



Forest and Watershed Restoration Act

FY23 Annual Report

Prepared by the Energy, Minerals and
Natural Resources Department

December 2022



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 funding 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 progress that has been made to restore New Mexico's forests and watersheds over the first four years of the program's existence. The report includes new projects selected for funding in August 2022 (FY23 projects) and provides updates on projects that were funded in the first three years of the program (FY20-FY22).

In 2022 New Mexico experienced the worst wildfire season on record. Record-breaking drought conditions and exceptional wind conditions triggered fire restrictions that severely constrained the ability to implement forest and watershed restoration projects. Nonetheless, progress on FAWRA projects continued and accelerated. Five projects are considered completed (three within the last year). These are the Encino Vista Landscape Restoration Project, the Gallinas Watershed Restoration Phase IV Project, the Zuni Landscape Cibola National Forest Puerco Area Project, the Sandia Pueblo Bosque Restoration Project, and the Santa Clara Creek Wetland Restoration Project.

Accomplishment Summary

- 25 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.
- 9,106 total acres of forest restoration, including fuels treatments, thinning, invasive species removal, and prescribed fire are complete as of November 1, 2022.

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 2022 are described below. Meeting minutes are provided in Appendix B.

- **April 13, 2022** - The Advisory Board met and heard presentations about seven projects - four continuing and three new - proposed for FY23 funding. The Advisory Board had a chance to ask questions about the proposed projects before submitting their project scores.
- **May 11, 2022** - The Advisory Board met to review the compiled project scores and make recommendations for project funding to the Forestry Division. All three new proposed projects were selected; continuing funding was also approved for projects funded in FY20-22.
- **September 14, 2021** - The Advisory Board met to finalize the [guidelines for FY24 project selection](#).

The Advisory Board meetings are open to the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. All meetings in 2022 were virtual. In addition, the Forestry Division hosted quarterly meetings of the statewide Forest and Watershed Health Coordinating Group, attended by anywhere from 50 to 100 agencies, organizations, and individuals, and provided updates on FAWRA projects and the project selection process.

The Forestry Division also hosted a few Advisory Board members on a field trip to see project outcomes firsthand. The field trip was held on November 1 and the itinerary included the Elk Ridge project, located on state trust lands in Colfax County, as well as the Black Lake project on state trust lands and the New Mexico State University John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center in Mora.

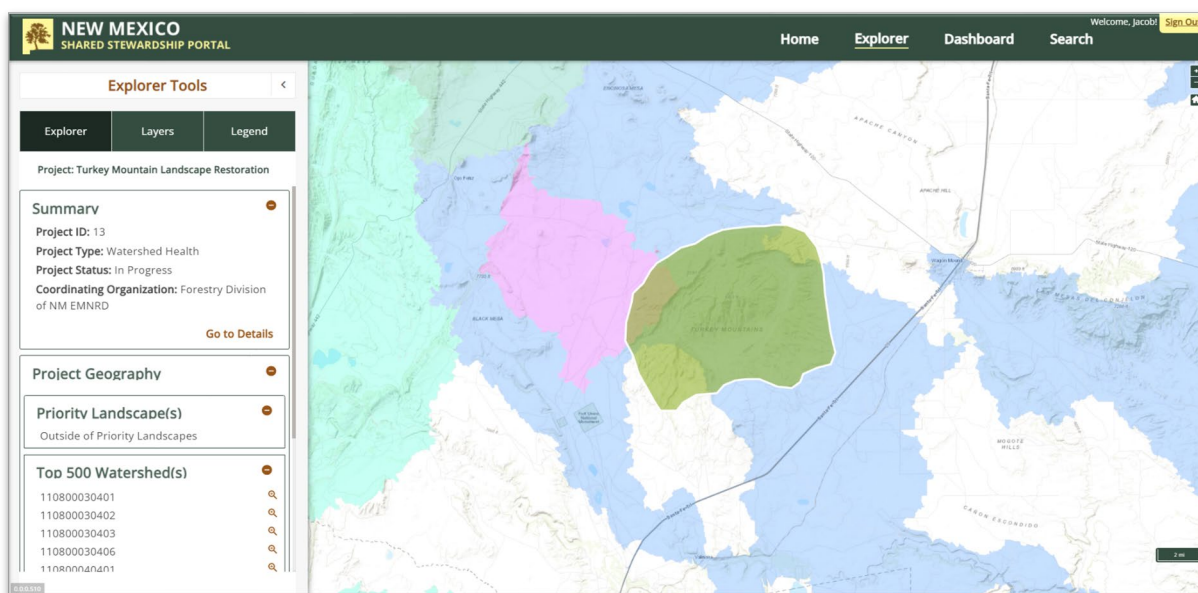


New Mexico State Land Office Forester Mark Meyers discusses forest health treatments in front of an elk exclusion fence to foster aspen regeneration in Colfax County during the FAWRA field trip on Nov. 1, 2022.

The Shared Stewardship Portal

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

The NMSSP also ensures that 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://www.nmssp.org).



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

Minor changes to FAWRA Submission Guidelines for FY24

Several of the projects funded in the first year of FAWRA have continued to seek funding to expand the project footprint. The continued funding needs demonstrate the value of stable funding to complete comprehensive, landscape-scale watershed health treatments. The funding guidelines developed for FY23 included minor changes to accommodate the demand for continued project funding. Even fewer editorial changes were made to the project guidelines that will be used to select projects in FY24.

New Projects Selected for FY23 Funding

The Advisory Board recommended three new projects for funding on May 11, 2022. An overview of the project scoring is provided in Table 1. Each project considered and recommended for funding in FY23 is expected to be a multi-year project. Two of the new projects include conducting archeological surveys on federal lands to facilitate large-scale thinning. These will be conducted under an updated Shared Stewardship Agreement between the Forestry Division and United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service) Southwestern Region. The projects are described below.

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

This project initiates a 10-year landscape scale treatment and restoration plan that will be begin by conducting 5,000 acres of archaeological surveys in this site-dense landscape. Initial surveys will 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.

Taos Valley Watershed Association (\$200,000)

This project will focus 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 will occur on public and tribal lands, with an initial 140-acre project on the University of New Mexico’s D.H. Lawrence Ranch.

Mimbres to Signal Peak (\$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. The goal of this project is 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. A work plan for initial surveys is currently in progress.

SCORER:		DGF	EDD	NMED	SLO	OSE	Holian	Hernandez	Racher	Average
3	Carson NF - Jicarilla Ranger District	80	60	55	68	77	70	92	43	68.125
1	Taos Valley Watershed Landscape Restoration	60	80	82	75	85	95	93	82	81.5
2	Mimbres to Signal Peak	85	80	71	85	84	85	90	58	79.75

Figure 1. Revised/Final FY23 FAWRA Project Proposal Scores adopted on May 11, 2022



Rock inscriptions in the Santa Fe National Forest, Jicarilla Ranger District

FAWRA Projects Under Construction

ABQ Reach Bosque Treatments (multiple years, \$945,000¹)

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 approximately 100 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.

Zuni Phase 1 Private Lands (multiple years, \$1.2M)

Restoring ponderosa pine and piñon juniper forests in the Bluewater portion of the Zuni Mountains is the goal of this project. The work is taking place in the upper watershed to restore the historic stand densities, increase ecosystem productivity, and reduce the risk of stand-replacing wildfire. Of the 4,500 acres identified with potential for restoration, 1,180 acres have been completed since the first year of FAWRA funding.

Turkey Mountains (multiple years, \$2.1M)

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 2,487 cumulative acres have been completed, leveraging the FAWRA funding with state capital funding and federal funding through a Landscape Scale Restoration grant.

¹ Dollar figures represent funds both funds spent, and funds currently budgeted to projects, including non-FAWRA dollars. Figures are subject to change.

El Caso Restoration (multiple years, \$945,000)

This project goal is targeted thinning and other forest treatments to improve stand structure and provide wildfire protection in the Quemado Lake area of the fire-adapted Gila Mountain Range. The project links past restoration treatments on the Gila National Forest to a populated wildland-urban interface area and helps protect several natural springs that exist in the area. A total of 642 acres have been completed.

Trampas to San Cristobal (\$380,000)

The project is a landscape-scale collaboration between Carson National Forest and the Forestry Division that will thin approximately 310 acres of ponderosa and piñon-juniper stands across multiple jurisdictions to support forest health and wildfire protection goals, contribute to water security in Taos County, and provide wood-cutting jobs and firewood in rural northern New Mexico communities. This project is an example of effective cross-boundary collaboration and shared stewardship within the Enchanted Circle Priority Area and a predecessor to the multi-year Taos Valley Watershed proposal recommended for funding in 2022. A work plan has been completed and the project is expected to begin in 2023.

Cimarron Range (\$300,000)

This project will selectively thin approximately 10,000 acres of ponderosa pine and mixed-conifer forests over 10 years in the high-priority, high-risk Cimarron watershed. The 2018 Ute Park Fire stimulated interest by landowners and local conservation groups in accelerating forest treatments and reintroducing fire as a management tool in the landscape. The state funding is matched to Congressionally directed spending of \$1.3 million that is increasing the scope and sustainability of project outcomes.

Sixteen Springs (\$220,000)

This is a project in a high-risk populated area to reduce fuels in mixed-conifer forests in the biologically diverse Sacramento Mountains. 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.

Upper Coyote Creek, Elk Ridge – (\$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. Work on this project began in late 2021, and 56 out of approximately 262 acres have been completed.

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

This watershed restoration project is located on the southern part of the Mescalero Apache Reservation. The project outcomes are to improve water reliability and provide wood supply for the Mescalero Apache Tribe and people in adjacent communities. 680 total targeted acres have been completed under a contract administered by the Mescalero Apache Tribe. Cumulative completed restoration on this project now totals 1,477 acres since 2015. The work has been supported by a mix of United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs funds, state funds, and Mescalero timber sales.



Post-treatment conditions in the Turkey Mountains in 2022.

Completed FAWRA Projects

The following projects are either completed or projected to be completed by early January 2023.

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

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 component will distribute firewood to local tribes and pueblos. Work was completed in 2022 with 164 acres treated.

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

This riparian restoration project is in the Rio Grande bosque within Sandia Pueblo. The project focus is 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 – (\$418,000 in FY20 and FY21)

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 also helped complete more than 3,706 acres of prescribed burning, followed by resprout treatment.

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

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

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

Watershed restoration was completed on approximately 122 acres in the Gallinas Municipal Watershed. Nearly 5,000 acres of treatment 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.

Delayed or Deferred Projects

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

- Northside-Rio Hondo Source Water Protection – (originally \$200,000 in FY21, seeking federal funding to complete the project because of potential state anti-donation clause conflict).
- Cebolla-Nutrias Watershed – (originally \$250,000 in FY21, working on landowner agreements and will seek federal funding).

- Rio Chama Watershed Restoration — (originally \$158,100 in FY21, success of the Rio Chama Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration application means federal funding may be a better fit).

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

Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department Forestry Division

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APPENDIX B: 2022 MEETING MINUTES

Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) Advisory Board Meeting Minutes (Final) April 13, 2022 FINAL

1. Call to Order

A virtual WebEx meeting of the FAWRA Advisory Board (Board) was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on April 13, 2022, and presided over by Laura McCarthy, State Forester, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division.

- **Board Members and Delegates Present**
Laura McCarthy, State Forester, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair
Mark Myers, State Land Office (SLO)
Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)
Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)
John Rhoderick, Environment Department (ED)
Abe Franklin, Environment Department (ED)
Kathy Holian, Public Member for academic or non-profit organization
Steve Hernandez, Public Member for local government
- **Board Members Absent**
Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Marshal's Office
Brent Racher, Public Member for industry
Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)
- **Other Federal Agencies Present**
Laura Moser, US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service (USFS), Southwestern Region
Andrew Mangham, National Weather Service (NWS), Albuquerque Weather Forecast Office
- **FY23 New Project Presenters Present**
Joe Carrillo, Chama District Timber Management Officer, EMNRD, Forestry Division
James Anzalone, Socorro District Forester, EMNRD, Forestry Division
J.R. Logan, Taos County WUI Coordinator

2. Welcome/Introductions

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

3. Board Business

Approval of Agenda

Julie Valdez moved to approve the agenda and Steve Hernandez seconded the motion. The meeting agenda for April 13, 2022, was unanimously approved.

Open Meetings Act Resolution

Steve Hernandez moved to approve the Open Meetings Act Resolution and Mark Meyers Seconded the motion. The resolution was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes for the September 16, 2021 FAWRA Advisory Board Meeting

Stewart Liley moved to approve the minutes for the September 16, 2021 Advisory Board meeting and Mark Meyers seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. State Forester's Update

- **Fires:** Recent weeks have produced several challenging fires across New Mexico, including the Big Hole Fire (Belen), the McBride Fire and the Nogal Canyon Fire (Ruidoso area), and the Hermit's Peak Fire (Las Vegas) which started as a prescribed burn. The Forestry Division remains committed to the safe and effective use of prescribed fire, and training is essential. The Forestry Division is developing the proficiency workbook that those seeking state certification under the Prescribed Burning Act will have to complete in order to be certified. Both the workbook and the prescribed burn rule are expected to be completed this summer.
- **Funding:** In addition to the \$2 million received annually in FAWRA funding, in FY23 the Forestry Division is receiving \$17 million from a combination of general fund and severance tax bond funding. These are record levels of funding for the Forestry Division, and the Forestry Division has a large project list it is working through to get started with these funds. There is also additional funding from the federal Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act that will come through the USFS that the Forestry Division will be able to use for term positions and to increase capacity to put both federal and state funds to work on the ground.

