

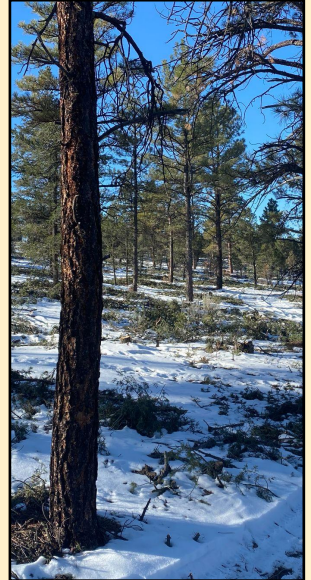
Land Grant Committee Meeting

Aug. 22
Peñasco, NM

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Taos County Forest and
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Promoting Watershed Protection, Traditional Uses and Economic Development with Land Grants



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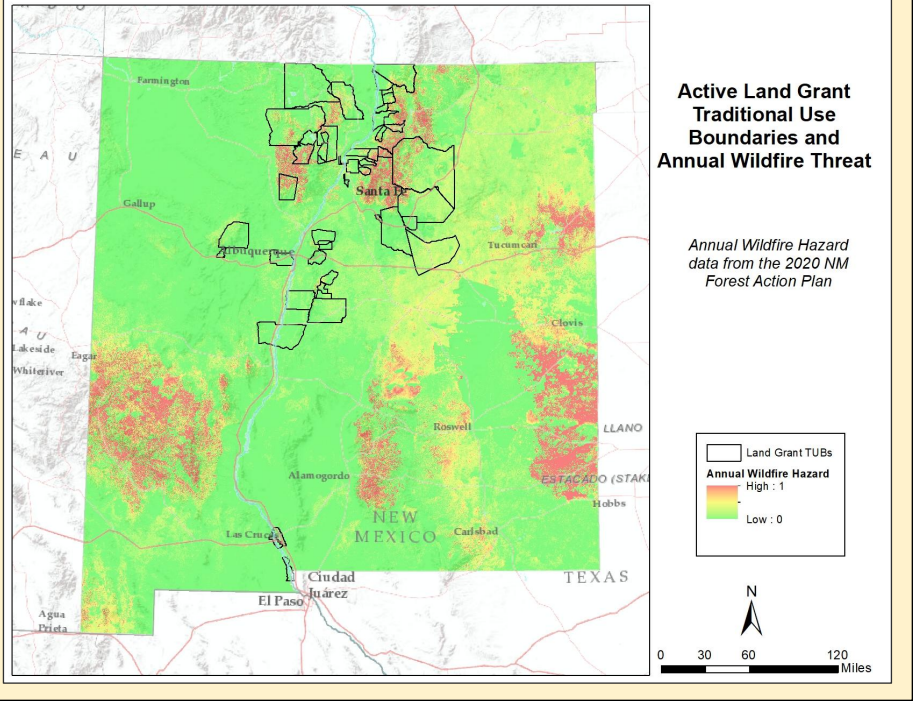
Topics to cover:

- Current wildfire threat to communities and watersheds, and connections with land grants statewide and in Taos County
- Recent examples of land grant involvement in wildfire risk reduction and harvest/distribution of forest products (e.g. firewood) on federal lands
- Opportunities for this committee and the legislature to augment and expand benefits of existing work by land grants

