

Restoring Forest and Watershed Health and Resilience

Presentation to the
Legislative Finance Committee

June 24, 2021

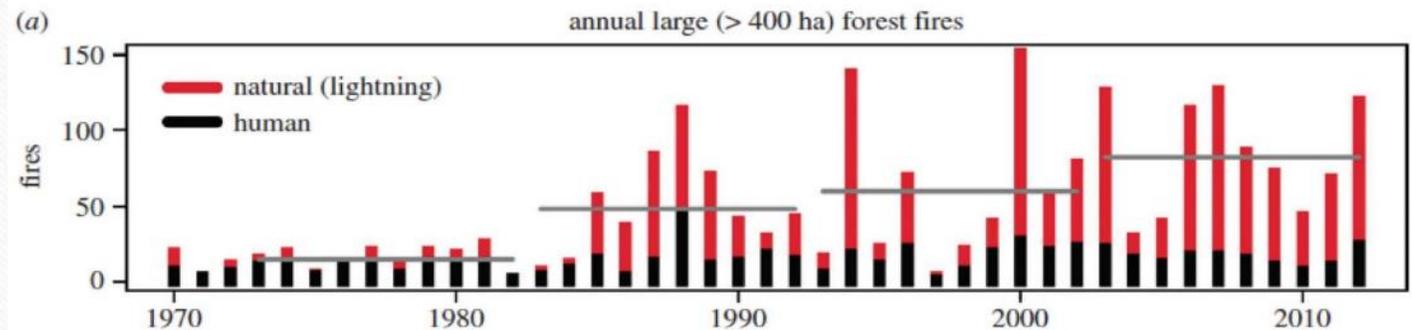
Changing Wildfire Environment

Longer fires seasons and more extreme fire behavior lead to:

- Increased threats to human life, health and property
- Water source damage
- Loss of forests and rangeland

Governor's Executive Order 2019-003

Decadal Wildfire Increase



Southwest

+462%

Westerling (2016)

Wildfire in NM: Not if, but when?

2020 Fire Season

- 504 fires on state and private lands (federal, municipal and tribal fires are not included in this tally)
- 46,209 acres state and private land affected

