



Forest and Watershed Restoration Act FY24 Annual Report

Prepared by the Energy, Minerals and
Natural Resources Department

December 2023



Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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 an update on one new project selected for funding in May 2023 (FY24), the Tres Rios Watershed Coalition Project, and provides updates on projects that were funded in the first four years of the program (FY20-FY23).

This year has been marked by concerted efforts to recover from the worst wildfire season on record in 2022 while also continuing and expanding on critical watershed restoration projects. In 2023 the Forestry Division worked with federal and state agencies and local partners to navigate and act on new funding opportunities, including federal disaster relief, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding, in efforts to support impacted communities and confront the wildfire crisis. Progress on FAWRA projects continued and accelerated. Ten projects are now considered completed (three within the last year).

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.
- 10,982 total acres of forest restoration, including fuels treatments, thinning, invasive species removal, and prescribed fire are complete as of November 28, 2023.
- \$4,622,823 in FAWRA funds expended on projects have leveraged over \$4.5M in other state and federal sources.

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 2023 are described below. Meeting minutes are provided in Appendix B.

- **April 12, 2023** - The Advisory Board met and heard presentations about four projects - two continuing and one new - proposed for FY24 funding. The Advisory Board had a chance to ask questions about the projects before submitting project scores.
- **May 17, 2023** - The Advisory Board met to review compiled project scores and make recommendations for project funding to the Forestry Division. The Tres Rios Watershed Coalition project was recommended.
- **September 13, 2023** - The Advisory Board met to discuss and finalize the [guidelines for FY25 project selection](#).

The Advisory Board meetings are open to the public in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. In addition, the Forestry Division hosted quarterly meetings of the statewide Forest and Watershed Health Coordinating Group (FWHCG), attended by anywhere from 50 to 100 agencies, organizations, and individuals, and provided updates on FAWRA projects and the project selection process. To learn more about the FWHCG, contact Erin McElroy at erin.mcelroy@emnrd.nm.gov.

The Forestry Division hosted the annual FAWRA field trip on September 22, 2023, to see project outcomes of the Trampas to San Cristobal and Taos Valley Watershed Coalition projects firsthand. Participants, including Advisory Board members (non-quorum) and other guests, viewed wildfire mitigation and forest restoration treatments in ponderosa pine ecosystems in the Carson National Forest and D.H. Lawrence Ranch and nearby projects completed by local partners through the Cerro Negro Collaborative Forest Restoration Program.

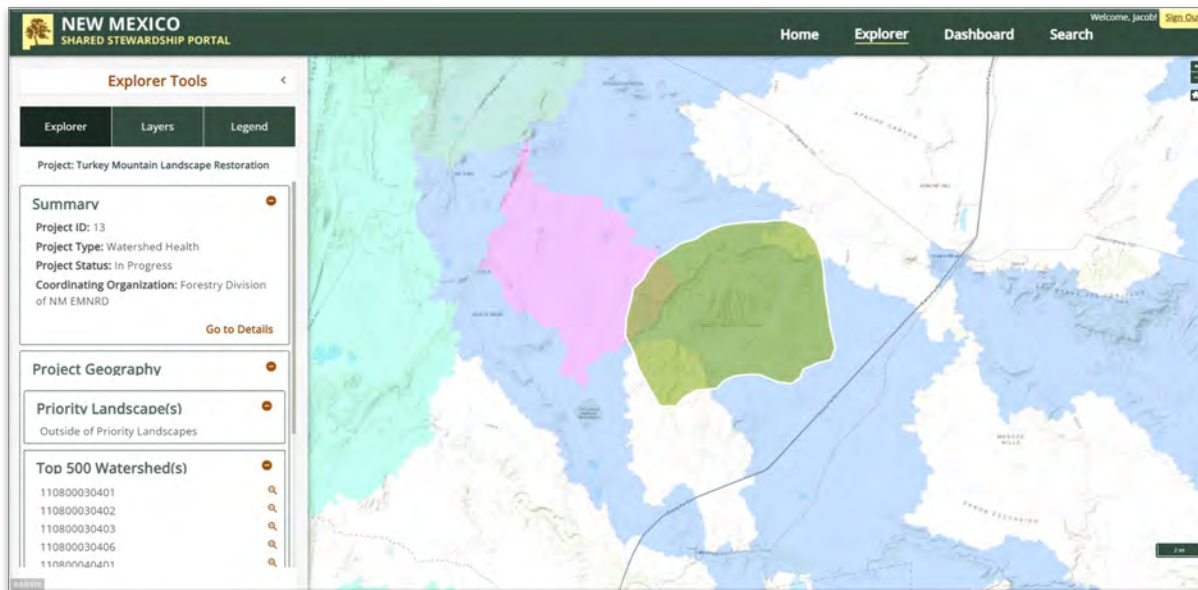


FAWRA partners gathered viewing a pre-treatment forest in the Trampas to San Cristobal Project area, September 2023

The Shared Stewardship Portal

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 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://nmssp.org).



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

FAWRA Submission Guidelines Updated for FY25

The FAWRA board recommended significant updates to [FY25 submission guidelines](#). Beginning this year:

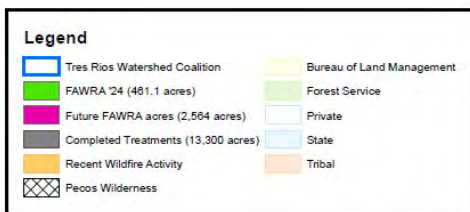
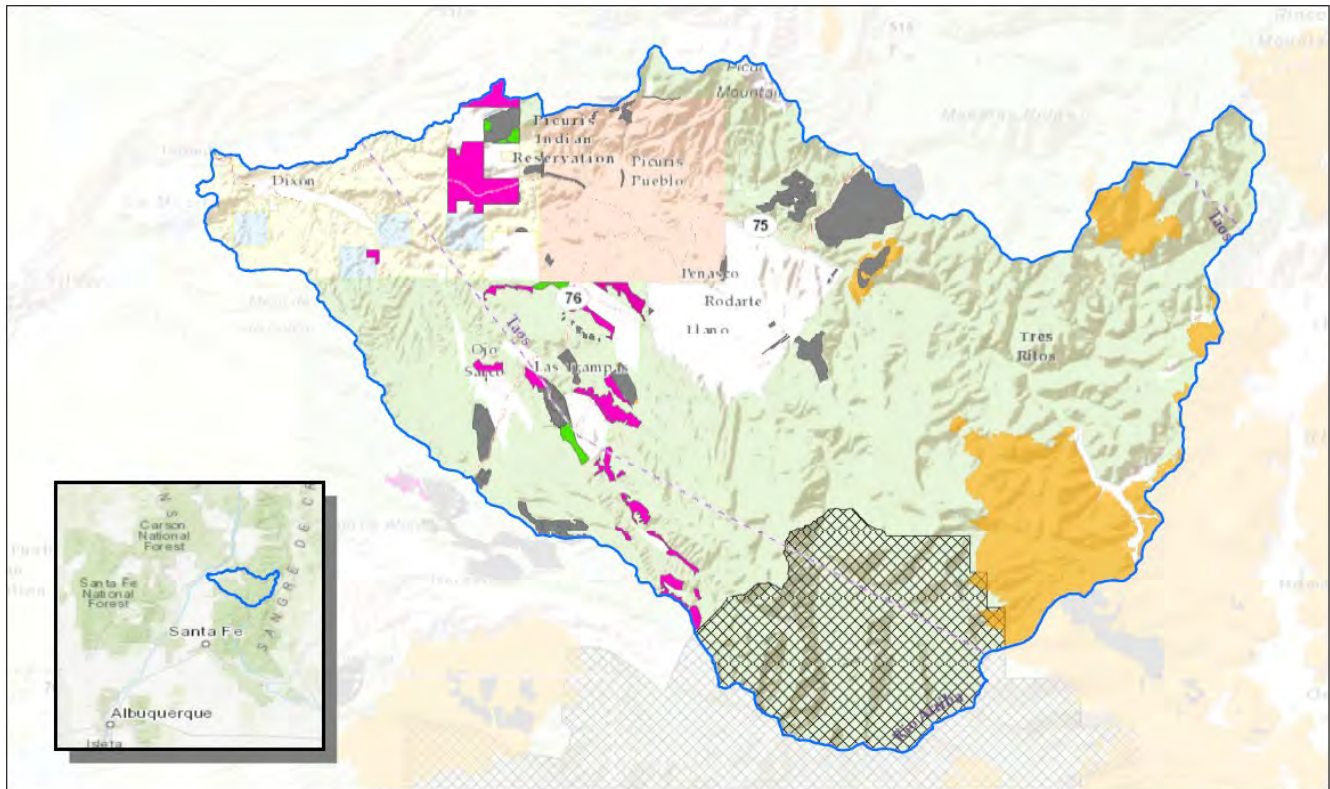
- FAWRA proposals will be accepted year-round;
- project submissions will be reviewed for recommendation by the Advisory Board quarterly, rather than annually; and
- submissions will be accepted through the Forestry Division’s Submittable Grant Portal (<https://emnr-d-sfd.submittable.com/submit>).

One New Project Recommended for FY24 Funding

The Advisory Board recommended one new project for funding on May 17, 2023, the Tres Rios Watershed Coalition Project. The Advisory Board has seen reduced project submissions over the past two years as available federal funds (BIL, IRA) have been available for forest and watershed restoration projects nationally. However, demand for FAWRA funds remains high, and the Forestry Division has fully budgeted the current FAWRA fund balance to existing projects, many of which require sustained funding over several years.

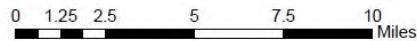
- **Tres Rios Watershed Coalition**

The Tres Rios Watershed Coalition project proposes approximately 4,500 acres of watershed restoration and hazardous fuels treatments through an existing partnership between Taos County and the Carson National Forest, with the majority of work occurring within the Rio Trampas National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) project area. Treatments will reduce the likelihood of stand-replacing wildfire and improve ecosystem function in ponderosa pine stands that abut Picuris Pueblo and are adjacent to several small villages in the Peñasco area, employ local contractors, and make fuelwood available to the public through the dead-and-down fuelwood program.