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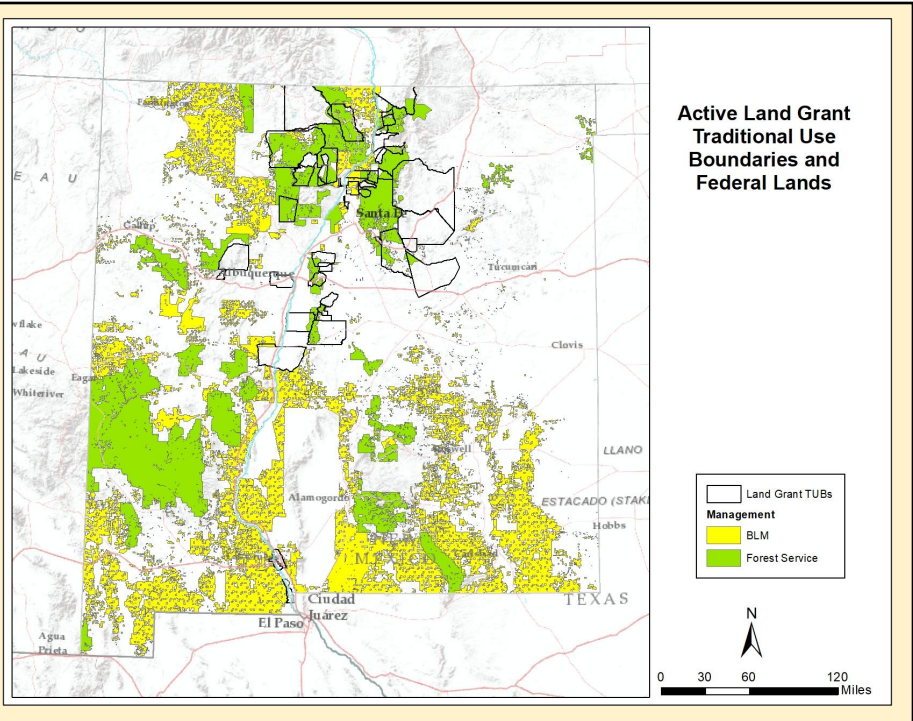
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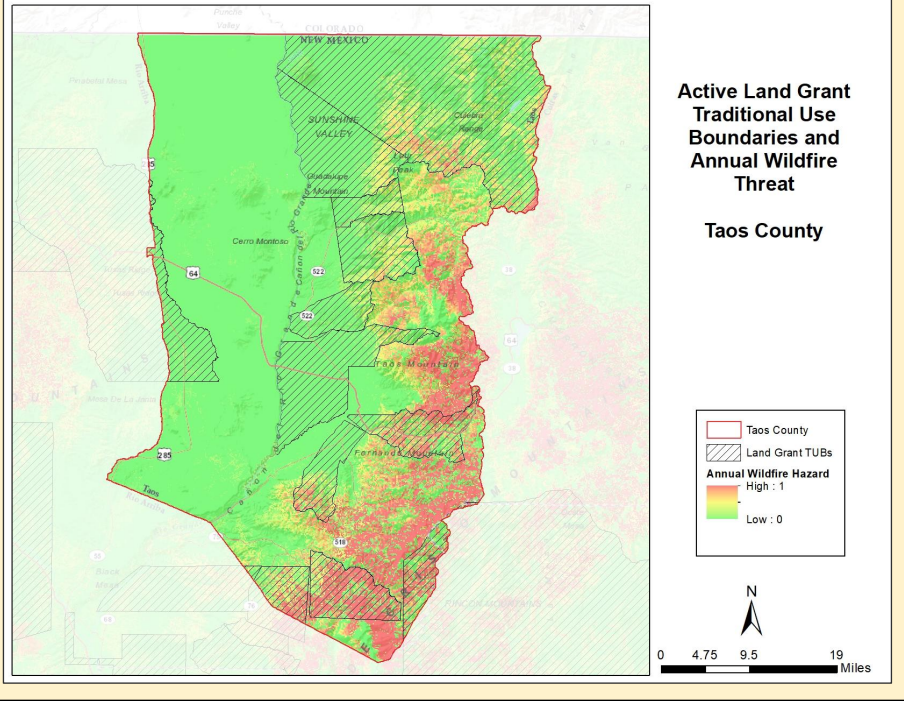
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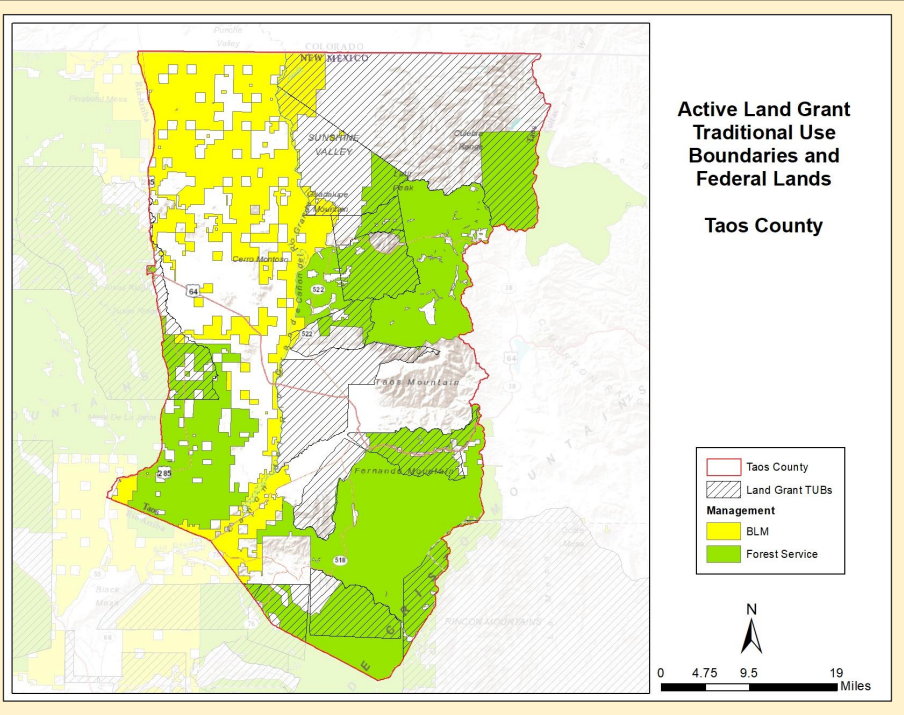
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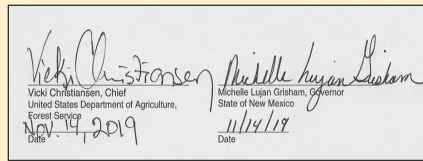
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- The Forestry Division and the Forest Service recognize traditional Hispanic communities, land grants, and acequias as essential participants in Shared Stewardship in order to protect, preserve, and enhance their spiritual and cultural heritage and access to resources and land.