2 consecutive weak monsoon seasons

Below average winter precipitation



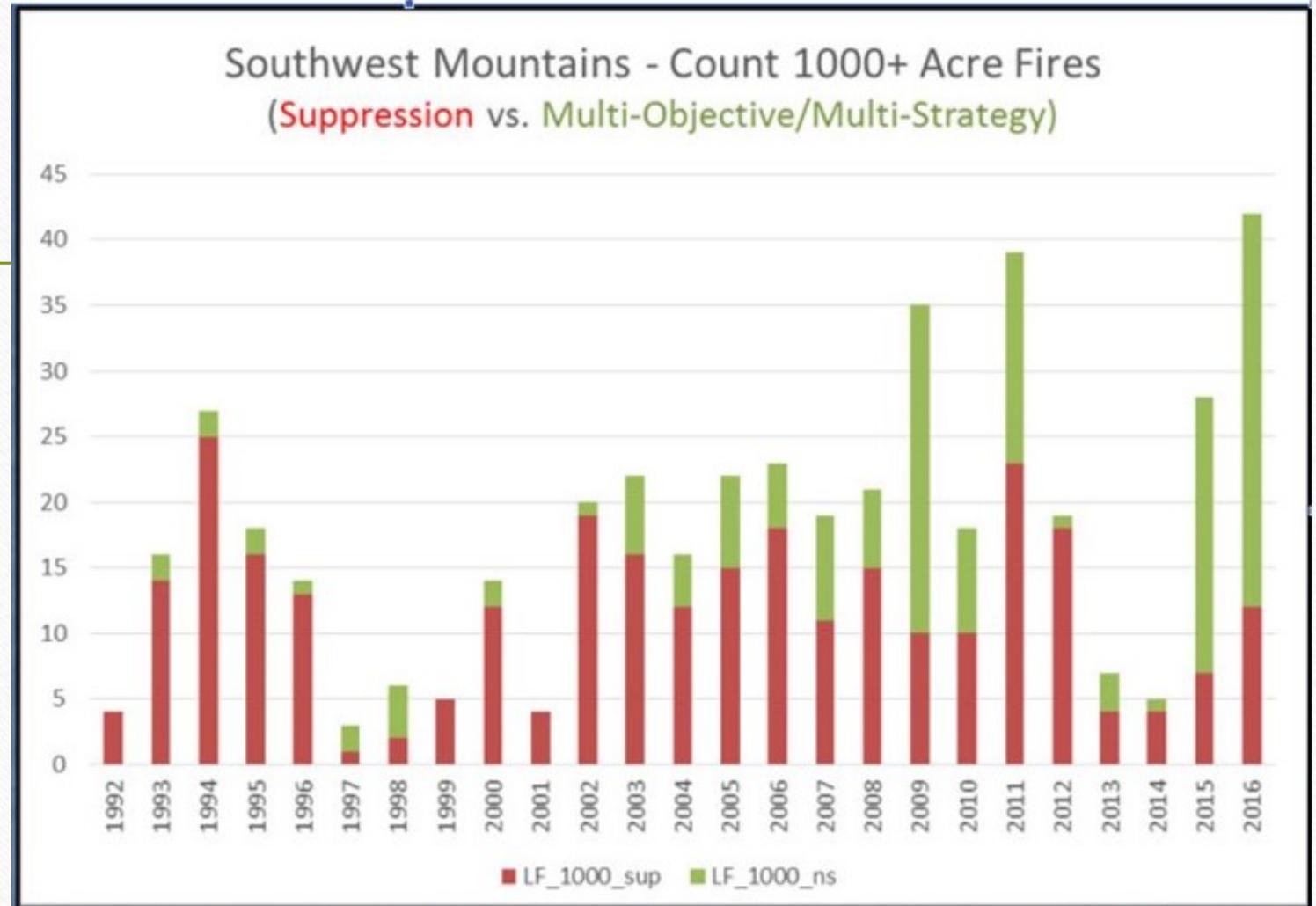
Fire Response Capability

- State Type II Initial Attack crews and all-terrain Type 6 engines
- Inmate Work Camp Type II crews
- Municipal, County and Volunteer Fire Departments



Evolving fire management strategy

The type of fire matters as much as the number and size

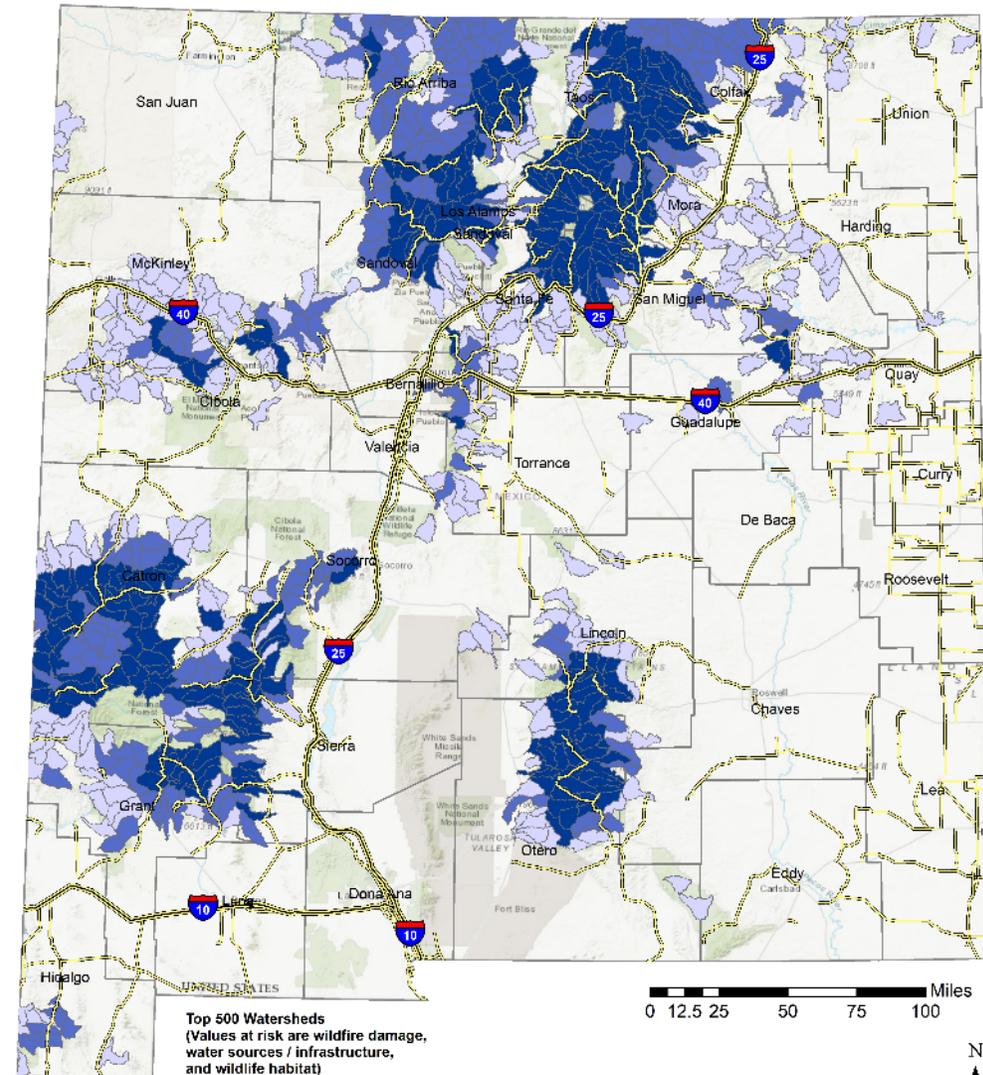


2020-2030 Forest Action Plan

- Identified the “Top 500” out of 3,219 HUC 12 watersheds based on wildfire risk to:
 - communities
 - water source areas
 - wildlife, fish and plants
- Expert and stakeholder engagement
- Climate change modeling



