



Forest and Watershed Restoration Act FY26 Annual Report

Mastication unit in Santa Fe Fireshed FAWRA. ©John Formby

Prepared by the Energy, Minerals and
Natural Resources Department

December 2025



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 \$2 million became available in FY26, bringing total available funds for FAWRA projects to over \$5.02 million.

The FAWRA Advisory Board met three times in 2025 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.

In the 2025 legislative session, House Bill (HB) 175, Forest & Watershed Buffer Projects, was introduced and passed. The bill was signed into law on March 19, 2025. HB175 amended FAWRA to allow for the creation and maintenance of strategic barriers around communities vulnerable to wildfire threats. A proposal to implement FAWRA buffers statewide was proposed and recommended for funding in 2025. Projects under this initiative will remove or modify fuels in the wildland urban interface to reduce severity or intensity of wildfires and improve forest health. The goal is to disrupt fuels to reduce threats to the public and for firefighter safety while reducing damage to communities from wildfire.

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. Additional funds secured through the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund and federal programs have accelerated our ability to meet the need of restoration funding long term, while the new authorities in FAWRA have expanded our opportunity to conduct work that protects communities from wildfire.

Accomplishment Summary

- 23 projects are underway or completed in high priority watersheds,¹ including projects based upon partnerships with tribes and pueblos, municipalities, and multiple state and federal agencies.
- 16,396 total acres of forest restoration, including fuels treatments, thinning, invasive species removal, and prescribed fire are complete as of November 17, 2025.
- \$8,378,933.90 in FAWRA funds expended on projects have leveraged over \$9.8 million in other state and federal sources.

1 - 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 2025 are described below. Meeting minutes are provided in Appendix B.

- **April 10, 2025** – The Advisory Board met to and discussed implications from the 2025 legislative session, including the passage of House Bill 175 which amended the Forest & Watershed Restoration Act. The Advisory Board adopted the Open Meetings Act Resolution for CY2025 and had a chance to ask questions about existing projects.
- **June 20, 2025** – The Advisory Board met to consider a new statewide project for implementing House Bill 175, discuss the status of existing projects and to adopt updated guidelines for project submittal and review. Considering input provided by the Advisory Board and Forestry Division priorities, the new FAWRA project was approved for FAWRA funding.
- **December 5, 2025** – The Advisory Board met to discuss current projects, consider new projects for funding, and to provide introductions for board members, Shantini Ramakrishnan and Colin Baugh, appointed in August 2025.

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.

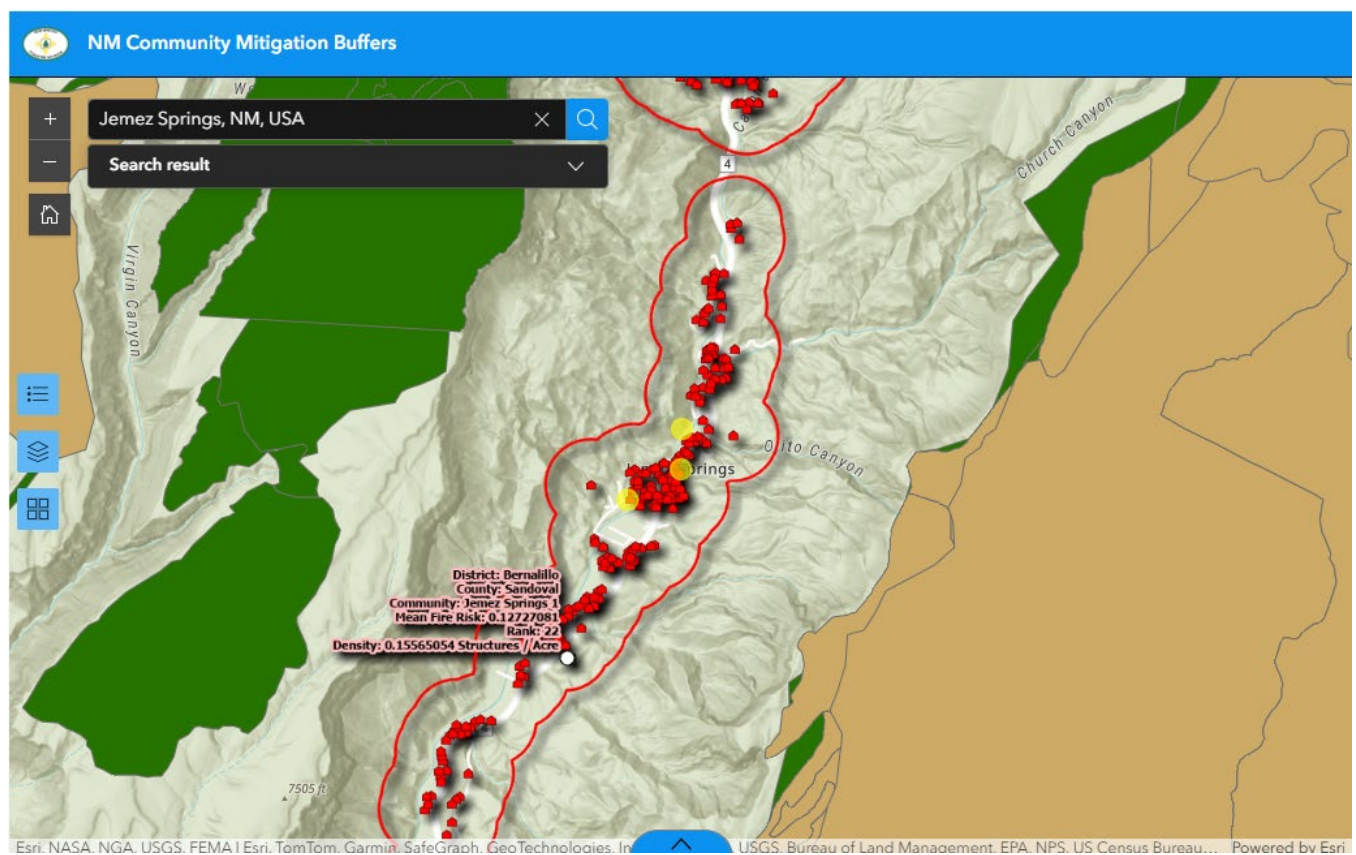
Community Mitigation Buffers

The Forestry Division identified the need to have a new mapping tool this year to inform our approach to identifying “buffer areas” with consideration of wildfire hazards and previous mitigation treatments conducted in communities.

We published an interactive map on our website (see link below*) which describes mitigation treatments within New Mexico. Data is based on vegetation, past fire history, slope and topography. Clicking through the map presents communities state-wide that can benefit from future mitigation efforts. Mitigation efforts are activities such as vegetation removal, home hardening and ordinance adoption, along with increased education and outreach.

This data utilized county-level risk considerations, including Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP). For more information on Communities at Risk, and CWPPs, visit <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/community-wildfire-protection-plans-cwpp/>.

* (<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/community-mitigation-maps/>)



Searching Jemez Springs, NM on the Community Mitigation Buffers map.

New Project Recommendations

The Advisory Board recommended one new project for funding in June 2025. 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.

- **FAWRA Community Buffers – Statewide**

This project prioritizes wildfire mitigation in and around a working list of the top 100 Community Mitigation Buffer areas in the state, based on emerging science and mapping tools. Our list takes into consideration local cooperator capacity, existing projects, landowner engagement and excludes non-forested areas. Buffer areas will increase the likelihood of successful wildfire suppression by creating strategic barriers between natural vegetation and residential areas, providing critical time for emergency response and evacuation. This effort will strengthen landscape scale resilience, promote sustainable buffer programs with cooperators across the state, coordinate treatments on adjacent lands, promote stewardship activity in areas at highest risk of wildfire and build public support for wildfire preparedness. This project aims to annually create or maintain one to two buffers on each Forestry Division district, provide technical assistance to at least 1,000 landowners, and treat 2,000 acres across the state in prioritized buffer areas. Over 5,600 acres are currently planned and in progress. *See Appendix D for active project areas.*



Hazard tree removal in Ruidoso after South Fork fire, 2025. ©Erin McElroy

FAWRA Projects In Progress

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

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

This project builds on over 20 years of planning and treatments to reduce forest stand densities, restore fire and improve forest resilience to wildfire in 107,000-acre landscape area. The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition is building support for the project with public outreach. The aim is to treat approximately 4,000 acres over 4 years, increase ecosystem resiliency and restore fire as an ecological process within the Santa Fe Fireshed. Project funds are used for mechanical and hand thinning, cultural surveys, pile and broadcast burning. To date, 118 acres of hand thinning and piling have been completed.



Thin and Pile unit near Bear Wallow trail, Santa Fe Fireshed project, 2025. ©Lawrence Crane

- **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. An agreement is in development to begin on the ground restoration by Spring 2026.

- **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. The majority of work will occur 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. Phase I of this work was completed Spring 2025, which resulted in 324 acres of treatment. Three new agreements are in progress to conduct over 2,000 acres of treatments.

- **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 with an aim of 887 acres are planned on the Carson National Forest.

- **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 444 acres have been completed thus far.



Colfax County Wildland Urban Interface project clears trees with funds from Community Wildfire Defense Grant. ©Rick Smith

- **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. To date, 123 acres have been completed of the total 667-acre project. The Division is currently working on a new agreement with the Lincoln National Forest for the next phase of work.

- **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, 913 out of original aim 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 407 out of an original aim of 262 acres have been completed. This project is enhancing landscape connectivity of treatments on state lands and private lands.



Division meeting field tour at Black Lake, October 2025. Discussing collaborative efforts to reintroduce fire onto state lands, adjacent Elk Ridge FAWRA project. ©Melissa McLamb

- **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 4,000 cumulative acres have been completed, leveraging the FAWRA funding with state capital funding and federal funding through a Landscape Scale Restoration grant. A draft prescribed burn plan has been developed and is under review.

- **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 initial 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. Phase III was initiated in 2025 to restore an additional 1,072 acres.

Completed FAWRA Projects

- **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 and Tres Rios Watershed Coalition projects.

- **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 762 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 focused on 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 Cancelled Projects

Occasionally projects are deferred or cancelled 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.
- **Carson National Forest, Jicarilla Ranger District (DISCONTINUED)** – Originally \$500,000 in FY23. This project aimed to initiate a 10-year landscape scale treatment and

restoration plan to conduct 5,000 acres of archaeological surveys in a site-dense landscape. Surveys were 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. We had to discontinue this project due to the lack of available contractors to conduct this work, after years of attempts to procure services.

- **Mimbres to Signal Peak** – Originally \$600,000 in FY23. 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 aimed to 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, and 3,300 acres were surveyed in total. The Trout Fire in 2025 burned through the project planning area, including acres recently surveyed. No further work is planned currently as we reassess priorities for the landscape.

FAWRA Projects Summary

v. 11/17/25

Status	PROJECT	Land Ownership	Target Acres	Acres completed	FAWRA Funds Expended	Leveraged Funds (State & Federal)	Total Project Funds expended
Completed	El Caso Private Lands	Private	1,300	762	\$ 422,521.00	\$ 743,106.43	\$ 1,165,627.43
Completed	Encino Vista Landscape Restoration (Heritage Surveys)	Santa Fe National Forest	N/A	N/A	\$ 162,567.55		\$ 162,567.55
Completed	Santa Clara Creek Wetland Restoration	Tribal	3,706	3,706	\$ 202,550.71	\$ 217,803.22	\$ 420,353.93
Completed	Gallinas Watershed Restoration	Santa Fe National Forest	122	122	\$ -	\$ 237,900.00	\$ 237,900.00
Completed	Small-Diameter Wood Products Business Planning (Cimarron)	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -	\$ 25,000.00
Completed	Zuni Landscape Restoration	Private; Cibola NF	1,280	1,133	\$ 532,795.50	\$ 416,604.00	\$ 949,399.50
Completed	Sandia Pueblo Bosque Restoration	Tribal	106	359	\$ 128,499.08		\$ 128,499.08
Completed	NMDGF Socorro Escondida WMA	NM Game and Fish	118	118	\$ 196,972.50	\$ 614,000.00	\$ 810,972.50
Completed	Trampas to San Cristobal	Carson National Forest	310	318	\$ 355,877.45		\$ 355,877.45
Completed	Zuni Landscape Cibola National Forest Puerco Area	Cibola National Forest	164	164	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 164,000.00
Completed	Timmons - Shared Stewardship Portal	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 13,110.00	\$ -	\$ 13,110.00
Delayed/Deferred	Mimbres to Signal Peak	Gila National Forest	N/A	N/A	\$ -	\$ 264,183.72	\$ 264,183.72
Delayed/Deferred	Northside/Rio Hondo Corridor Restoration	Private	0	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Delayed/Deferred	Rio Chama Watershed Restoration	Private	0	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Delayed/Deferred	Cebolla Nutrias Watershed	Private	0	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Cancelled	Carson National Forest - Jicarilla Ranger District	Carson National Forest	N/A	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Ongoing	Joplin Ridge	State Land Office	113	185	\$ 35,312.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 135,312.00
Ongoing	Red Cabin, No Name Springs	Tribal	2,400	2,954	\$ 500,007.09	\$ 355,460.00	\$ 855,467.09
Ongoing	Turkey Mountain Watershed	Private	4,500	3,963	\$ 1,621,839.50	\$ 5,274,364.86	\$ 6,896,204.36
Ongoing	Upper Coyote Creek - Elk Ridge	State Land Office	262	406.81	\$ 1,178,692.49	\$ -	\$ 1,178,692.49
Ongoing	Rio Grande ABQ Bosque Restoration	Municipal	800	913	\$ 1,111,550.89	\$ 40,087.50	\$ 1,151,638.39
Ongoing	16 Springs	Lincoln National Forest	667	123	\$ 128,951.38	\$ -	\$ 128,951.38
Ongoing	Cimarron Range	Private	7,000	284	\$ 918,193.19		\$ 918,193.19
Ongoing	Taos Valley Watershed Coalition	Carson National Forest	500	249	\$ 76,380.90	\$ 643,299.80	\$ 719,680.70
Ongoing	Tres Rios Watershed Coalition	Carson National Forest	4,500	324	\$ 591,381.79	\$ -	\$ 591,381.79
Ongoing	Santa Fe Fireshed Restoration	Santa Fe National Forest	3,500	312	\$ 26,730.88	\$ 884,161.96	\$ 910,892.84
Ongoing	Marquez/LBar Forest and Meadow Restoration	NM Game and Fish	9,000				
Ongoing	FAWRA WUI buffer projects*	All	2,000 annually				
			40,348	15,634	\$ 7,956,412.90	\$ 9,061,865.06	\$ 17,018,277.96
Total FAWRA budget (all years):		\$14,000,000.00	24,714				
Unexpended FAWRA budget:		\$ 6,043,587.10					



