, this pilot will be completed for other burn scars throughout the state.

- The Forestry Division has a study underway with the Bureau of Business and Economic Research to investigate benefits from work on private land and whether these benefits are stronger for the landowner or the state. The results may have implications for the Anti-donation Clause. A preliminary report is expected in July with a final report in October.

- The Forest and Watershed Advisory Board has a vacancy for a public member for local government. The process to fill the vacancy has been initiated.

## **7. Progress report on funded projects**

Jacob Pederson provided an overview of Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) funded projects and related expenditures. Since the inception of FAWRA in 2019, 25 projects have been reviewed and approved, including 11 completed projects, 9 ongoing projects, 3 deferred projects, and 2 pending projects. There have been 13,387 total acres treated utilizing FAWRA funding to date which accounts for \$5 million of expenditures out of \$8 million obligated in the four fiscal years FAWRA has been active. There has been an additional \$4.6 million of non-FAWWRA funds that have been leveraged on FAWRA projects. Ongoing projects include Elk Ridge, Cimarron Range, 16 Springs, and two cultural resources survey projects (Mimbres to Signal Peak and Carson Nation Forest Jicarilla Ranger District). Currently, project development exceeds the FAWRA budget resulting in projects being supplemented with other funding sources.

## **8. Presentation of new projects**

### **a. Marquez/ LBar Forest and Meadow Restoration**

i. The Marquez/LBar Forest and Meadow Restoration Project occurs in the state's largest wildlife management area (WMA) which includes 68,000 deeded acres in Sandoval, McKinley, and Cibola counties. The project will occur in the upper WMA within the Bernalillo Forestry District and will include three watersheds from the 2020 NM Forest Action Plan's top 500 watersheds at risk.

ii. Project goals include restoring ecosystem function and resilience in an at-risk habitat to benefit human and wildlife populations on a landscape scale. The project will also result in local employment, training, and business opportunities by providing a relatively stable source of work for local contractors.

iii. Project activities will include approximately 6,000 acres of thinning in Ponderosa pine stands and 5,000 acres of meadow restoration to remove encroaching conifers. Other activities may include heritage surveys, road inventory and maintenance, procurement of stand exams, development of a burn plan, and removal of thinned materials.

iv. The project is requesting \$1.5 million of funding per year over 5 years. Project implementation would begin in the spring of 2025 and the aim is to complete the project within 5 years.

### **b. Santa Fe Fireshed Restoration**

i. The Santa Fe Fireshed Restoration project will occur largely within the Santa Fe National Forest, a high-interest fireshed for many residents and recreationists in the area as well as a priority watershed in the 2020 NM Forest Action Plan. Land ownership in the area includes the U.S. Forest Service, City of Santa Fe, Tesuque Pueblo, State Parks, and private land ownership. The project area provides approximately 40% of the City of Santa Fe's water supply.

ii. Project goals include increasing ecosystem resilience, wildfire risk reduction, and returning the role of beneficial fire to the landscape.

iii. Proposed actions include mechanical and hand thinning, hand piling, fire line creation, heritage surveys, pile burning, and broadcast burning. The project work will build on previously completed work in the project vicinity. FAWRA funding will be used primarily for archeological clearances, thinning, and piling work. The Santa Fe National Forest will contribute leveraged funding for additional thinning and follow-up prescribed burning.

iv. The project is requesting \$1 million per year over ten years. Project implementation would begin in Fall of 2024 and the project aims to treat a minimum of 350 acres per year.



## 9. Presentation of continuing projects

There were no continuing projects presented. Jacob Pederson proposed a future guideline amendment to eliminate the continuing project track. Instead, projects with a change in the scope of work would be presented using the same application process as new proposals.

## 10. Other business

Laura McCarthy identified the need to choose a location for the fall FAWRA field trip and welcomed recommendations. Santa Clara or Encino Vista were discussed as nearby locations with proposed dates of September 20th or 27th, 2024.

## 11. Adjourn

Brent Racher moved to adjourn the meeting and Mark Meyers seconded the motion. The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:18 pm.

Draft Minutes submitted by: Erin McElroy on March 18th, 2024

Draft Minutes reviewed by: Jacob Pederson on March 18th, 2024

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### Forest and Watershed Restoration ACT (FAWRA) Advisory Board Meeting

#### Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

Thursday, June 13, 2024 at 1:00 PM

OFS Conference Room, 1220 S. St. Francis Drive

## 1. Call to Order

1:04 pm

### a. Board Members and Delegates Present:

Laura McCarthy, Director, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair  
Mark Meyers, State Land Office (SLO)  
Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)  
Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)  
Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)  
Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Marshal's Office

### b. Board Members Absent:

John Rhoderick, Environment Department (ED)  
Brent Racher, Public Member for Industry  
Vacant, Public Member for academic or non-profit organization  
Vacant, Public Member, Local Government

### c. Others Present:

Jacob Pederson, EMNRD, Forestry Division  
Melissa McLamb, EMNRD, Forestry Division  
Chelsea Fox, EMNRD, Forestry Division

**2. Approve Agenda –Review and Approval (Action Item)**

Tim Hagaman made a motion to approve the agenda, which Stewart Liley seconded. None opposed. The agenda was unanimously approved.

**3. Review and Approval of Minutes (Action Item)**

Julie Valdez made a motion to approve the minutes from the Advisory board meeting on March 14, 2024, which was seconded by Mark Meyers. None opposed. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**4. State Forester's Update**

Laura McCarthy provided a Forestry Division update on the following:

- a. The Division has recently completed and posted updates to the Forester job series, which hadn't been updated since 2012. The updates increase the bottom pay band, include emphasis on fire ecology and fuels reduction. The intent is to align with current forest ecology needs, address and improve Forester hiring and retention issues.
- b. The Forestry Division has been working with the Fire Marshal's office and partners at the Office of Insurance (including the construction industries division) on home insurance issues in fire prone areas.
- c. FAWRA is currently receiving recurring state funding at \$2M annually. The Land of Enchantment Legacy fund now adds \$1.4M annually and likely will increase over time as its invested. This will help us provide consistent support for projects and keep them going. The Forestry Division is focusing on more landscape scale projects to strengthen outcomes of investment.

**5. Progress Report on Funded Projects**

Jacob Pederson provided an overview of current projects.

- a. Turkey Mountain Watershed
- b. Rio Grande ABQ Bosque Restoration
- c. Upper Coyote Creek - Elk Ridge-Cimarron District is currently short-handed on project foresters and the NMFD Resource Management Bureau is working to provide resources, particularly working FCIs to get inspections complete and keep work going.
- d. Cimarron Range - Biggest project in scale on paper; landowner access agreements required and all agreements recently completed.
- e. Taos Valley Watershed Coalition - Focused on removal of wood from treated areas
- f. Tres Rios Watershed Coalition - Workplans now active.
- g. Marquez L Bar Meadow Restoration - Getting started with new Forest Contract Inspector, Rocky Mountain Ecology, to provide road mapping. Current focus is on road mapping and stand evaluation. plan to utilize existing road as fire break and meadow restoration; DGF working on Mexican Spotted Owl and archeology surveys.
- h. Santa Fe Fireshed Restoration Project – using USFS Good Neighbor Authority on this project; in process of getting agreements in place.

The Board discussed adding a column to FAWRA project tracking sheet to specify the County where each project is located. This could help make connections between projects and the status of Community Wildfire Protection Plans, inform fire management plans, and these connections could improve project outcomes for reducing wildfire risk.

**6. Discussion and Adoption of New Program Guidelines (Action Item)**

Pederson provided an overview of changes suggested by NMFD informed by the Division's experience of managing the FAWRA process. Guidelines were provided for review to the Advisory Board a week before the meeting.

Julie Valdez made a motion to approve the updated guidelines, which was seconded by Randy Varela. None opposed. The motion was unanimously approved.

**7. Other Business**

- a. Fall Field Trip – A tentative date was scheduled for Friday, September 27 to host a field trip for the Advisory Board to a FAWRA project. McCarthy asked all to hold the date. Potential project sites are: Turkey Mountains or Zuni Mountains. McCarthy will scope options with Forestry Districts and send out confirmation of location to Board.

**8. Adjourn**

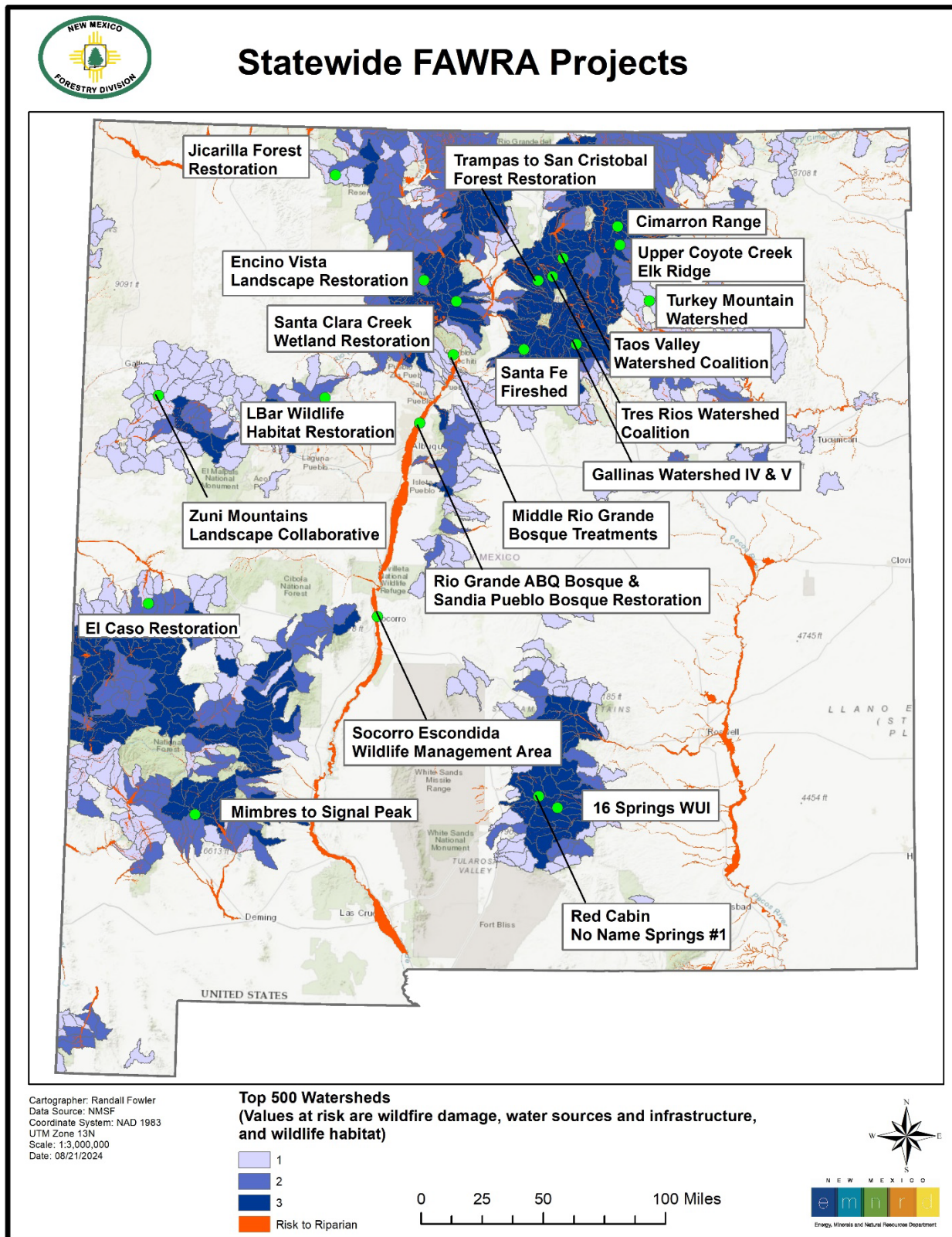
Tim Hagaman motioned to adjourn which was seconded by Mike Meyers. Board Chair, Laura McCarthy adjourned the meeting at 1:46 PM.