Tres Rios Watershed Coalition

Completed Treatments and FY24 FAWRA Acres



FAWRA Projects Under Development and Construction

The following projects have been recommended by the Advisory Board and are currently under development or construction. Dollar figures indicated account for both expended funds and funds currently budgeted to projects, including non-FAWRA dollars. Figures are subject to change.

- **Carson National Forest – Jicarilla Ranger District (FY23 - \$500,000)**

This project initiates a 10-year landscape scale treatment and restoration plan that will 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. The Forestry Division’s Chama District Office is currently working with the San Juan Soil and Water Conservation District to select contractors, with work planned to begin in 2024.

- **Taos Valley Watershed Coalition (FY23 - \$400,000)**

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. An initial 140-acre project on the University of New Mexico’s D.H. Lawrence is underway and adjacent projects are now being planned on the Carson National Forest.

- **Mimbres to Signal Peak (FY23 - \$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. Initial surveys began in fall 2023.

- **Cimarron Range (FY22 - \$300,000)**

This project will selectively thin approximately 7,000 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 landowner and community interest 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. Work began in summer 2023 and 325 acres have been completed thus far.

- **Sixteen Springs (FY22 - \$500,000)**

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. A work plan for a 667-acre project was approved in Fall 2023.

- **ABQ Reach Bosque Treatments (FY21 - \$210,000)**

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 129 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. The original acreage goal of this project has been met, but the project will remain open to take advantage of new partnership and project opportunities across complex land conditions and ownerships in the valley.

- **Upper Coyote Creek, Elk Ridge – (FY21 - \$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, and near the Cimarron Range FAWRA project. Work on this project began in late 2021, and 131 out of approximately 262 acres have been completed.

- **Turkey Mountains (FY20 - \$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 2,795 cumulative acres have been completed, leveraging the FAWRA funding with state capital funding and federal funding through a Landscape Scale Restoration grant.



Equipment staged to begin work on the Sixteen Springs Project, November 2023.

- **Red Cabin Mescalero, No Name Springs #1 – (FY20 - \$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. Work is being conducted under a contract administered by the Mescalero Apache Tribe. Cumulative completed restoration on this project now totals 1,208 acres under FAWRA and 2,516 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.

Completed FAWRA Projects

- **Trampas to San Cristobal (FY 23 - \$355,877)**

This is a landscape-scale collaboration between Carson National Forest and the Forestry Division that thinned 318 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. Work was completed in 2023 and served as an effective precursor to the long-term Toas Valley Watershed Coalition Project.

- **El Caso Restoration (FY22 - \$1,051,575)**

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.



Recently completed treatments on the El Caso Restoration Project, April 2023.

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

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 (FY21 - \$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 (FY21 - \$418,000)**

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

- **Zuni Phase 1 Private Lands (FY21 - \$949,400)**

This project restored 1,180 acres of ponderosa pine and piñon juniper forests in the Bluewater portion of the Zuni Mountains. Work focused on the upper watershed to restore the historic stand densities, increase ecosystem productivity, and reduce the risk of stand-replacing wildfire.

- **Socorro Escondida Wildlife Management Area (FY23 - \$811,000)**

This project addressed wildfire danger and ecosystem restoration needs on State Game Commission properties within the Middle Rio Grande Conservation Opportunity Area. A total of 118 acres were treated for nonnative invasive species, including tamarisk, and replanted with native shrubs and grasses.

- **Encino Vista Landscape Restoration (FY 20 - \$162,568)**

In the final phase of planning under NEPA for an area of the Santa Fe National Forest 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 (FY20 - \$237,900.00)**

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.

- **Taos Small Diameter Wood Products Business Plan (FY20 - \$25,000)**

In a partnership with Taos County, this project project funded a business plan and market analysis for small-diameter wood product utilization that serves as a blueprint for the creation and operation of for-profit businesses that add value to small-diameter wood and other forest products produced through forest restoration and fuels reduction projects.

Delayed or Deferred Projects

Occasionally projects are delayed or deferred due to unexpected landowner access, title, or other issues. Funding has been redirected from the following 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 constitution 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).

FAWRA Projects Summary

PROJECT	Land Ownership	Forestry Division District	FAWRA Board Recommendation Date	Target Acres	Acres completed	Status	FAWRA Funds Expended	Leveraged Funds Expended
Red Cabin, No Name Springs	Tribal	Capitan	8/6/2019	2,400	1,208	Ongoing	\$ 500,007.09	\$ 355,460.00
Encino Vista Landscape Restoration (Heritage Su	Santa Fe National	Bernalillo	8/6/2019	N/A	N/A	Completed	\$ 162,567.55	
Santa Clara Creek Wetland Restoration	Tribal	Bernalillo	8/6/2019	3,706	3,706	Completed	\$ 202,550.71	\$ 217,803.22
Gallinas Watershed Restoration	Santa Fe National	Las Vegas	8/6/2019	122	122	Completed	\$ -	\$ 237,900.00
Northside/Rio Hondo Corridor Restoration	Private	Cimarron	11/13/2019	0	0	Delayed/Defe	\$ -	\$ -
Turkey Mountain Watershed	Private	Las Vegas	11/13/2019	4,500	2,795	Ongoing	\$1,621,880.00	\$ 946,000.00
Small-Diameter Wood Products Business Plann	N/A	Cimarron	11/13/2019	N/A	N/A	Completed	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -
Zuni Landscape Restoration	Private	Bernalillo	6/6/2020	1,280	1,133	Completed	\$ 532,795.50	\$ 416,604.00
Upper Coyote Creek - Elk Ridge	State Land Office	Cimarron	6/6/2020	262	131	Ongoing	\$ 193,630.50	\$ 42,747.98
Rio Chama Watershed Restoration	Private	Chama	6/6/2020	0	0	Delayed/Defe	\$ -	\$ -
Cebolla Nutrias Watershed	Private	Chama	6/6/2020	0	0	Delayed/Defe	\$ -	\$ -
Rio Grande ABQ Bosque Restoration	Municipal	Bernalillo	6/6/2020	800	129	Ongoing	\$ 61,771.50	\$ 148,242.50
Sandia Pueblo Bosque Restoration	Tribal	Bernalillo	6/6/2020	106	359	Completed	\$ 128,499.08	
NMDGF Socorro Escondida WMA	NM Game and Fis	Socorro	6/6/2020	118	118	Completed	\$ 196,972.50	\$ 614,000.00
Trampas to San Cristobal	Carson National Fi	Cimarron	5/14/2021	310	318	Completed	\$ 355,877.45	
Zuni Landscape Cibola National Forest Puerco A	Cibola National Fo	Bernalilo	5/14/2021	164	164	Completed	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 14,000.00
El Caso Private Lands	Private	Socorro	5/14/2021	1,300	688	Completed	\$ 442,849.44	\$ 608,725.24
16 Springs	Lincoln National Fi	Capitan	5/14/2021	667	0	Ongoing	\$ -	\$ -
Cimarron Range	Private	Cimarron	5/14/2021	7,000	325	Ongoing	\$ -	\$ 857,381.74
Taos Valley Watershed Coalition	Carson National Fi	Cimarron	5/11/2022	500	0	Ongoing	\$ -	\$ -
Mimbres to Signal Peak	Gila National Fore	Socorro	5/11/2022	N/A	N/A	Ongoing	\$ -	\$ -
Carson National Forest - Jicarilla Ranger District	Carson National Fi	Chama	5/11/2022	N/A	N/A	Pending	\$ -	\$ -
Tres Rios Watershed Coalition	Carson National Fi	Cimarron	5/17/2023	4,500	0	Pending	\$ -	\$ -
Timmons - Shared Stewardship Portal	N/A	All	Administrative	N/A	N/A	Completed	\$ 13,110.00	\$ -
Joplin Ridge Right of Way	State Land Office	Capitan	Administrative	113	113	Completed	\$ 35,312.00	\$ 100,000.00
				27,848	10,982		\$4,622,823.32	\$4,558,864.68
Total FAWRA budget (all years):	\$ 8,000,000.00							
Unexpended FAWRA budget (as of 11/28/23):	\$ 3,377,176.68							



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APPENDIX A: FOREST AND WATERSHED RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD – updated 11/28/2023

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 12, 2023 FINAL

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

A meeting of the FAWRA Advisory Board (Board) was called to order at 9:07 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 in person**
Laura McCarthy, State Forester, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair
Kyle Rose, State Land Office (SLO), Designee for Mark Meyers
Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)
Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)
John Rhoderick, Environment Department (ED)
Kathy Holian, Public Member for academic or non-profit organization
- **Board Members Present online (non-voting)**
Brent Racher
- **Board Members Absent**
Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Marshal's Office
Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)
Steven Hernandez, Public Member for Local Government
- **FY24 Continuing and New Project Presenters Present**
Alex Etkind, Las Vegas District Project Forester (EMNRD)
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

John Rhoderick moved to approve the agenda and Kathy Holian seconded the motion. The meeting agenda for April 12, 2023, was unanimously approved.

Open Meetings Act Resolution

Julie Valdez moved to approve the Open Meetings Act Resolution and Kathy Holian seconded the motion. The resolution was unanimously approved.

Stewart Liley asked whether the resolution could be amended to allow telephonic participation by Advisory Board members because the Game Commission has that in their OMA resolution. Deputy General Counsel Cheryl Bada said it was not allowable because the FAWRA statute does not have a provision for telephonic participation.

Approval of Minutes for the September 14, 2022 FAWRA Advisory Board Meeting

John Rhoderick moved to approve the minutes for the September 14, 2022 Advisory Board meeting and Kathy Holian seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. State Forester's Update

Laura McCarthy discussed the impact of the 2022 fire season on the Forestry Division and how post-fire needs are impacting the Division today. The current fire report shows that fire risk is above normal for April, however forecasts are below normal through the Summer.