Top 500 Watersheds in New Mexico



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

- 1 of 3 values at risk
- 2 of 3 values at risk
- 3 of 3 values at risk
- Highways
- Interstates

0 12.5 25 50 75 100 Miles



Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

Strategies

1. Restore forests and watersheds
2. Manage fire
3. Steward private lands
4. Maintain utility ROW
5. Conserve rare plants
6. Reforest burned areas
7. Promote urban and community forests
8. Build the restoration economy
9. Conserve land
10. Provide for outdoor recreation

2020 New Mexico Forest Action Plan

A Collaborative Approach to Landscape Resilience



September 2020



FY21 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

| | | FY18 | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 | FY21 |
|--------|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| | | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>to Q3</u> | <u>Target</u> |
| Output | <u>Number of nonfederal wildland firefighters provided professional and technical incident command system training</u> | 1,205 | 1,454 | 1,229 | 842 | 1,500 |
| Output | <u>Number of acres treated in New Mexico's forests and watersheds</u> | 13,226 | 13,358 | 8,213 | 12,157 | 14,500 |

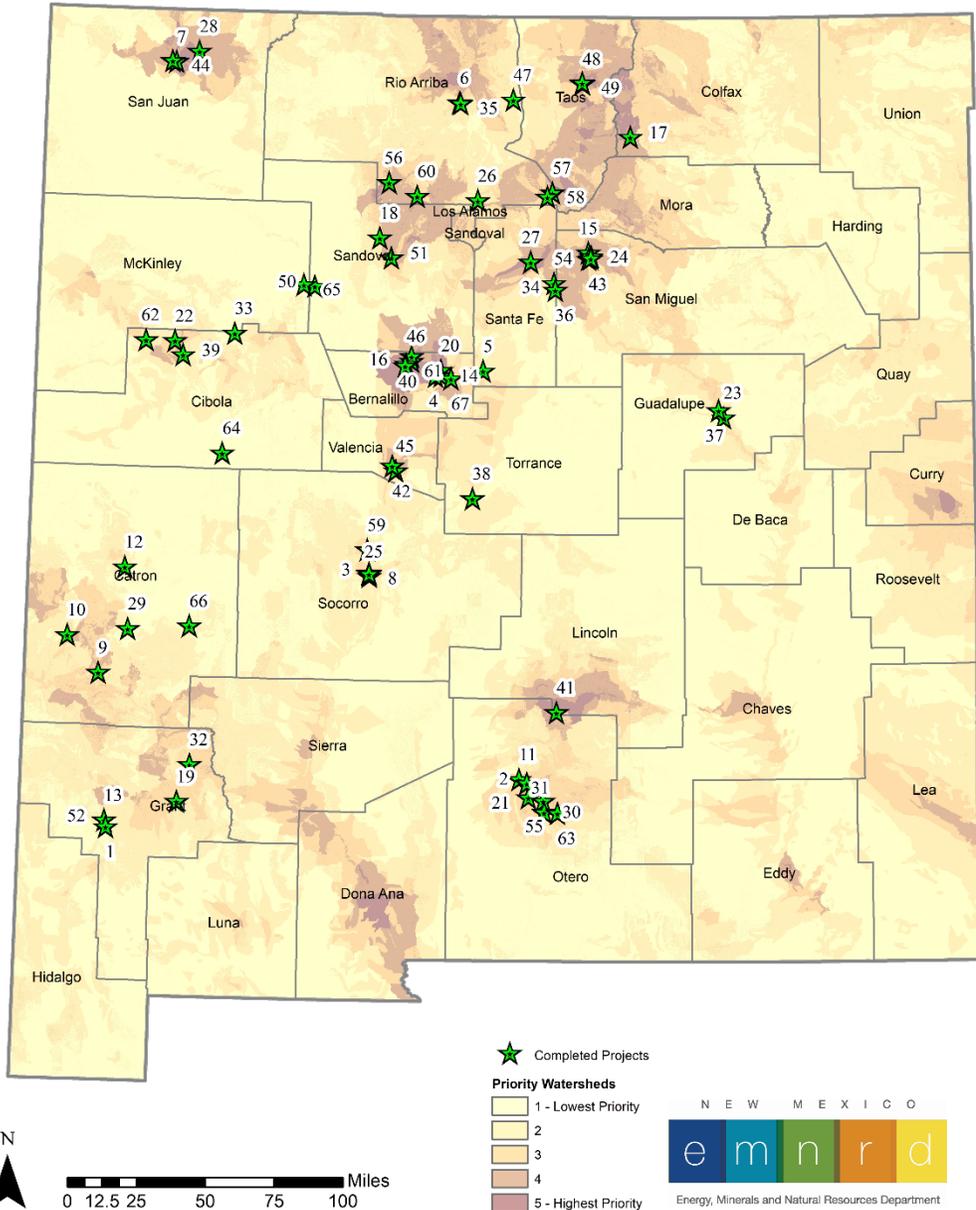
FY22 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