Draft Minutes prepared by: Melissa McLamb on 06/14/24

Draft Minutes reviewed by: Jacob Pederson on 06/14/24



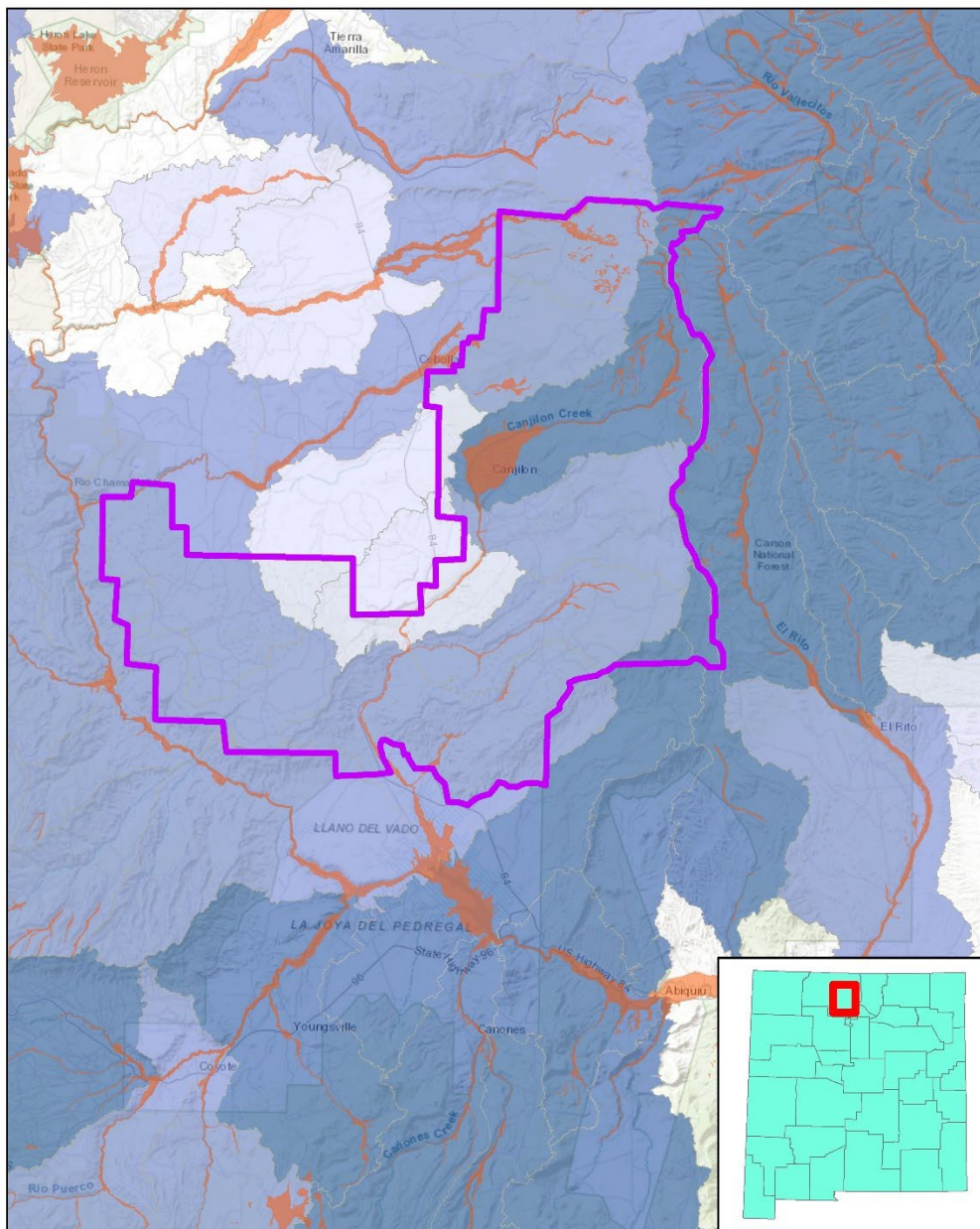
# APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW MAP