5. Progress report on funded projects and proposed continuing projects

Laura McCarthy presented information and images from projects that have previously received FAWRA funding. Project progress slides include existing projects that have not requested additional FAWRA support including Upper Coyote Creek-Elk Ridge, Joplin Ridge, 16 Springs, Santa Clara Pueblo Wetlands Restoration and Prescribed Burning, Encino Vista Landscape Restoration and Archeological Surveys, and Red Cabin No Name Springs.

Continuing projects slides (projects that have requested additional FAWRA support, but which will not be scored again by the Advisory Board per FY23 FAWRA Guidelines):

- **El Caso Ranch & Quemado Lake:** A map demonstrated the proximity of private inholdings within the Gila National Forest (Quemado Lake Estates and El Caso Ranch units), to Quemado Lake and the Slaughter Mesa National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) area where forest health treatments are 90 percent complete. A table showed anticipated funding needs to complete the remaining 600 unfunded acres within the private inholdings. Once completed the project will effectively tie together treatments in the Slaughter Mesa Area and recent treatments using Non-federal Lands support from USFS located in Quemado Lake Estates. Photos demonstrate pre- and post-treatment conditions at the border of national forest and private lands.

Sandia Pueblo Bosque Restoration: Photos show conditions within the Romero Fire burn scar where the fire crossed the Rio Grande on to Sandia Pueblo lands. A map demonstrated completed, ongoing, and proposed new treatments located on Sandia Pueblo lands. Additional photos demonstrated conditions before and after goat treatments.

- **Turkey Mountain Watershed Forest and Watershed Restoration:** A map demonstrated the 4,500-acre project area and the scale of the work to be done, including locations of 2,250+ acres that have already been treated. A slide presented narrative details on project status and remaining work, including the development of a prescribed burn plan and plans to continue using this project a training for those seeking burn certification in the future.
- **Zuni Landscape Restoration:** The first phase of this project focused on private lands, and the continuing proposal focuses on state trust lands. A map demonstrated the proximity of state trust lands to previous treatment areas and town of Thoreau, NM. The project is on track to have approximately 628 acres completed by mid-April. This project has delivered 50 cords of firewood to nearby communities in need. Additional photos demonstrated conditions before and after thinning treatments.

The Board had no comments on the progress reports.

6. FY23 Ranking Sheet and Project Scoring Criteria

A slide presented the FY23 Project Scoresheet. Laura McCarthy presented the “FY23 project criteria for ranking”, which were displayed on the scoresheet and have not changed from the previous fiscal year.

7. Presentation of New FY23 Project Proposals

Jicarilla Range District Cultural Evaluation:

Joe Carrillo presented project overview slides covering a proposal to conduct 5,000 acres of heritage surveys on the Carson National Forest Jicarilla Ranger District. Once surveys are completed, treatments will be designed to improve vegetative diversity and health stand structure in older Ponderosa pine stands in two headwater drainages of the San Juan River with additional goals of protecting historic cultural sites, improving habitat, and protecting oil and gas infrastructure in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas on the Carson National Forest. Project partners include the Forestry Division, USFS (landowner), San Juan Soil and Water Conservation District (contractor), Department of Game and Fish (supplemental funding for habitat improvement), and oil and gas industry (mitigation funding for cultural surveys).

Taos Valley Watershed Landscape Restoration:

J.R. Logan presented project overview slides for landscape-scale forest restoration projects planned for lands in the Carson National Forest as well as Taos Pueblo lands. An image presented the community of Arroyo Seco and El Salto, with nearby Taos Pueblos lands, and the high elevation mountains bordering these communities. A map demonstrated proposed FAWRA project areas across a 320,000-acre project area, identical to the Taos County Watershed Coalition (TVWC) Boundaries, which were drawn to capture tributaries that flow into the Rio Grande off the west flank of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The project area also includes three traditional land grants and numerous acequias. Over the past seven years, TVWC has worked to help clear four NEPA areas totally 27,400 acres. Treatment areas for the next five-to-10 years are focused where there is both a threat of stand-replacing wildfire and threats to downstream communities. An initial 141-acre project (thinning followed by pile burning) is proposed for FY23 FAWRA funding is located on the DH Lawrence Ranch, which is owned by the University of New Mexico (UNM). Additional goals for this initial project are to tie together existing and planned treatments on the Carson National Forest that are immediately adjacent, protect cultural structures and values

on the ranch, and protect nearby communities from stand-replacing fire. Future FAWRA funding is requested and would be used for prioritized treatments aimed at protecting water resources on pueblo and federal lands. Project Partners include TVWC, the Forestry Division, Carson National Forest, acequia commissioners, land grant representatives, and Taos Pueblo.

Abe Franklin expressed a concern about stream temperatures in Rio Hondo Canyon, which is indicated for treatment in the map and requested that project proponents include specification on any treatment contracts to not reduce the amount of shade on the river itself. The prescription for this area has not been developed yet, and J.R. Logan indicated that they would be happy to coordinate the prescription with the Environment Department and the Carson National Forest.

Steven Hernandez inquired whether the University of New Mexico would be contributing to the initial project. As part of the agreement, UNM has agreed to make fuelwood produced from the project available to the community and this will be counted as an in-kind contribution. While UNM is the steward of the publicly owned cultural properties on the ranch, they lack the forestry expertise to necessary to accomplish that goal and compliment the cultural resource preservation activities they are already doing on the ranch.

Mimbres to Signal Peak:

James Anzalone presented project overview slides covering a proposal to conduct cultural resource surveys on 11,400 acres over 10 years to set up fuels reduction and prescribed fire on 52,800 acres. Additional funds are requested for prescribed fire preparation and hazardous fuels reductions through mechanical thinning. A map was shown demonstrating the Signal Peak-Bear Creek Joint Chiefs project and the Upper Mimbres NEPA area in the Gila National Forest where work would occur. Outcomes include reduction of hazardous fuels in the WUI, improved watershed and riparian condition through soil stabilization, and protection of sensitive Mexican Spotted Owl habitat. Watersheds that benefit include the Gila River, Upper Mimbres, and Bear Creek, as well as numerous ditch associations. Partners include the Forestry Division, Gila National Forest Silver City Ranger District, The Nature Conservancy, Grant Soil and Water Conservation District, the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, the USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Abe Franklin inquired whether the project would include fencing. While mentioned in the written proposal, any fencing that occurs would be the responsibility of the USFS and not a part of the FAWRA funding.

8. Timeline for Submitting Scores and Preview of the Agenda for Next Meeting on May 11, 2022

Scoring spreadsheets are due by May 6. The May 11 meeting will include:

- discussing new project rankings,
- finalizing ranking recommendations,
- reviewing FY23 guidelines,
- setting a date for the fall 2022 meeting to adopt FY24 guidelines, and
- discussing possible field trips for fall 2022.

9. Other Business

None.

10. Adjournment

Draft minutes submitted by: Jacob Pederson on April 15, 2022

Draft minutes approved by: Laura McCarthy April 18, 2022
Final minutes approved by FAWRA Advisory Board: May 11, 2022 (no changes)

Forest and Watershed Restoration Advisory (FAWRA) Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 11, 2022 at 9:00 am

1. Call to Order

A virtual WebEx meeting of the FAWRA Board (Board) was called to order at 9:00 am on May 11, 2022, and presided over by Laura McCarthy, State Forester, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division.

- **Board Members and Delegates Present**
Laura McCarthy, State Forester, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair
Mark Myers, State Land Office (SLO)
Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)
Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)
Abe Franklin, Environment Department (ED)
Kathy Holian, Public Member for academic or non-profit organization
Steve Hernandez, Public Member for local government
Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)
- **Board Members Absent**
Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Marshal, State Fire Marshal's Office
Brent Racher, Public Member for industry
- **Others Present**
Jacob Pederson (EMNRD)
Andrew Frederick (EMNRD)
Lindsey Quam (EMNRD)
Cheryl Bada (EMNRD)
Joe Carillo (EMNRD)
James Anzalone (EMNRD)
Nick Smokovich (EMNRD)
Mary Stuever (EMNRD)
Andrew Erdmann, Interstate Stream Commission (ISC)

2. Welcome/Introductions

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

3. Board Business

Approval of the agenda

Kathy Holian moved to approve agenda; Tim Hagaman seconded; none opposed; motion approved.

Approval of minutes for the April 13, 2022 meeting

Tim Hagaman moved to approve minutes; Steve Hernandez seconded; none opposed; approved.

4. State Forester's update

State Forester Laura McCarthy provided an update on ongoing fires in New Mexico, the topic on all minds. The type and duration of the wind is extraordinary and contributing to the most destructive fire season in memory. FAWRA is all the more important for this fact. We have photographs coming in from

recently treated areas within FAWRA boundaries demonstrating fire behavior can be effectively managed through fuels treatments. On the other hand, the loss of personal property across many communities is tragic. It is essential FAWRA continues to be as strategic as possible in the placement of treatments. FAWRA's focus on water sources and water source protection continues to be well founded. Mark Meyers provided an update on the Cooks Peak Fire, which has occurred in a landscape where SLO has done a lot of planning and completed thousands of acres of projects (the Elk Ridge FAWRA project is an example). SLO will reassess priorities due to the Cooks Peak Fire and the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon Fires, depending on how they develop over the next weeks. Preliminary SLO data show that treatments can be effective at mitigating fire severity. The higher elevations, where fewer treatments have occurred, are a concern.

5. Progress report on funded projects

Nothing new to report since the April 2022 meeting; fire season is consuming all staff resources.

6. Discussion new project rankings and make and adopt recommendations

The Board discussed the projects and member rankings. Scores were discussed; however, no member revised their scores. The Board recommended the following projects be funded in FY23 (in order of ranking).

- a. Taos Valley Watershed Landscape Restoration
- b. Mimbres to Signal Peak
- c. Carson National Forest – Jicarilla Ranger District

Board members noted a typo in the scoring overview slide (the project identified as “Santa Fe NF – Jicarilla Ranger District” should have read “Carson NF – Jicarilla Ranger District”). The error was corrected in the final ranking slide Board members ultimately recommended.

7. Review of FY23 guidelines

The Board discussed the following issues regarding potential changes For FY24 Guidelines and Scoring Criteria:

- Projects requesting funding for surveys are becoming common. A recommendation was made to clarify that “planning” (Criteria 1.d.) includes survey activities.
- A question was raised regarding whether the Forestry Division anticipates more proposals in the future that focus more narrowly on restoration goals. Laura McCarthy reviewed the text of FAWRA, and the Board broadly discussed the purpose of the Act and how that is reflected in the existing ranking criteria. No specific proposals for changes were made during this discussion.
- The Board noted that funding this year is substantial enough to easily fund all new project proposals in FY23 and recognized that this will not be the case in all years. Forestry Division staff noted that regardless of funding levels, preparation for FAWRA review provides a strong incentive within the districts to produce strong, well-developed projects.

8. Set date for fall 2022 meeting to adopt FY24 guidelines

Laura McCarthy proposed Wednesday, September 14 from 10 am-11 am for the fall meeting date. Board members had no immediate objections and will have a few days to check calendars and communicate conflicts before calendar invitations are sent to hold this date.

9. Discuss field trips in fall 2022

The Board discussed the value of field trips taken in 2021 and identified several options for 2022 fall field trips, including opportunities to demonstrate fire severity in treated versus non-treated areas. Possibilities include the Jemez Mountains, the Gallinas Watershed, Ruidoso, Albuquerque Bosque, the Taos Watershed, Ute Park, Elk Ridge, and the Black Lakes area. However, these will depend on how the current fires move. The Board also noted that previous field trips have not included the western part of the state (the Zuni Mountains) so this should also be considered.

10. Review the next steps

- EMNRD will send the Board a save-the-date for the proposed September 14 fall meeting

- EMNRD will identify proposed dates and tentative agendas for field trips and distribute these to the Board
- EMNRD will produce drafts for FY24 Ranking Criteria and Submission Guidelines for distribution to the Board in advance of the fall meeting

11. Adjourn

Julie Valdez moved to adjourn at 10:15 am; Abe Franklin seconded; none opposed. Meeting adjourned.

Draft minutes submitted by: Jacob Pederson on May 12, 2022

Draft minutes reviewed by: Laura McCarthy on May 23, 2022

Final minutes approved by the FAWRA Advisory Board on September 14, 2022

Forest and Watershed Restoration Advisory Board Meeting

September 14, 2022, at 10:00 AM

DRAFT MINUTES

3. Call to Order

A virtual WebEx meeting of the FAWRA Advisory Board (Board) was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on September 14, 2022, and presided over by Laura McCarthy, State Forester, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division.

- **Board Members and Delegates Present**

Laura McCarthy, State Forester, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair

Mark Myers, State Land Office (SLO)

John Rhoderick, Environment Department (ED)

Donald Auer (for Stewart Liley), Department of Game and Fish (DGF)

Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)

Kathy Holian, Public Member for academic or non-profit organization

Steve Hernandez, Public Member for local government

Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)

- **Board Members Absent**

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

Brent Racher, Public Member for industry

- **Others Present**

Jacob Pederson (EMNRD)

Andrew Frederick (EMNRD)

Lindsey Quam (EMNRD)

Cheryl Bada (EMNRD)

James Anzalone (EMNRD)

Shannon Atencio (EMNRD)

Susan Sita (EMNRD)

Sara Goldstein (OSE)

4. Welcome/Introductions

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

12. Board Business

Approval of the agenda

Tim Hagaman moved to approve agenda; Kathy Holian seconded; none opposed; motion approved.