FY22 Target

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----|
| Output | Percent of wildland firefighting <u>equipment and training provided to local communities and fire departments in medium- and high-threat response areas</u> | 50% |
| Output | Percent of forest and watershed <u>restoration accomplished within medium- and high-risk areas</u> of the state | 50% |
| Output | Percent of forest and watershed restoration projects with total funding <u>leveraged from other sources</u> | 50% |
| Explanatory | Percent of forest acres treated in medium- and <u>high-productivity water source areas</u> | 50% |
| Output | Percent of communities with medium- and high- <u>impervious surface cover</u> that receive technical assistance | 50% |



Completed Watershed Restoration Initiative Projects (6/14/2021)



New Mexico State Forestry Projects completed 2014 to date

- Capital Outlay funding - \$23,301,820
- CIP Funds expended – \$20,995,296
- Leveraged funding - \$25,523,862
- Target acres – 36,283
- Acres treated to date – 33,245



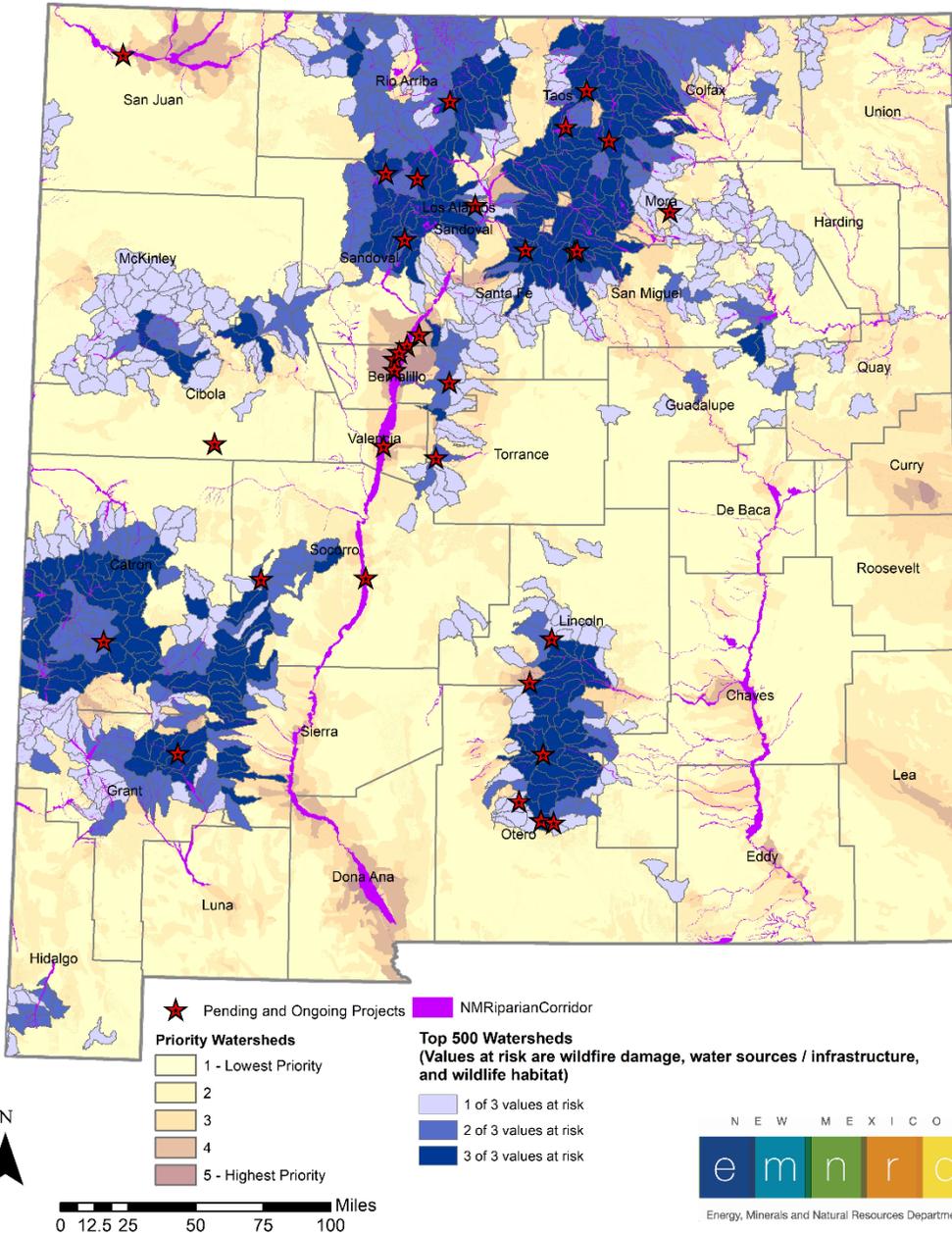
Before



After



Pending and Ongoing Watershed Restoration Initiative Projects (6/14/2021)



New Mexico State Forestry 2021 pending & ongoing projects

- Capital Outlay funding - \$4,236,500
- CIP Funds expended – \$1,052,635
- Leveraged funding to date - \$200,778
- Target acres – 5,500
- Acres treated to date – 2,260