# APPENDIX D: PROJECT AREA MAPS



## 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

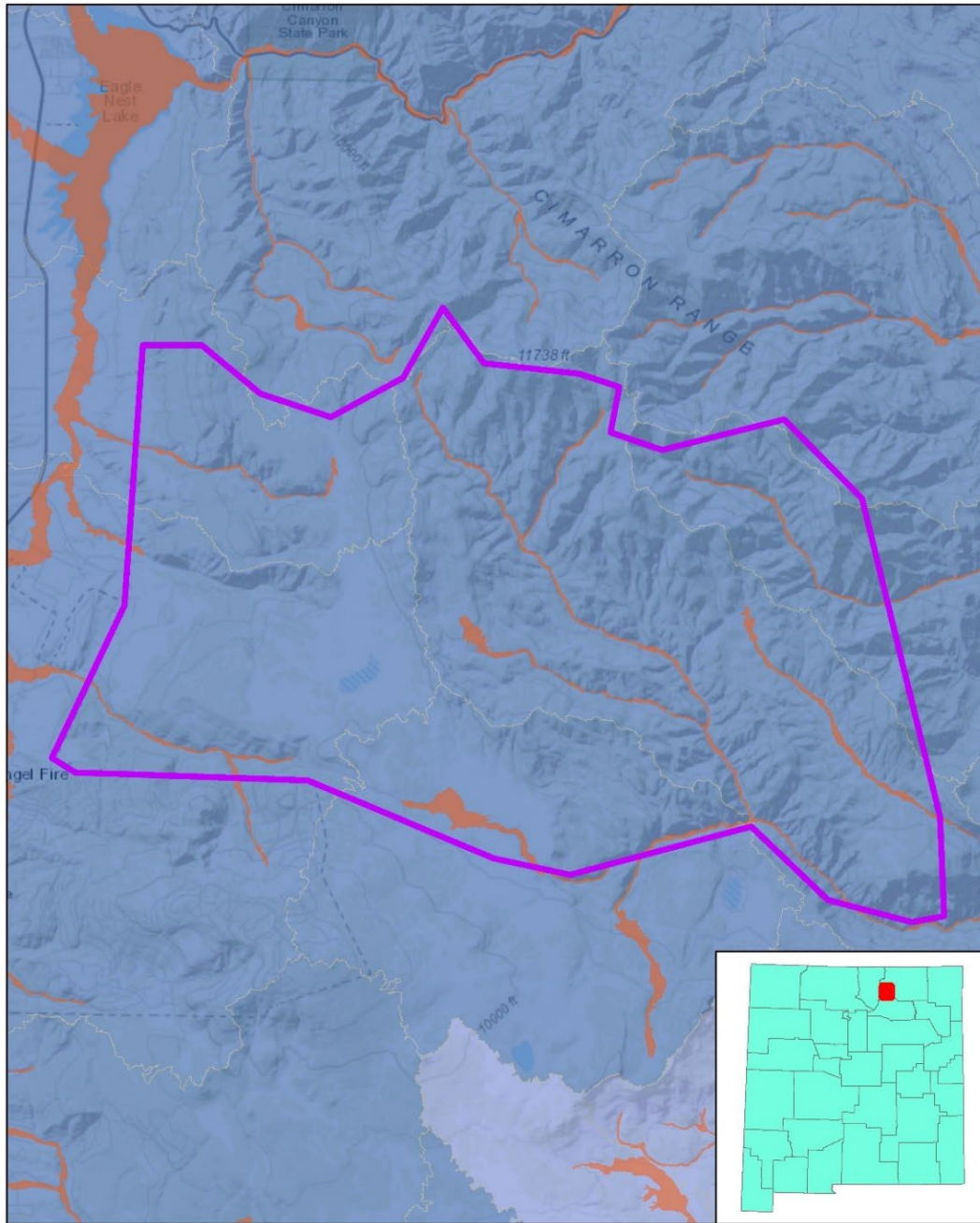
0 2.5 5 10 Miles







# 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

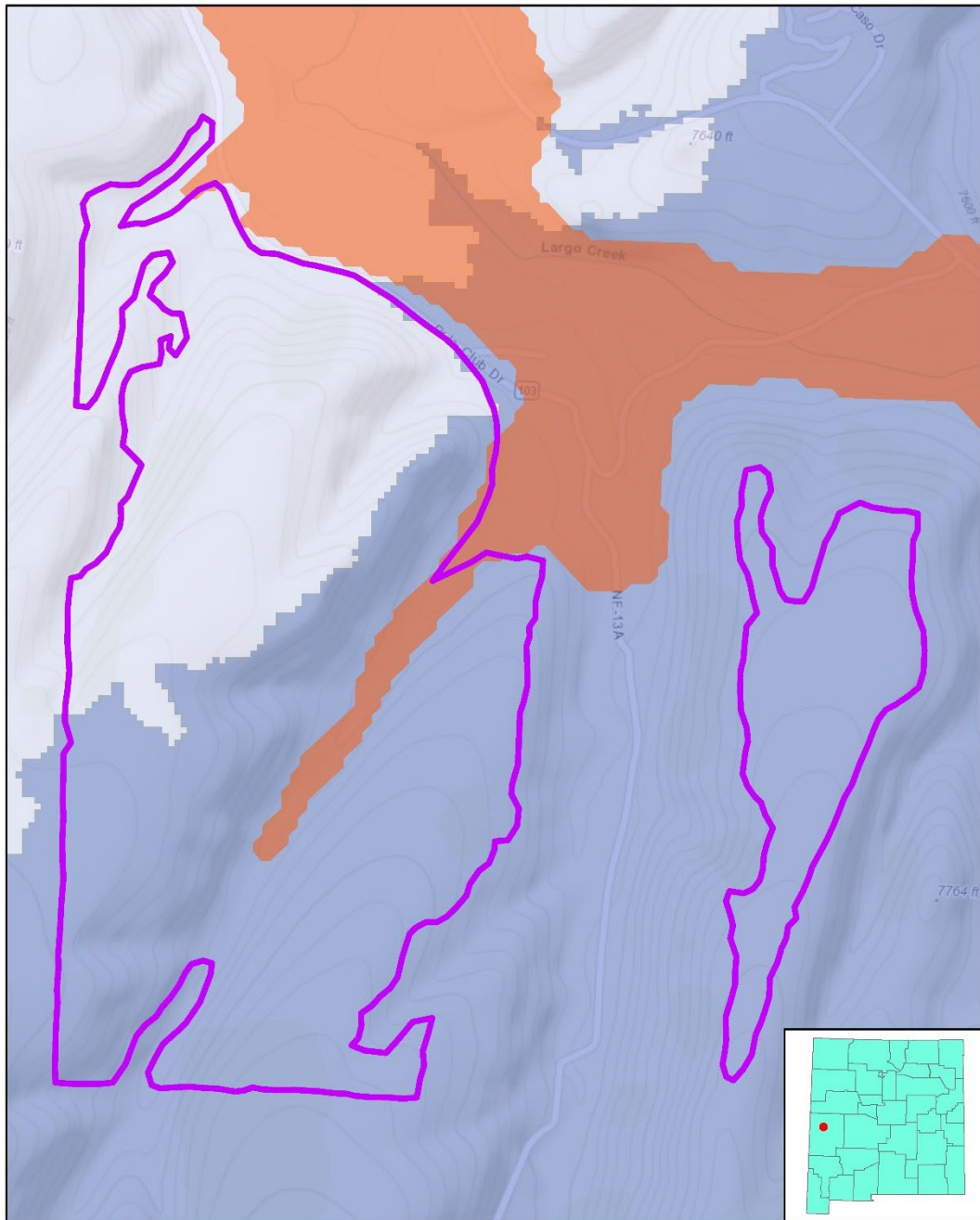
0 1 2 4 Miles







# 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)

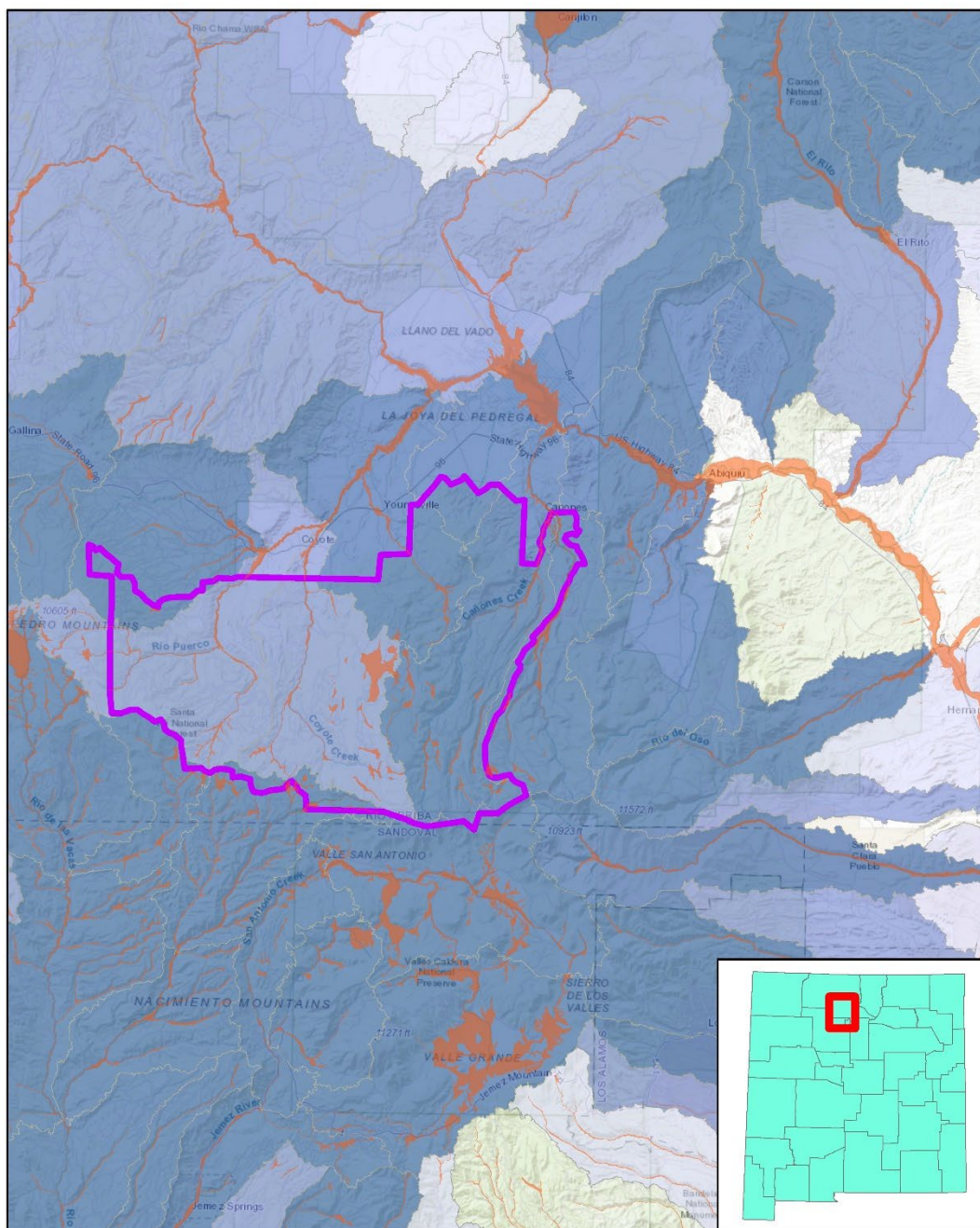
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.075 0.15 0.3 Miles





# 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

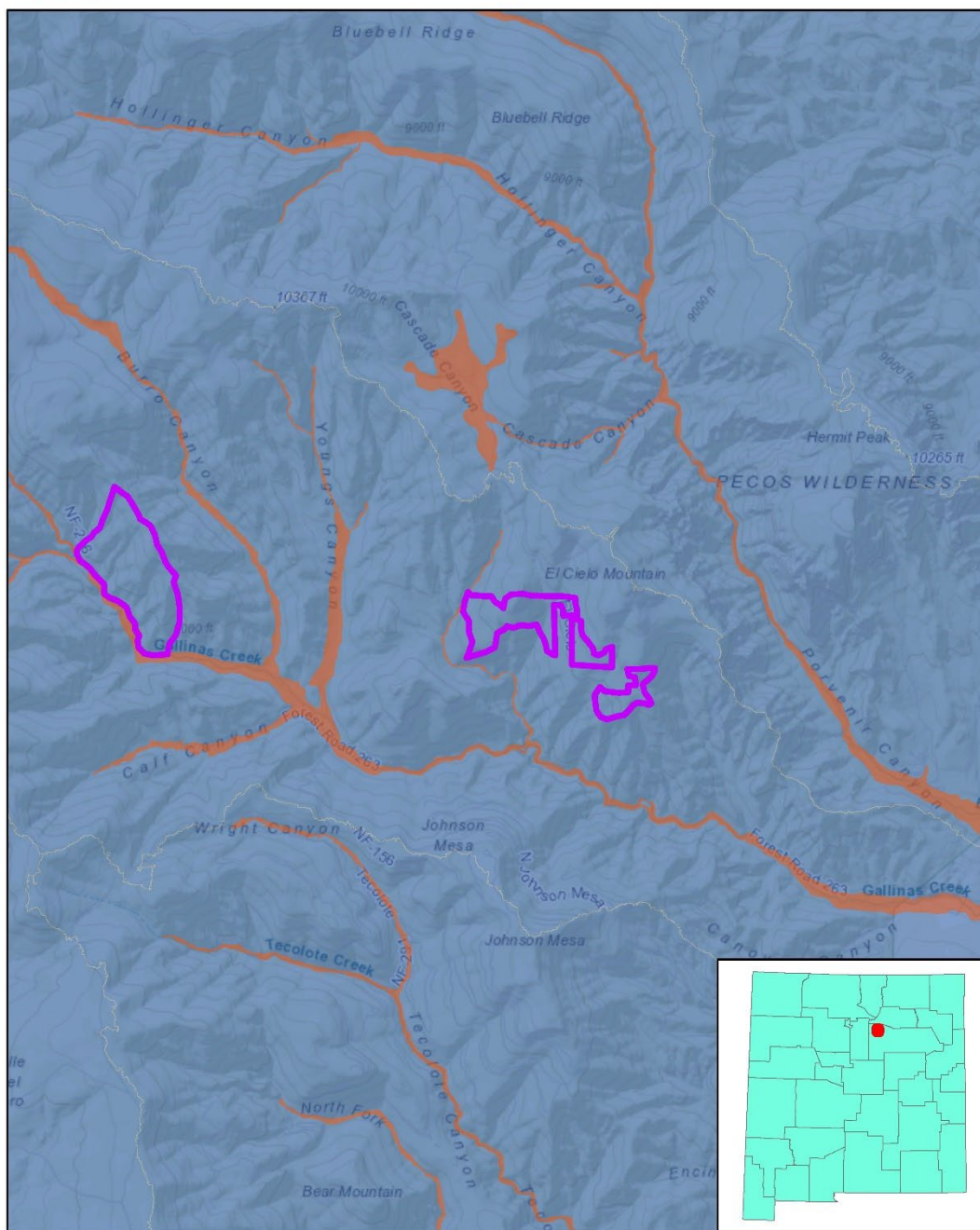
0 2.5 5 10 Miles







# 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

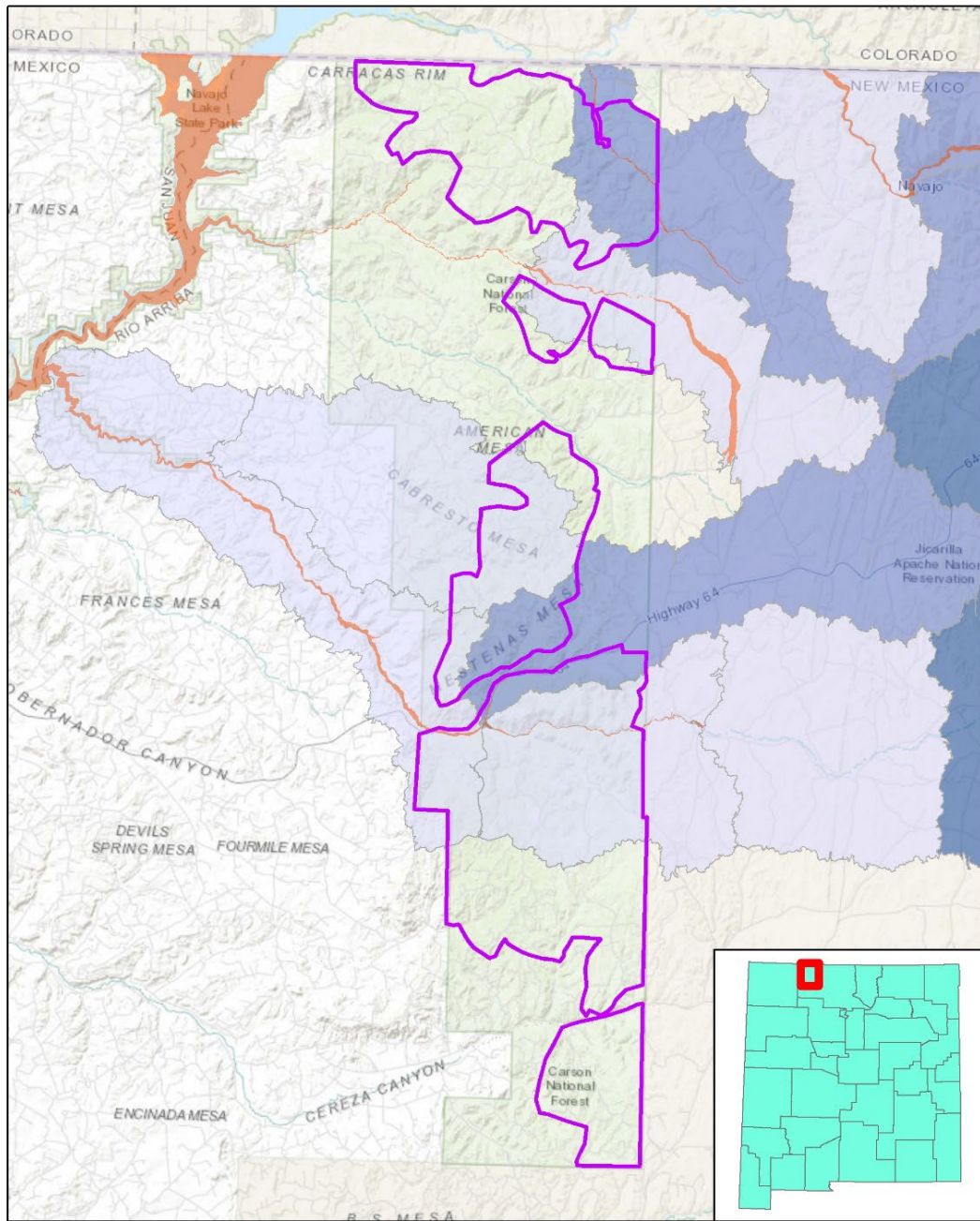
0 0.5 1 2 Miles







# Jicarilla Forest Restoration



Cartographer: Randall Fowler  
 Data Source: NMFD  
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983  
 UTM Zone 13N  
 Scale: 1:62,845  
 Date: 10/5/2022