Approval of minutes for the May 11, 2022 meeting

Steve Hernandez moved to approve minutes; Mark Meyers seconded; none opposed; approved.

4. State Forester's update

State Forester Laura McCarthy provided an update on the progress made with accelerating the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration projects to match unprecedented funding the Forestry Division has received in the past year, totaling approximately \$19M. An update was also provided on the Fireline Fuelwood for Northern NM Communities Project, a partnership between the US Forest Service, EMNRD Forestry Division, and the New Mexico National Guard. This project involves delivering wood cut from fire suppression activities on the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon Fire to communities in need. Initial deliveries were made to Mora on 9/14/22 and future deliveries are planned for San Miguel and Taos Counties.

5. Progress report on funded projects

Jacob Pederson provided a brief update on progress made to initiate new FY23 FAWRA projects, including the Taos Valley Watershed Landscape Restoration Project, the Mimbres to Signal Peak Project, and the Carson National Forest – Jicarilla Ranger District Project.

6. Discussion and approval of FY24 guidelines

Jacob Pederson presented the draft FY24 guidelines, which included only minor changes from FY23 guidelines to streamline the proposal process for continuing projects. Board members suggested small changes and typo fixes and the draft FY24 guidelines were amended based on these recommendations. Steve Hernandez moved to approve FY24 Guidelines as amended; Kathy Holian seconded; none opposed; approved.

7. Discussion of fall field trip option

Laura McCarthy took a roll call of Board members interested in attending the field trip planned for October 6, 2022, to observe forest and watershed health treatments in Black Lakes and Elk Ridge and to observe damage from the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon Fire.

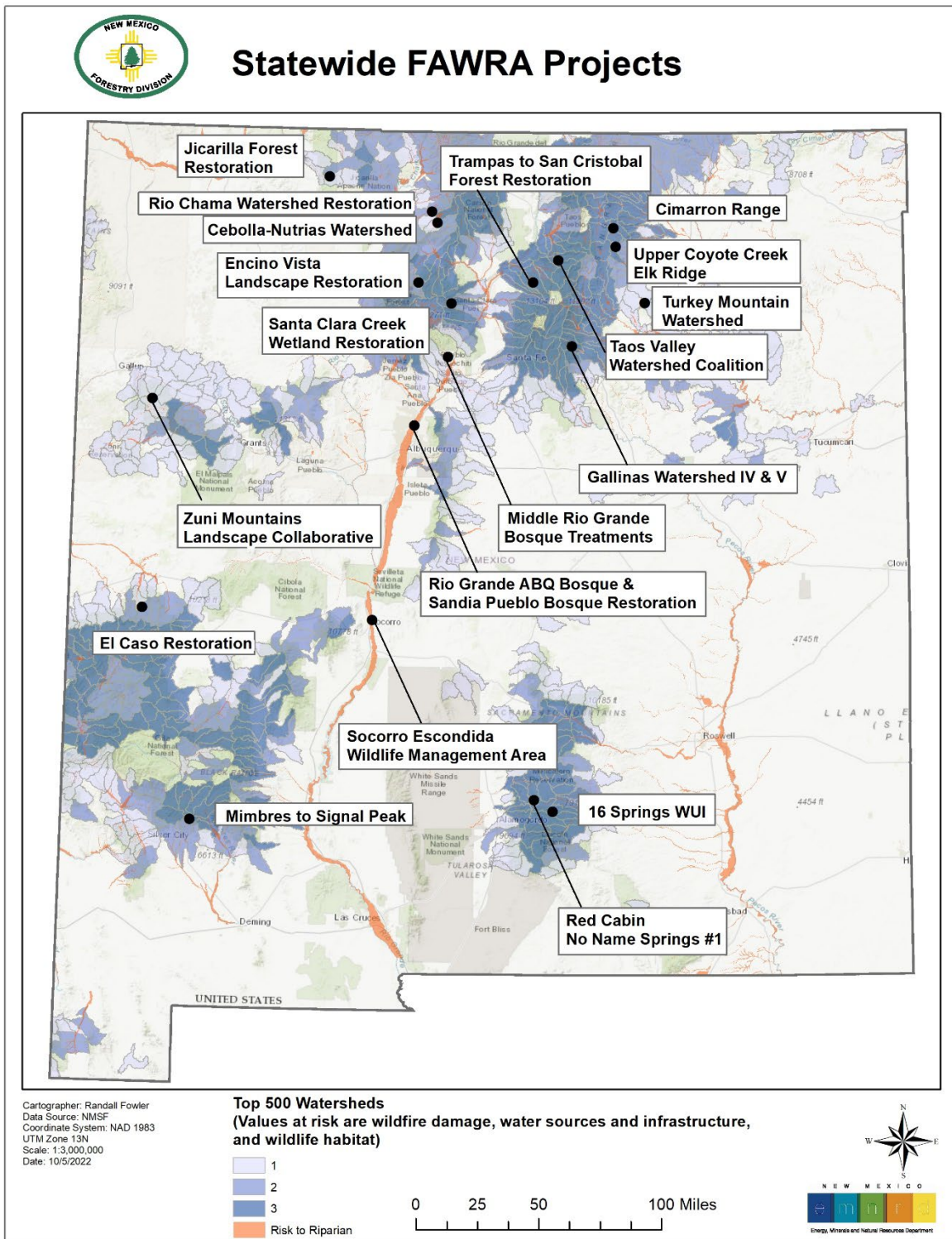
8. Adjourn

Steve Hernandez moved to adjourn; Kathy Holian seconded; none opposed; meeting adjourned at 10:30am.

Draft minutes submitted by Jacob Pederson on September 21, 2022

Draft minutes reviewed by Laura McCarthy on September 21, 2022

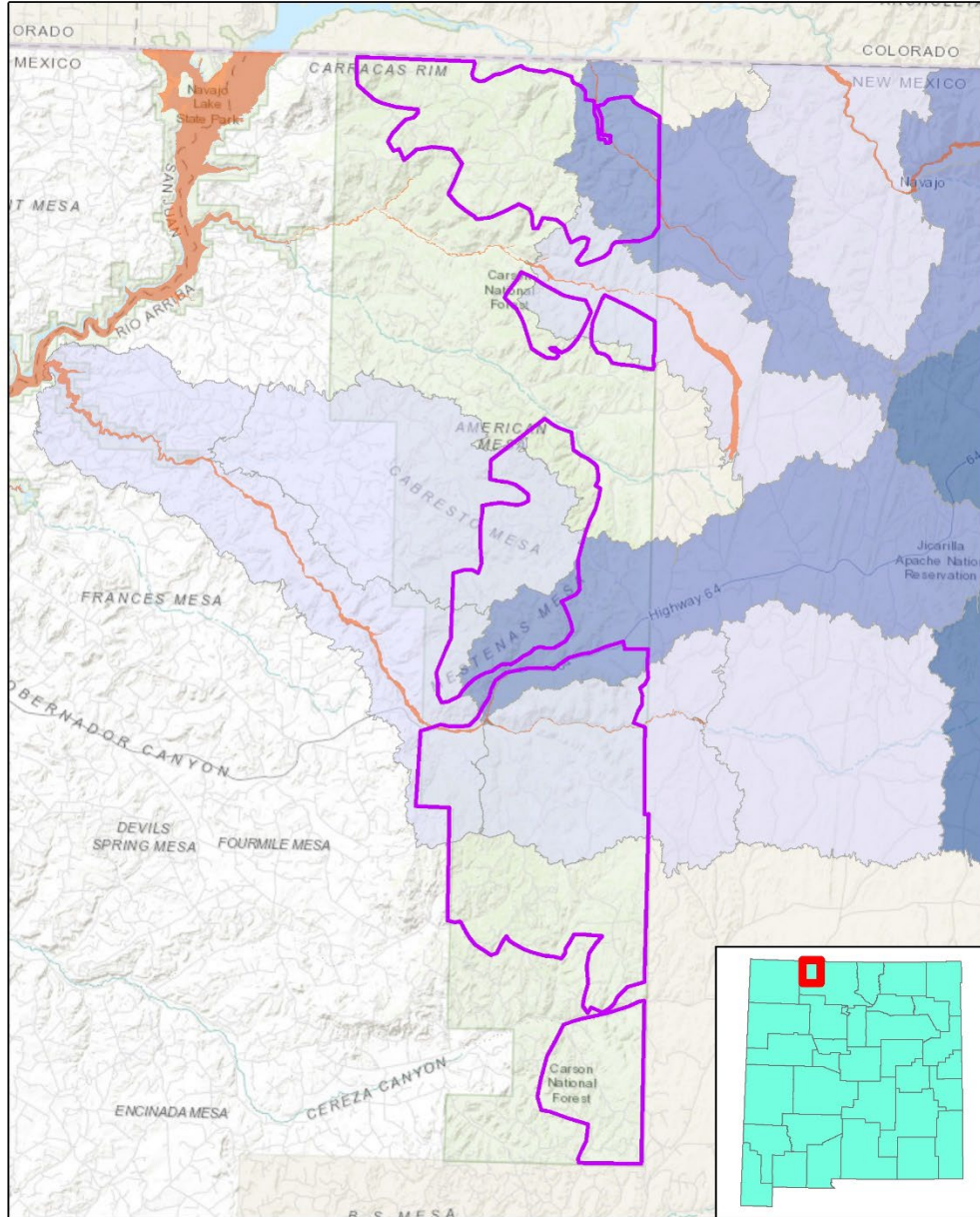
APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW MAP



APPENDIX D: PROJECT AREA MAPS



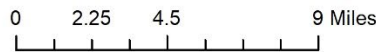
Jicarilla Forest Restoration



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

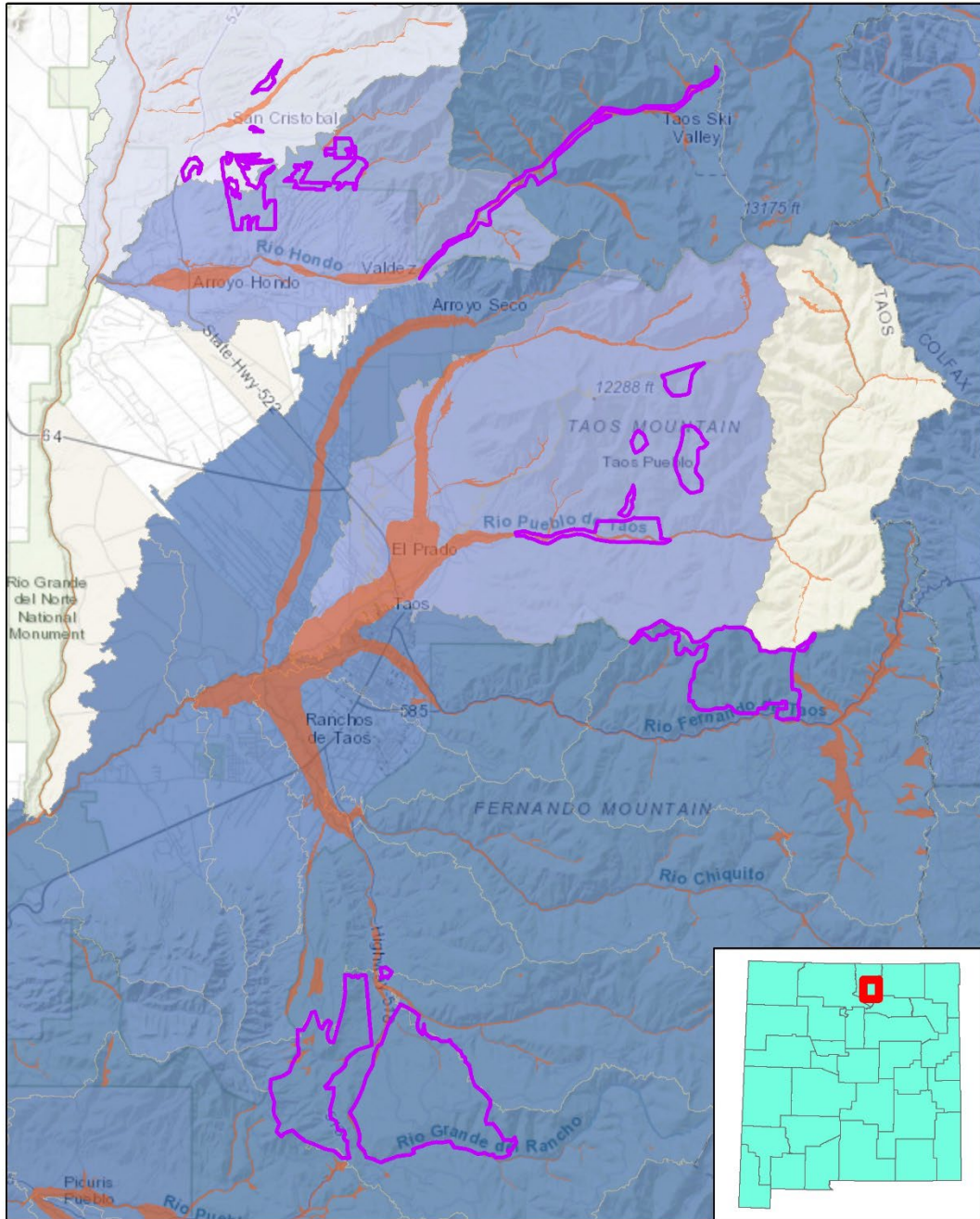
**Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure,
 and wildlife habitat)**