Before



After

Encino Vista



Santa Clara Pueblo



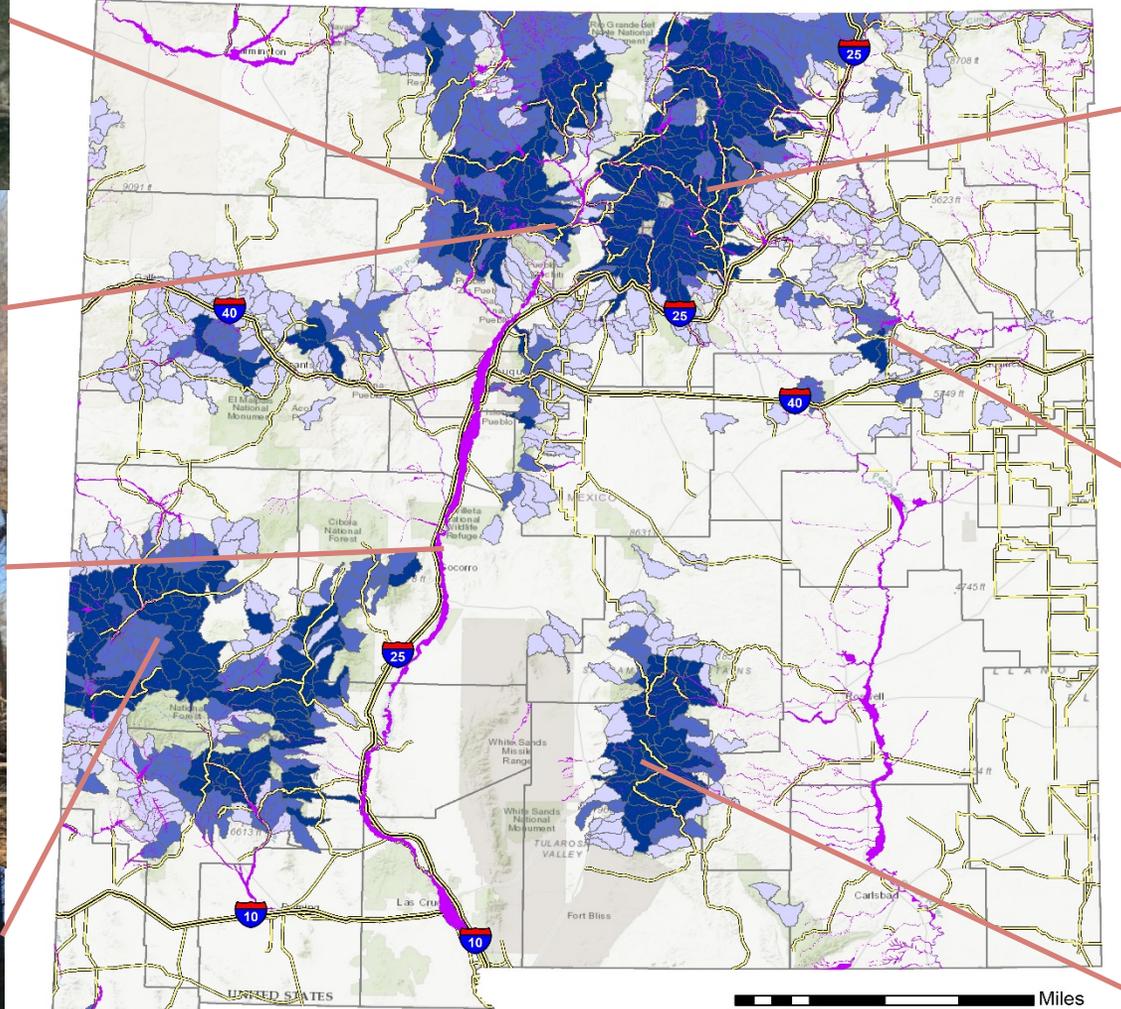
Escondida WMA



El Caso/Quemado Lake



FY2022 Projects Forest and Watershed Restoration Act



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

- Interstates
- Highways
- 1 of 3 values at risk
- 2 of 3 values at risk
- 3 of 3 values at risk