Laura McCarthy also discussed three important bills that passed during the 2023 legislative session: a bill that modernized the Forest Conservation Act, a bill that provided the Forestry Division with a narrow procurement exemption for NGOs already selected for grant awards through a federal competitive processes, and the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, which will increase the amount of funding that comes to FAWRA from \$2M/year to \$3.2M/year beginning in FY25.

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 Quemado Lake – El Caso, Upper Coyote Creek – Elk Ridge, 16 Springs, Santa Clara Pueblo Wetlands Restoration & Rx Burning, Red Cabin No Name Springs, Sandia Pueblo Bosque Restoration, Zuni Landscape Restoration, Carson NF – Jicarilla RD Heritage, Mimbres to Signal Peak, Cimmaron Range, and Trampas to San Cristobal.

Continuing projects slides (projects that have requested additional FAWRA support, but which will not be scored again by the Advisory Board per FY24 FAWRA Guidelines):

- **Turkey Mountain Watershed Forest and Watershed Restoration (presented by Alex Etkind):** Alex reported that 2,570/4,500 acres have been competed for this project, which is now moving into more challenging work on steeper slopes and less accessible areas. A fire management plan is in place on the property, and the landscape experienced several lightening starts in 2022, all of which were kept small in 2022. Approximately \$800,000 per year for three years is needed to complete the project.
- **Taos Valley Watershed Restoration (J.R. Logan):** J.R. Logan presented an overview of last year's proposal and an additional \$4.9M of additional funds from various sources that have been secured for this work. J.R. reported that 30,000 acres of new NEPA-cleared areas are coming up, which will contribute to future phases of this project. The first phase of treatments at the DH Lawrence Ranch are anticipated to begin in May 2023. The continuing proposal is for \$1,046,250 in FAWRA funds to be spent in FY24 on approximately 379 acres.

The Board had no comments on the progress reports.

6. FY24 Ranking Sheet and Project Scoring Criteria

A slide presented the FY24 Project Scoresheet. Laura McCarthy presented the “FY24 project criteria for ranking”, which were displayed on the scoresheet. One minor change from FY23 criteria made is clearer that cultural resource surveys are included in the planning proposal category.

7. Presentation of New FY23 Project Proposals

Tres Rios Watershed Coalition

J.R. Logan presented project overview slides for landscape-scale forest restoration projects planned for the Greater Rio Embudo Watershed in the southern end of Taos County. Several traditional villages and portions of the Picuris Pueblo are in this area. This is the most historically underserved portion of Taos County. The Tres Rios Watershed Coalition was formed in the image of the successful Taos Valley Watershed Coalition and has become a productive, well-attended, effective venue for local planning. The proposal asks for \$550,000 in the first year and recurring funding of \$500,000/year to treat 2,500 NEPA-ready acres on BLM, Forest Service, and tribal lands.

8. Timeline for Submitting Scores and Preview of the Agenda for Next Meeting on May 17, 2023

Scoring spreadsheets are due by May 12. The May 17, 2023 meeting will include:

- discussing new project rankings,
- finalizing ranking recommendations,
- reviewing FY24 guidelines,
- setting a date for the Fall 2023 meeting to adopt FY25 guidelines, and
- discussing possible field trips for Fall 2023.

9. Other Business

Brent Racher raised the issue of road maintenance in forests, include maintenance backlogs, potential decommissioning, maintaining access for forest health treatments, and movement of material out of project areas. J.R. Logan observed that agencies have lost institutional knowledge related to roads and mentioned that road maintenance costs are included in existing Good Neighbor projects in Taos Canyon, but are insufficient. Kyle Rose says this is also a constant issue for the State Land Office. Laura McCarthy suggested continuing this conversation during the discussion of FY25 project guidelines in May.

Laura McCarthy discussed a tentative date of Wednesday, September 13 for the next FAWRA meeting, followed by a Field Trip on Friday, September 22nd to visit the Trampas to San Cristobal project area.

10. Adjournment

Kathy Holian motioned to adjourn the meeting. and John Rhoderick seconded. None opposed, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:25am.

Draft minutes submitted by: Jacob Pederson on April 12, 2023

Draft minutes approved by: Laura McCarthy on April 12, 2023

Final minutes approved by FAWRA Advisory Board on May 17, 2023

Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) Advisory Board Meeting Minutes (Final) May 17, 2023

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

A meeting of the FAWRA Advisory Board (Board) was called to order at 9:04 a.m. on May 17, 2023, and presided over by Lindsey Quam, Deputy Director, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division.

- **Board Members and Delegates Present in person**
Lindsey Quam, Deputy Director, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair Designee
Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)
Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)
John Rhoderick, Environment Department (ED)
Kathy Holian, Public Member for academic or non-profit organization
Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)
Brent Racher, Public Member for Industry
- **Board Members Present online (non-voting)**
Steven Hernandez, Public Member for Local Government
- **Board Members Absent**
Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Marshal, Fire Marshal's Office
Mark Meyers, State Land Office (SLO)

2. Welcome/Introductions

Lindsey Quam, Deputy Director and FAWRA Chair Designee, 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

Kathy Holian moved to approve the agenda and Brent Racher seconded the motion. The meeting agenda for May 17, 2023, was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes for the April 12, 2023 FAWRA Board Meeting

Tim Hagaman moved to approve the minutes for the April 12, 2023 Board meeting and Kathy Holian seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. State Forester's Update

Lindsey Quam provided a brief update on the status of the 2023 fire season.

5. Progress report on funded projects and proposed continuing projects

Jacob Pederson provided a verbal update on recently approved FAWRA projects, including cultural resource surveys on the Jicarilla-Apache Ranger District of the Carson National Forest, additional surveys for the Mimbres to Signal Peak project on the Gila National Forest, and the Taos Valley Watershed Coalition Phase I work to thin the DH Lawrence Ranch.

6. FY23 Proposal Scoring and Recommendations

Jacob Pederson presented scoring results for the Tres Rios Watershed Coalition project proposal, the only new FY23 project proposal. The Board was able to review all scores.

Lindsey Quam invited a motion to recommend the Tres Rios Watershed Coalition proposal for funding. Tim Hagaman moved to recommend the proposal for funding. Kathy Holian seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Review of FY24 Guidelines

The Board noted the lack of FY24 proposals, which decreased to one from three that were received in FY23. Notes for the ensuing discussion:

- Alternative sources of federal and state funding are resulting in less demand for FAWRA funding. This pattern is expected to continue for the next few years.
- Recent previously recommended projects will take several years to implement, resulting in fewer proposals over time.

The Board identified potential ways to increase FAWRA applications in FY25:

- Change guidelines to promote low-cost feasibility studies and other investments that will result in future projects.
- Review and update the application process (John Rhoderick described how the NMED Clean Water State Revolving Fund application process was recently revised to be more accessible to small communities, resulting in a 40% increase in applications).
- Accept new applications multiple times per year.
- Institute a simple pre-application process that is open year-round.

8. Fall 2023 Meetings

A fall 2023 meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 13, to be followed by a field tour to the Trampas to San Cristobal project area in Taos on September 22.

9. Adjournment

Kathy Holian moved to adjourn the meeting and Julie Valdez seconded. None opposed, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Draft minutes submitted by: Jacob Pederson on May 19, 2023

Draft minutes approved by: Lindsey Quam on August 9, 2023

Final minutes approved by FAWRA Advisory Board on: September 13, 2023

Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) Advisory Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

September 13, 2023

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

A meeting of the FAWRA Advisory Board (Board) was called to order at 10:02 a.m. on September 13, 2023, and presided over by Laura McCarthy, State Forester, Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division.

- **Board Members and Delegates Present in Person**
Laura McCarthy, State Forester, EMNRD, Forestry Division, FAWRA Chair
Stewart Liley, Department of Game and Fish (DGF)
Kathy Holian, Public Member for academic or non-profit organization
Mark Meyers, State Land Office (SLO)
Julie Valdez, Office of the State Engineer (OSE)
Anthony Leyba, Fire Marshal's Office, Designee for Randy Valera
John Rhoderick, Environment Department (ED)
Tim Hagaman, Economic Development Department (EDD)
- **Board Members Absent**
Brent Racher, Public Member for Industry
Vacant, Public Member for Local Government
- **Others Present**
Jacob Pederson (EMNRD)
Lindsey Quam (EMNRD)
Erin McElroy (EMNRD)
Cheryl Bada (EMNRD) - online
Deanna Luna (EMNRD) - online

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; John Rhoderick seconded; none opposed; motion approved. The meeting agenda for September 13, 2023, was unanimously approved.

Approval of minutes for the May 17, 2023 meeting

John Rhoderick moved to approve minutes; Stewart Liley seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. State Forester's update

Laura McCarthy informed meeting attendees Steve Hernandez has resigned as the Public Member for Local Government on the Board before describing the process to approve a new Board member and asking the group for recommendations for candidates to fill the vacant position.

Laura McCarthy also discussed the need to address policies and procedures that limit the Forestry Division's ability to further increase the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration. This includes the need to evaluate and advocate for changes related to the Forestry Division's current authorities and state policies and procedures, which act as a bottleneck, causing delays in project work.

5. Progress report on funded projects

Laura McCarthy provided a brief update on the status of ongoing FAWRA projects, including the Trampas to San Cristobal Project, the Cimarron Range Project, the Mimbres to Signal Peak Project, the Sixteen Springs Project, and the Elk Ridge Project.

6. Discussion and approval of FY24-25 guidelines

Jacob Pederson presented the draft FY24-25 guidelines. This revision includes more substantial changes than in previous years. Most notably this includes an update to the project submission process, allowing for rolling applications to be evaluated on a quarterly basis. This update results in changes to the proposed Board schedule, as each quarterly meeting would include an opportunity to review and evaluate proposed projects in addition to the usual Board business.

The draft guidelines were amended to include flexibility in the outlined schedule for FY24 Board meetings and to add a description that the guidelines are to become effective upon the date of the Board vote. Kathy Holian moved to approve FY24-FY25 Guidelines as amended; John Rhoderick seconded; none opposed; approved.