Elk Ridge FAWRA inspection, November 2024. ©Brian Lindsey

APPENDIX A: FOREST AND WATERSHED RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD – updated 11/13/2025

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department Forestry Division

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APPENDIX B: 2025 MEETING MINUTES

MEETING MINUTES (FINAL)
Forest & Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, June 13, 2024, at 1:00 PM
NMFD Conference Room
1220 S. St. Francis Dr., Santa Fe, NM 87501

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, Office of General Counsel
Natalia Shaw, EMNRD, Forestry Division
Anthony Leyba, Fire Marshal's Office

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)

Jacob 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

MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)

Forest & Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) Advisory Board Meeting

Friday, June 20 2025, at 1:00 PM

New Mexico Forestry Division Conference Room

1220 S. St. Francis Dr., Santa Fe, NM 87505

1. Call to Order

1:02P

a. Board Members and Delegates Present:

Laura McCarthy, Director, EMNRD, Forestry Division (NMFD), FAWRA Chair

John Rhoderick, Environment Department (ED)

Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)

Mark Meyers, State Land Office (SLO)

Brent Racher, Public Member for Industry

Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)

b. Board Members Absent:

Anthony Leyba, Fire Marshal's Office

Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)

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

Vacant, Public Member for academic or non-profit organization

Vacant, Public Member, Local Government

c. Others Present:

Melissa McLamb, NMFD

Randy Fowler, NMFD

Gwen Wion, NMFD

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

Laura McCarthy invited discussion of the agenda. No discussion was requested. Tim Hagaman made a motion to approve the agenda, which Mark Meyers seconded. None opposed. The agenda was approved with no changes.

3. Approval Minutes of April 10, 2025 (Action Item)

Laura McCarthy invited discussion of the minutes. No discussion was requested. Stewart Liley motioned to approve the minutes from the Advisory board meeting on April 10, 2025, which was seconded by Tim Hagaman. With none approved, the minutes were approved by the Advisory Board.

4. Approve FAWRA Guidelines for FY2026

Melissa McLamb provided an overview of the major changes from the FY25 guidelines. Laura McCarthy invited discussion of the guidelines. Stewart Liley identified a minor grammatical error that needed revising. Tim Hagaman motioned to approve the FAWRA guidelines, as submitted, with mentioned minor revision. The motion was seconded by Mark Meyers. None opposed. The guidelines for FY2026 were approved.

5. State Forester's Update

a. Chair McCarthy introduced Gwen Wion, NMFD's Reforestation Coordinator.

b. Chair McCarthy provided an update on work catalyzed by Senate Bill 33, Wildfire Prepared Act, and highlighted for the Board that while no staff or funding was provided to EMNRD for the effort, the Fire Planning Task Force is considering potential for a state program including home hardening criteria and developing a prioritization map for community mitigation efforts.

6. Status update on funded projects

Melissa McLamb provided an overview of expenditures and changes to funded projects since the last FAWRA Advisory Board meeting. The Board reviewed and discussed the FAWRA budget table provided, including highlighting where the Trout Fire burn is within proximity to past and planned project work.

7. Presentation on new projects:

Melissa McLamb introduced a proposal to implement House Bill 175, Forest & Watershed Buffer Projects, including an overview of NMFD's approach to further refine prioritization of Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) buffer areas since discussion at the last Board meeting in April. Laura McCarthy invited discussion and provided additional context regarding WUI buffer designation, the list of ranked project areas and intent of proposal. Randy Fowler reviewed the prioritization mapping tool with the Board. Ms. McCarthy and NMFD staff addressed questions. Discussion included the suggestion to further refine the ranking, with field staff, to reflect risk in WUI buffer areas that have burned in the past ten years. After discussion, Mark Meyers made a motion to approve the project for FAWRA funding as proposed. The motion was seconded by Stewart Liley and with none opposing, the FAWRA WUI Buffer project proposal was approved and recommended for funding by the Advisory Board.

8. Other business

a. Chair McCarthy provided an update on Senate Memorial 2, Frontier Areas Task Force and provided a timeline for the draft proposal for the Governor's office and encouraged input from the Board.

b. Chair McCarthy informed the Board that four nominations for the two vacant public member positions on the Board have been provided by the Senate Pro Tem and the Speaker of the House to the Governor for consideration.

9. Adjourn

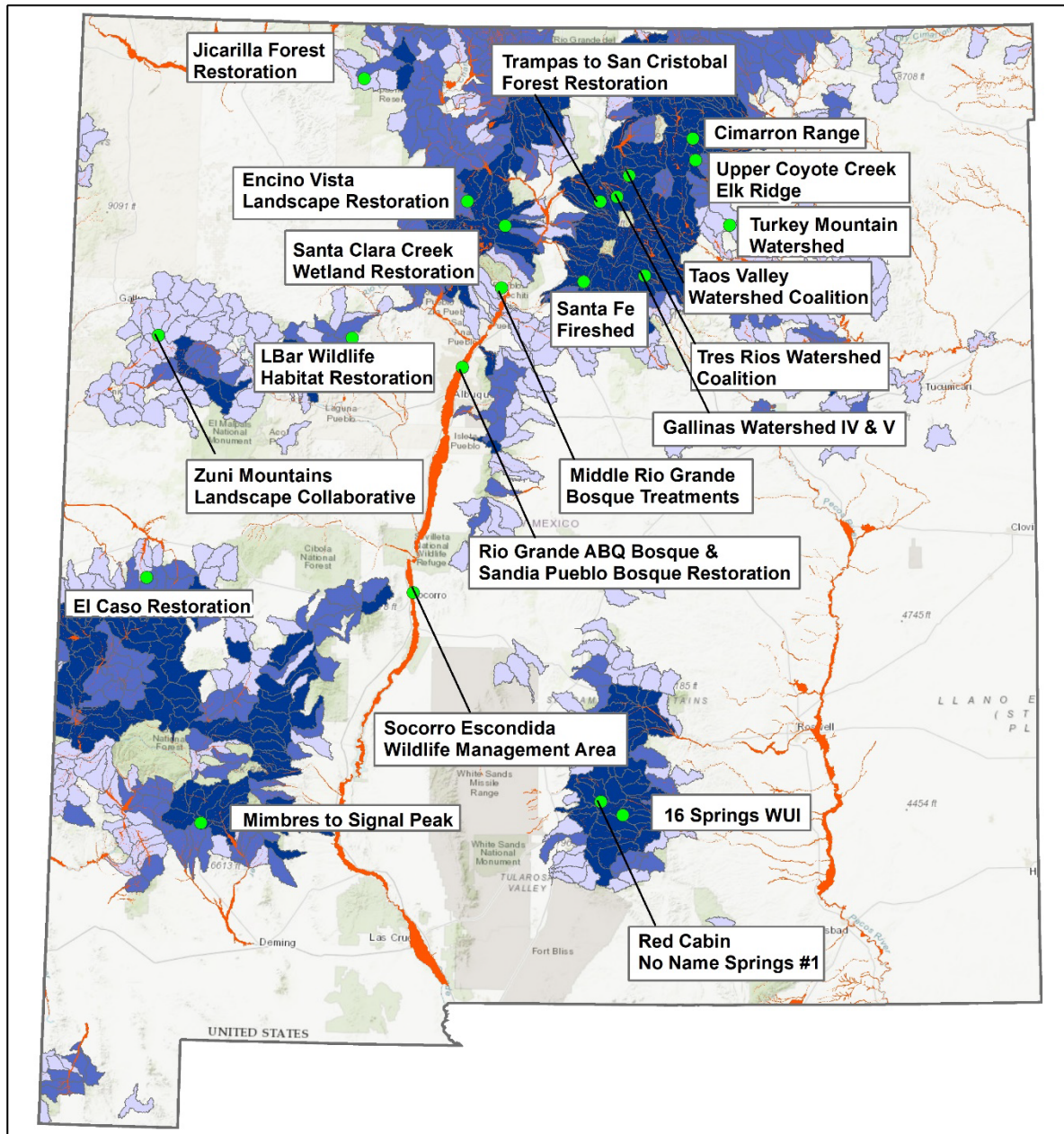
John Rhoderick motioned to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Brent Racher. None opposed. Board Chair McCarthy adjourned the meeting at 1:56 PM.

Draft Minutes prepared by: Melissa McLamb 6/20/25

APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW MAPS

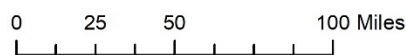
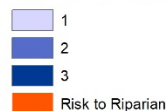


Statewide FAWRA Projects

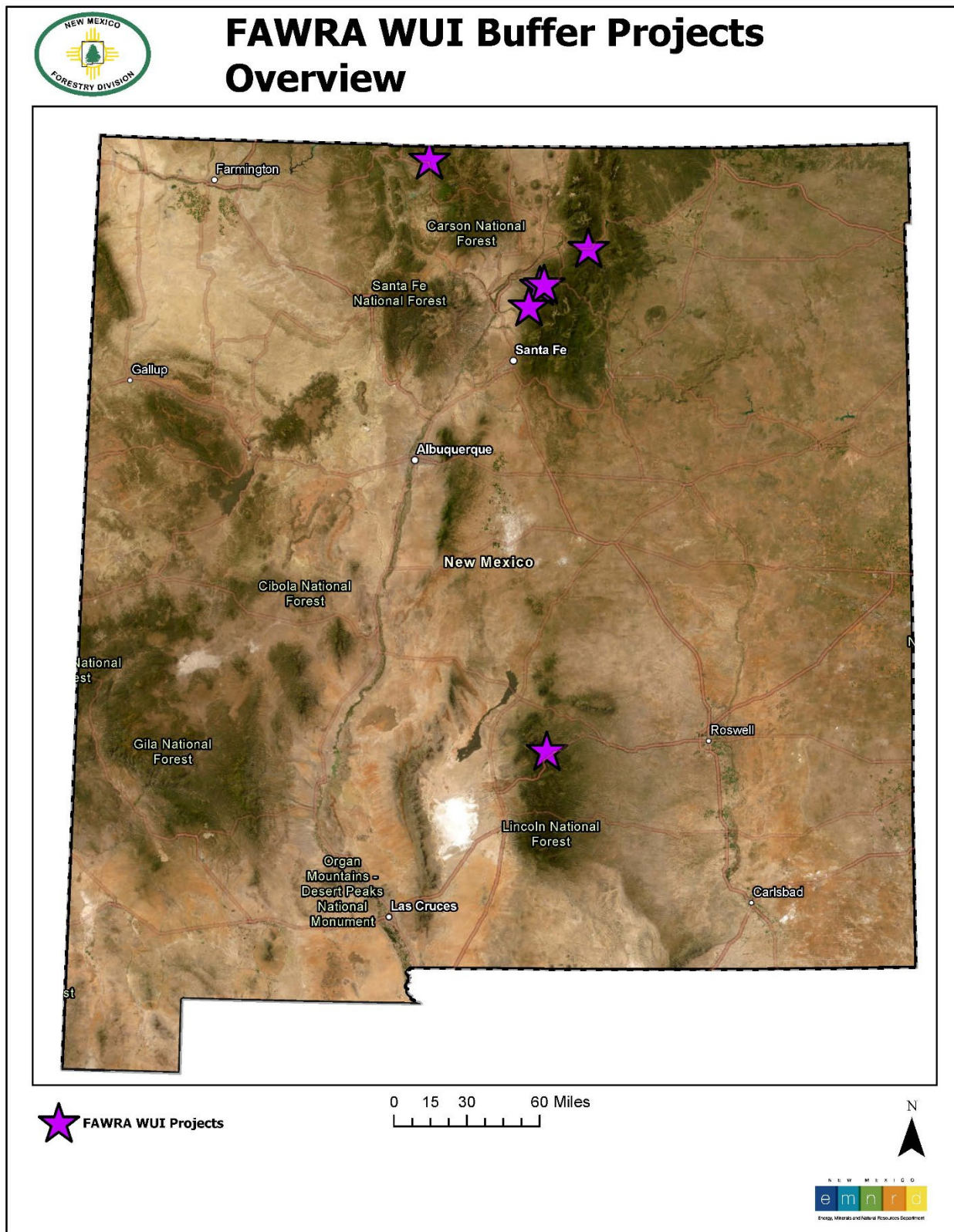


Cartographer: Randall Fowler
Data Source: NMSF
Coordinate System: NAD 1983
UTM Zone 13N
Scale: 1:3,000,000
Date: 08/21/2024