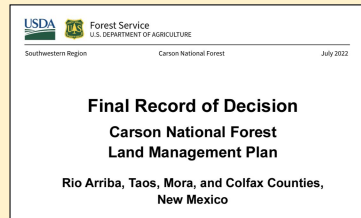


New Mexico Agreement for Shared Stewardship (2019)

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Topic 3: Support traditional and cultural ways of life

Recognition and inclusion of traditional communities (36 CFR 219.8(b), 36 CFR 219.10(b)(ii))

The final LMP recognizes and values the uniqueness of rural historic communities and the traditional uses that maintain these cultures. The long history and ties of rural historic communities and traditional uses (such as livestock grazing, fuelwood gathering, acequias, and hunting) to NFS lands and resources are understood and appreciated. The final LMP provides sustainable grazing, fuelwood, water for irrigation (acequias), and other forest products and makes those resources available to rural historic communities and federally recognized tribes for cultural and traditional needs, subsistence practices, and economic support. It focuses on incorporating community perspectives, needs, and concerns, as well as traditional knowledge, into project design and decisions.

Carson National Forest Land Management Plan (2022)

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From Rhetoric to Results:

- Federal and state agencies are saying the right things, both in public and in agreements/plans
- Turning those talking points and bullet points into action can be complicated, but it is possible
- This committee and the state legislature can make it easier for land grants to play a more active role in the management and restoration of our forests and watersheds.

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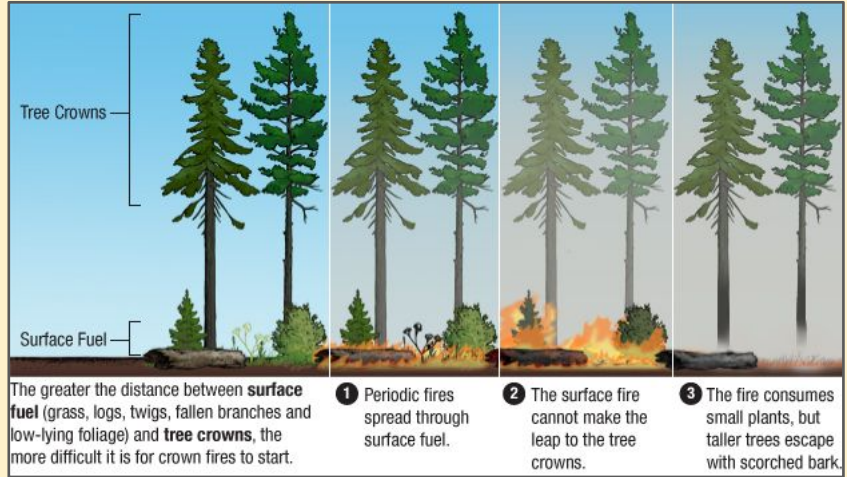
Why Land Grants?

- Centuries-old connections to forests and watersheds, with a vested interest in long-term ecological, cultural and economic health of their communities
- Political subdivisions of the state with access to government funding sources
- Hyper-local form of government in rural New Mexico made up of consistent, respected local leaders
- Partially protected from liability in state statute, through changes are needed.

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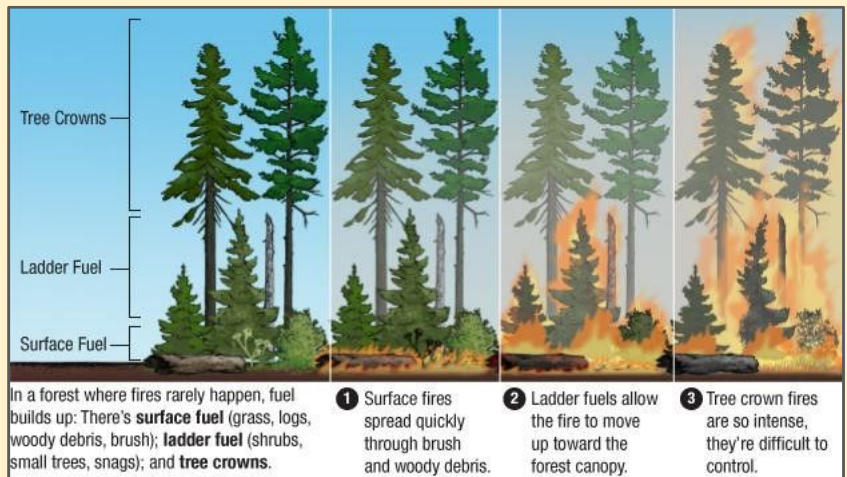