7. Discussion of September 22 Field Trip

A detailed itinerary for the FY24 FAWRA field trip was sent to Board members on September 12, 2023. Laura McCarthy updated the group that there will be a new temporary DFA analyst joining the September 22, 2023 field trip and offered an opportunity for attendees to ask questions.

8. Other Business

Tim Hagaman updated the group that the Economic Development Department (EDD) is working with a consultant in Cimarron to complete a feasibility study on using wood products to create beneficial nursery products. EDD also received input from the City of Raton on water rights in relation to the reforestation center.

Anthony Leyba updated the group that the Fire Marshal's Office will be conducting grant reviews for the FY24 Fire Grant Application in October and aims to award grants by November. Last year's grant cycle focused on the acquisition of Type 3 apparatuses, which have a large delay in delivery of 2-3 years. The Fire Marshal's Office is also revamping its Fire Academy.

Mark Meyers informed the group that the State Land Office will be opening its statewide price agreement (SWPA) and is allowing new items to be added for bids. Mark will inform the Forestry Division when the SWPA has opened.

Lindsey Quam updated that the Forestry Division has launched online training for the Certified Burn Manager Program for pile burning, which is available on the Forestry Division's website. The Forestry Division's current focus is on the reciprocity process, which allows individuals who are certified in a state with its own certified burn manager program to obtain certification in New Mexico. The next focus will be on rolling out the training to interested landowners. Broadcast burn training is still in development, but the Forestry Division hopes to roll it out early in calendar year 2024.

9. Review Next Steps

The updated guidelines will be posted on the Forestry Division's website.

Calendar invites for the remainder of FY 2024 will be sent out to Board members.

The FAWRA Chair will compile a list of potential replacements for Steve Hernandez's position and is accepting recommendations from Board members.

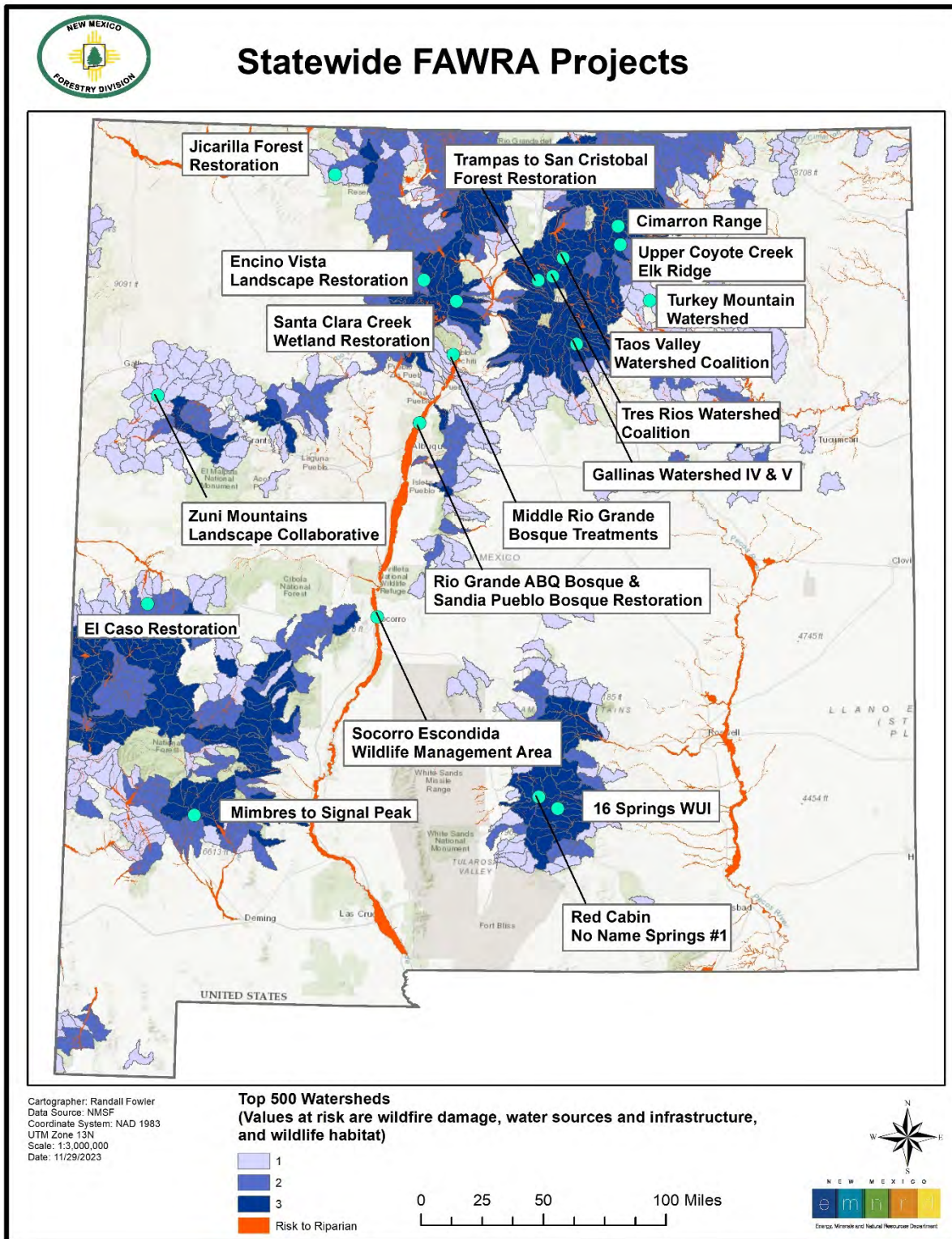
10. Adjourn

Tim Hagaman moved to adjourn the meeting and Mark Meyers seconded. None opposed, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

Draft minutes submitted by Erin McElroy on September 13, 2023

Draft minutes reviewed by Laura McCarthy on September 13, 2023

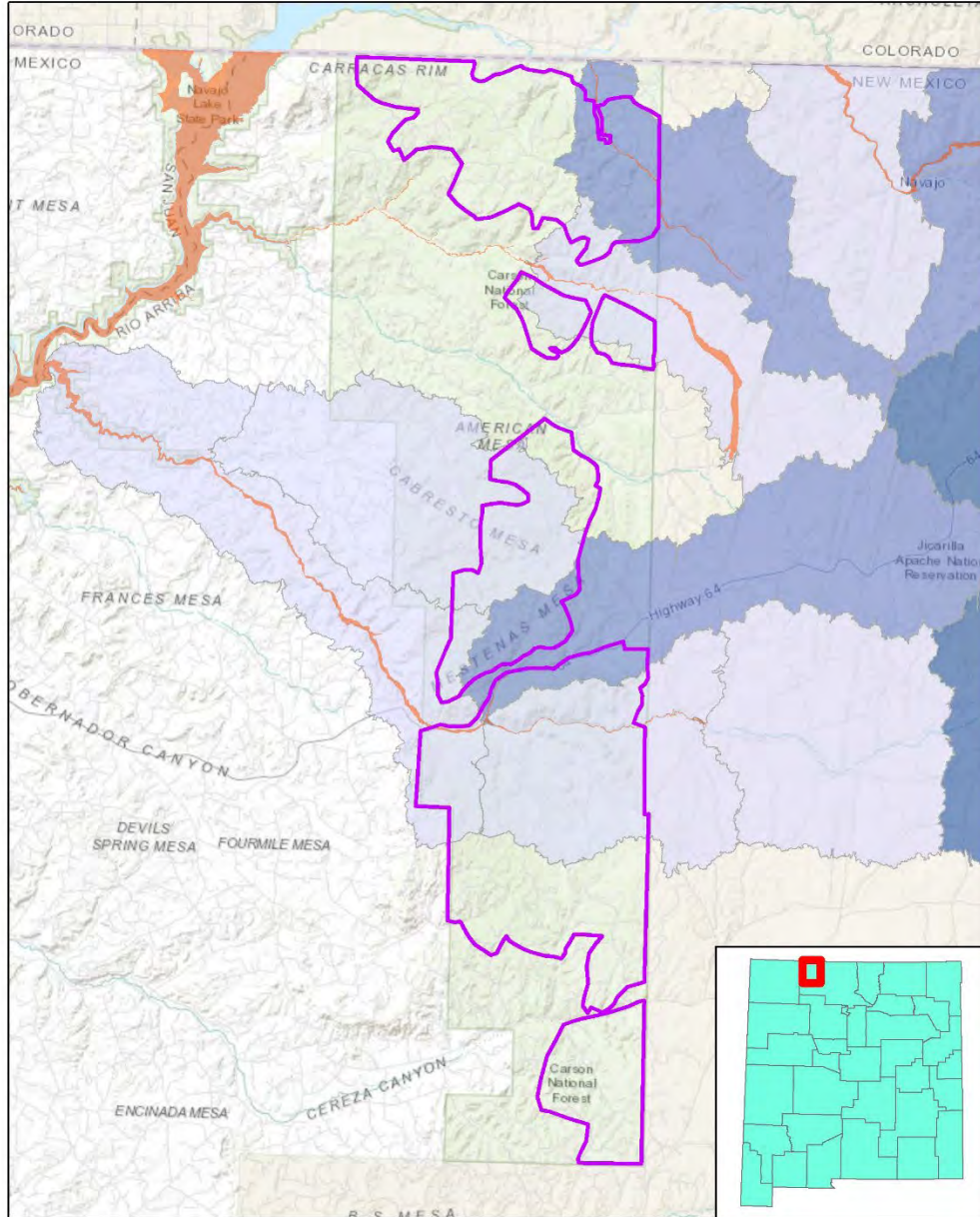
APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW MAP