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





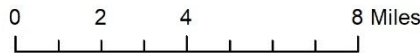
Taos Valley Watershed Coalition



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

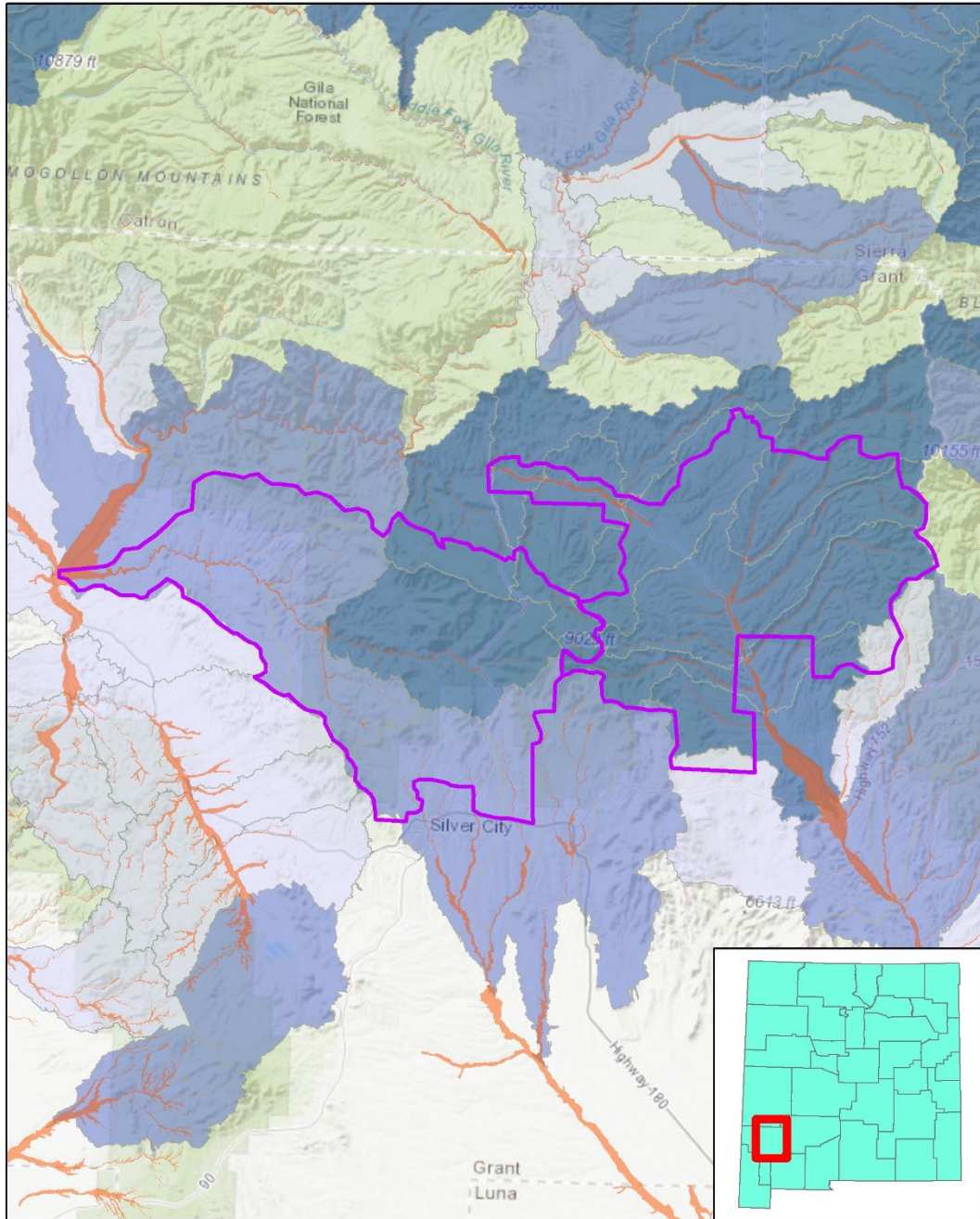
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





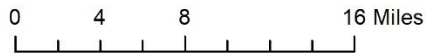
Mimbres to Signal Peak



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

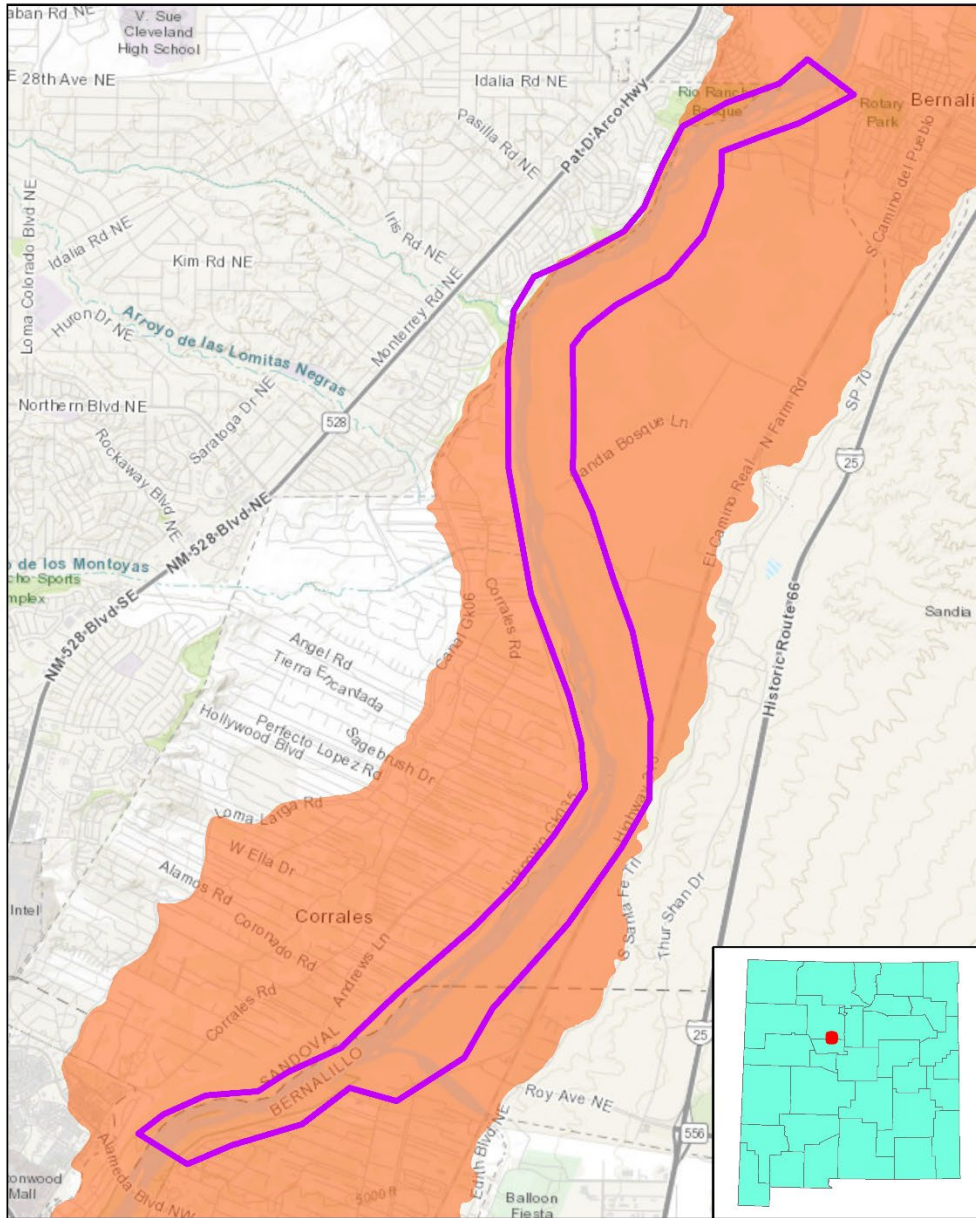
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





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

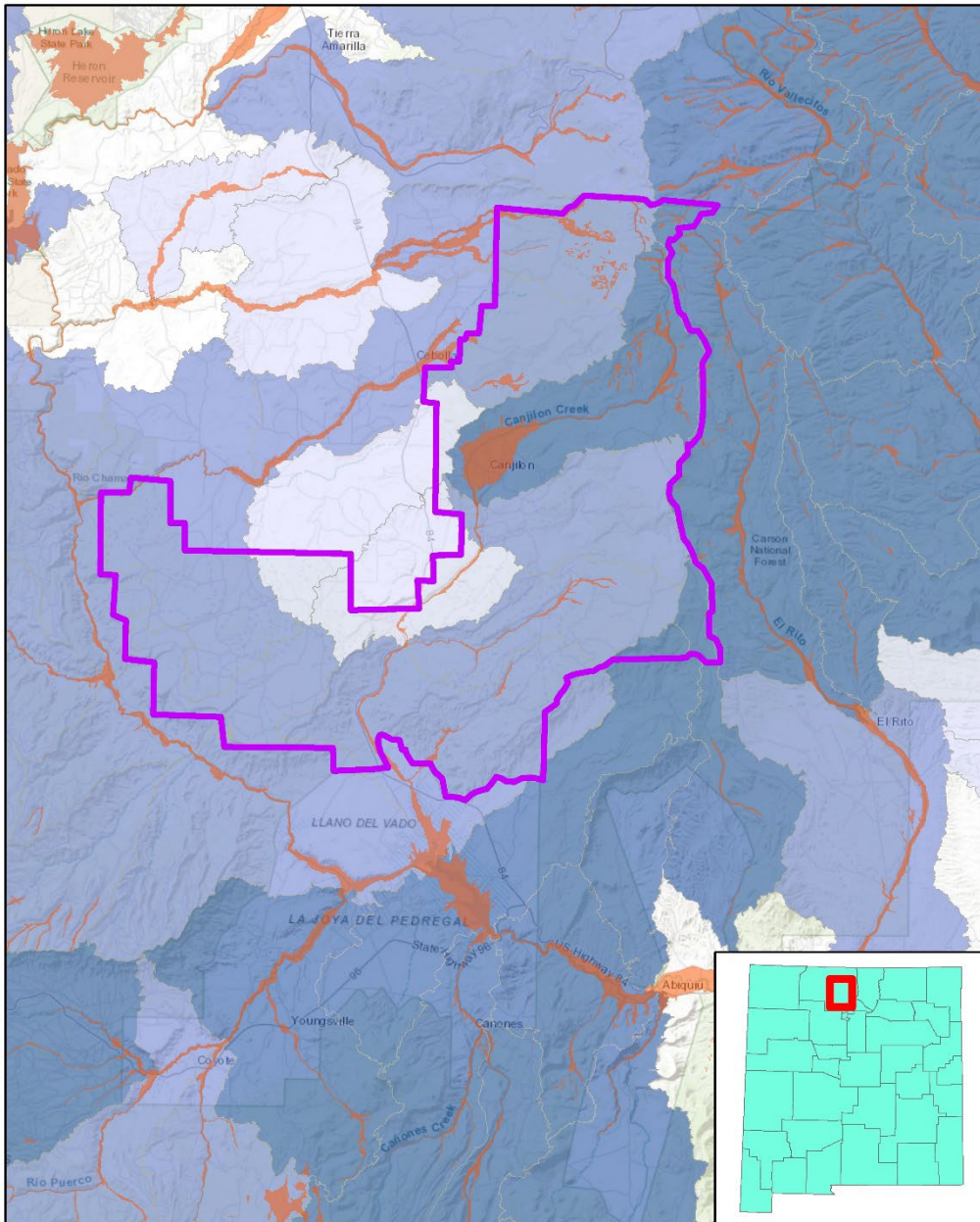
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