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



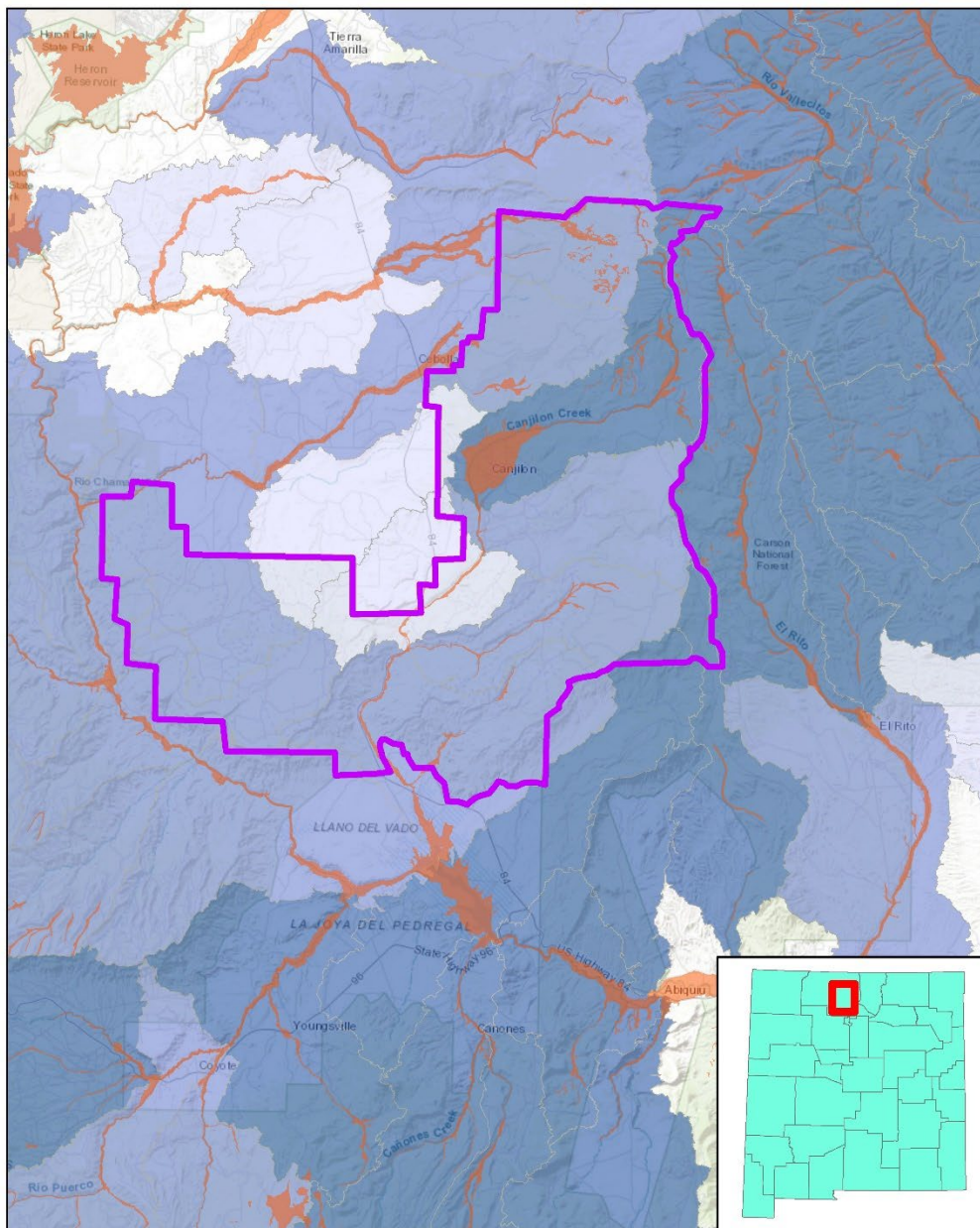
The statewide FAWRA Buffer project analyzes and identifies buffer areas across the state and prioritizes areas for treatments. The latest map can be found on our website at <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/community-mitigation-buffers/>. The map below depicts areas where we are conducting buffer mitigation work statewide.



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)

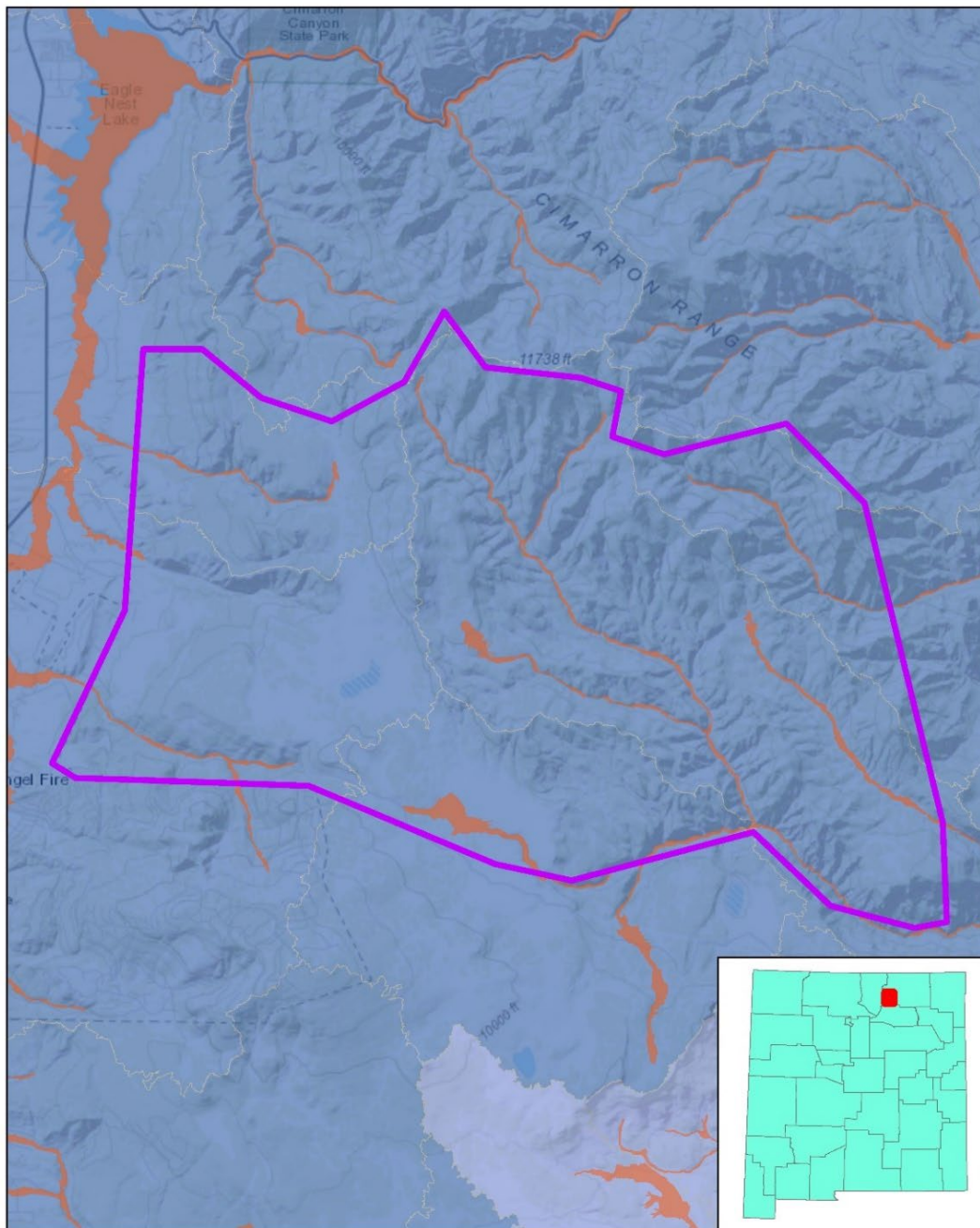
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

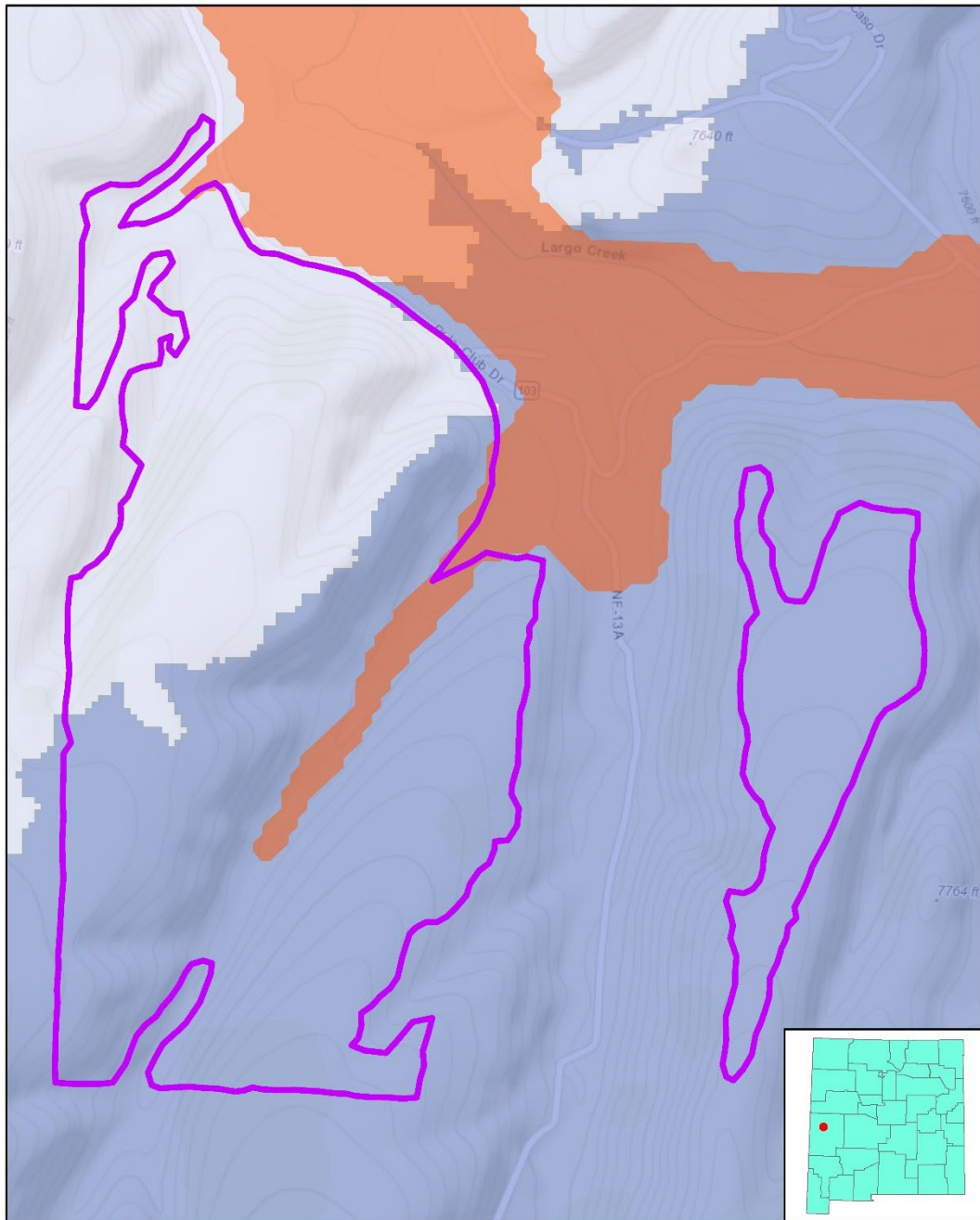
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