APPENDIX D: PROJECT AREA MAPS



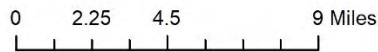
Jicarilla Forest Restoration



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

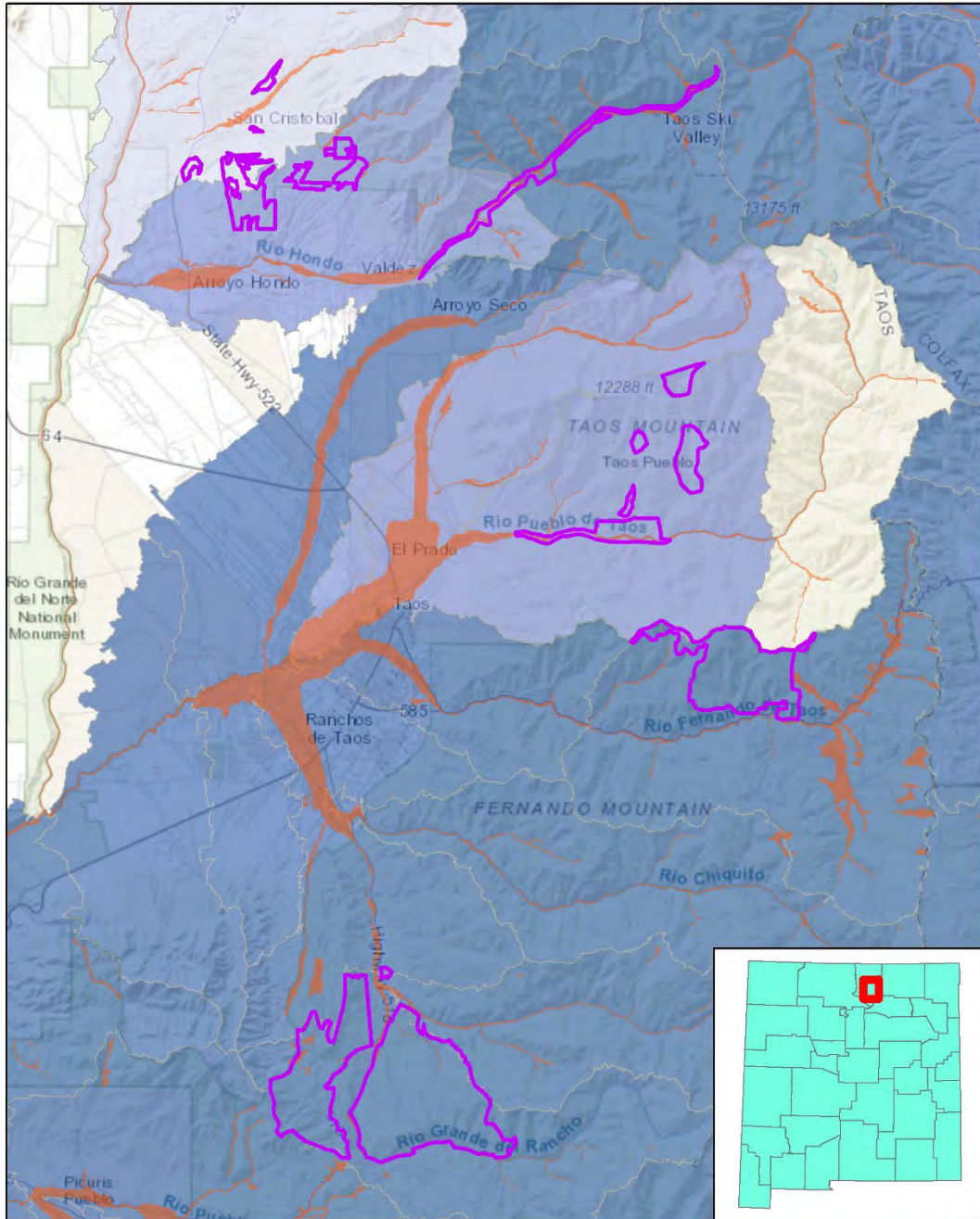
**Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure,
 and wildlife habitat)**

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





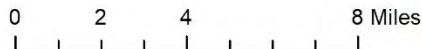
Taos Valley Watershed Coalition



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

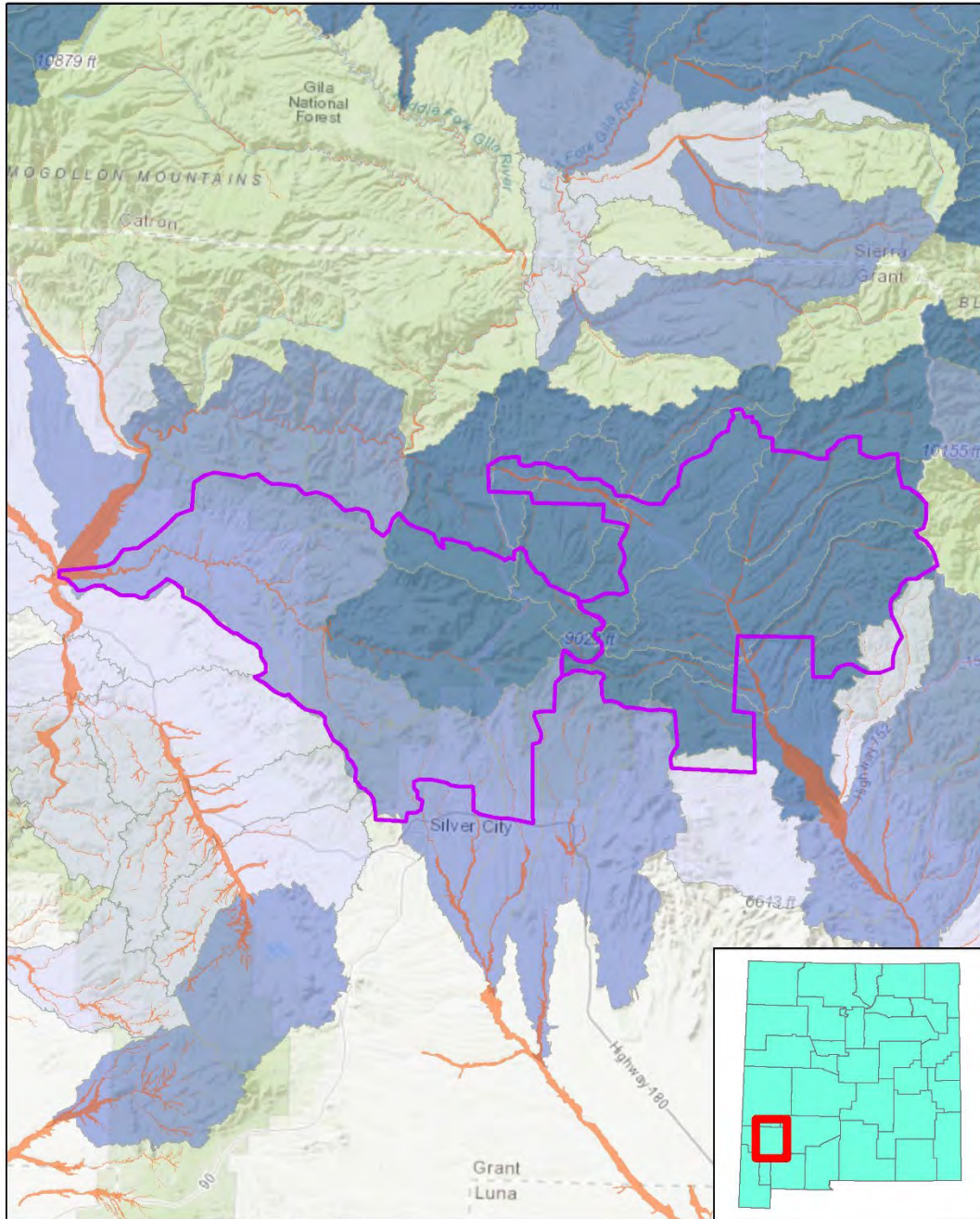
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 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)

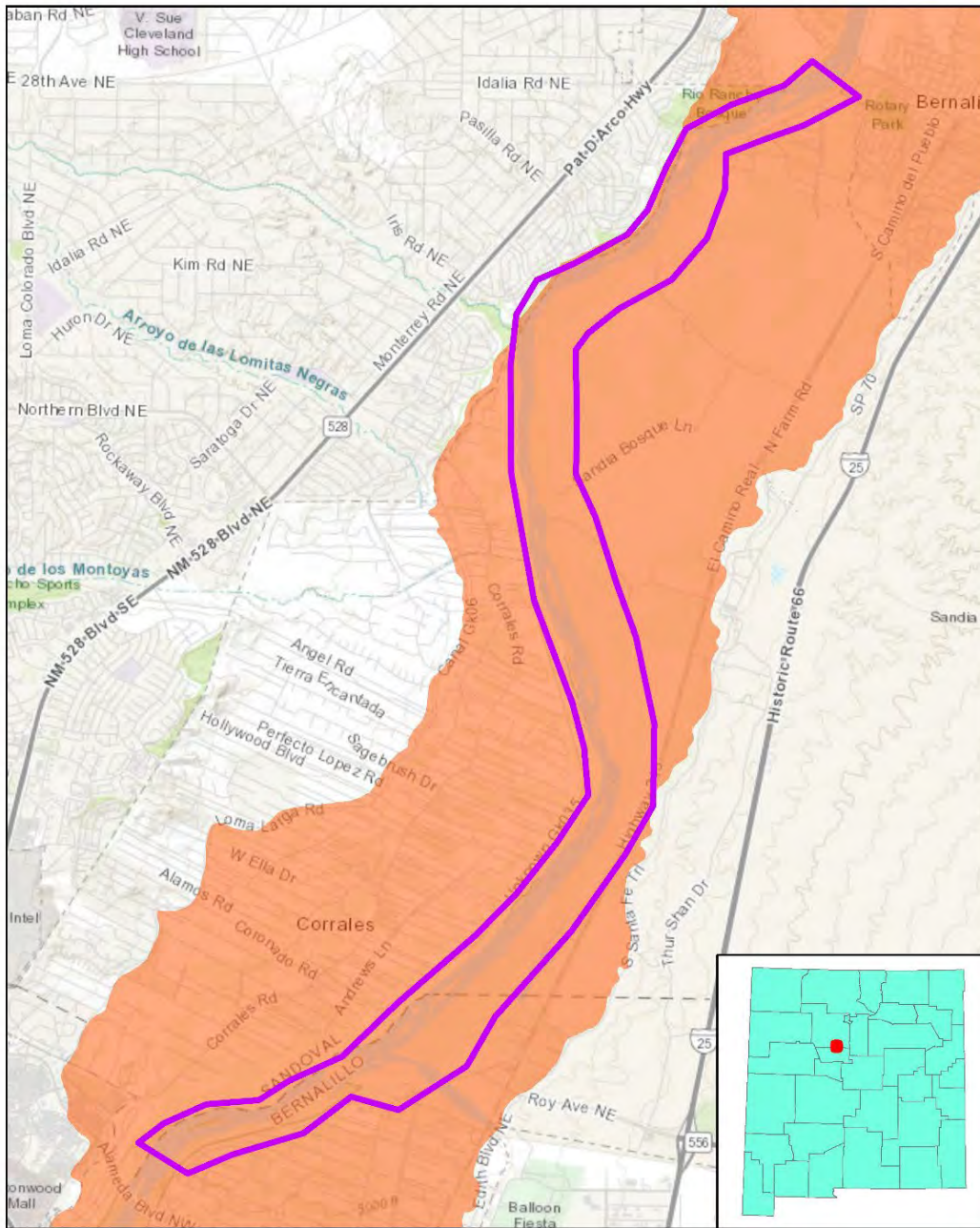
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 4 8 16 Miles