Cebolla-Nutrias Watershed



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

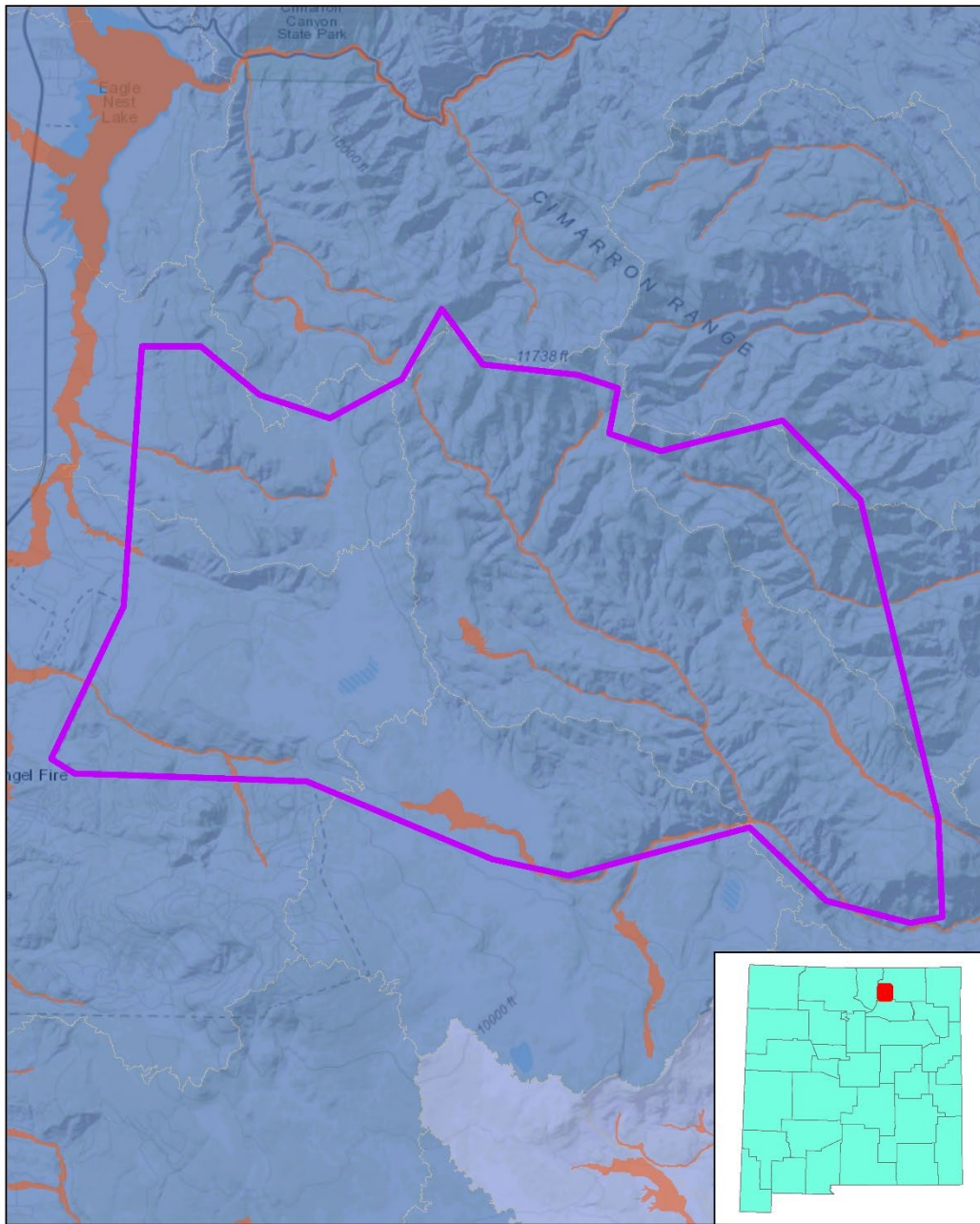
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





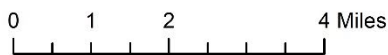
Cimarron Range



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

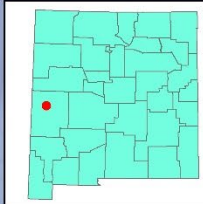
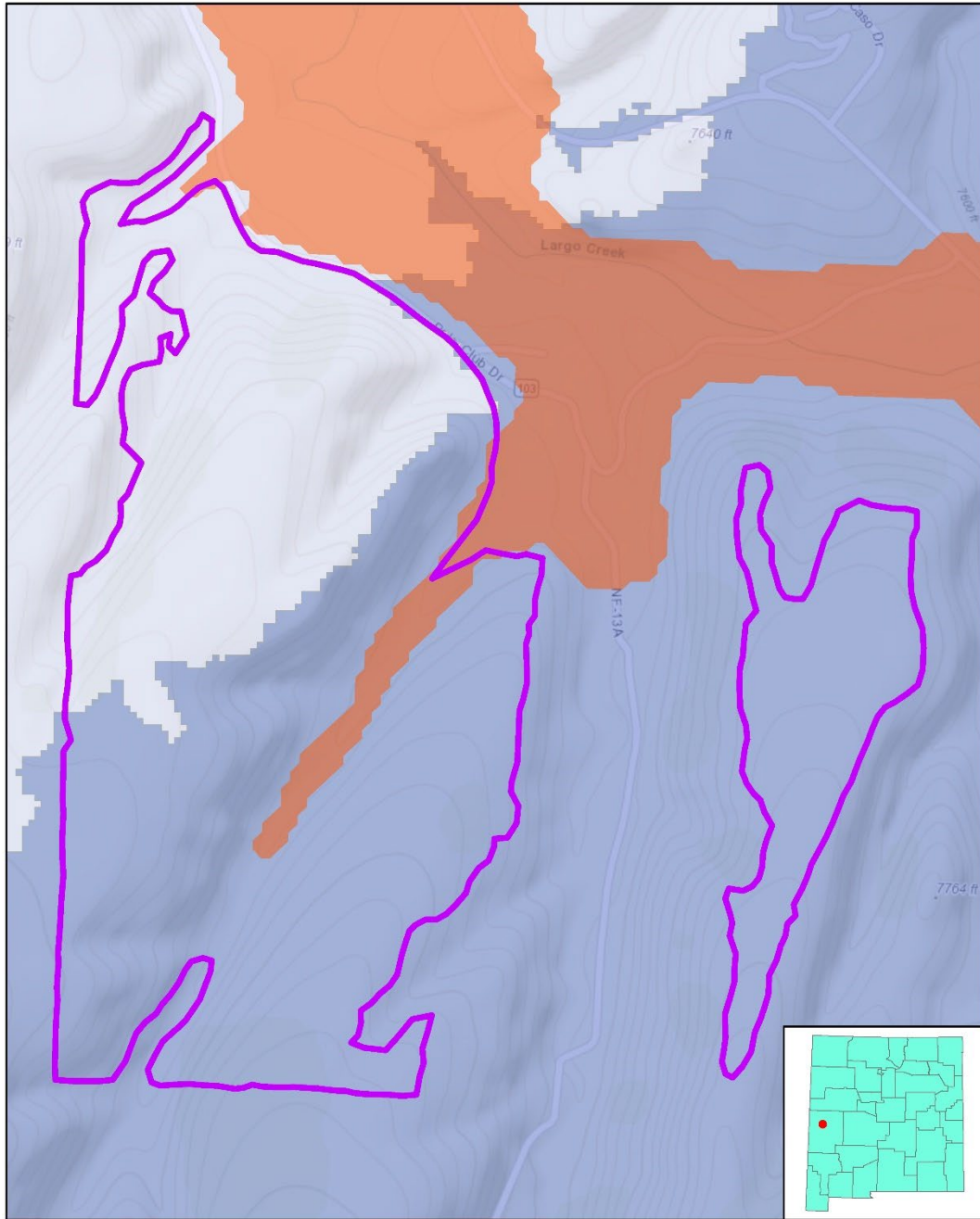
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





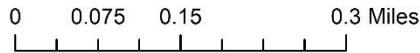
El Caso Restoration



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

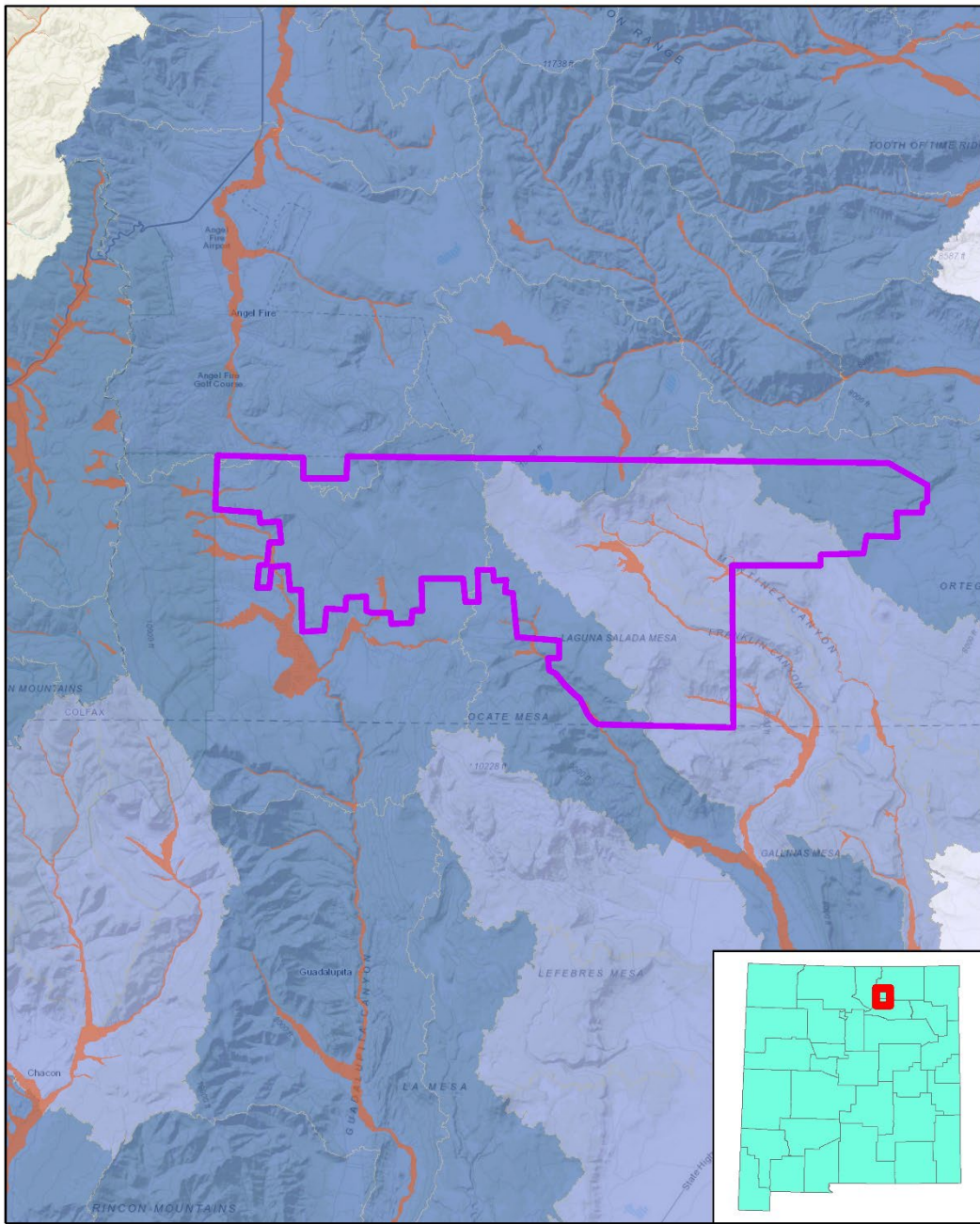
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





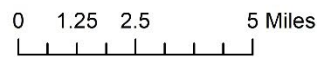
Upper Coyote Creek, Elk Ridge



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

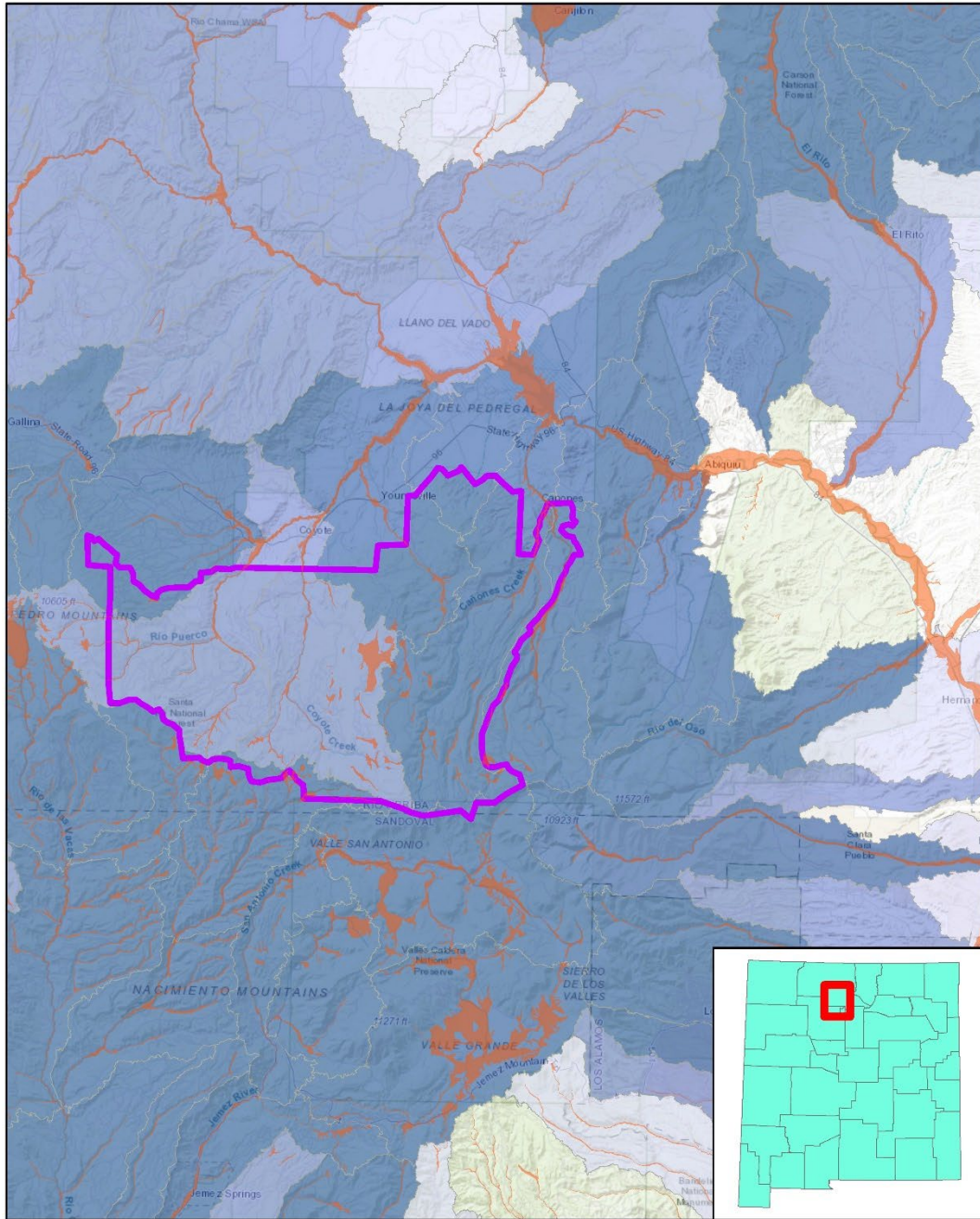
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