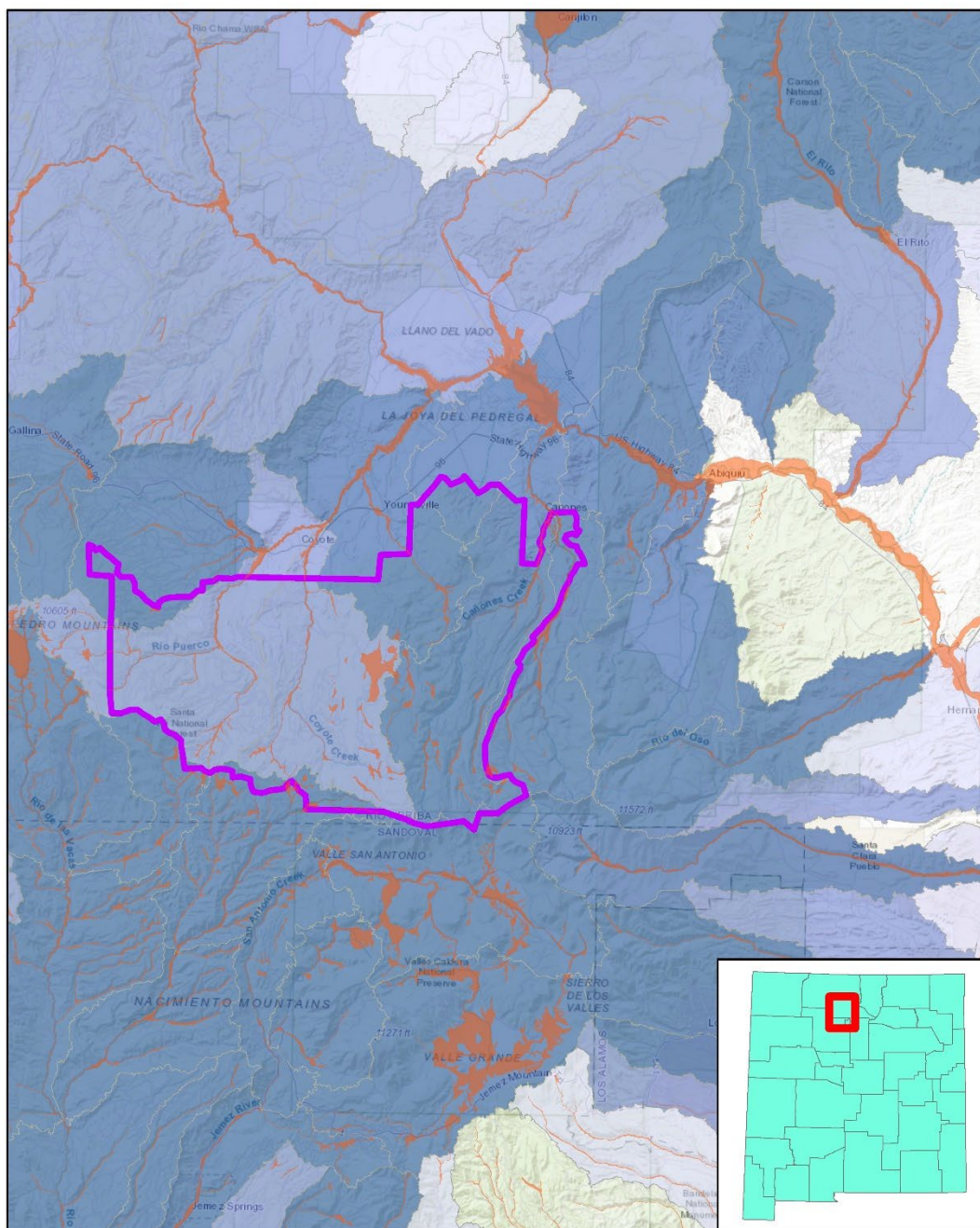
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

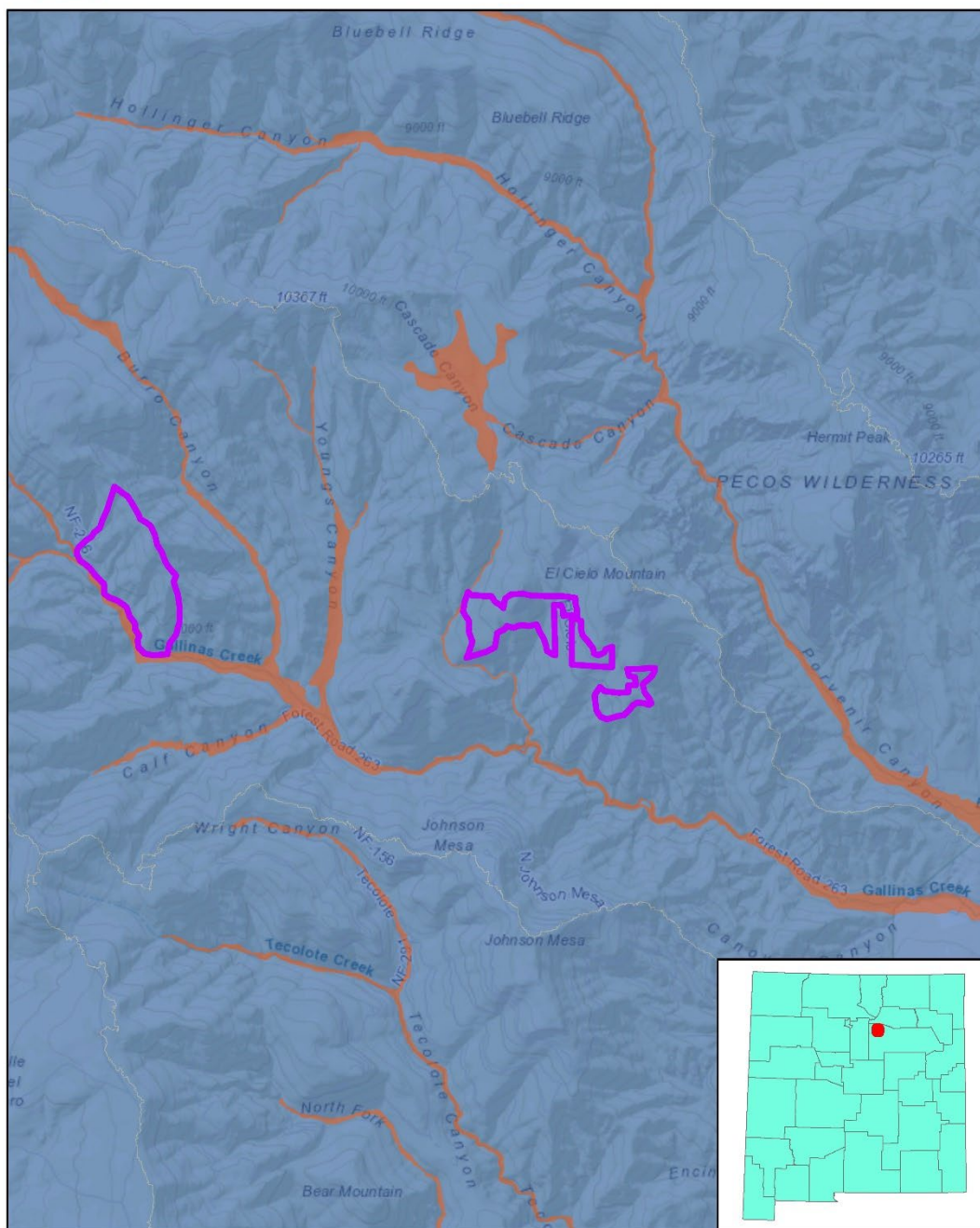
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

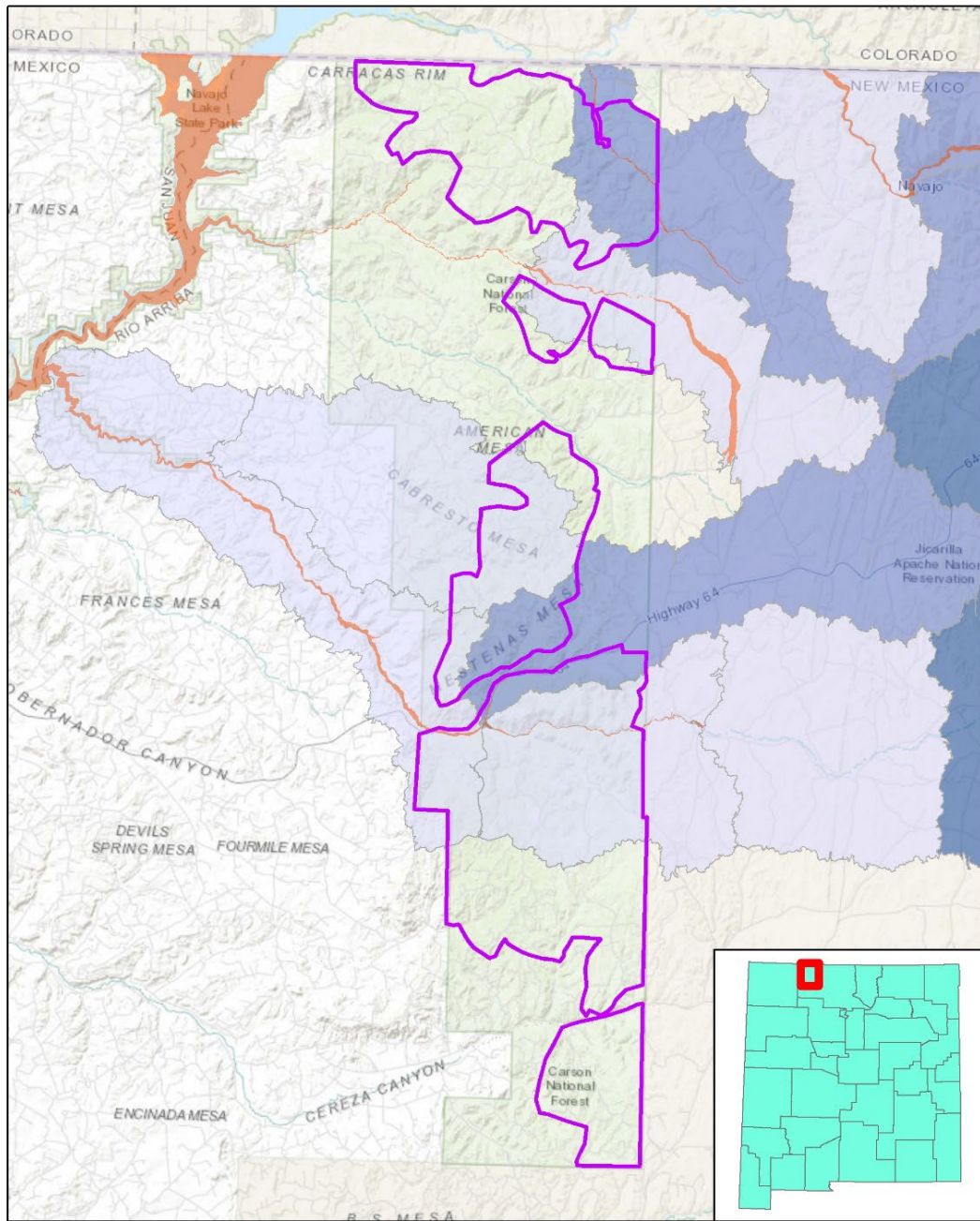
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

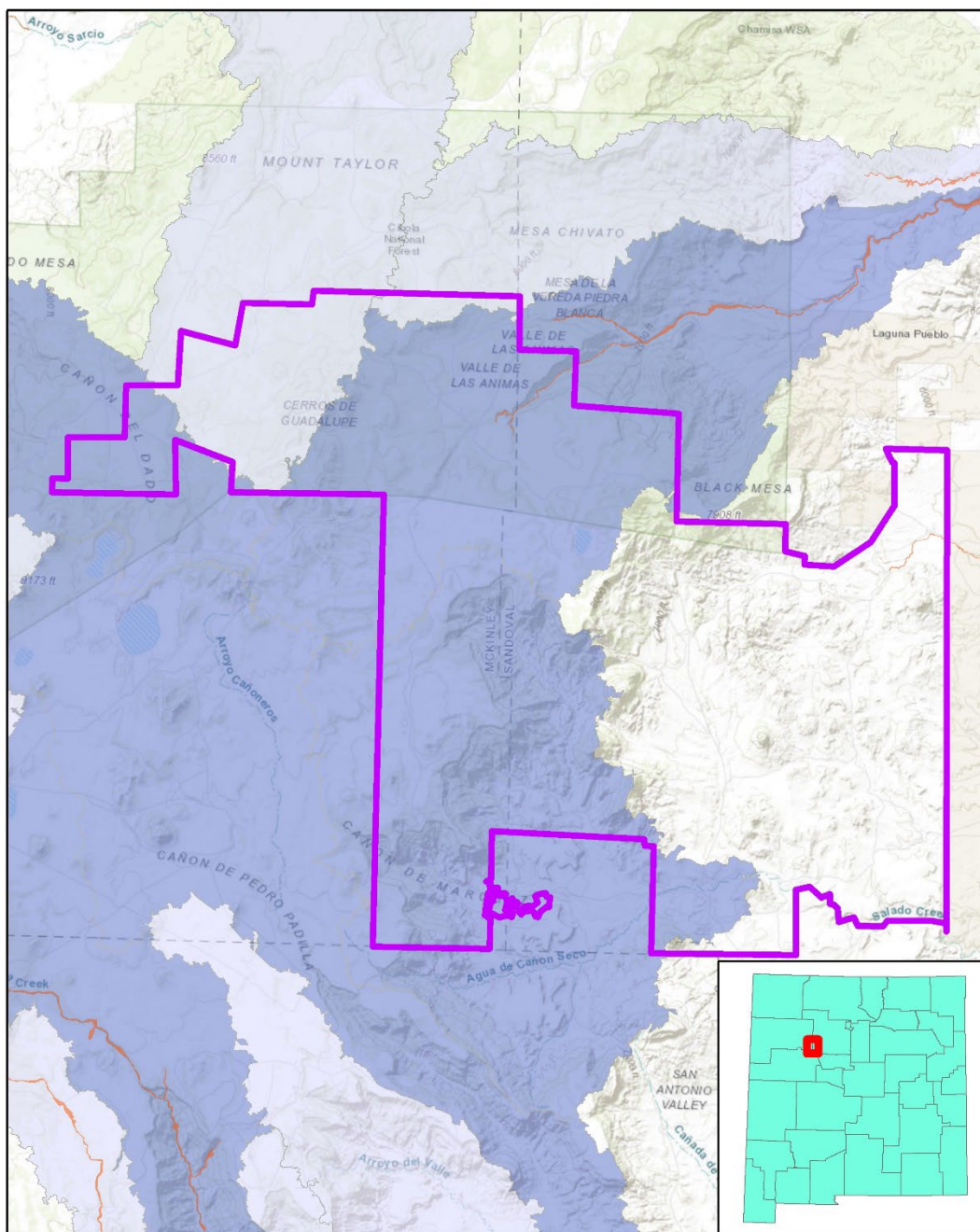
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