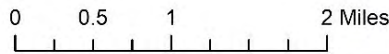
Sandia Pueblo Bosque Restoration & Rio Grande Bosque Albuquerque



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

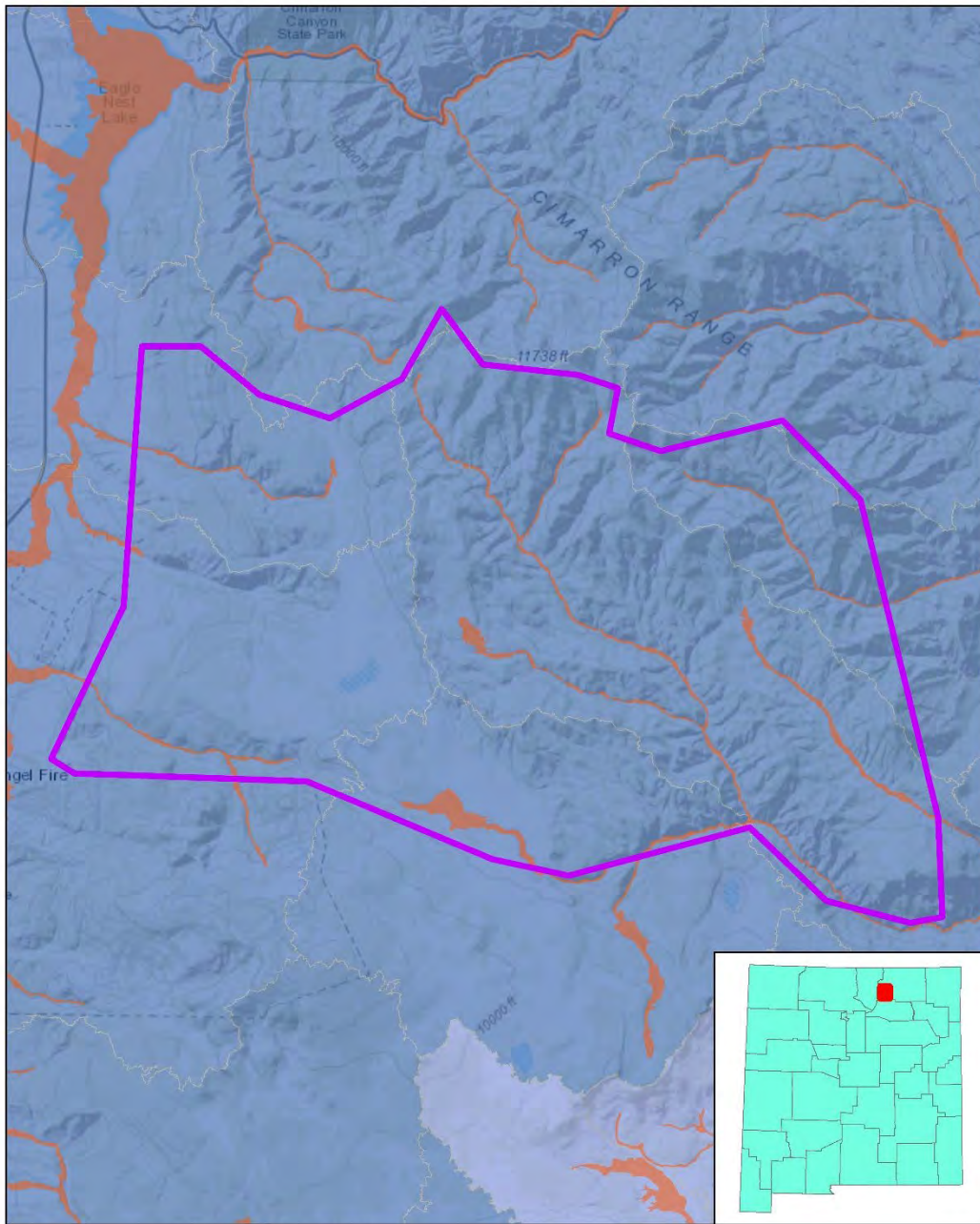
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





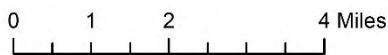
Cimarron Range



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

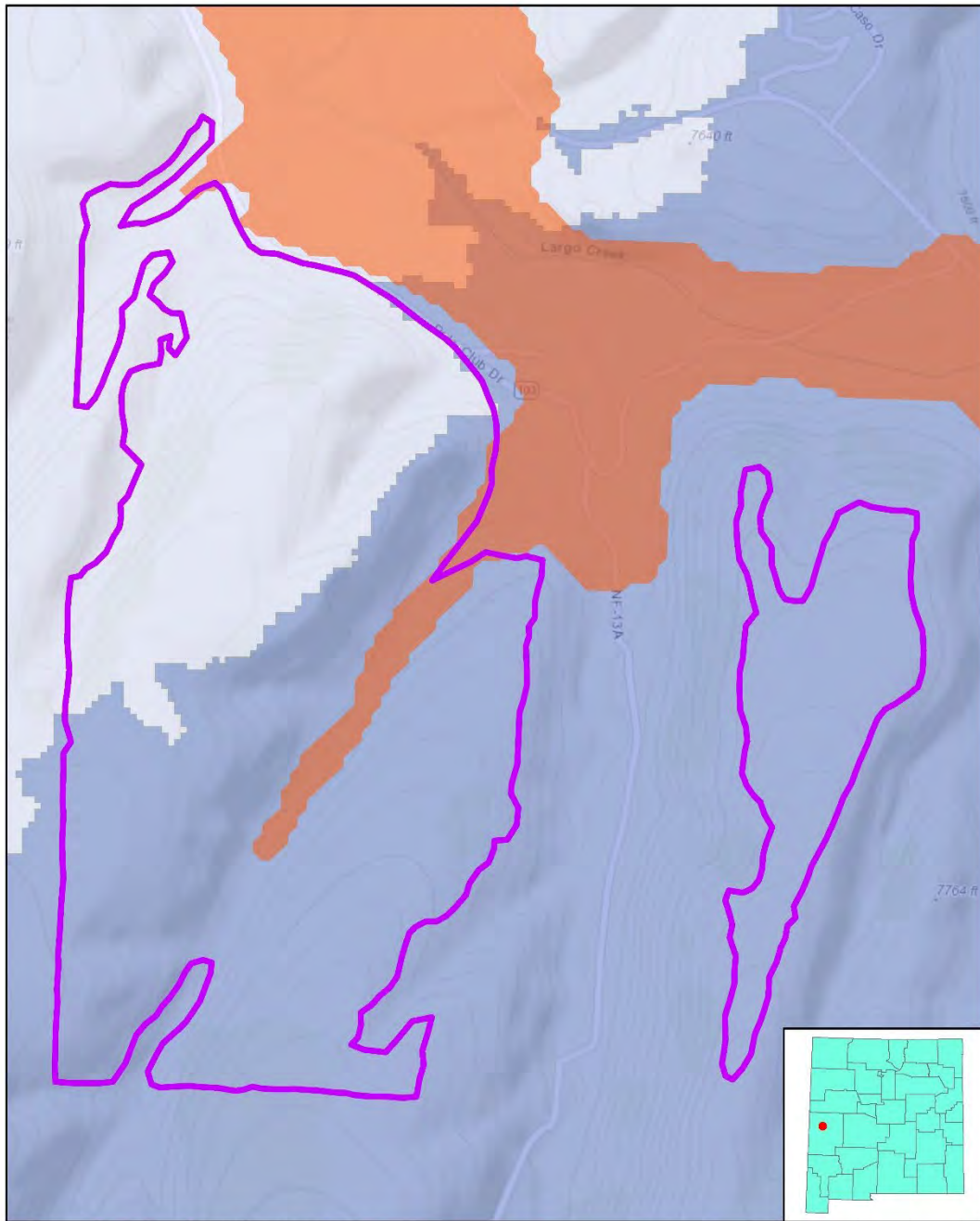
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





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)