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

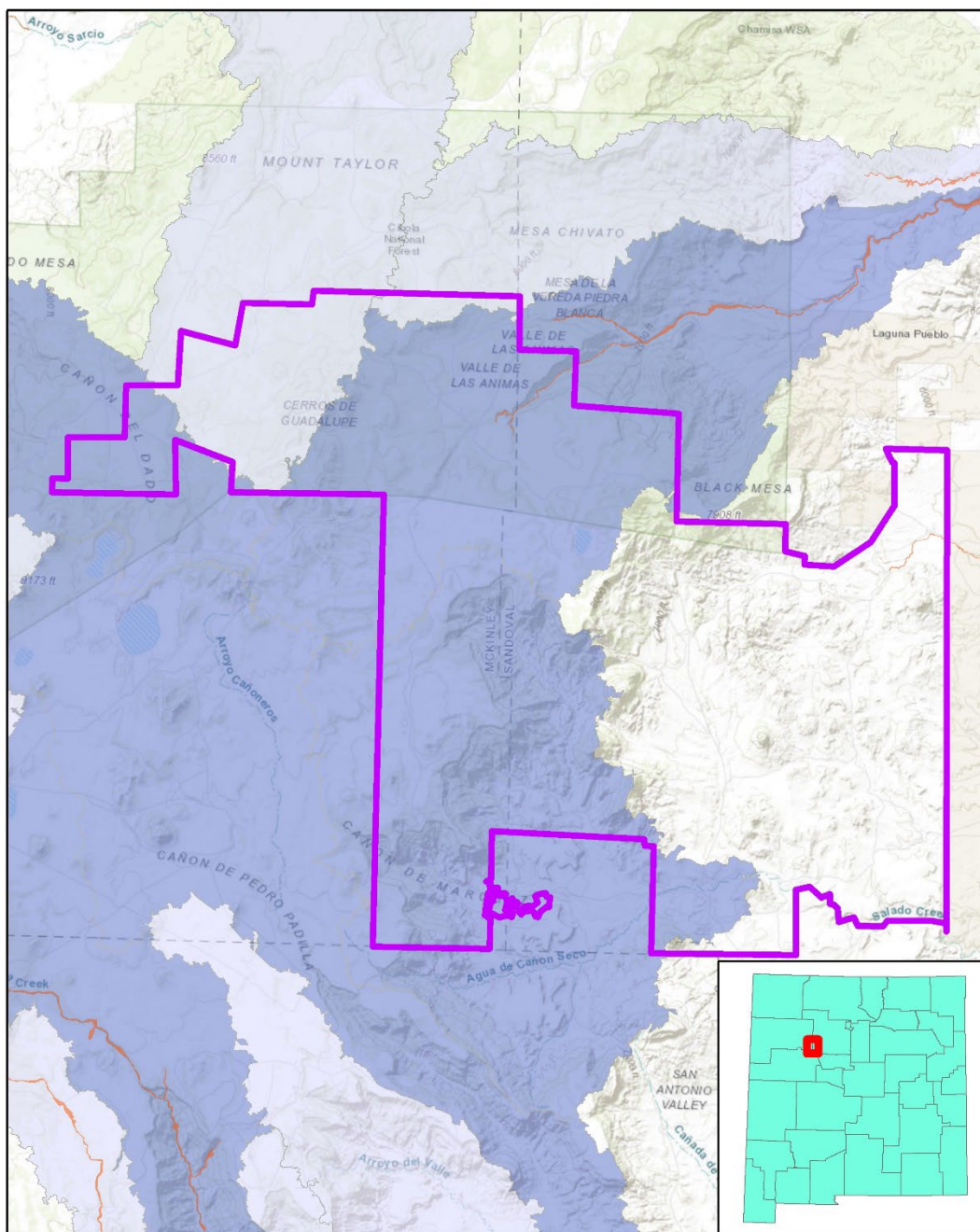
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 2.25 4.5 9 Miles





# L-Bar / Marquez



Cartographer: Randall Fowler  
Data Source: NMSF  
Coordinate System: NAD 1983  
UTM Zone 13N  
Scale: 1:384,716  
Date: 12/2/2024

## 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

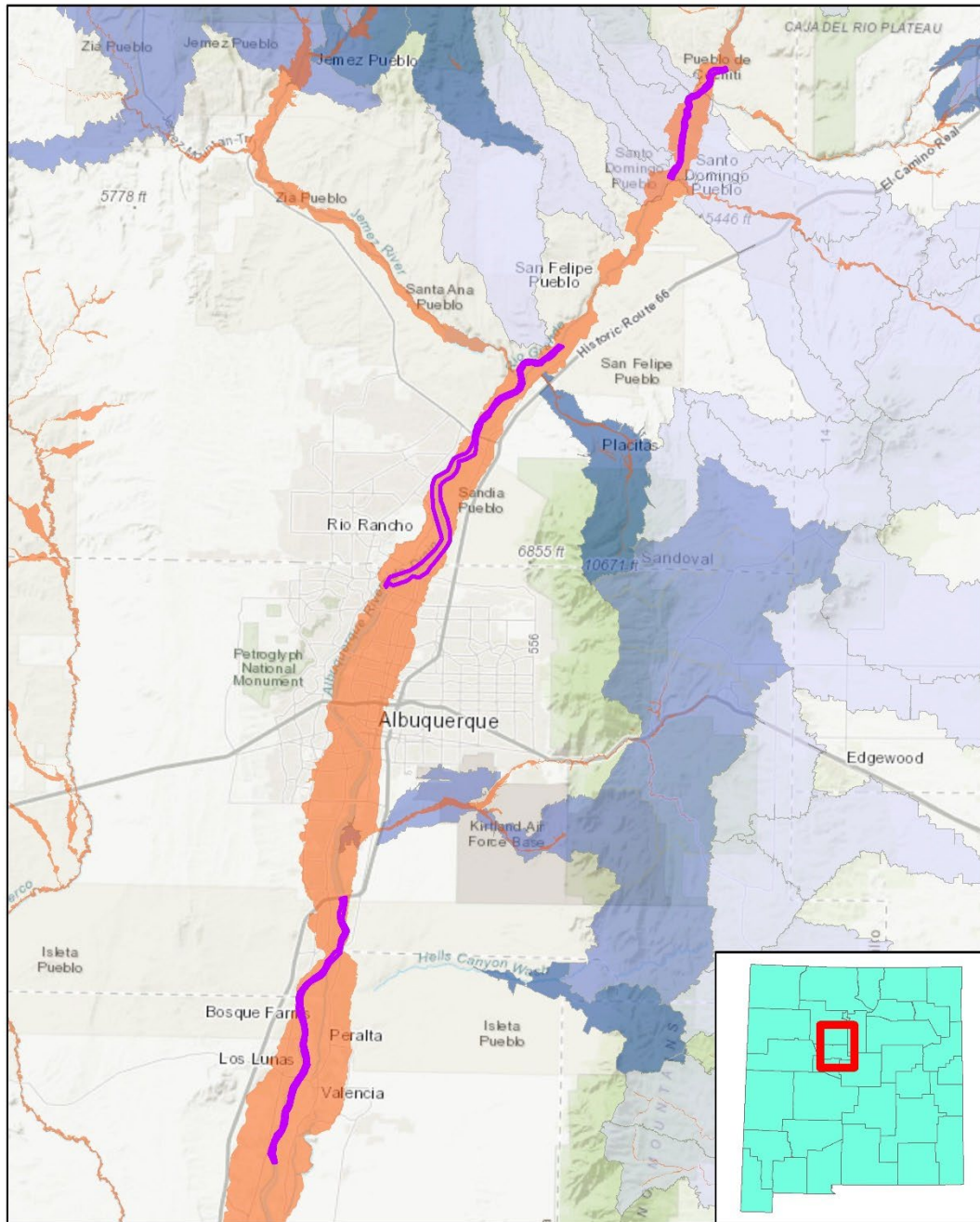
0 1 2 4 Miles







# 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)

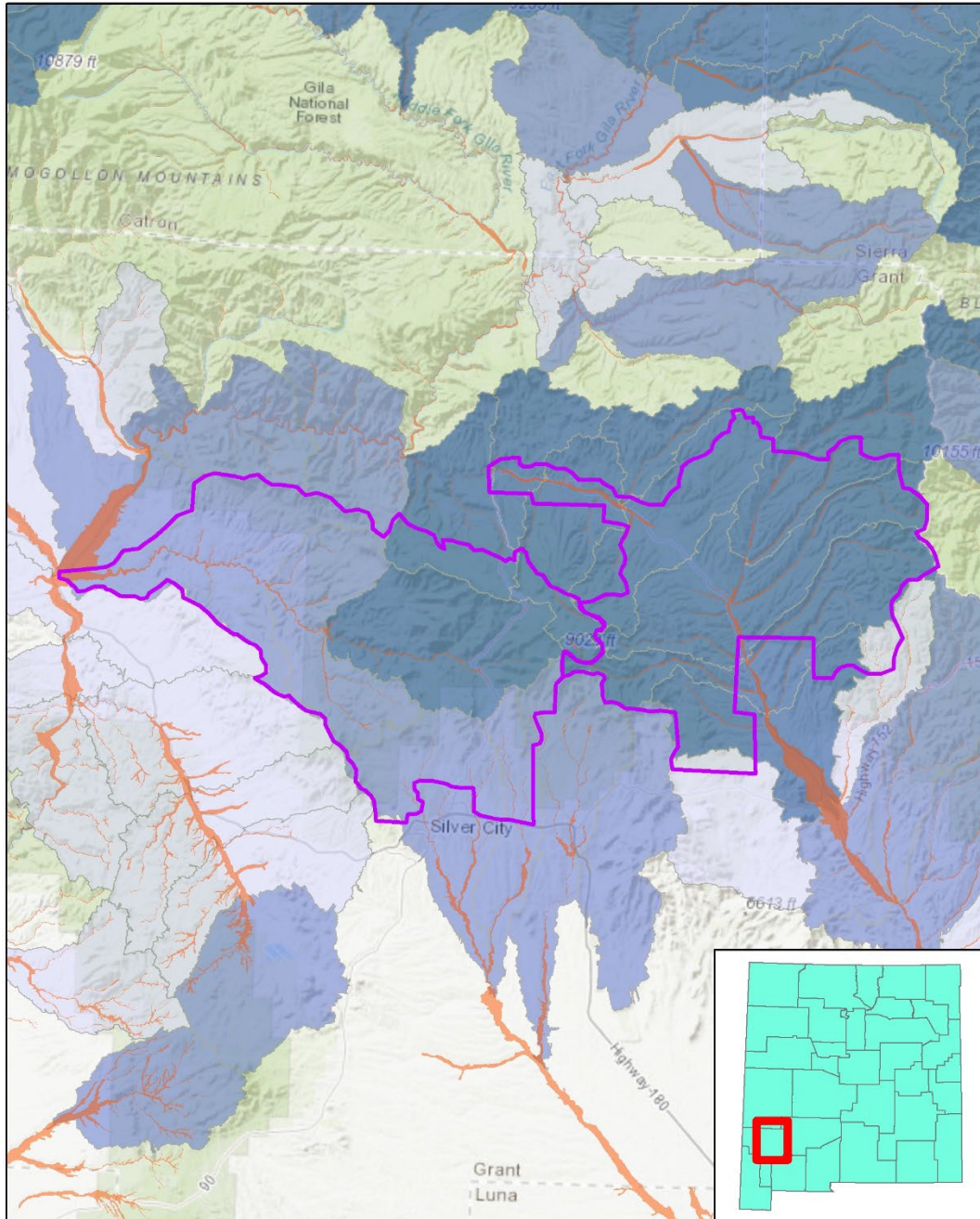
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 2.5 5 10 Miles