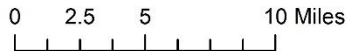
Encino Vista Landscape Restoration



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

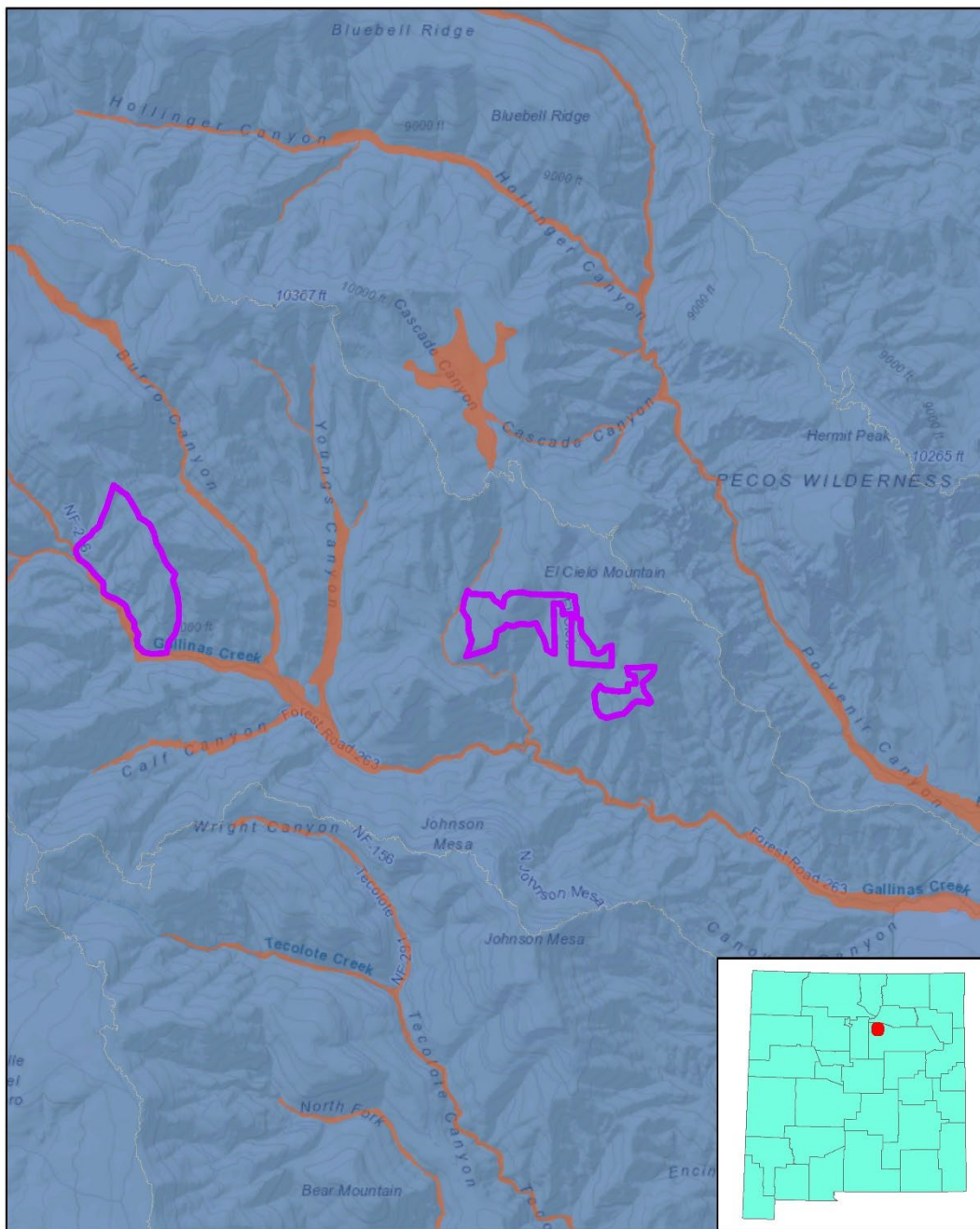
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





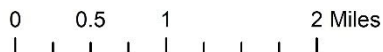
Gallinas Watershed Restoration Phase V



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
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 Date: 11/13/2020

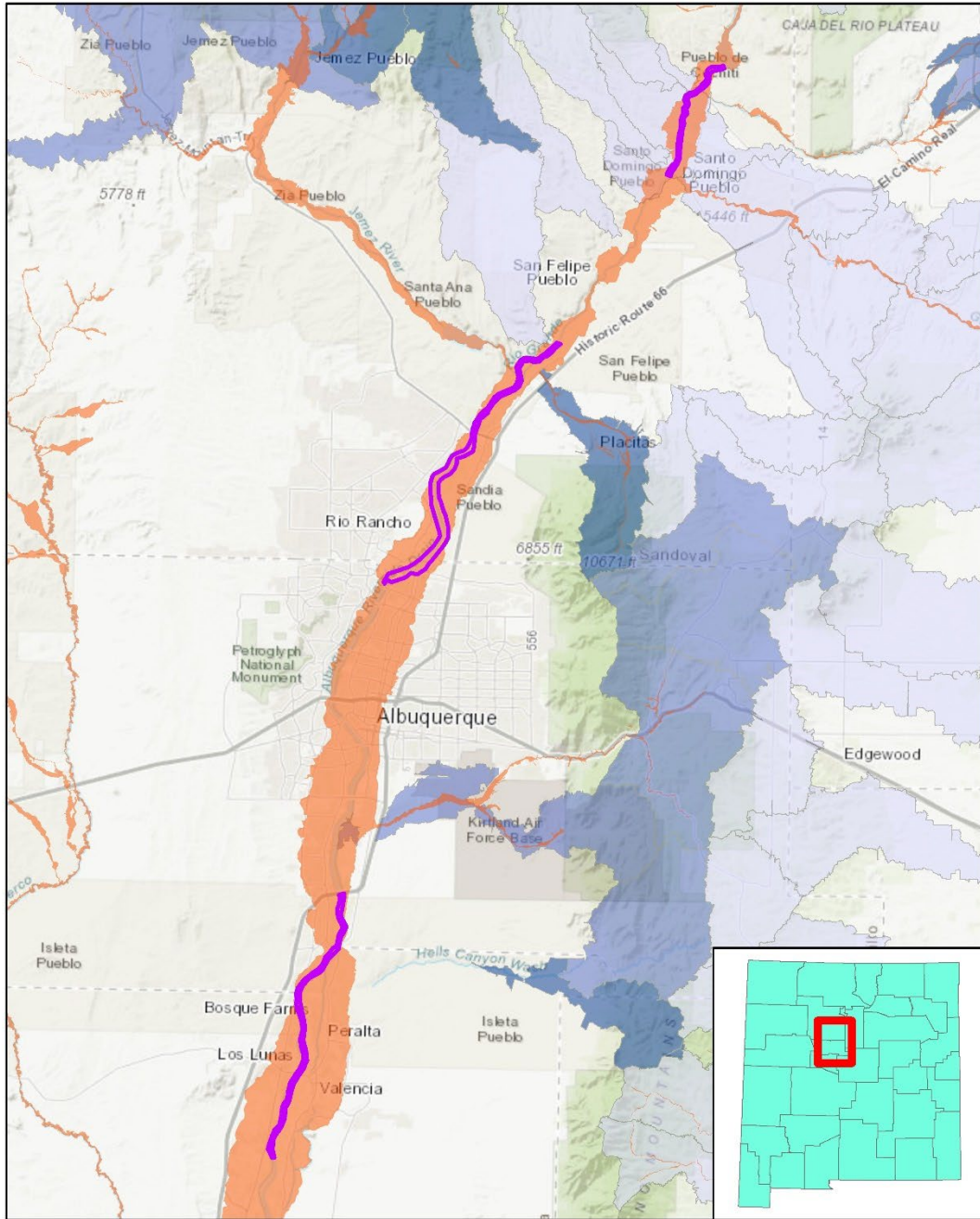
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





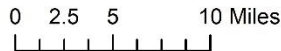
Middle Rio Grande Bosque



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

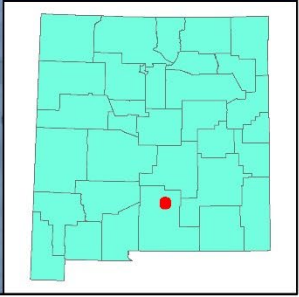
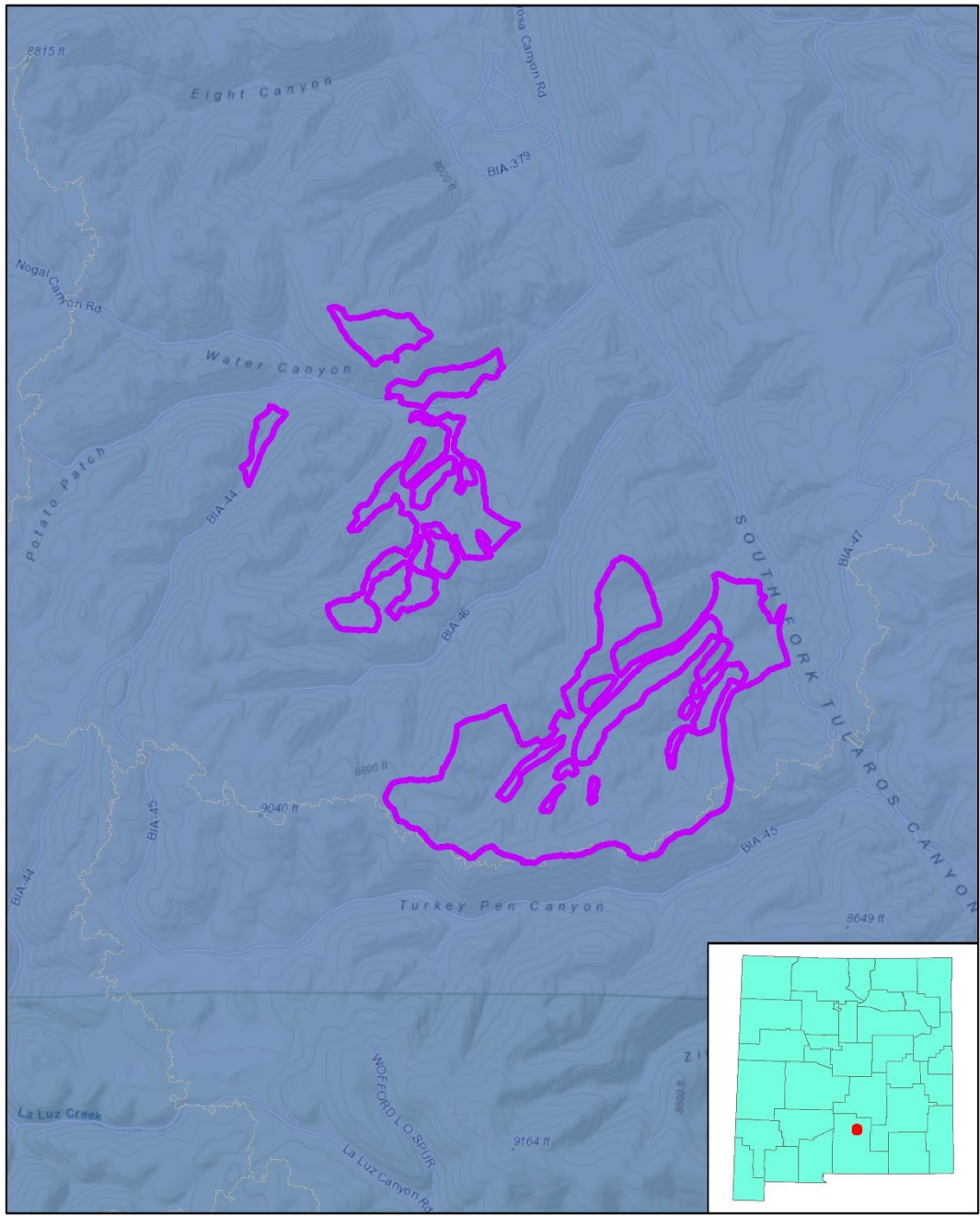
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