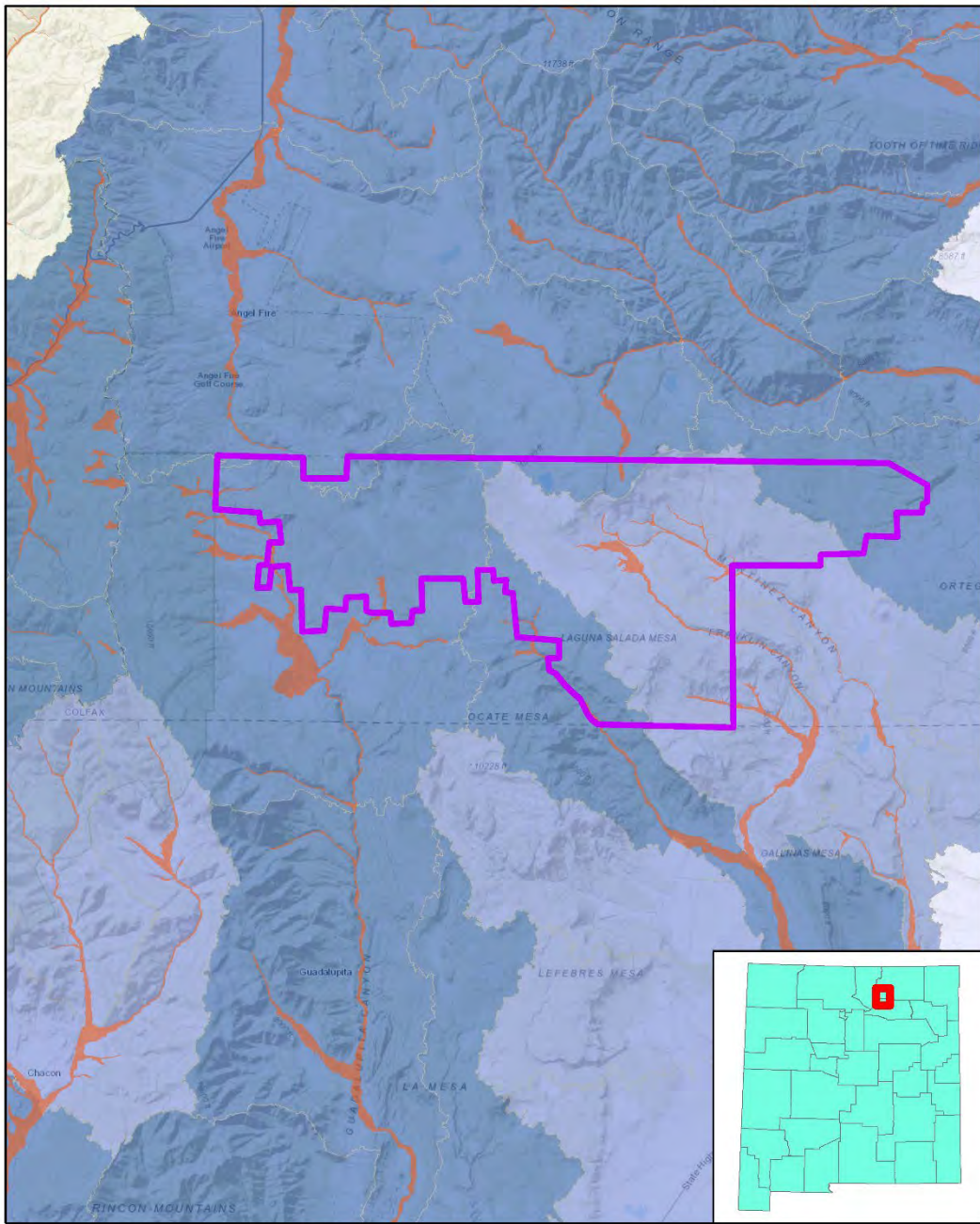
-  1 of 3 values are at risk
-  2 of 3 values are at risk
-  3 of 3 values are at risk
-  Risk to Riparian

0 0.075 0.15 0.3 Miles





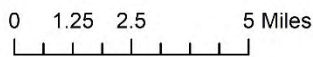
Upper Coyote Creek, Elk Ridge



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

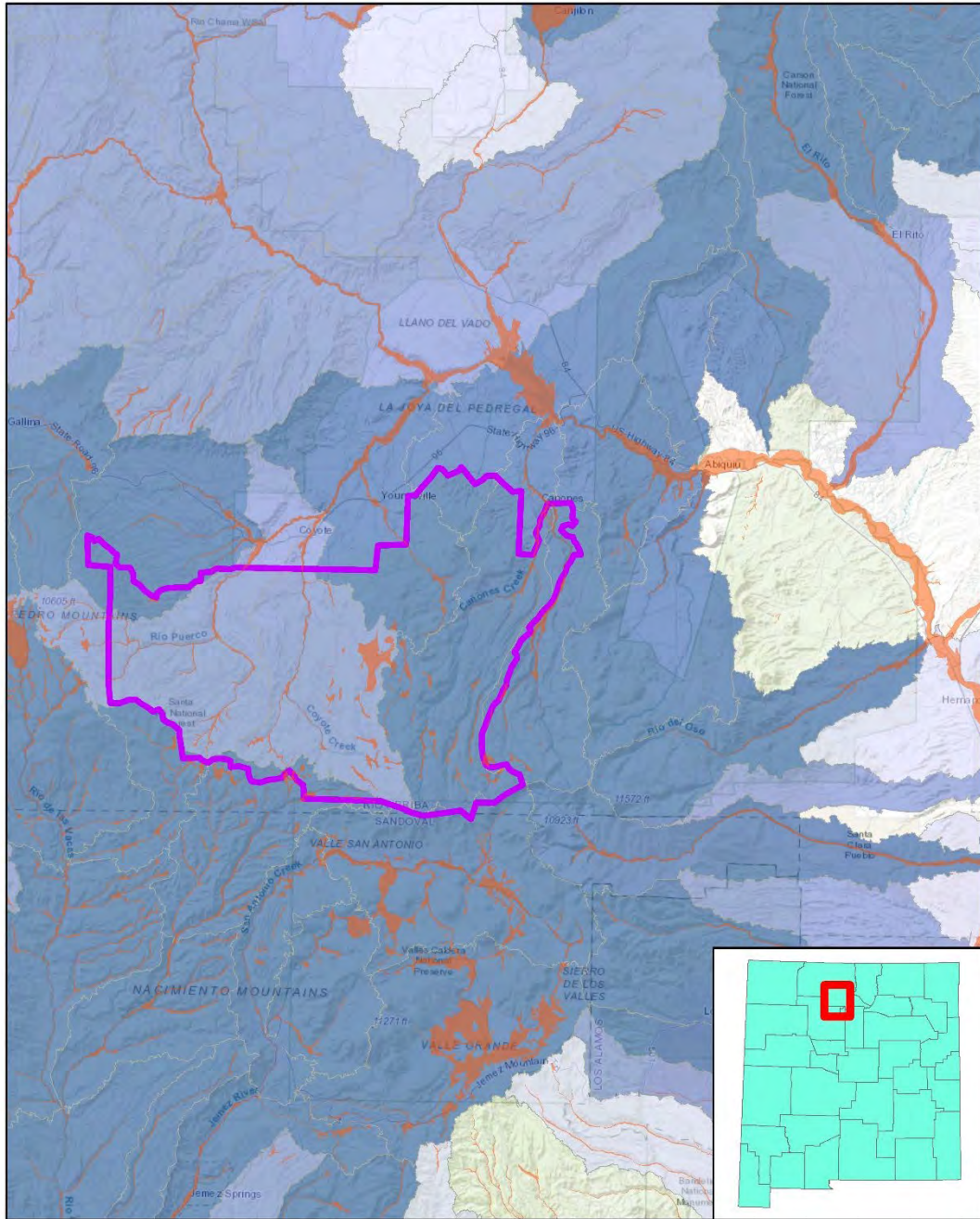
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





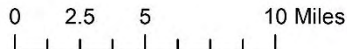
Encino Vista Landscape Restoration



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

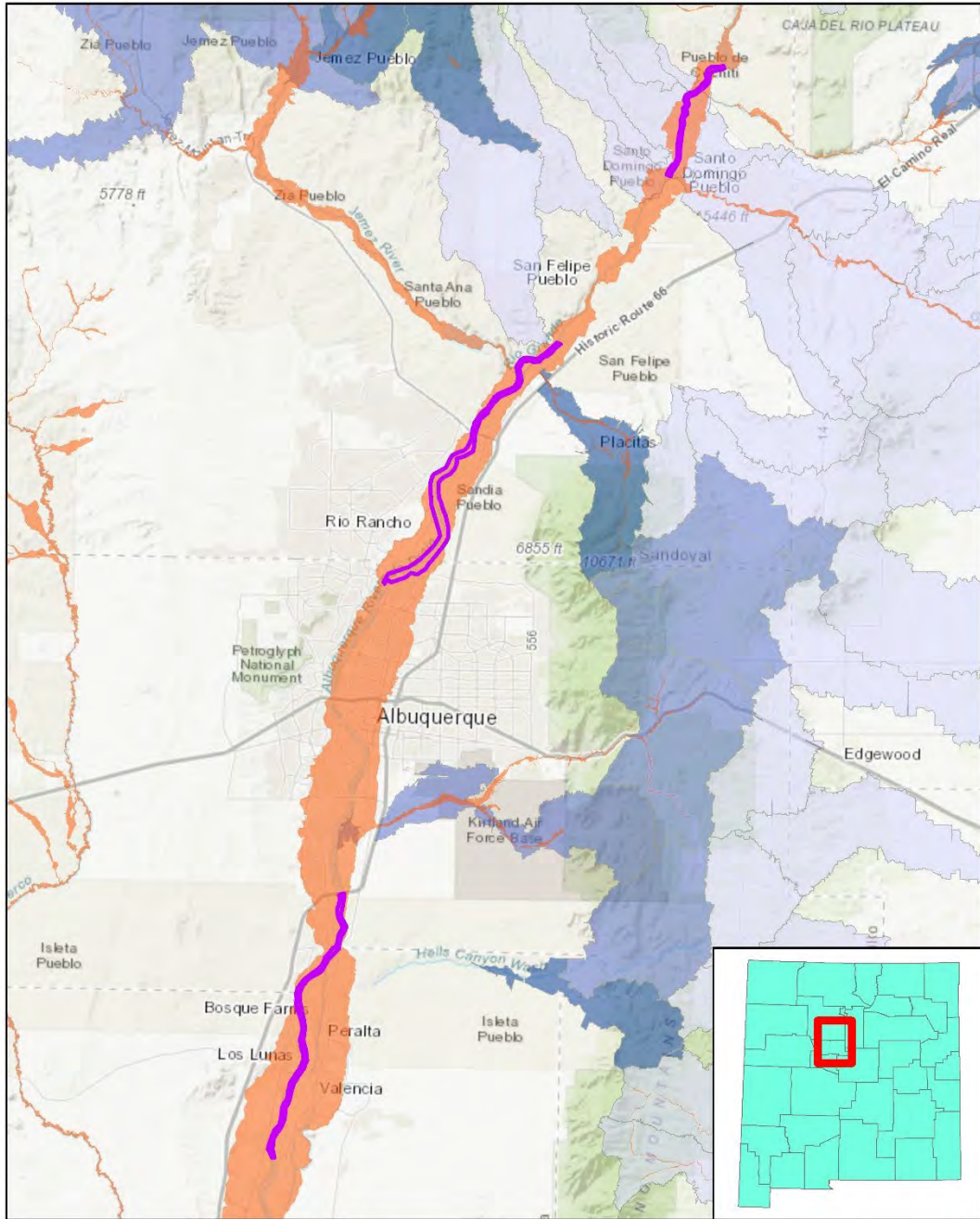
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