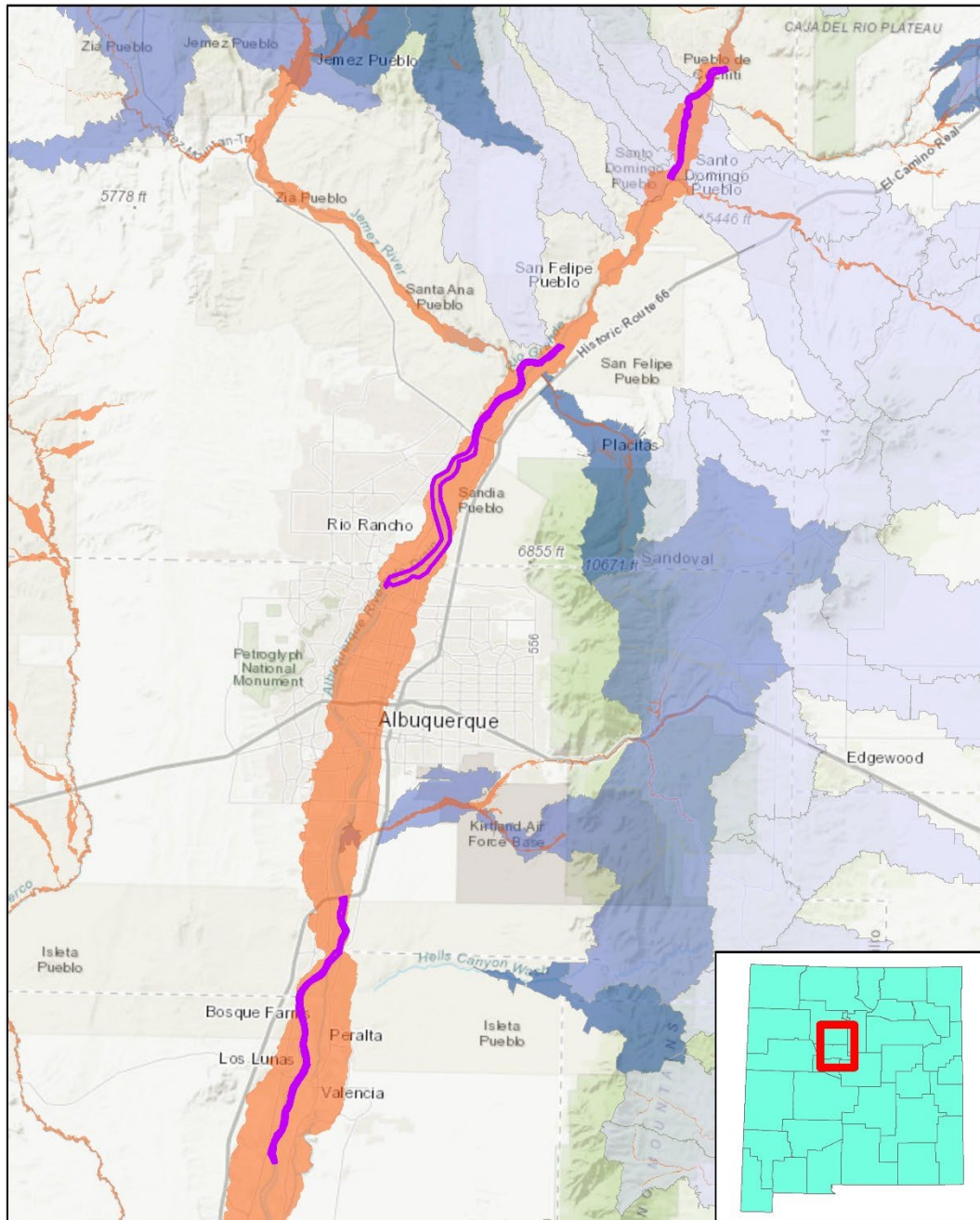
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

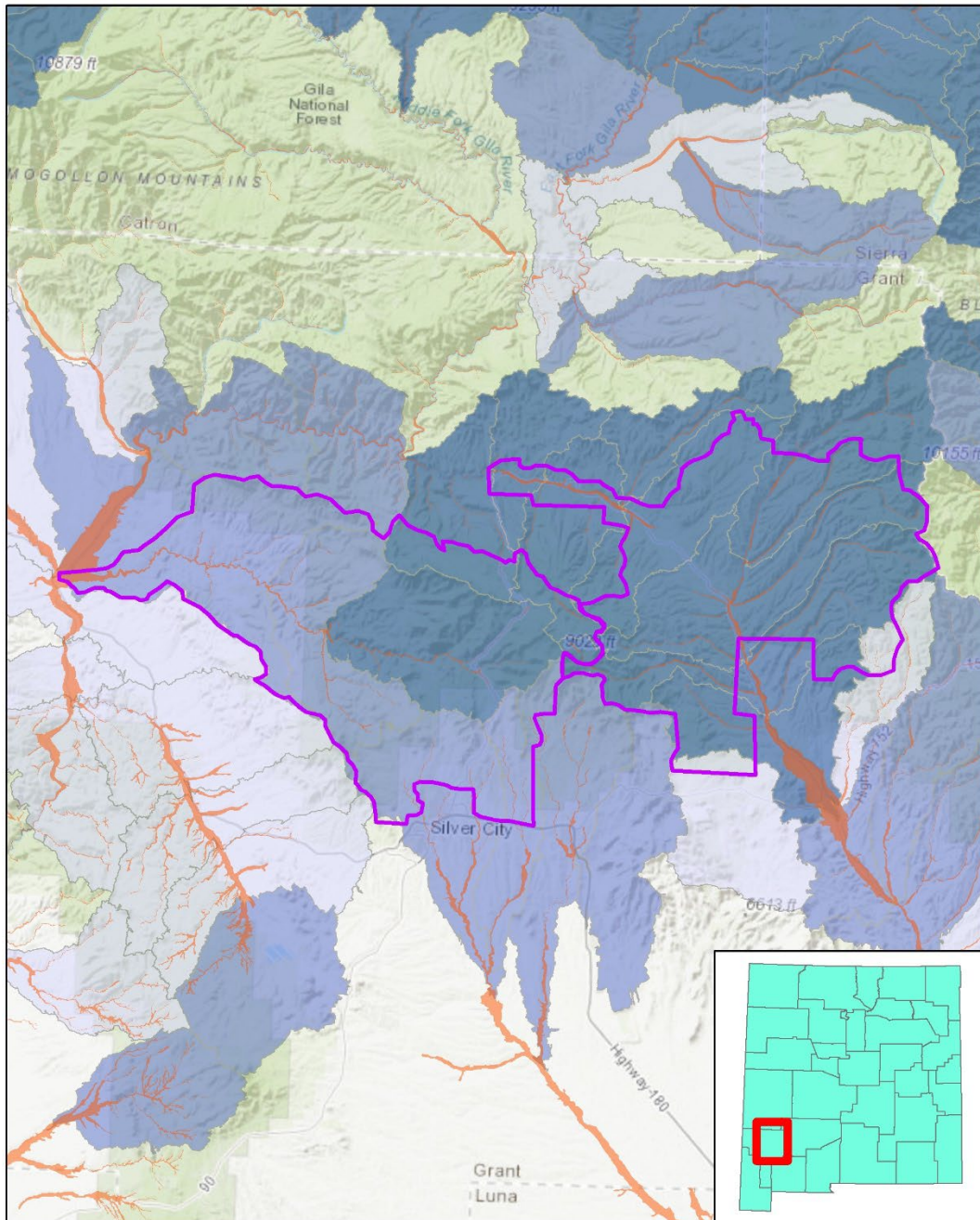
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

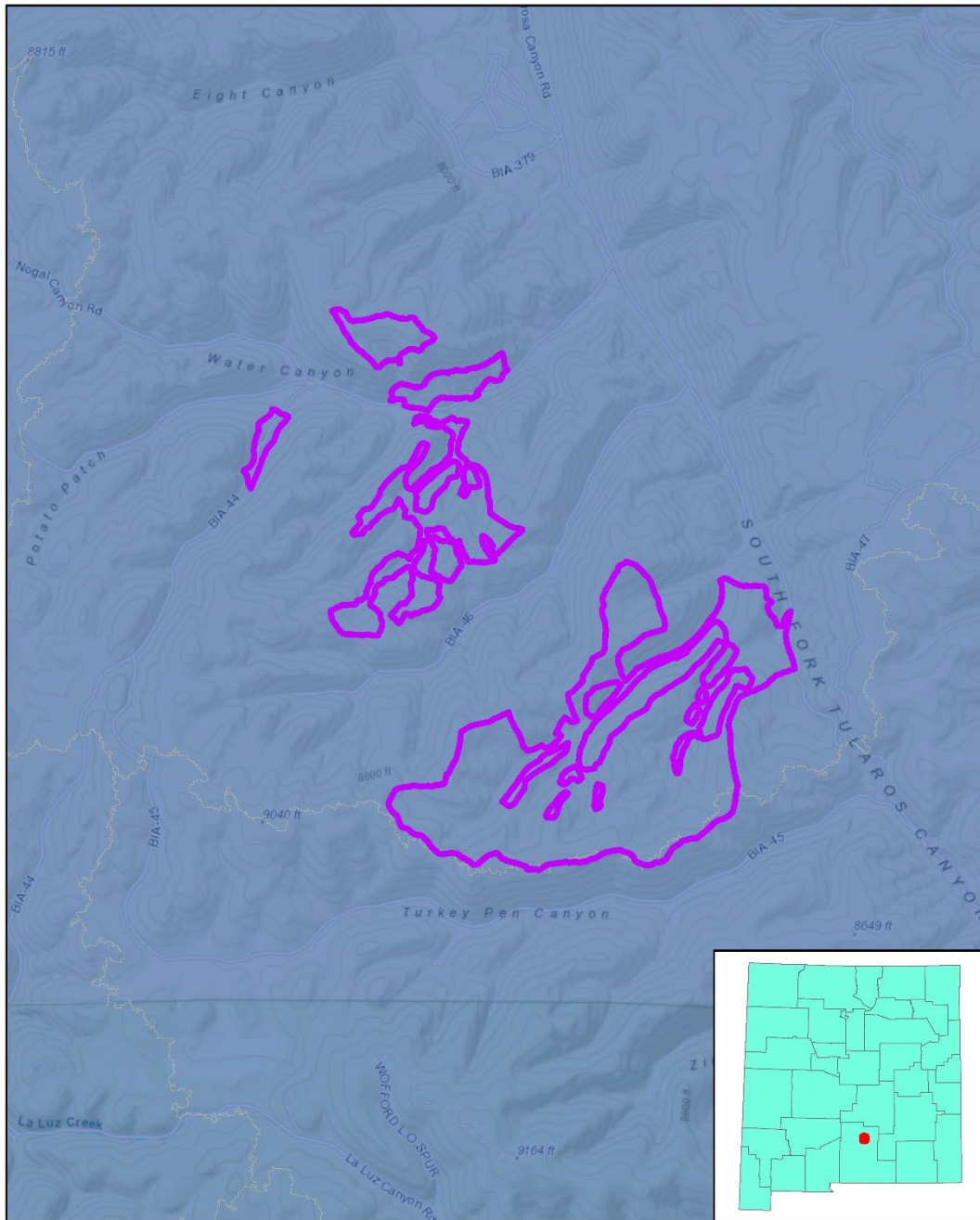
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