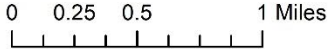
Red Cabin, No Name Springs #1



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

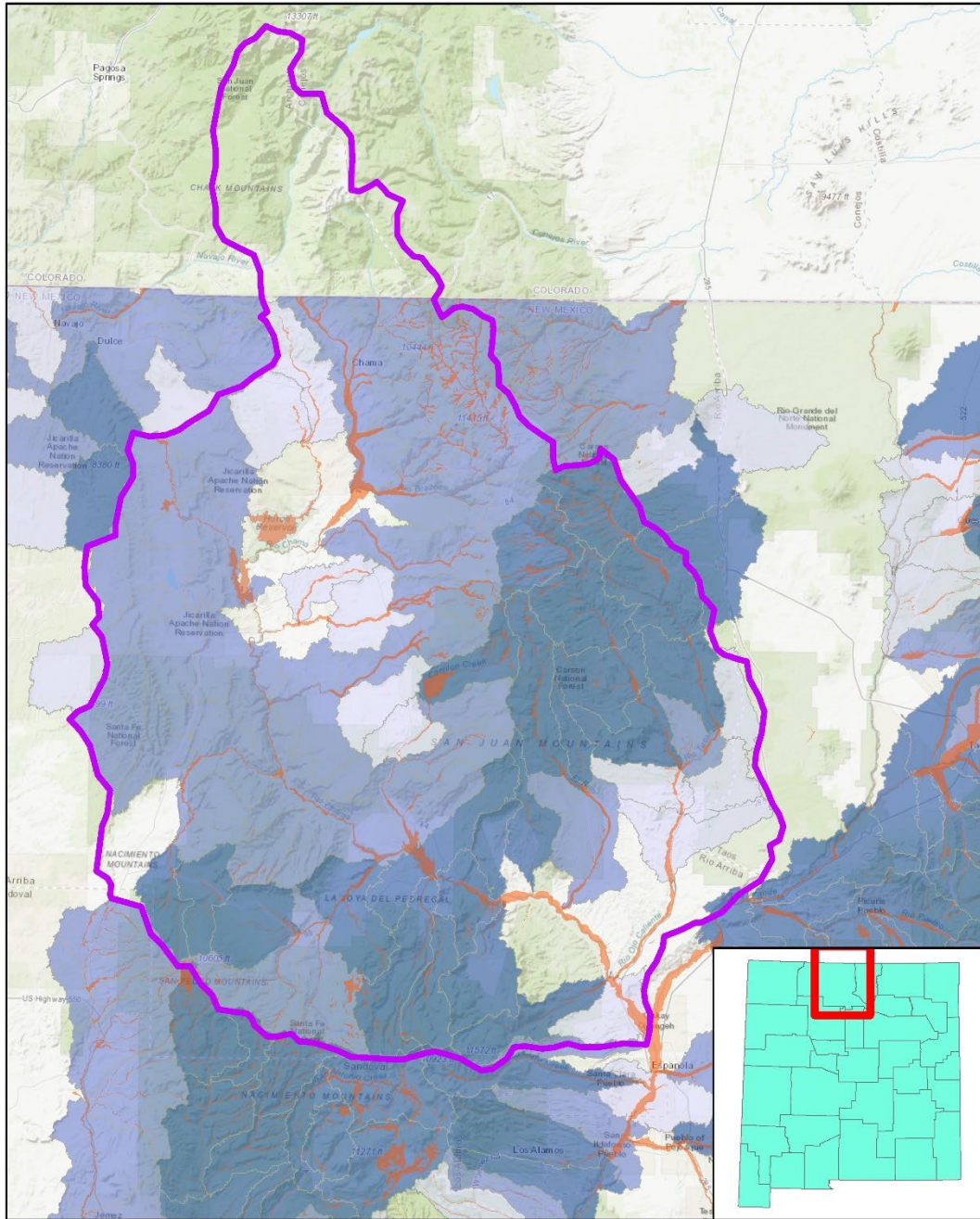
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





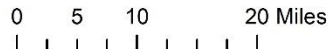
Rio Chama Watershed Restoration



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
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 Date: 11/13/2020

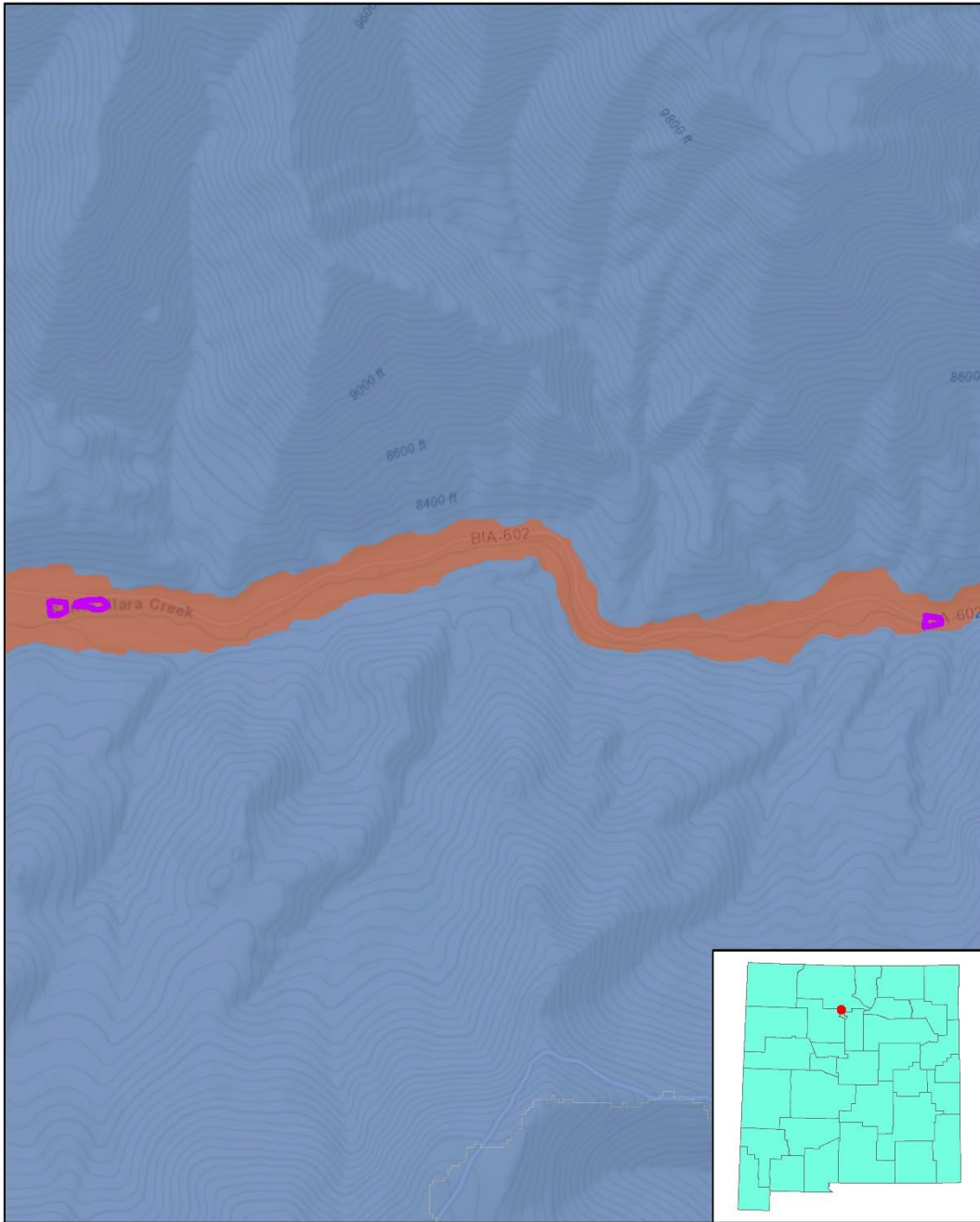
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





Santa Clara Creek Wetland Restoration



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

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

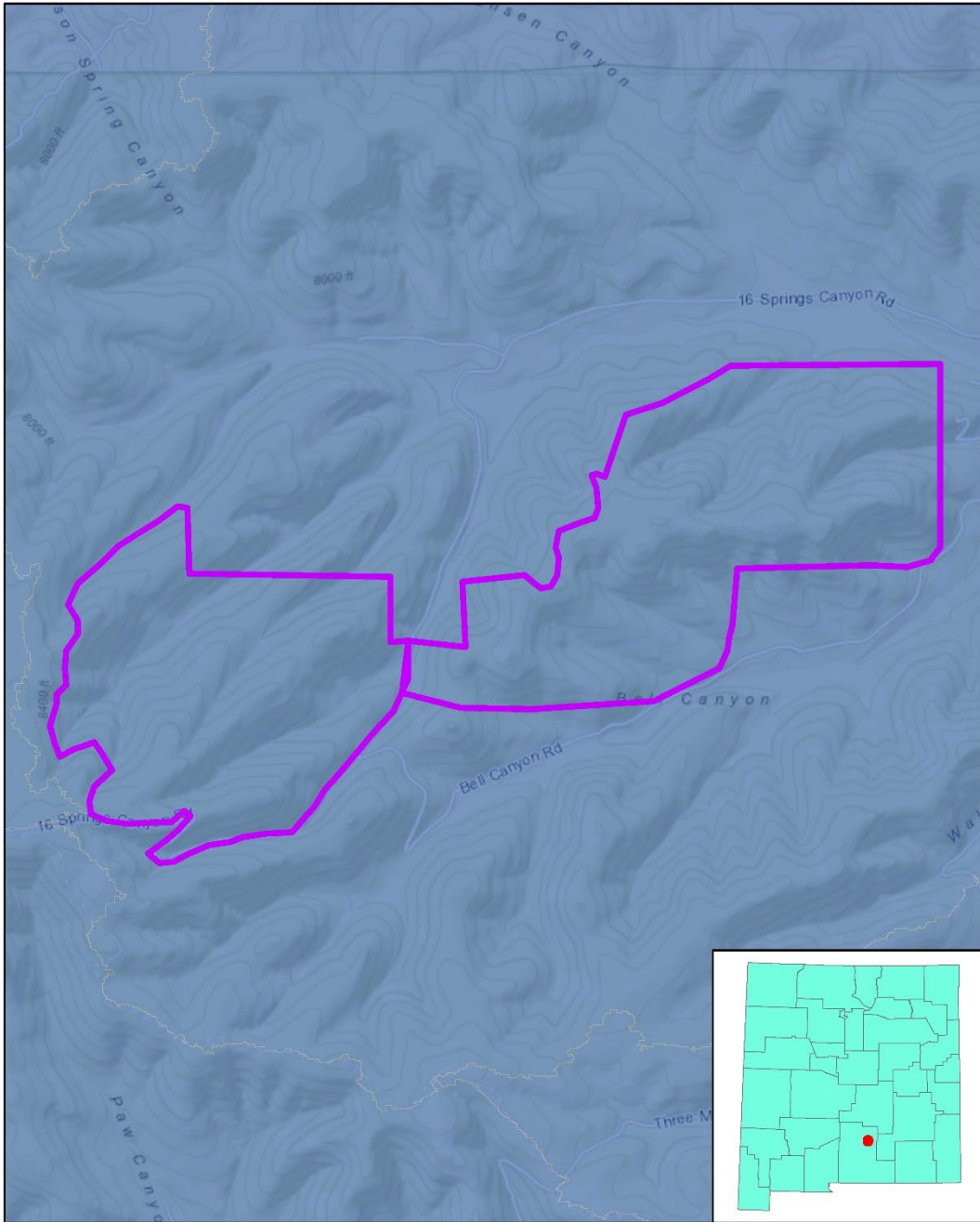
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles





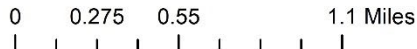
Sixteen Springs WUI



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

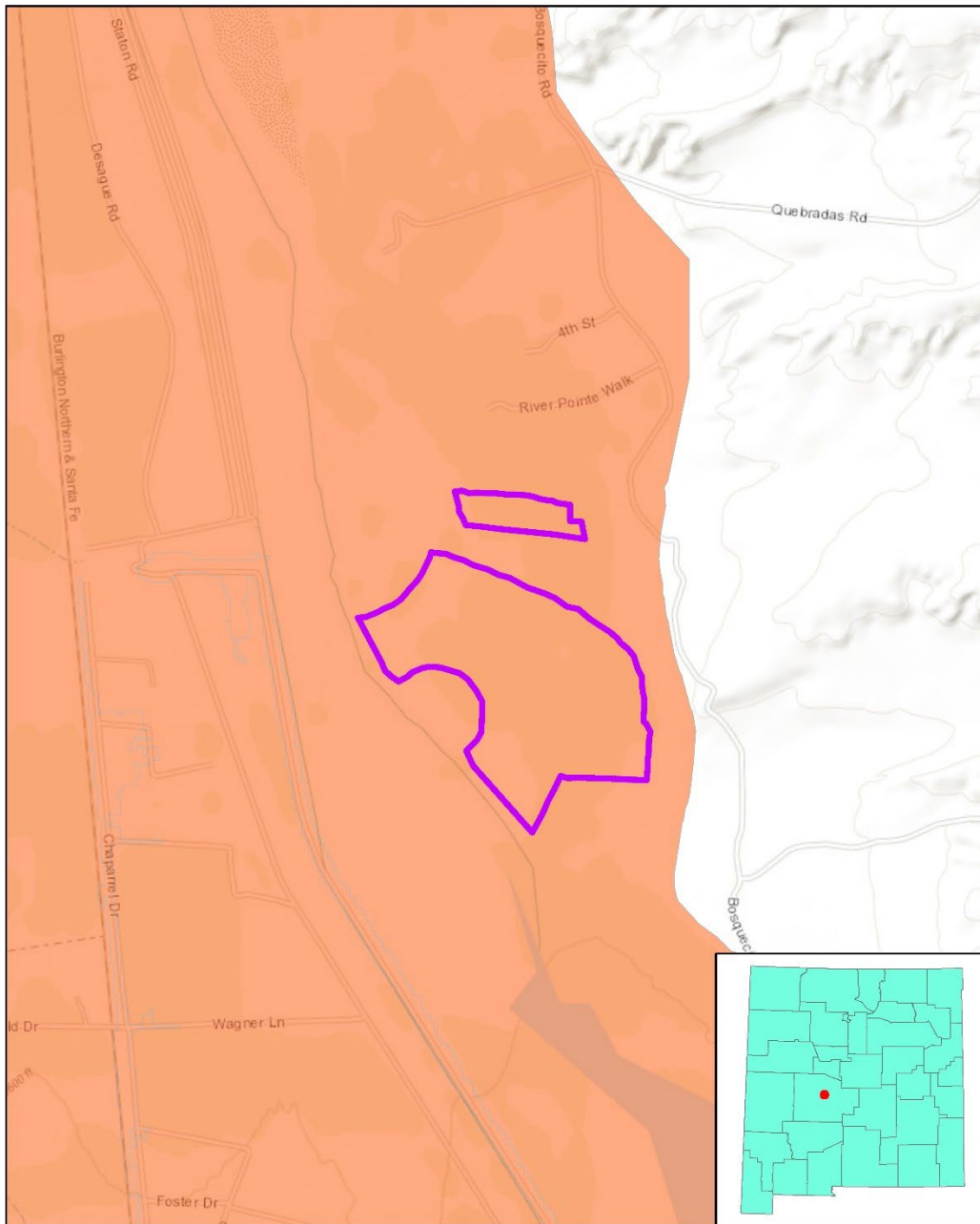
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





