Tierra Y Montes SWCD

Local Forest Management

New Mexico State Legislature, Water & Natural Resources Committee

Function of the local Soil and Water Conservation District

- To take available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so they meet the needs of the local land user.

Soil & Water Conservation Districts

- Unique entity-Have the statutory authority to implement work across all landownership types with the proper agreements and permissions.
- Public Land-Local, State and Federal
- Private Land

Tierra Y Montes SWCD Local Forest Management over the Last 20 years

- Primarily utilized grant funding from United States Forest Service (USFS) and NM State Forestry
- Bulk of funding was USFS in origin
- USFS → NMSF → TYMSWCD

Forest Treatment Grants Administered by Tierra Y Montes SWCD

Funding Source	Grant Period	Location	Acres Treated	Funding Utilized	Description of Activities
NMSF; USFS	2002-04	Gallinas Watershed	118	190,374.76	Hazardous Fuels Reduction
USFS	2004-2010	Gallinas Watershed	270	$ 349,269.00	Reduce fire hazard, improve watershed conditions
NMSF: USFS	2006-2007	San Miguel County	75	$ 70,688.00	Reduce fire hazard, improve watershed conditions
NMSF: USFS	2005-2010	Mora & San Miguel Counties	2,100	$ 1,200,000.00	Reduce fire hazard, improve watershed conditions
NMSF; USFS	2011-13	San Miguel County	479.65	$ 243,000.00	Reduce hazardous fuels
NMSF; USFS	2011-13	Mora & San Miguel Counties	560.34	$ 270,000.00	Woody biomass reduction; reduce fire risk
NMSF; USFS	2013-15	Las Dispensas	256.1	$ 255,000.00	Reduce Wildfire Risk
NMSF; USFS	2014-15	City Reserviors	40	$ 66,000.00	Reduce Ladder Fuels
NMSF; USFS	2015-17	Land around City Reservoirs	230	$ 253,000.00	Reduce wildfire risk, improve watershed conditions
NMSF; USFS	2015-17	Pendaries	111.23	$ 165,000.00	Reduce wildfire risk
NMSF; USFS	2017-19	Mineral Hill	188	$ 249,529.00	Reduce wildfire risk
NMSF; USFS	2019-21	Pendaries	83.6	$ 132,000.00	Reduce wildfire risk
			4393.92	$ 3,253,486.00	

Treatment Types

- Primarily hand thinning- chainsaw
- Chipping, lop and scatter
- Defensible space around homes
- Thinning forested acres

Before and after treatment

During Treatment

Did these treatments make a difference in the state's largest disaster (HPCC Fire)?

- Have seen evidence that treatments did positively alter fire behavior
- City of Las Vegas Reservoirs-2 treatments over 4 year period. Fire dropped to understory. Allowed fire personnel to actively engage and reduce impact of fire around municipal water supply.
- Several treatment sites scattered throughout fire showed similar results while neighboring properties that were not treated were completely consumed.
- Important to point out that some treated sites also experienced complete crown mortality

Challenges to getting work done on the ground

- Funding-treatments are labor intensive and not cheap ~$1,000-$4,000/acre depending on contractor and treatment type
- Terrain and access to site
- Landowner buy-in/willingness to participate
- The right treatment in the right place-often we are scouting project sites to fit grant criteria
- Watershed scale-linked acreage across all landowner types will have a greater impact than smaller scattered treatments

How do we as a state accomplish what needs to be done to reduce catastrophic fire threat and subsequent flooding impacts?

- Thinning operations will need to take place at a scale that we have not seen in New Mexico.
- No one entity or organization can take this on alone
- Collaborations and partnerships are key
- Funding-Future Federal funding is ???????????

Potential actionable items within the State of New Mexico

- Increase funding for forest management treatments- either through existing opportunities or the creation of new opportunities
- Increase funding available to SWCD's and other land management agencies with the proven ability to get work done on the ground

Desired outcomes

- Reduce catastrophic fire threat through mitigation/treatment beforehand
- Reduction in catastrophic fire can reduce flooding impacts following fires
- Reduction in catastrophic fire can also reduce the need to reforest after fires
- Knowing that there are limitations in funding and resources, implement treatments in areas with the highest likelihood of reducing catastrophic fire and flooding impacts