# Mimbres to Signal Peak



Cartographer: Randall Fowler  
 Data Source: NMFD  
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983  
 UTM Zone 13N  
 Scale: 1:62,845  
 Date: 10/5/2022

## 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

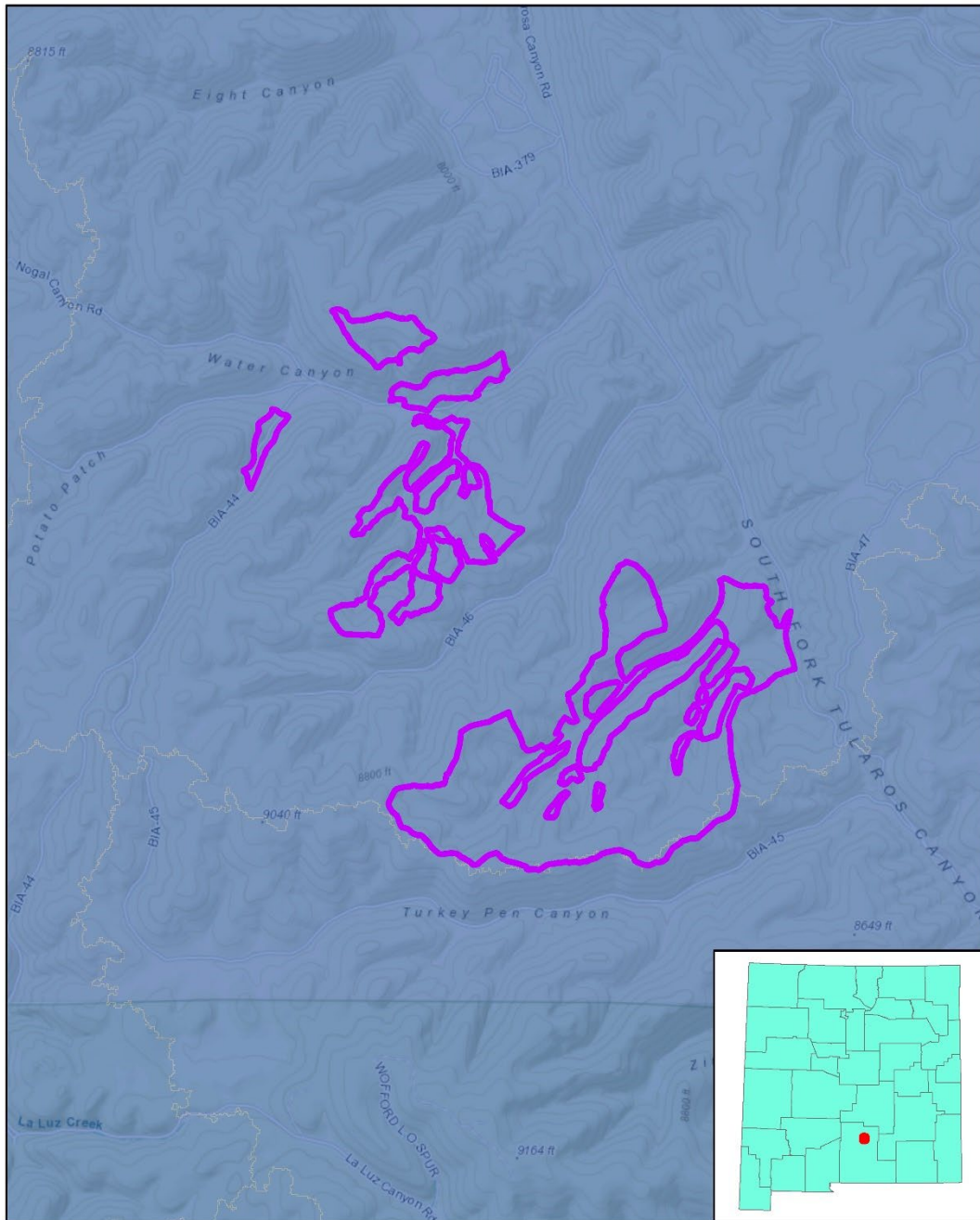
0 4 8 16 Miles







# 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)

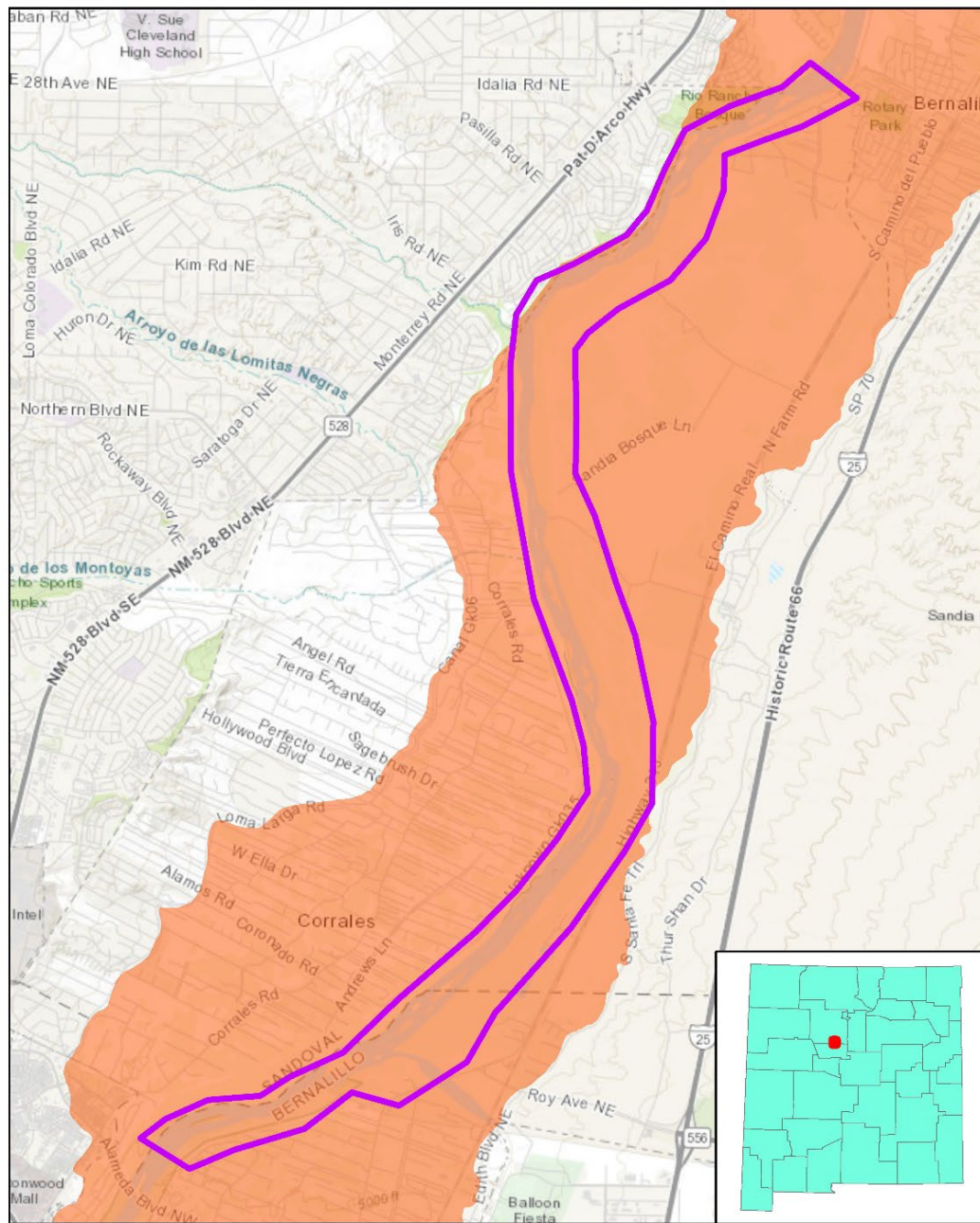
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