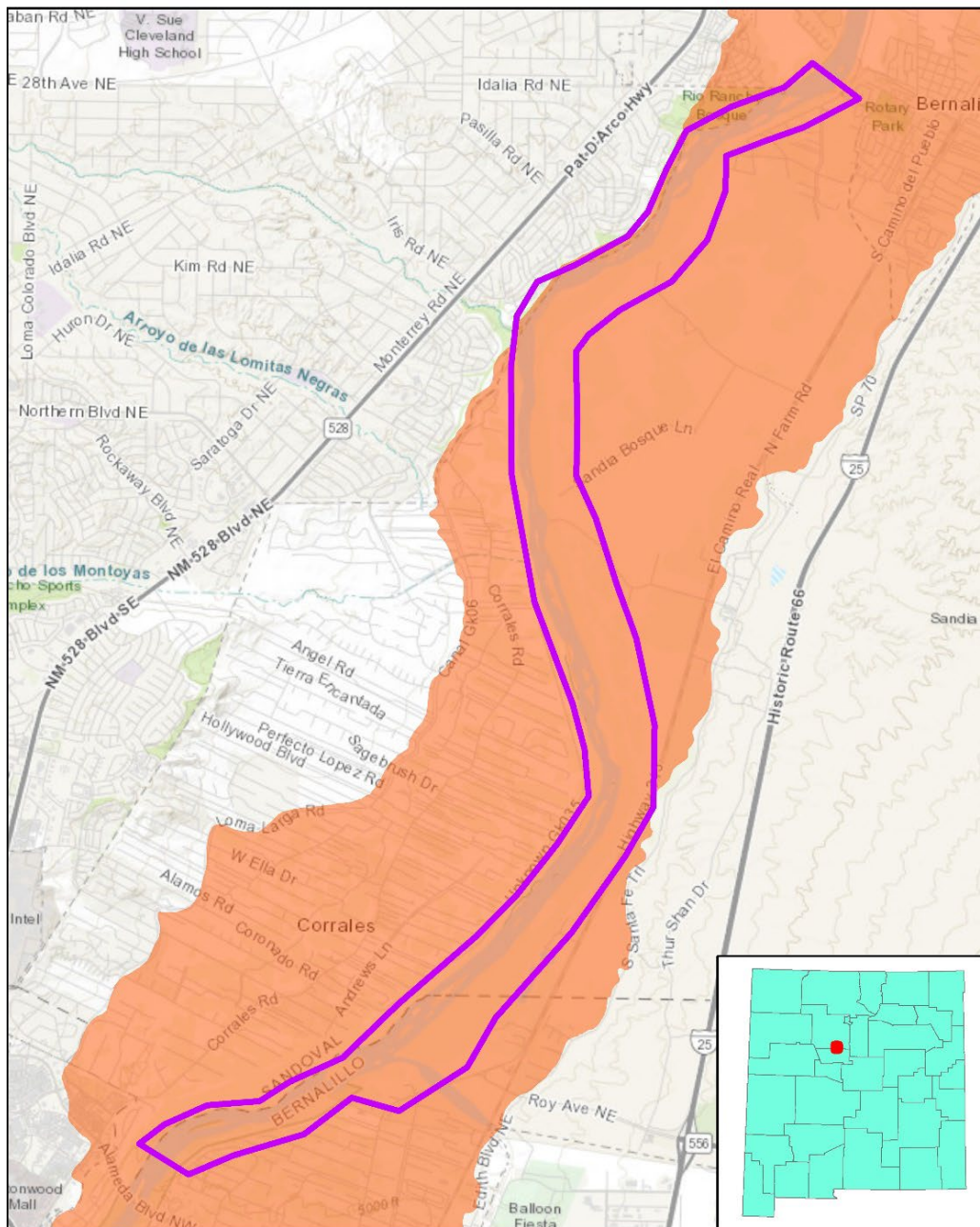
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

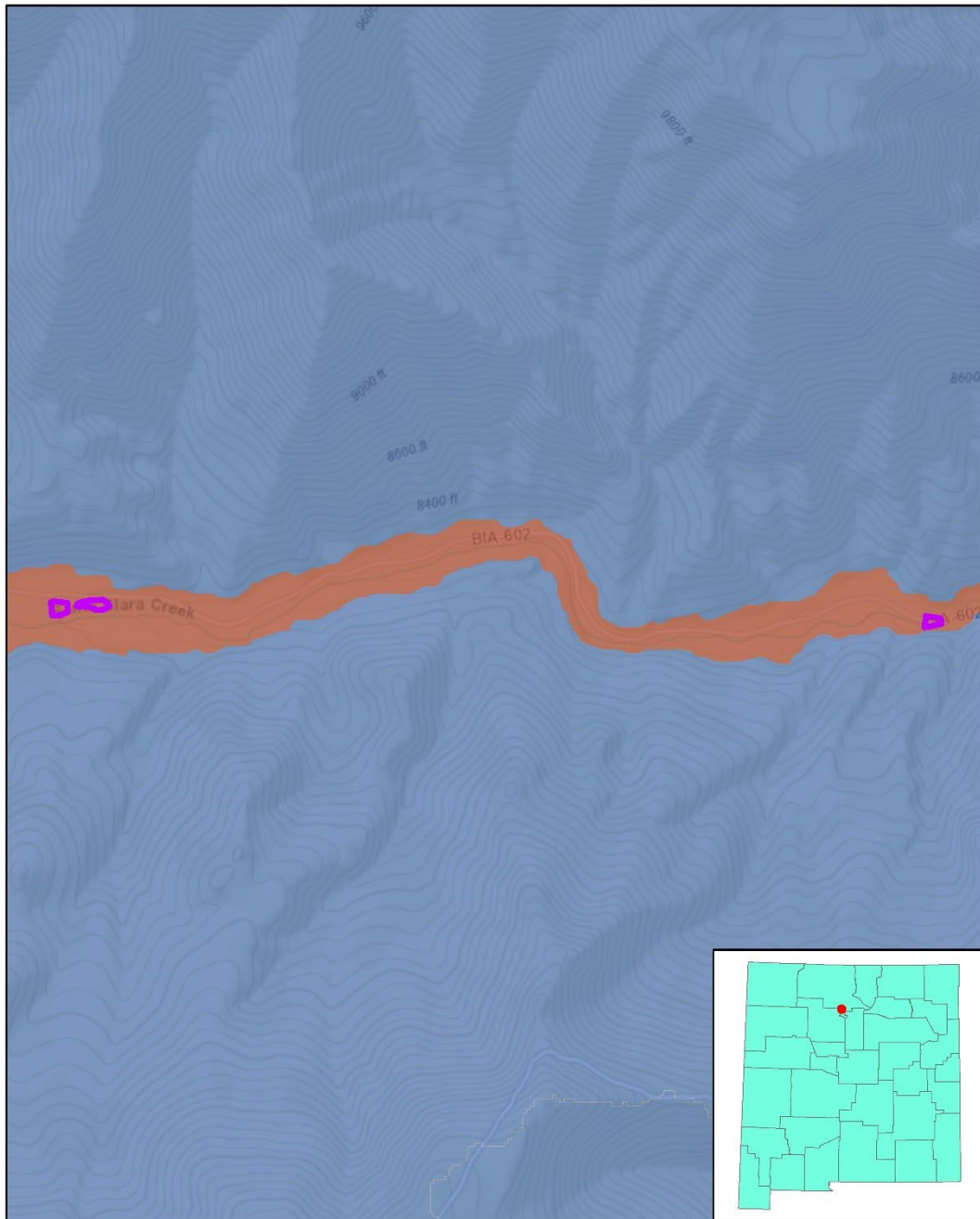
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

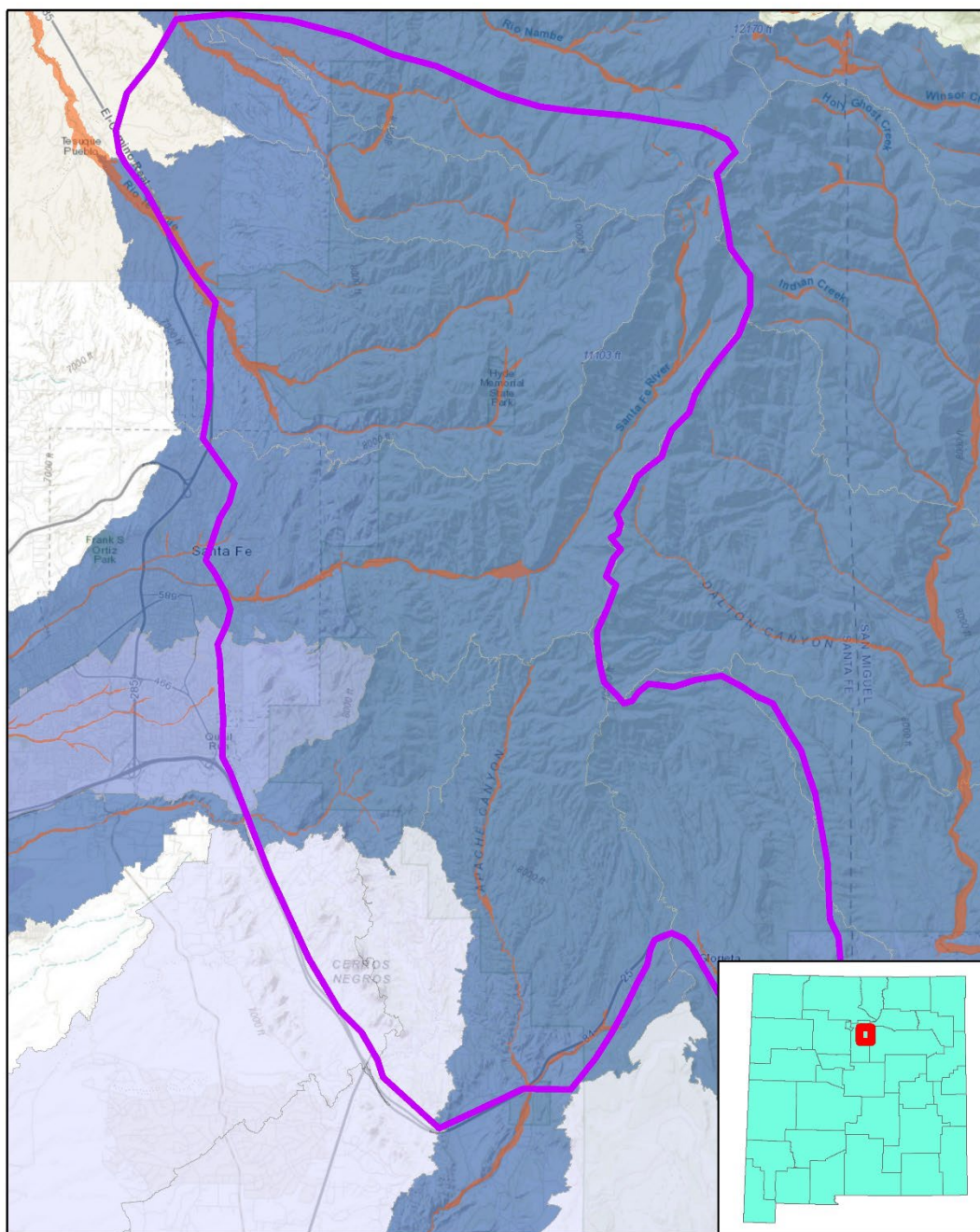
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

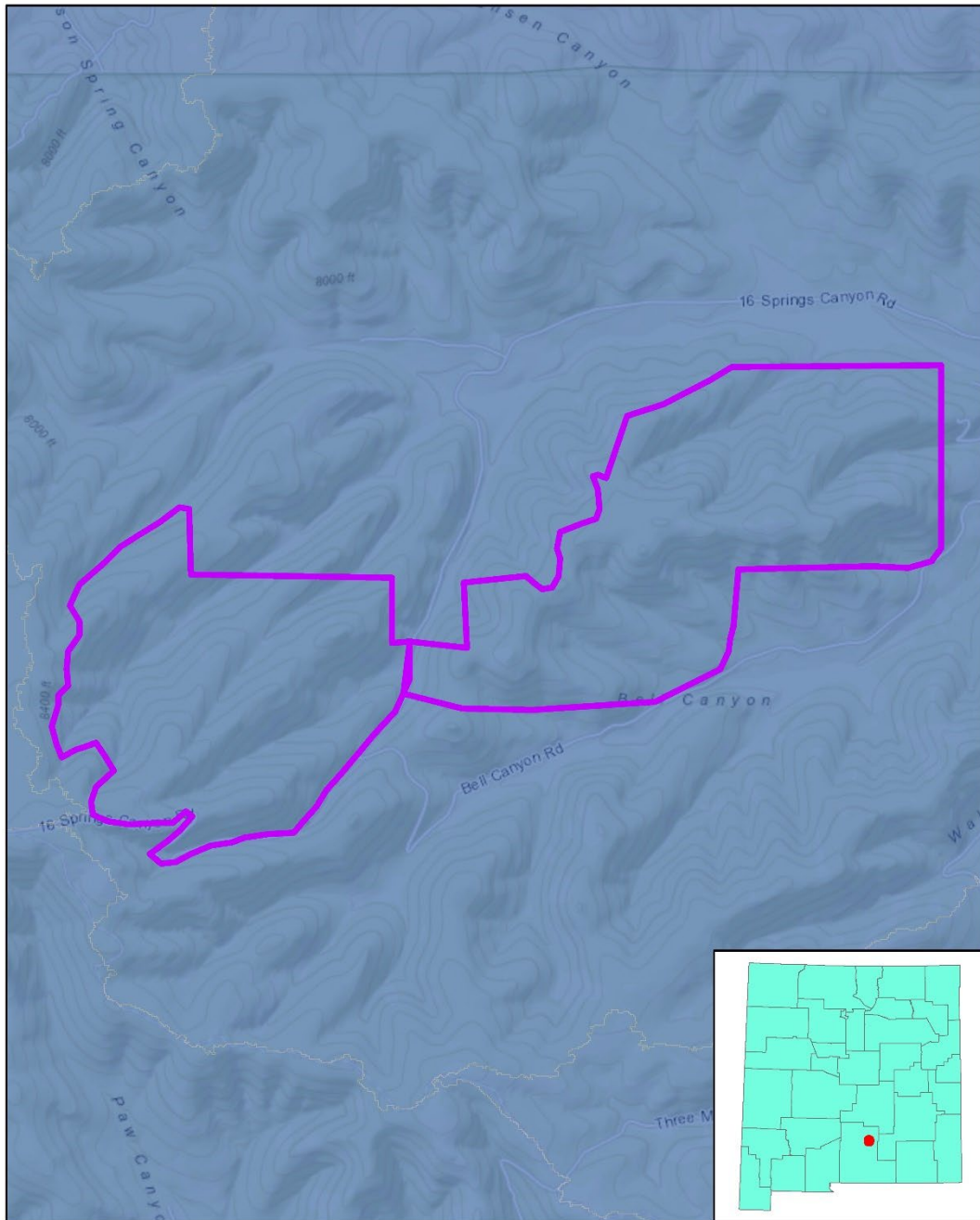
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