“Good fire” in dry forest ecosystems

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“Bad fire” in dry forest ecosystems

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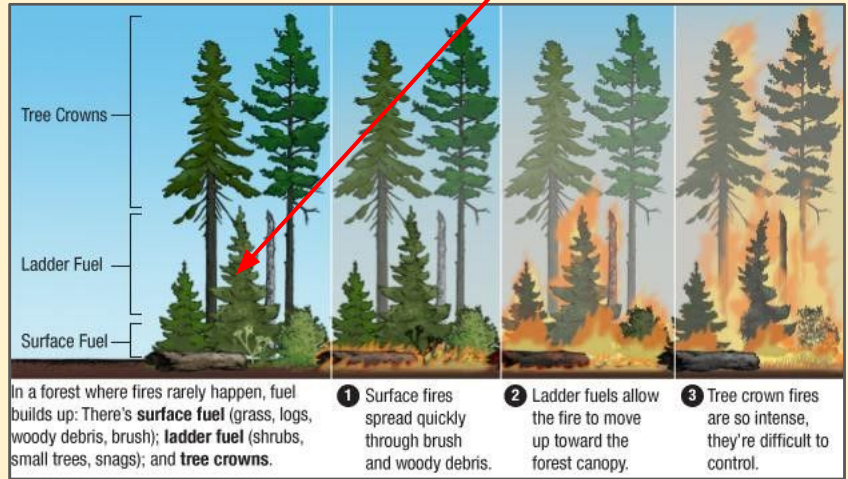
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Firewood



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“Forest Mayordomo” Projects

- Empowers communities to resume stewardship of traditional lands
- Increases access to forest resources while protecting communities and watersheds from high-severity wildfire
- Strengthens cultural and generational connections to forested lands, and fosters long-term care of our forests and watersheds

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“Forest Mayordomo” Projects

- Projects locations are developed in partnership with land manager (in Taos County, this is usually the Forest Service).
- Thinning units are divided into 1-acre blocks that are issued to local residents (*leñeros*) under the supervision of a forest mayordomo.
- Leñeros can keep all cut wood and are paid \$300 for each completed acre

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“Forest Mayordomo” Projects

- We now have 10 forest mayordomo projects that are already completed or currently being implemented in Taos County
- All projects add up to 938 acres of forest restoration treatments
- Combined, these projects are the equivalent of 4,690 cords of firewood and \$281,000 in payments to leñeros.

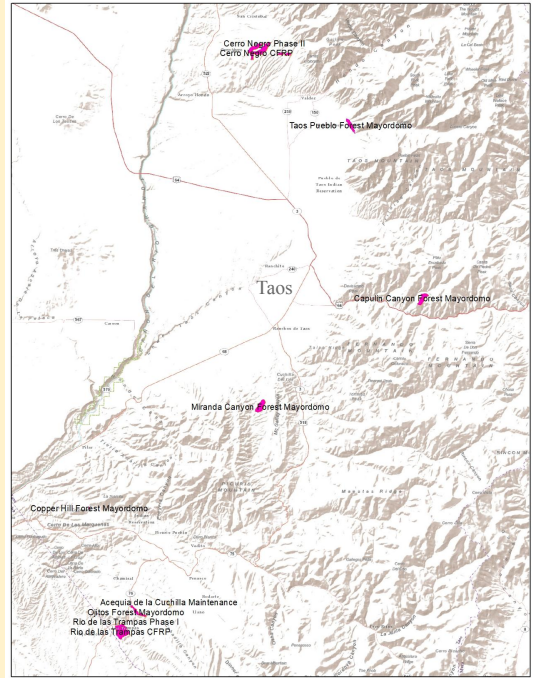
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Locations of
current forest
mayordomo
projects in
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CO-MANAGEMENT



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How Can We Expand This Concept:

- Land grants need a change to NMSA 41-4-30 to give them the same protections as acequias under the Tort Claims Act (see NMSA 41-4-13)
- Capital Outlay to land grants for the purchase of property/buildings/equipment to create woodlots that add value to forest products like firewood
- Funding commitment to the New Mexico Land Grant Council to hire a full-time Natural Resources Manager to support land grants statewide.

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Questions?



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