# 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

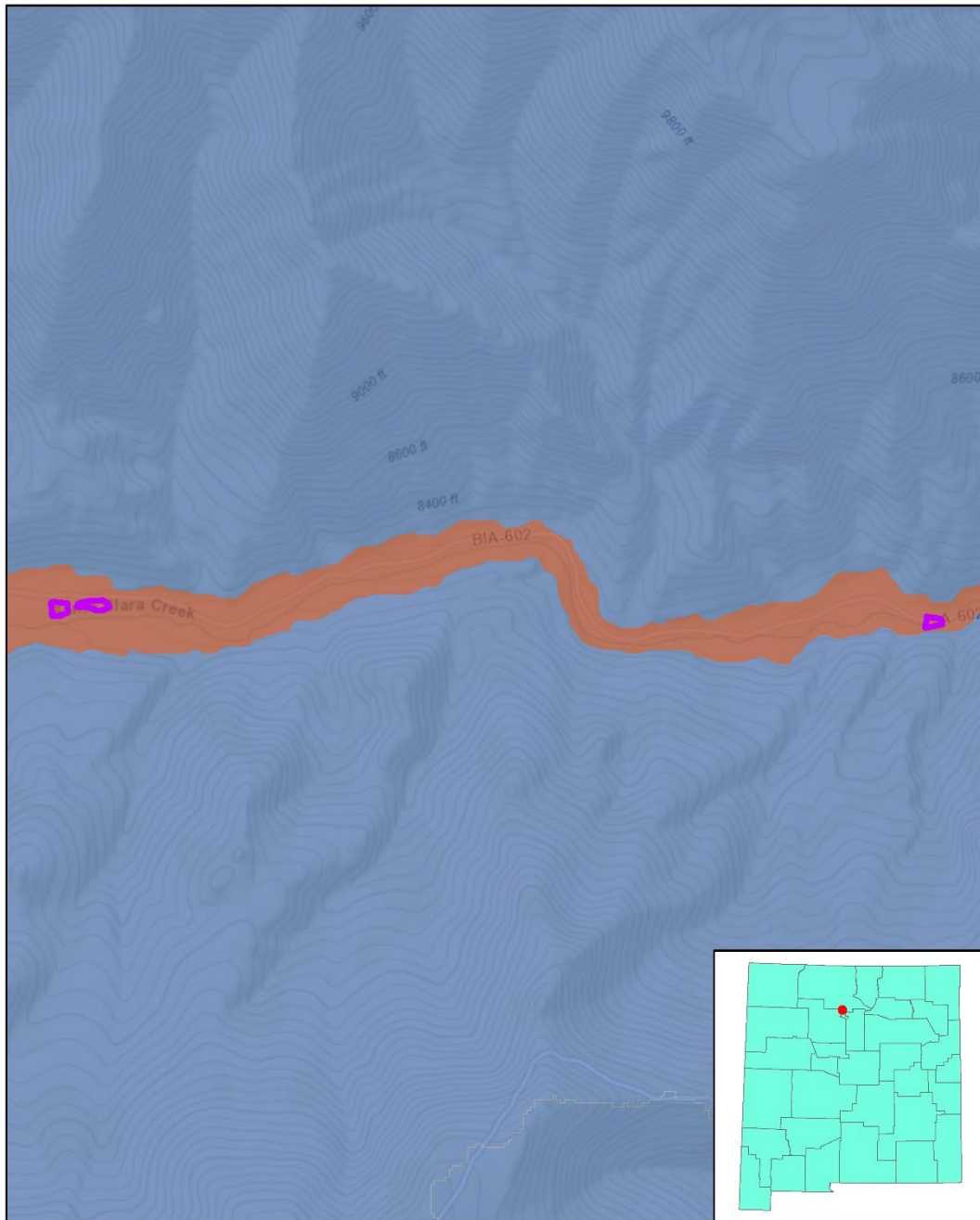
0 0.5 1 2 Miles







# 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)

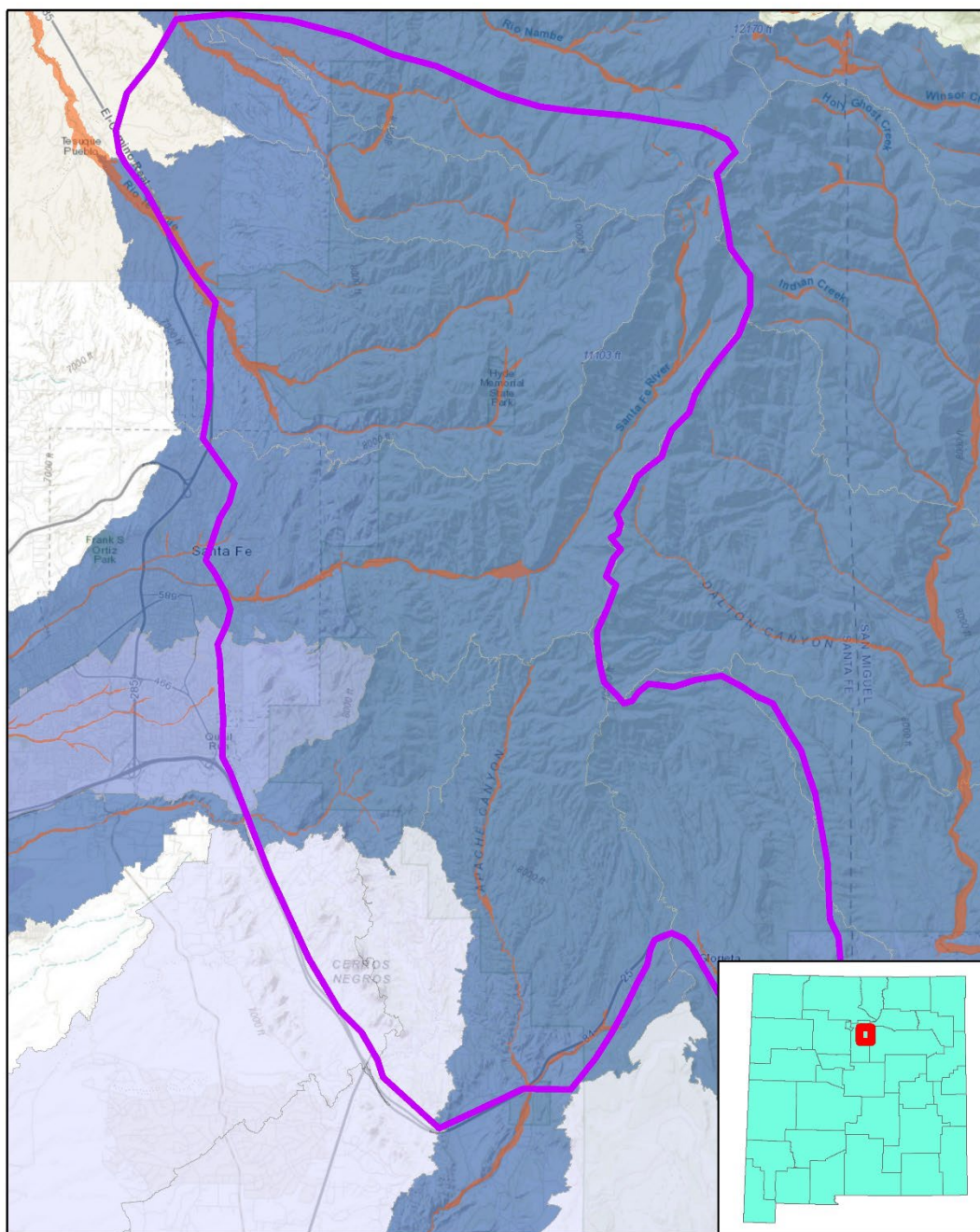
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles





# Santa Fe Fireshed



Cartographer: Randall Fowler  
Data Source: NMSF  
Coordinate System: NAD 1983  
UTM Zone 13N  
Scale: 1:384,716  
Date: 12/2/2024

## 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

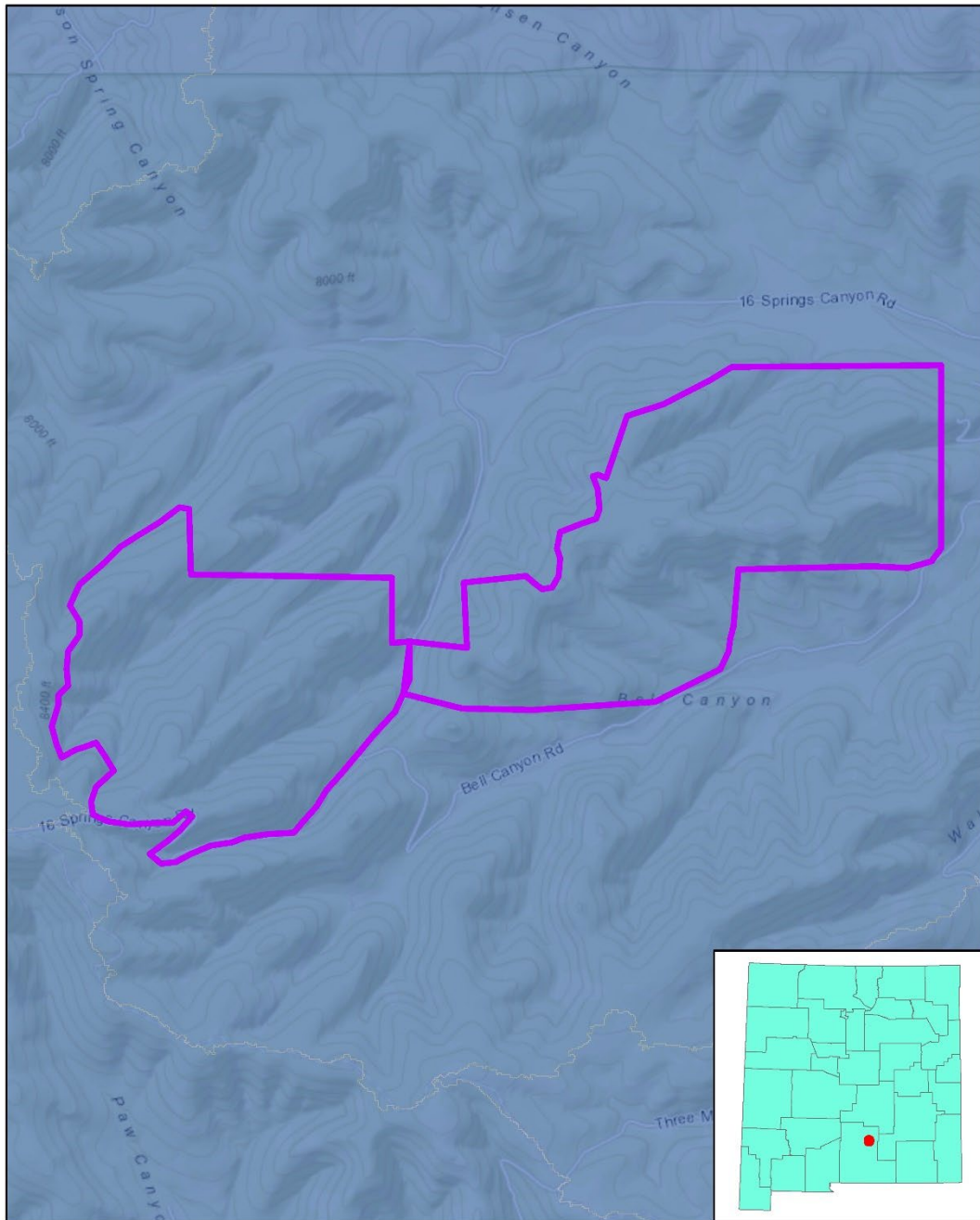
0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles