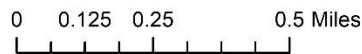
Socorro Escondida Wildlife Management Area



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
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 Date: 11/13/2020

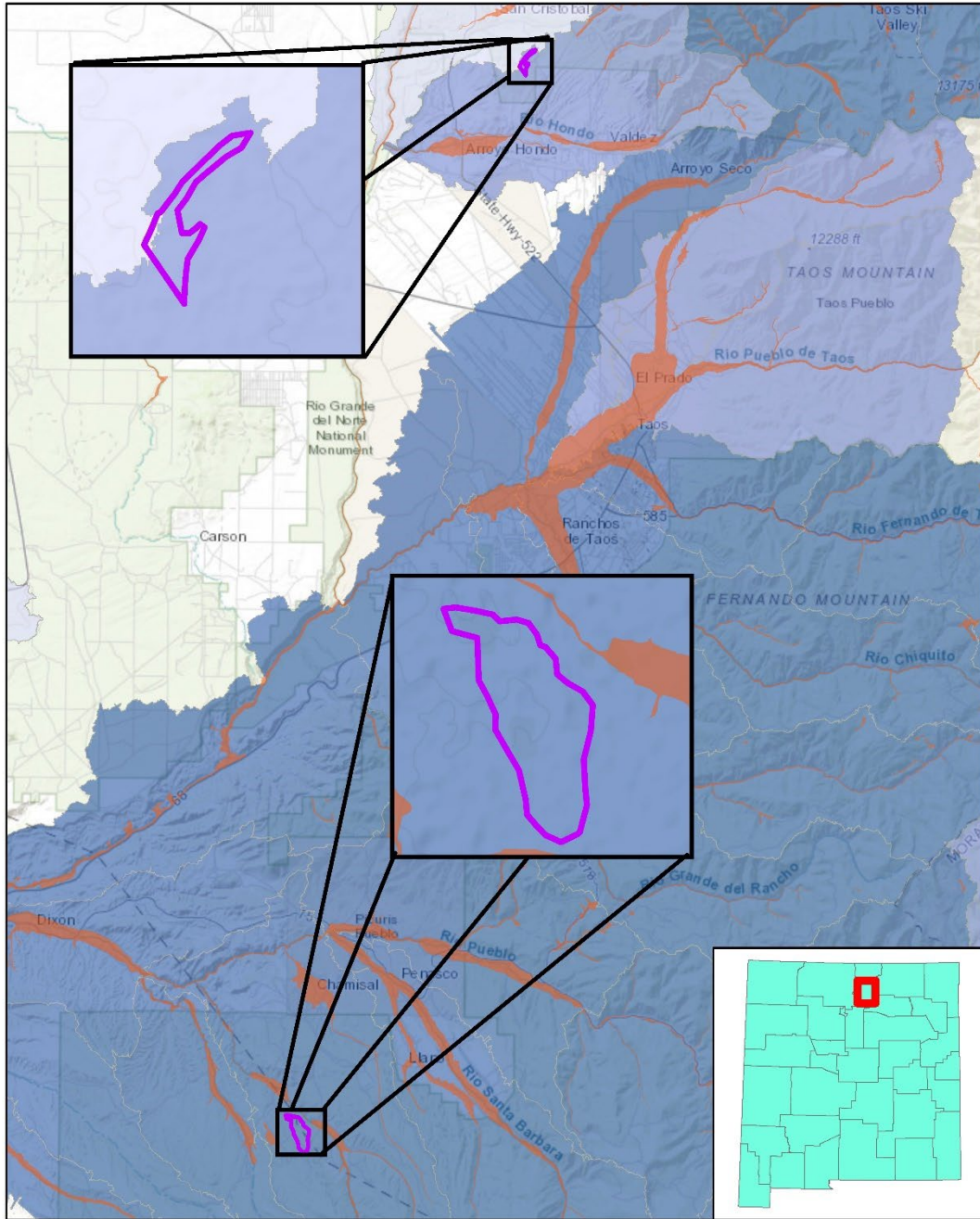
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





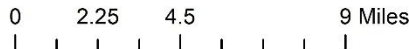
Trampas to San Cristobal Forest Restoration



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

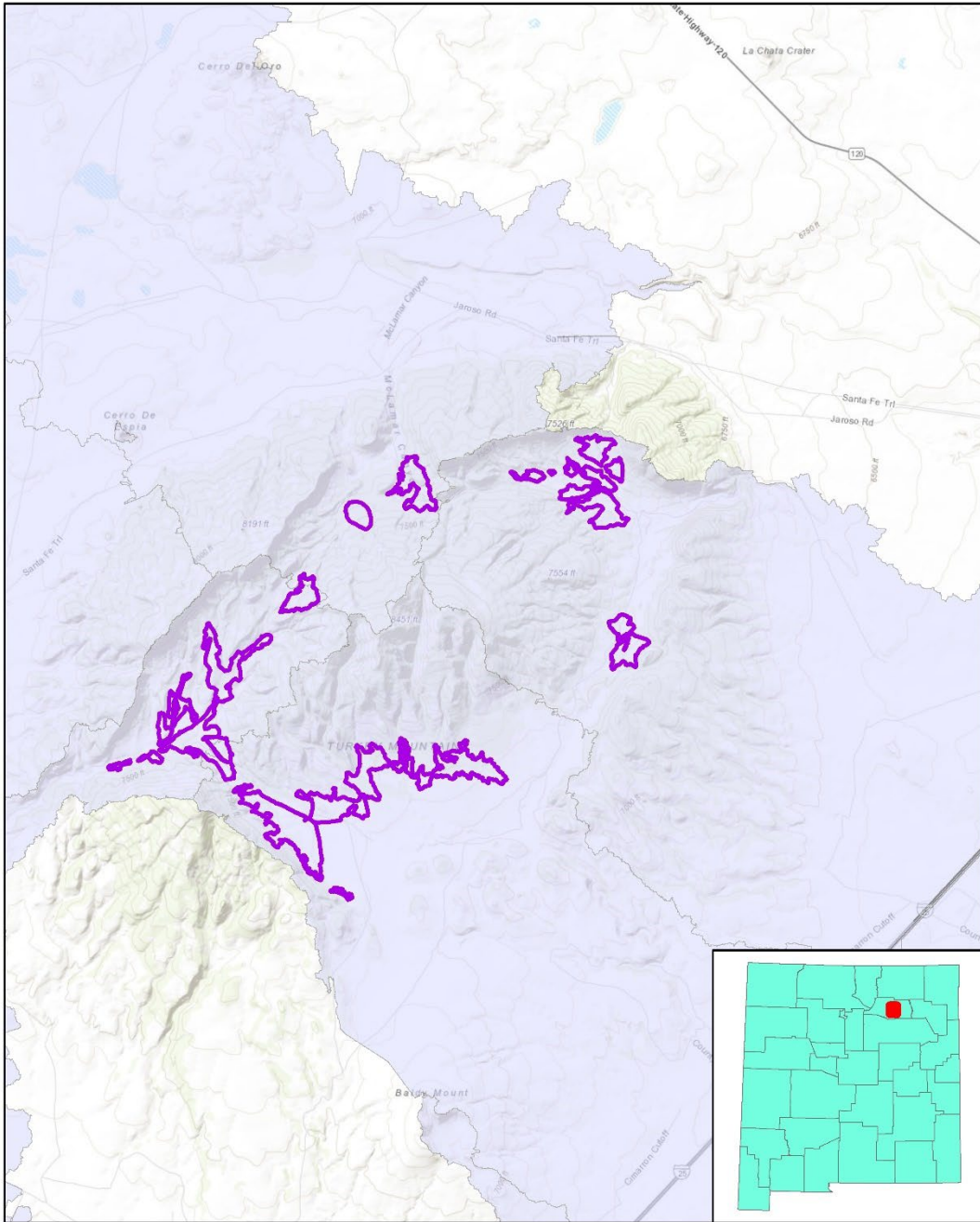
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





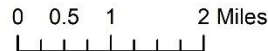
Turkey Mountain Watershed



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

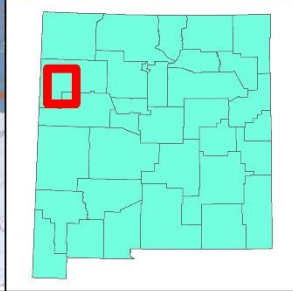
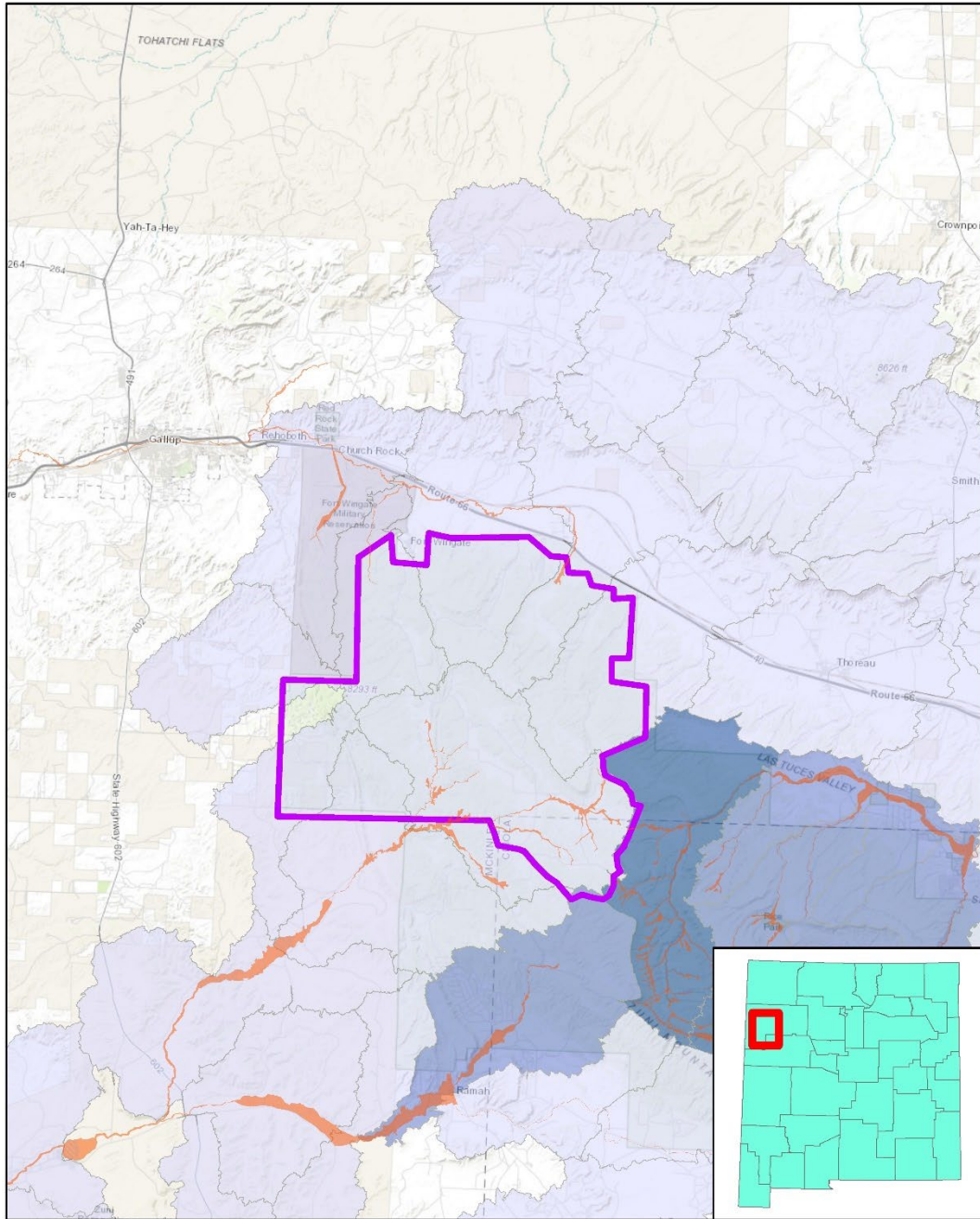
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

- 1 of 3 values are at risk
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- 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





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