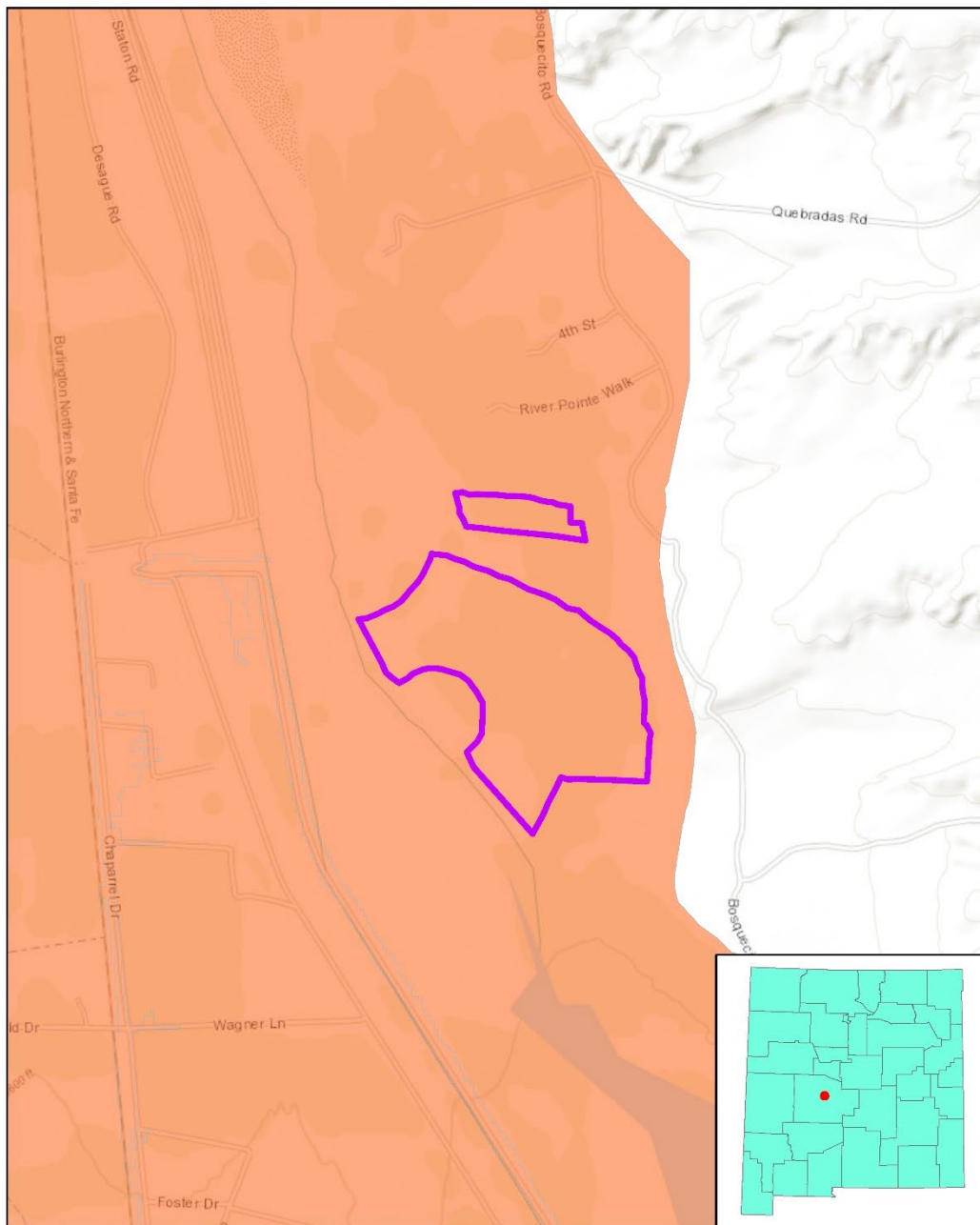
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

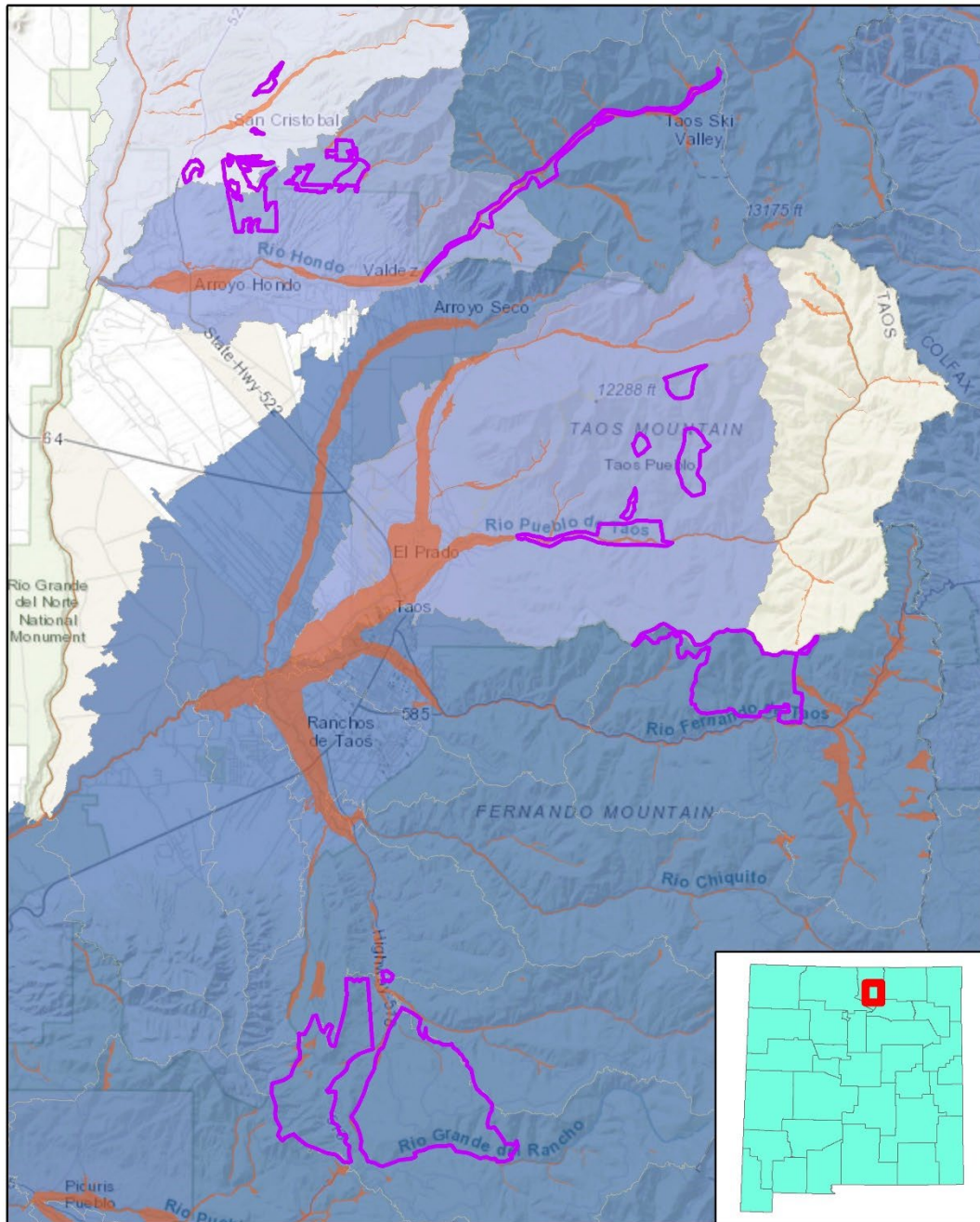
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

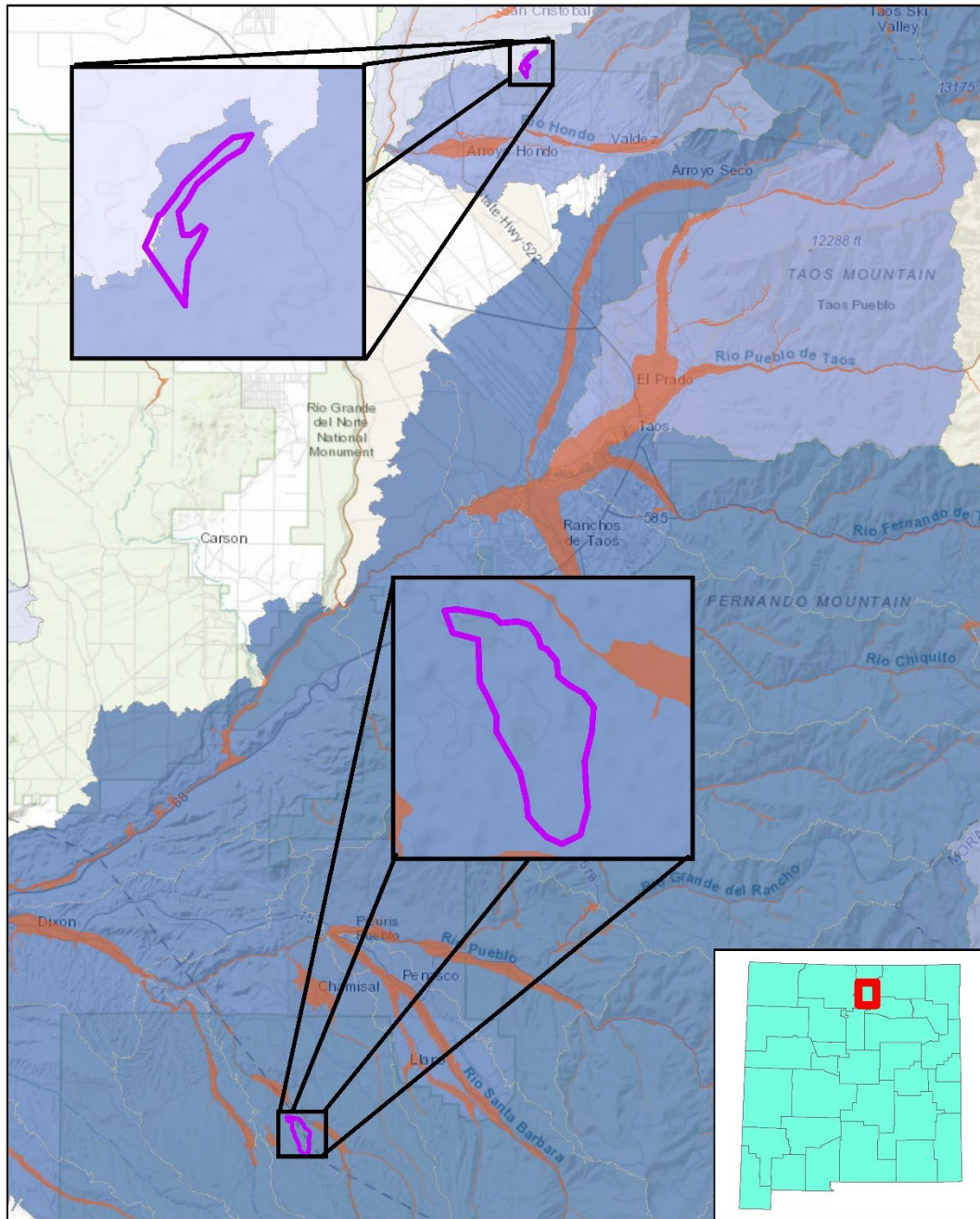
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

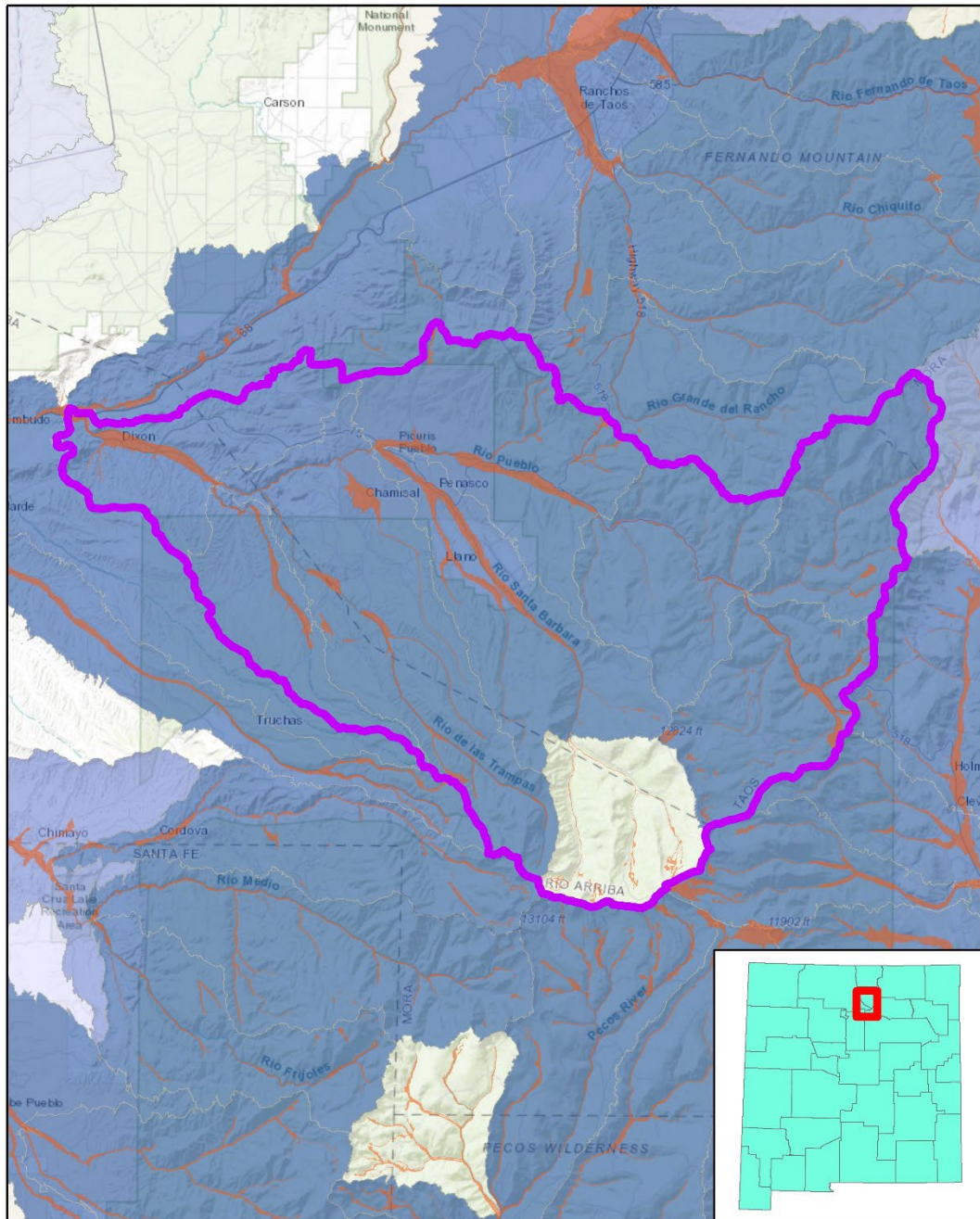
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