## 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)

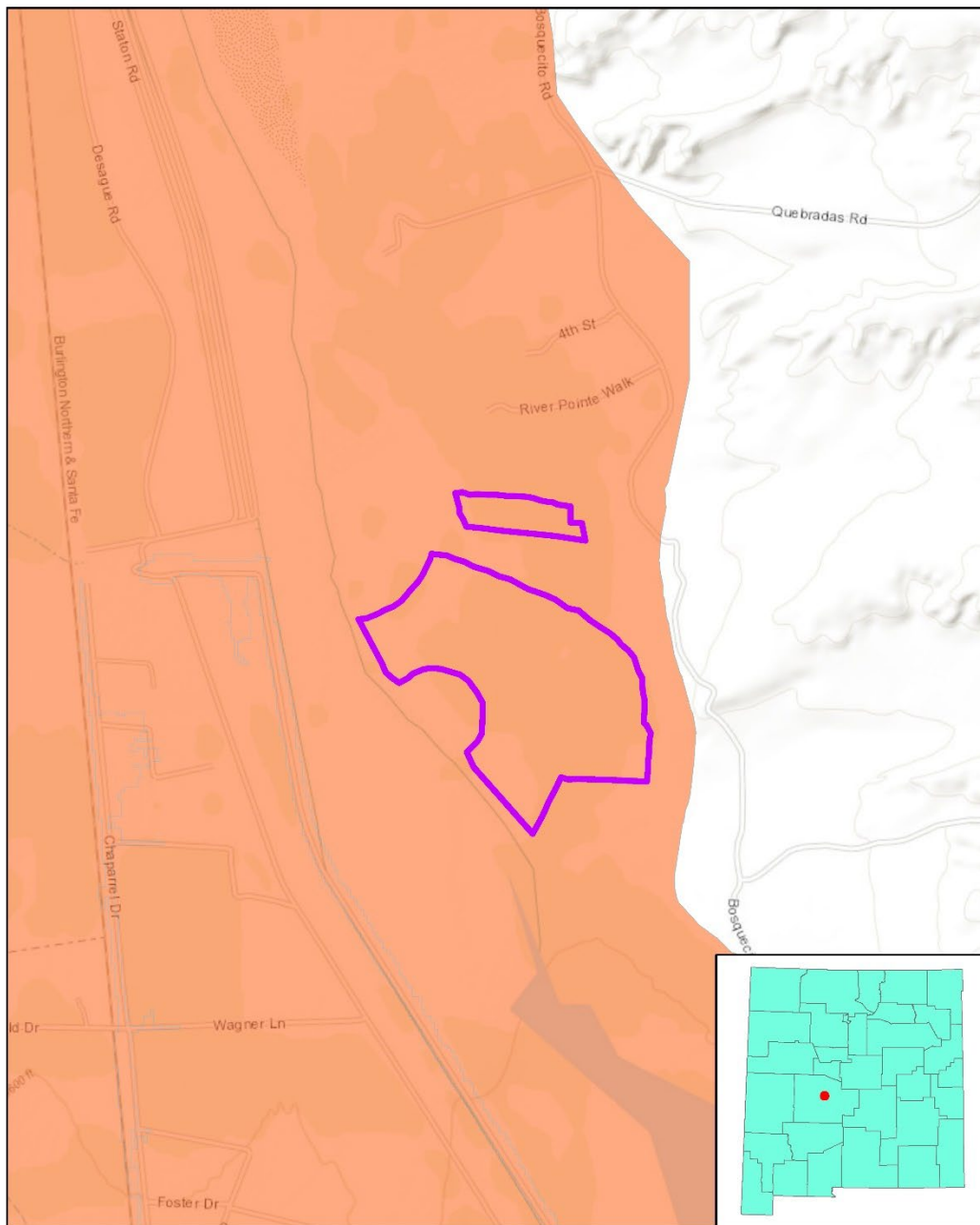
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

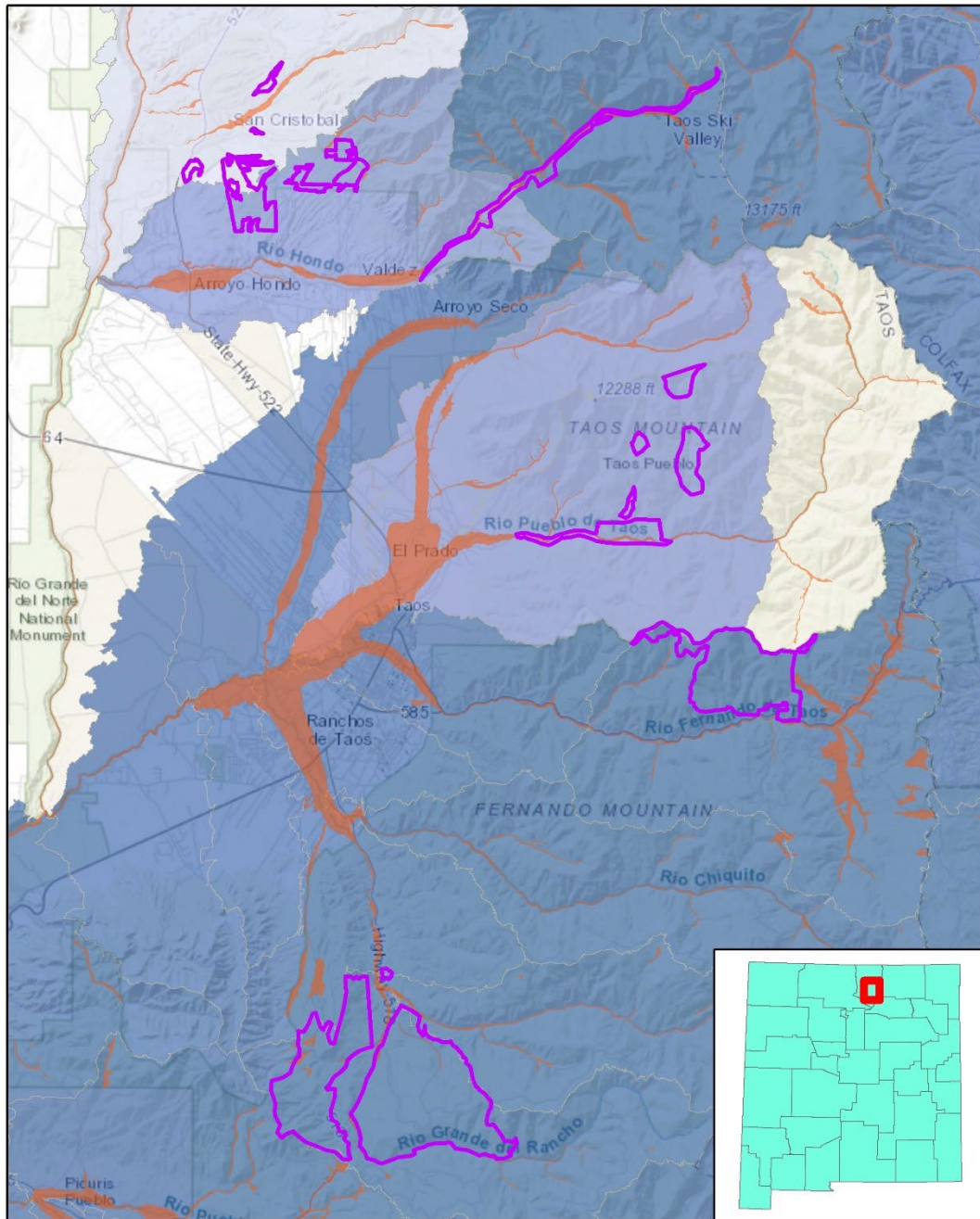
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles





# Taos Valley Watershed Coalition



Cartographer: Randall Fowler  
Data Source: NMFD  
Coordinate System: NAD 1983  
UTM Zone 13N  
Scale: 1:62,845  
Date: 11/29/2023