2,922 acres completed



SLO Elk Ridge



Turkey Mts



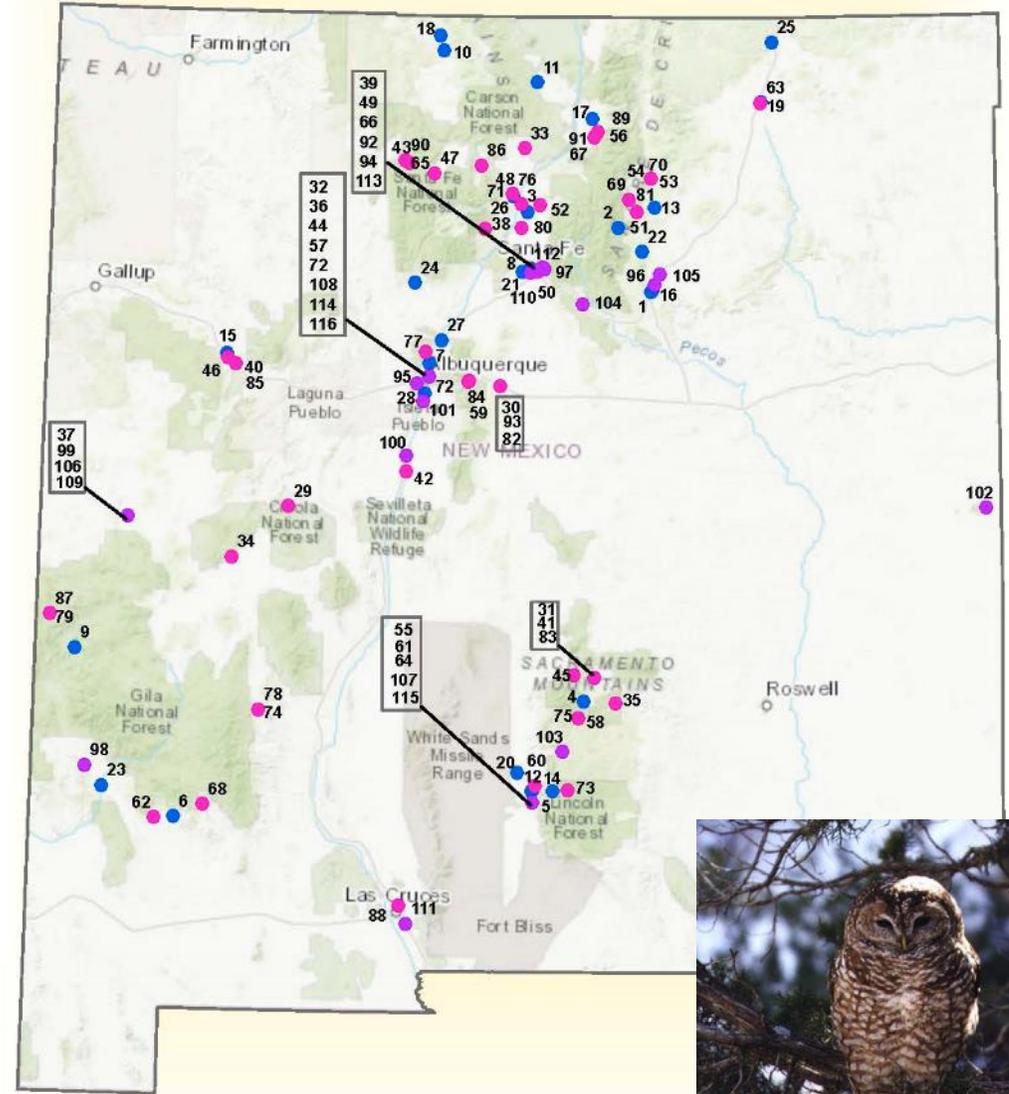
Mescalero Red Cabin



Water Benefits of Forest and Watershed Restoration Funding

- Headwater forest restoration
- Riparian vegetation restoration





New Mexico Forest Products



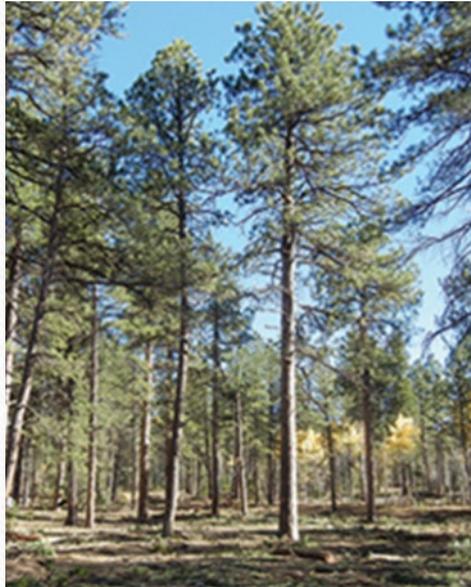
Prescribed Burning Act



Thinning and Burning Will Change Fire Behavior



Untreated



Thinned