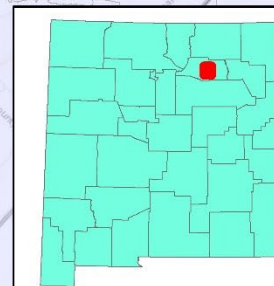
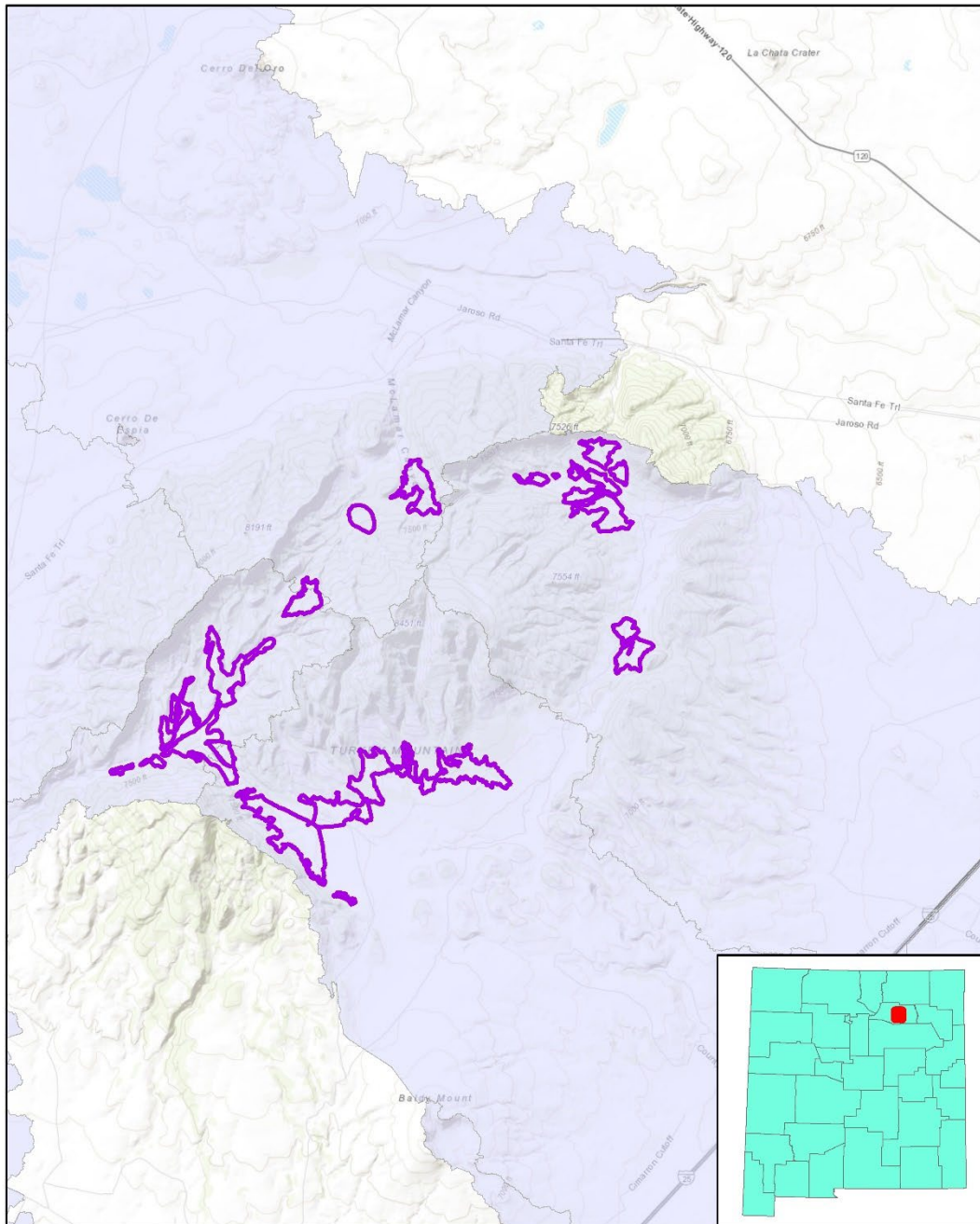
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

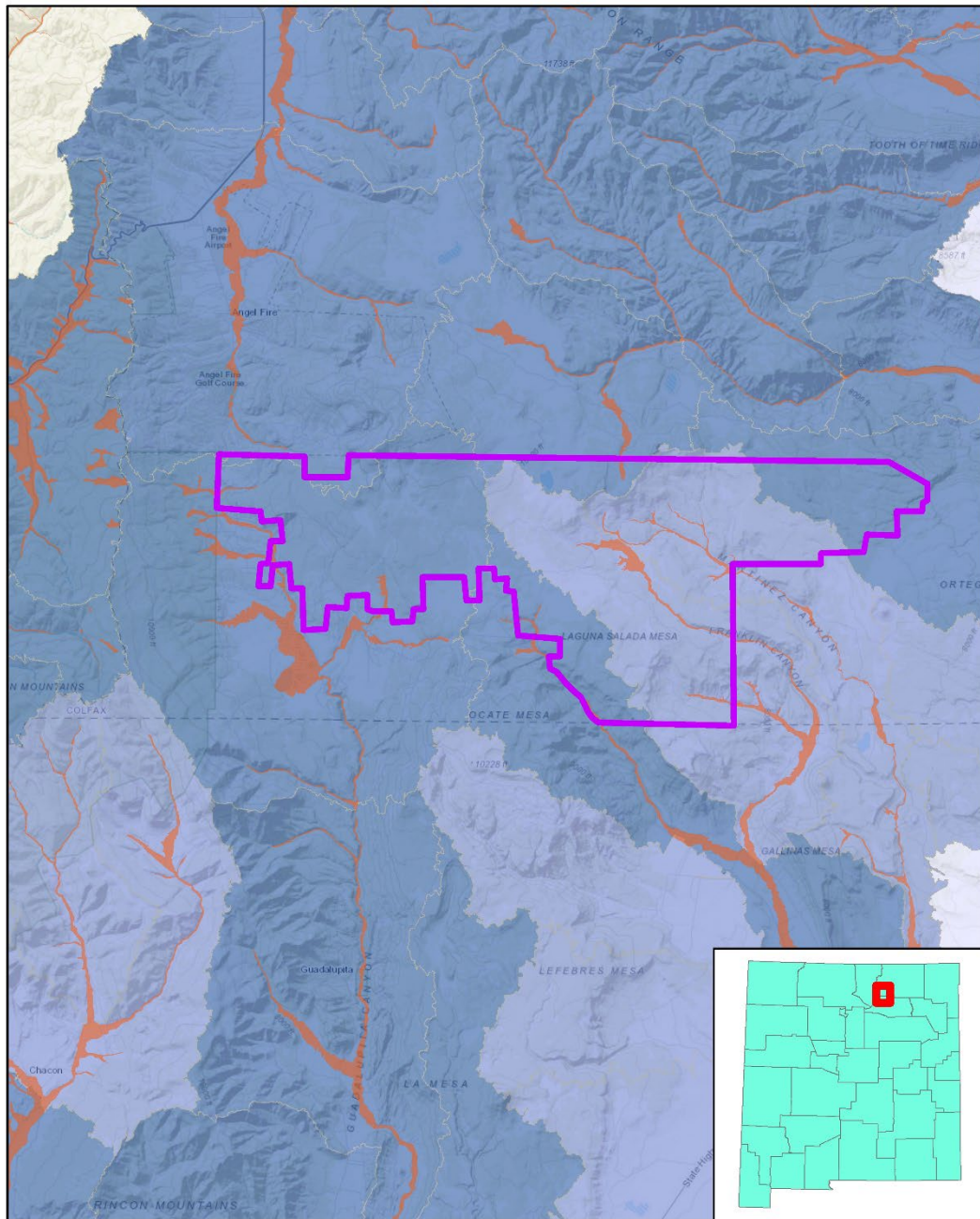
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.5 1 2 Miles





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)

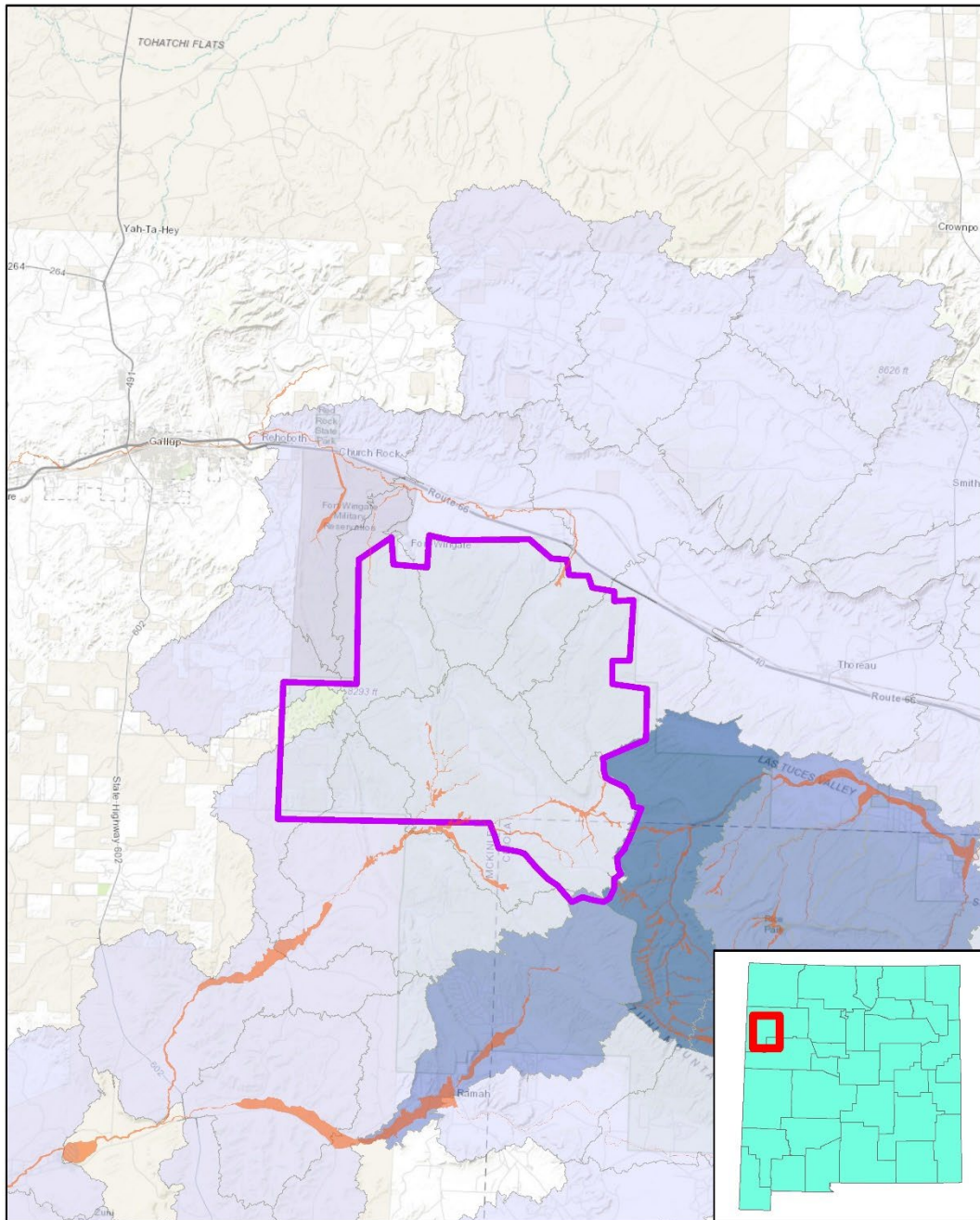
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles





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