## 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

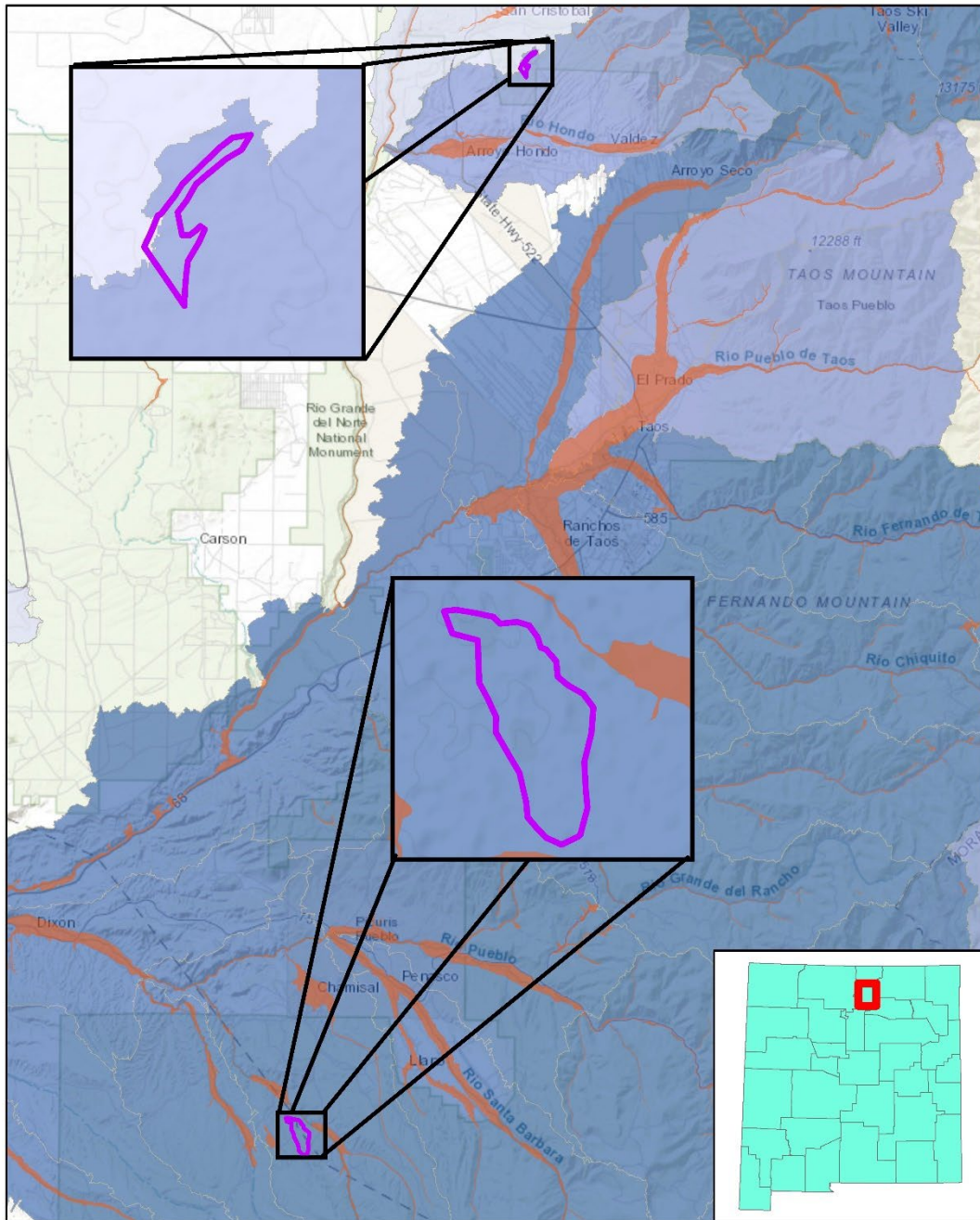
0 2 4 8 Miles







# 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)

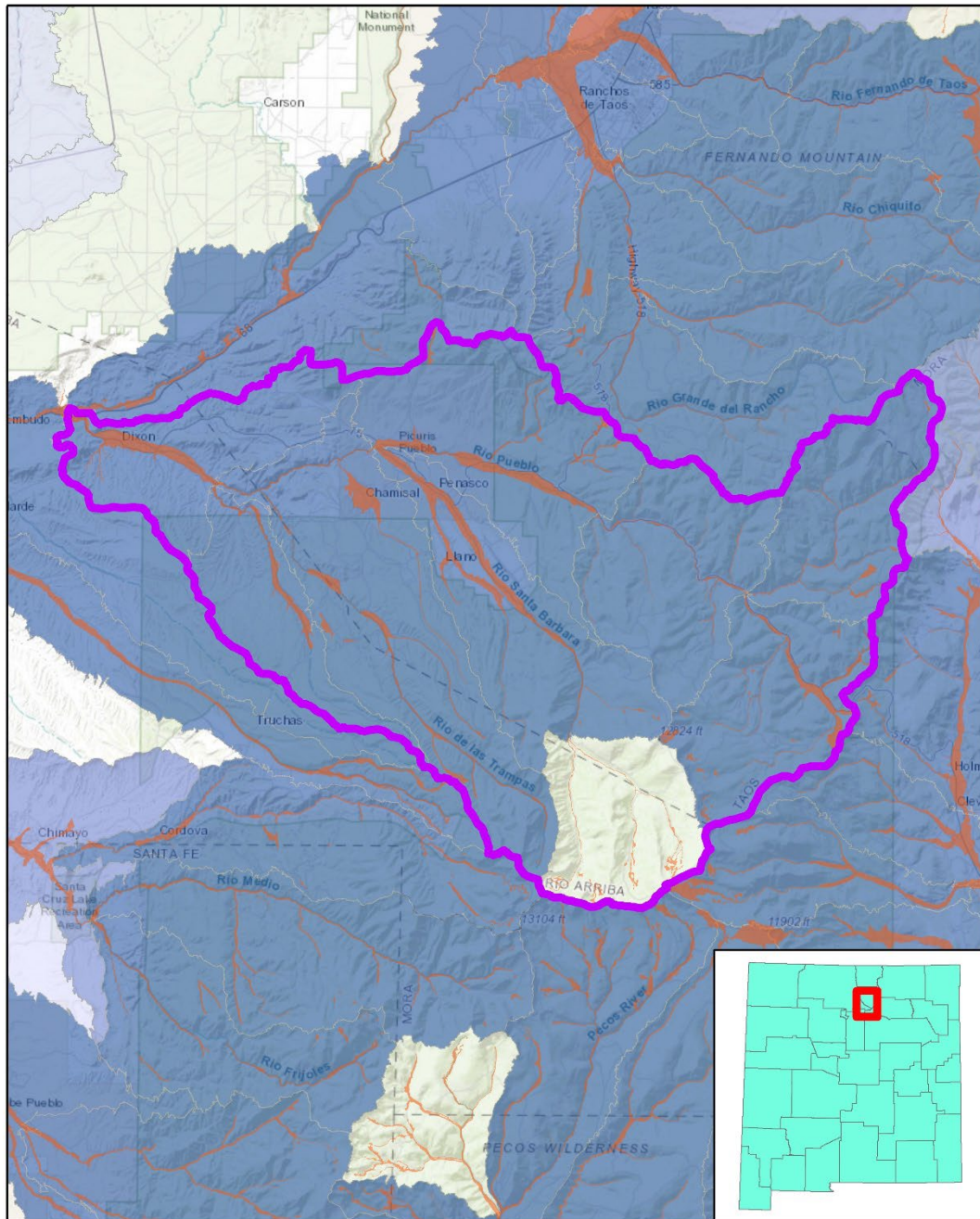
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 2.25 4.5 9 Miles





# Tres Rios Watershed Coalition



Cartographer: Randall Fowler  
Data Source: NMFD  
Coordinate System: NAD 1983  
UTM Zone 13N  
Scale: 1:62,845  
Date: 11/29/2023

## 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

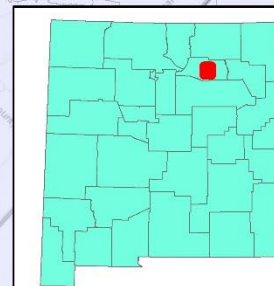
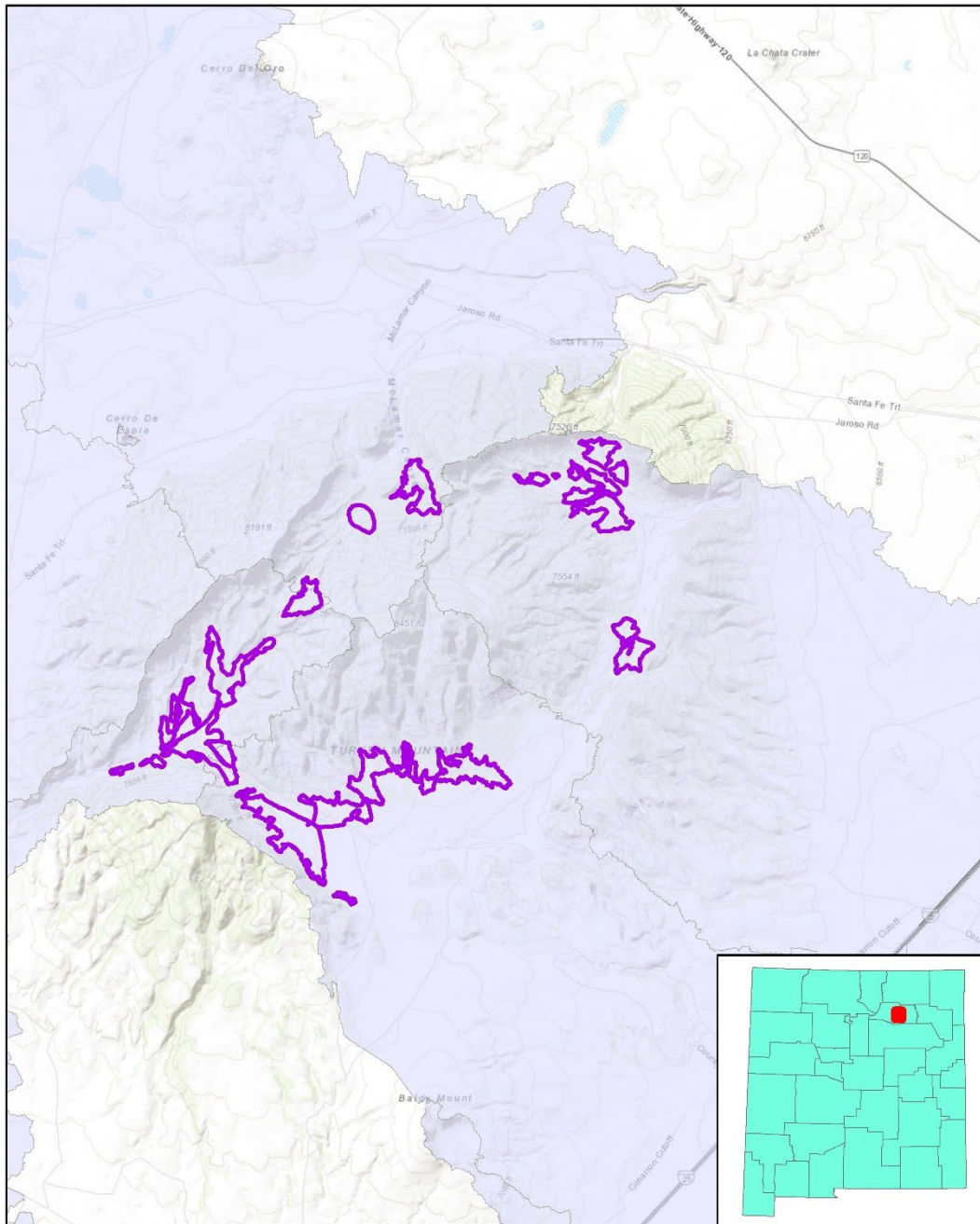
0 2.75 5.5 11 Miles







# Turkey Mountain Watershed



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

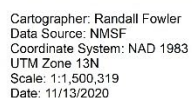
## Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

- 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







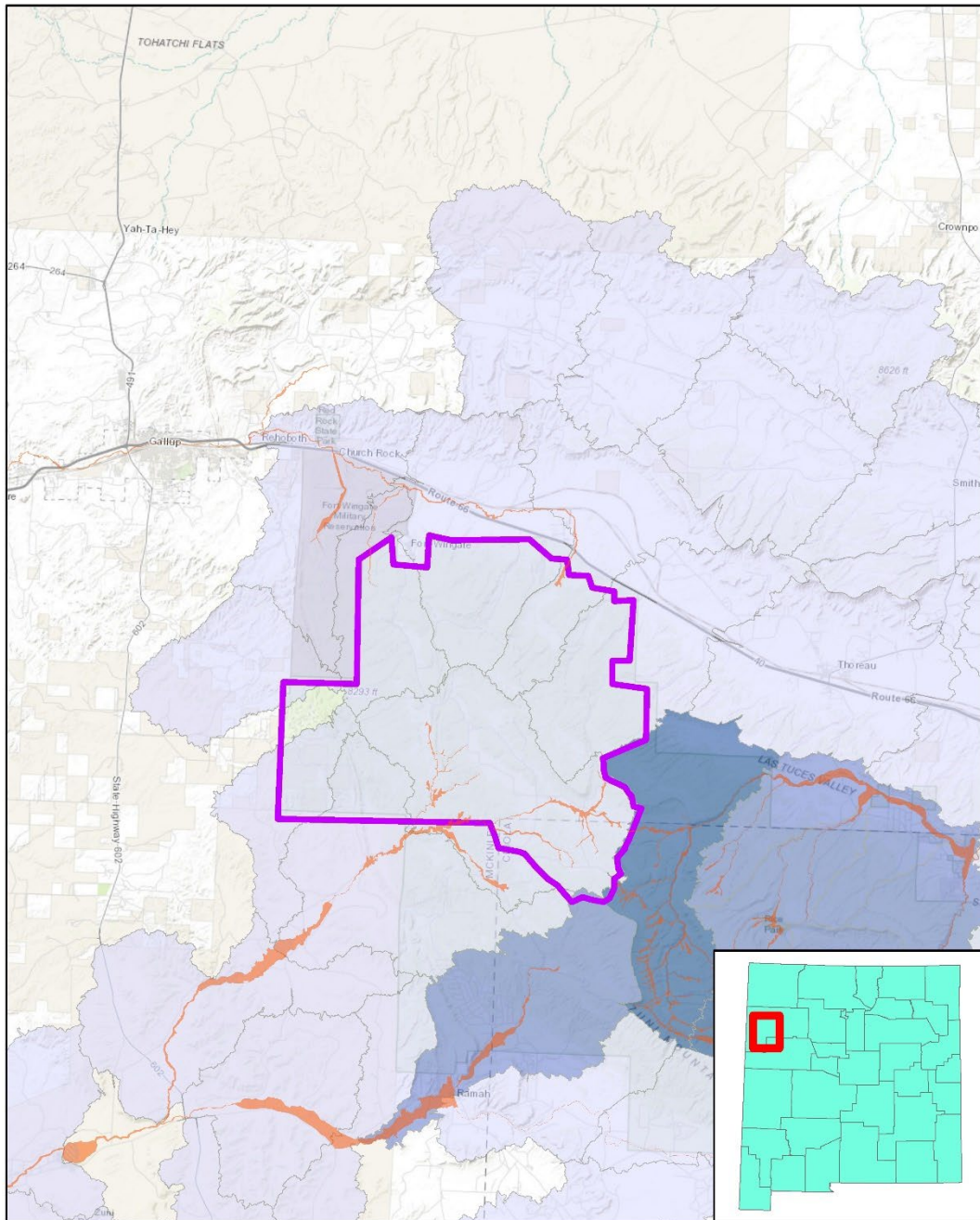
(Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





# 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

