

The New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute
at New Mexico Highlands University

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We were established by the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004, “an Act to establish Institutes to demonstrate and promote the use of adaptive ecosystem management to reduce the risk of wildfires, and restore the health of fire-adapted forest and woodland ecosystems of the interior West.”

In the language of the Act, we are to assist collaborative efforts by affected entities – land managers, political subdivisions of the State, concerned citizens, and any person interested in or affected by management of forest or woodland ecosystems - with the design of ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially responsible adaptive management approaches for the implementation of restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments.

Project examples:

SWJM CFLR – 210,000 acres with the Santa Fe National Forest, the Valles Caldera National Preserve, the Nature Conservancy, Jemez Pueblo, and other stakeholders, starting in 2008 and ongoing.

Estancia – Starting in 2008, FWRI convened the meetings of the Estancia Basin Monitoring Steering Committee, which comprises the three Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the basin and representatives from cooperating agencies.

Bureau of Geology - Following site visits to the Coleman Ranch in 2007, FWRI teamed with the Lower Pecos Watershed Alliance and New Mexico Tech in the development of an on-going project designed to examine how thinning in ponderosa pine and mixed conifer would impact surface and subsurface water budgets.

Gallinas Partnership - In partnership with NM State Forestry, FWRI initiated and facilitates the Gallinas Partnership, whose mission is to improve the health and safety of the Gallinas and neighboring watersheds. The group works to reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfire and to secure a more certain and sustainable water supply to the City of Las Vegas.

Southern New Mexico – In a new effort funded by the Forest Service, we are working with local people to organize two community-based watershed restoration partnerships. This task is coordinated with State Forestry .

FWRI receives funding for core activities from the USDA Forest Service, and from the New Mexico Legislature via a dedicated line-item in the budget of New Mexico Highlands University. We receive additional funds from other agencies for specific projects.