Prescribed
Burn



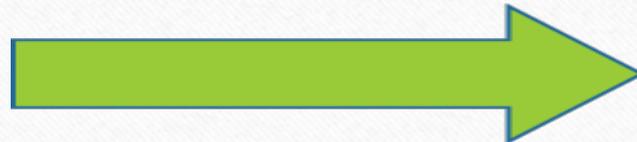
Thinned and Burned

Wildfires Helped by a Recent Prescribed Burn



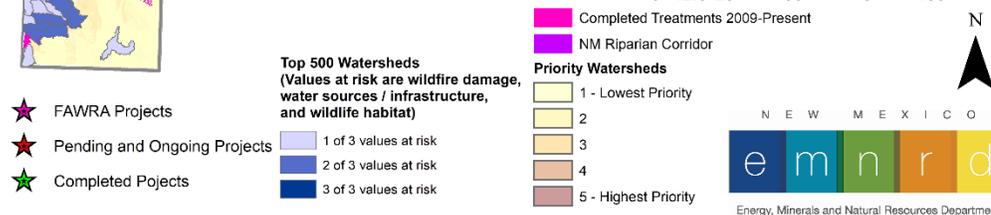
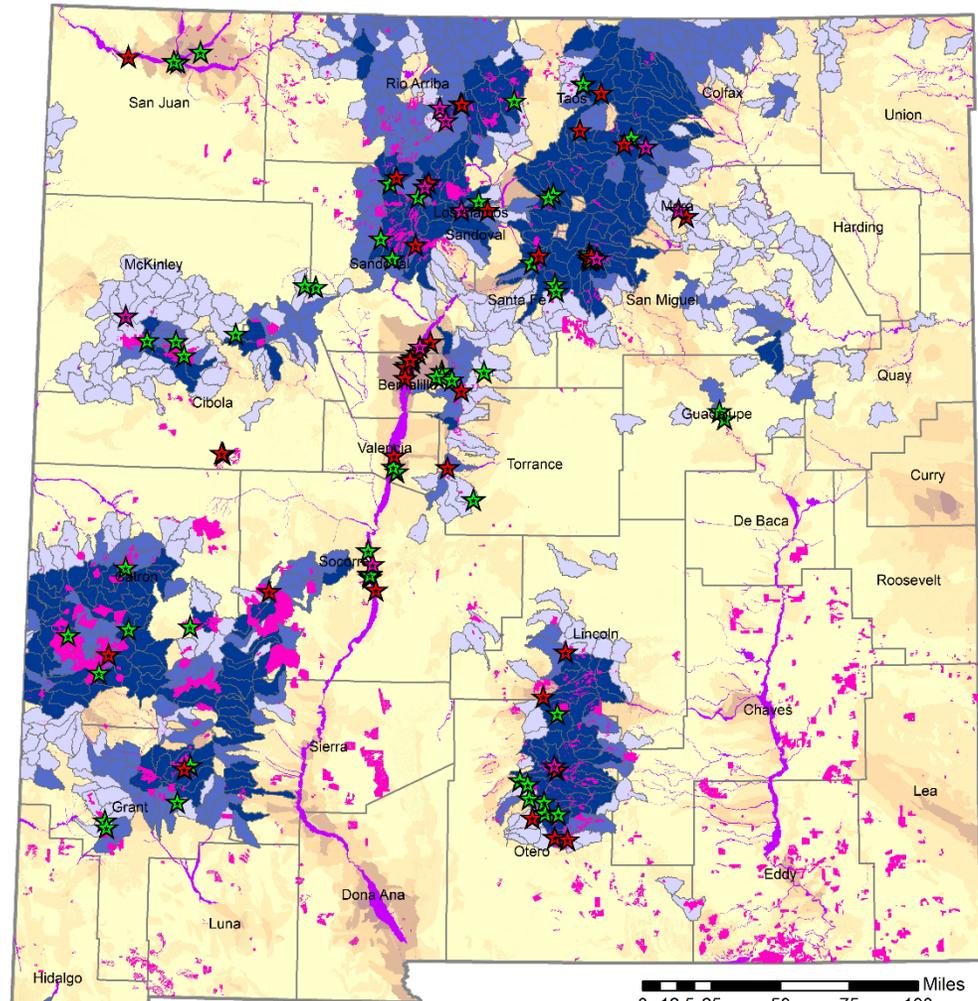
Examples:

1. Cajete Fire 2017
2. Venado Fire 2018
3. Medio Fire 2020





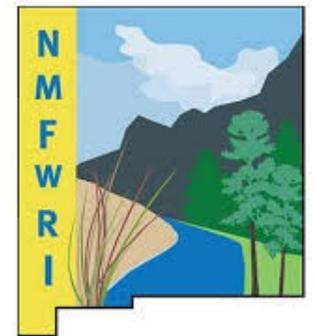
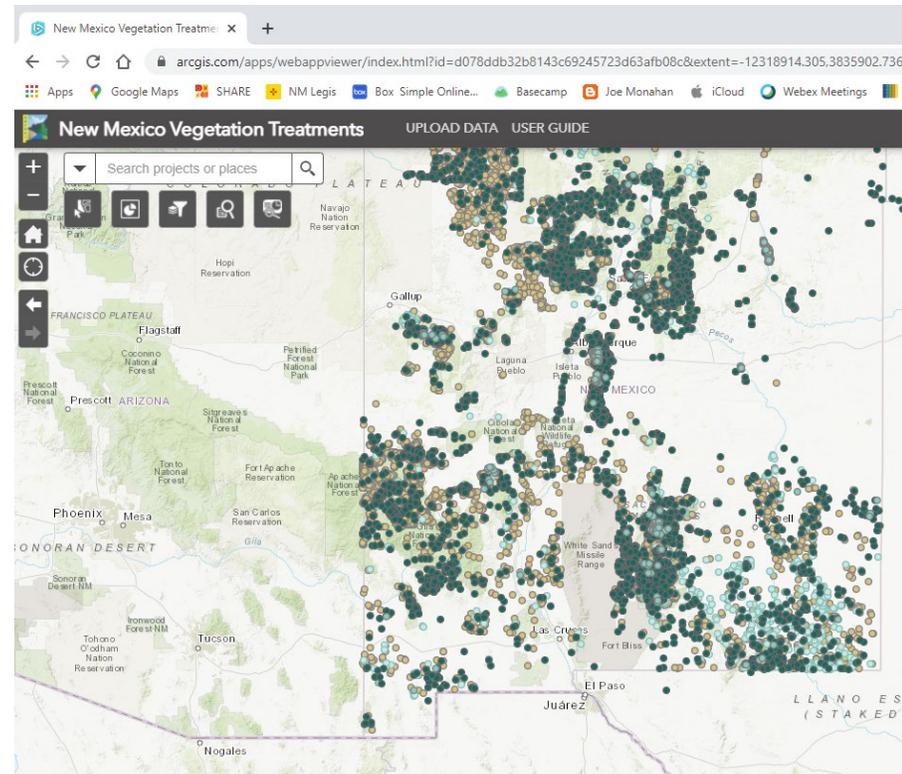
All Watershed Restoration Initiative Projects (6/14/2021)



Collaborative Work Across Boundaries = Pace & Scale of Restoration

- Capital Outlay funding
- Forest and Watershed Restoration funding
- Shared Stewardship with USFS, BLM, NRCS

www.vegetationtreatments.org



Reforest New Mexico's Burned Areas

Partnership proposal:
New Mexico Reforestation Center



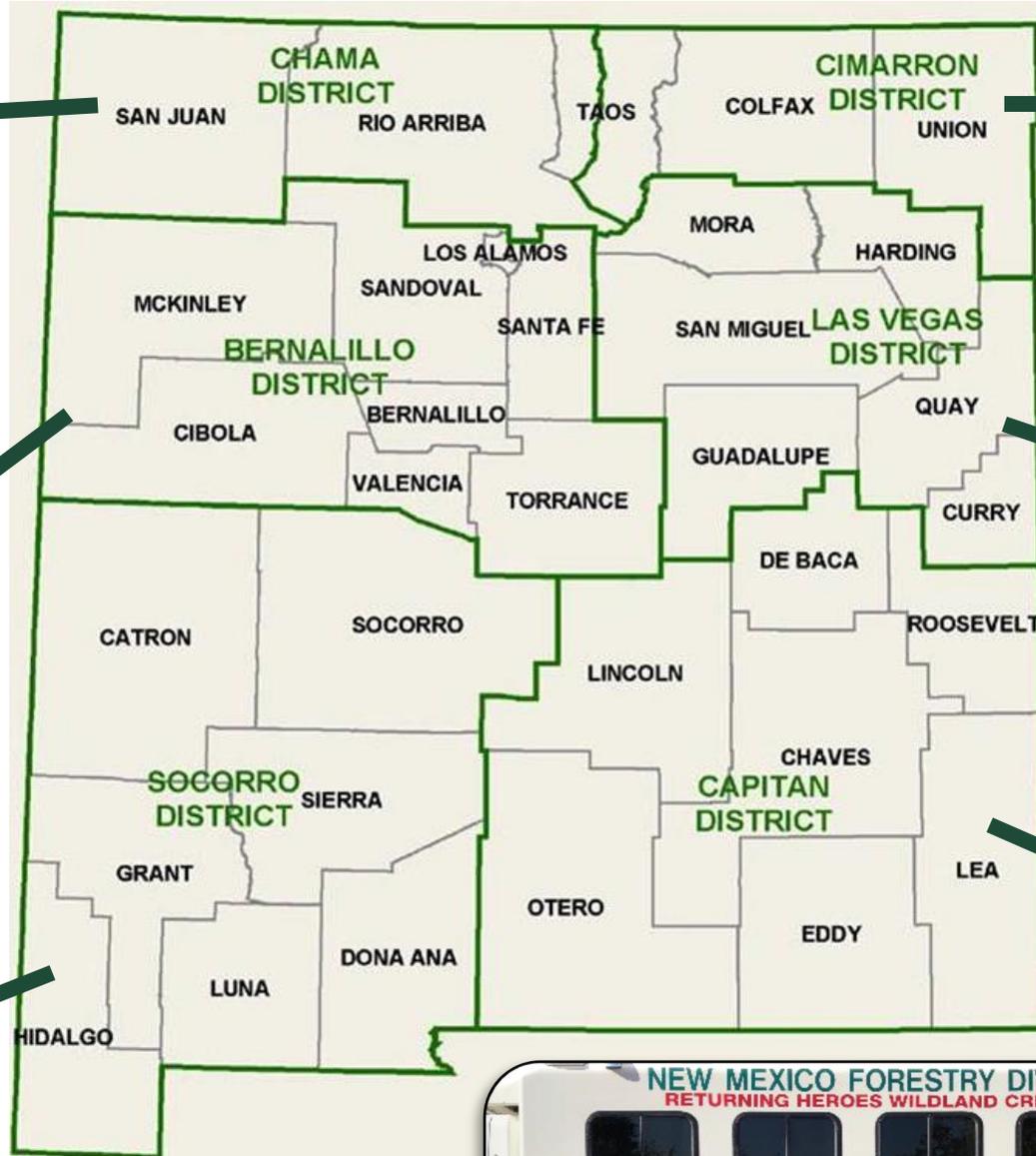
Seed



Nursery Systems



Outplanting



Forestry Division
Districts

www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD



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