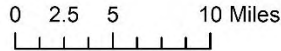
Middle Rio Grande Bosque



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

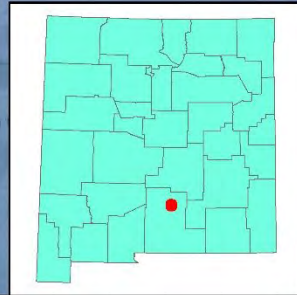
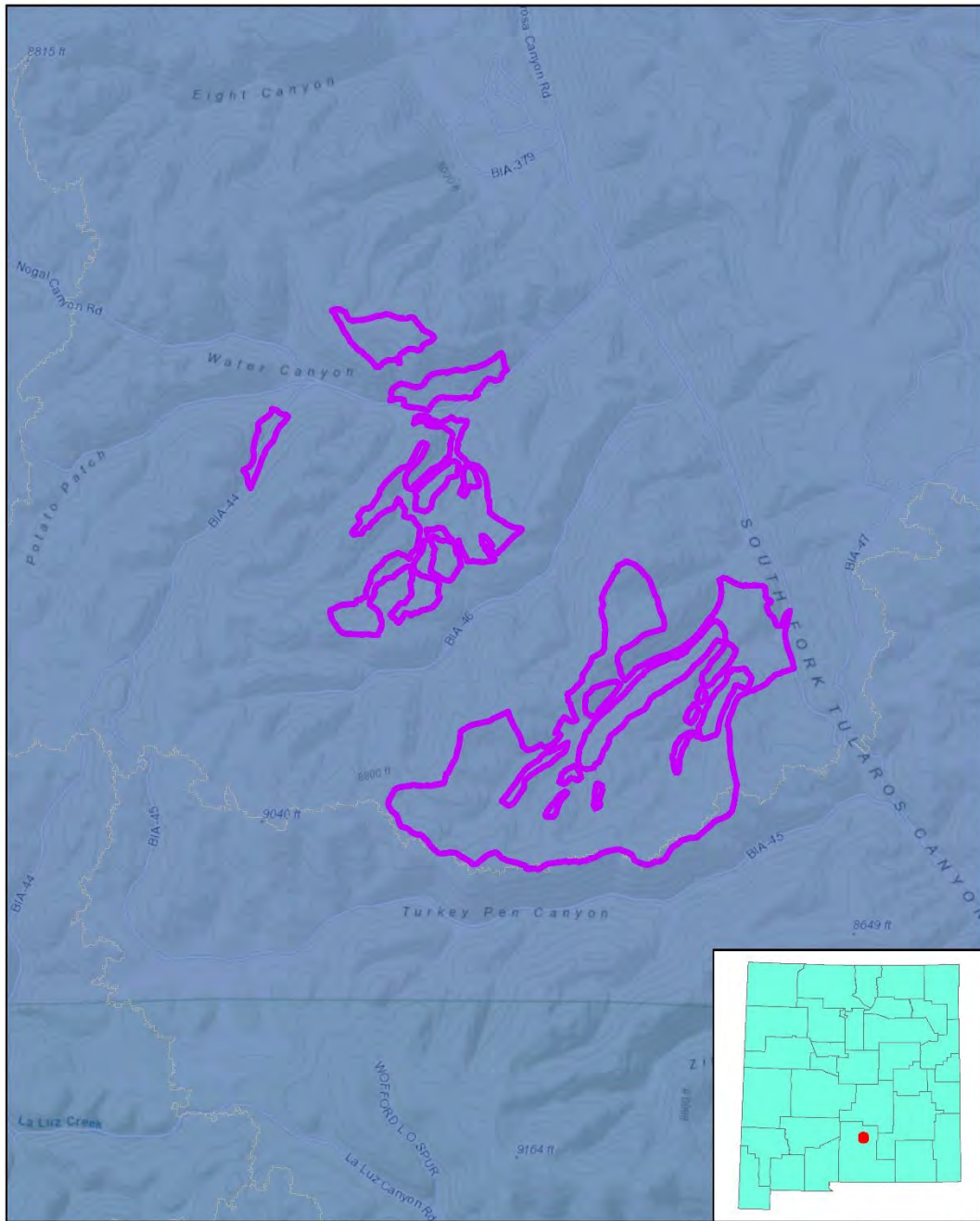
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

- 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)

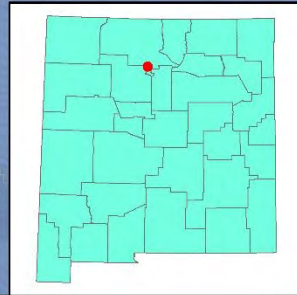
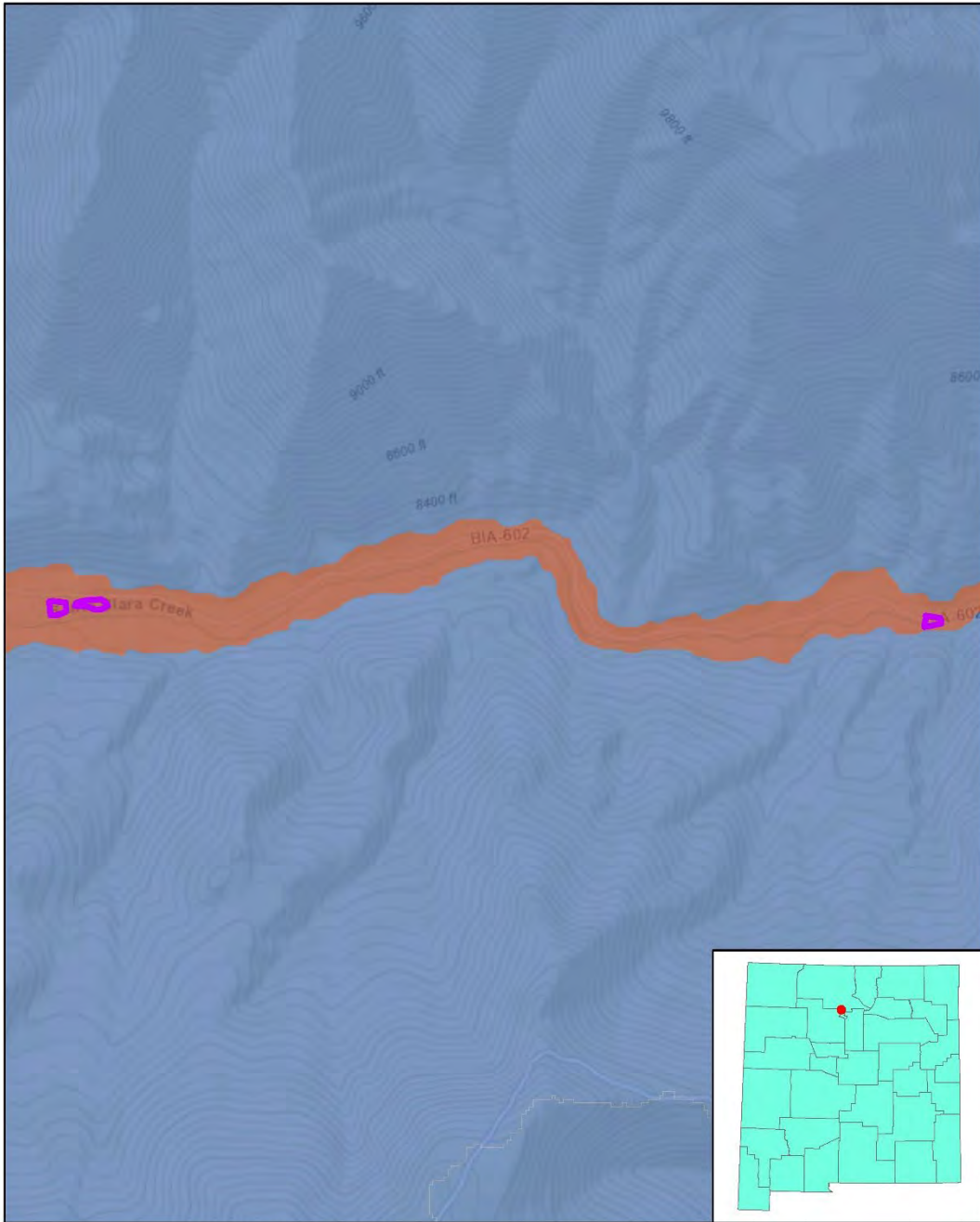
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





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)

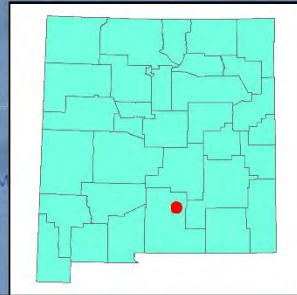
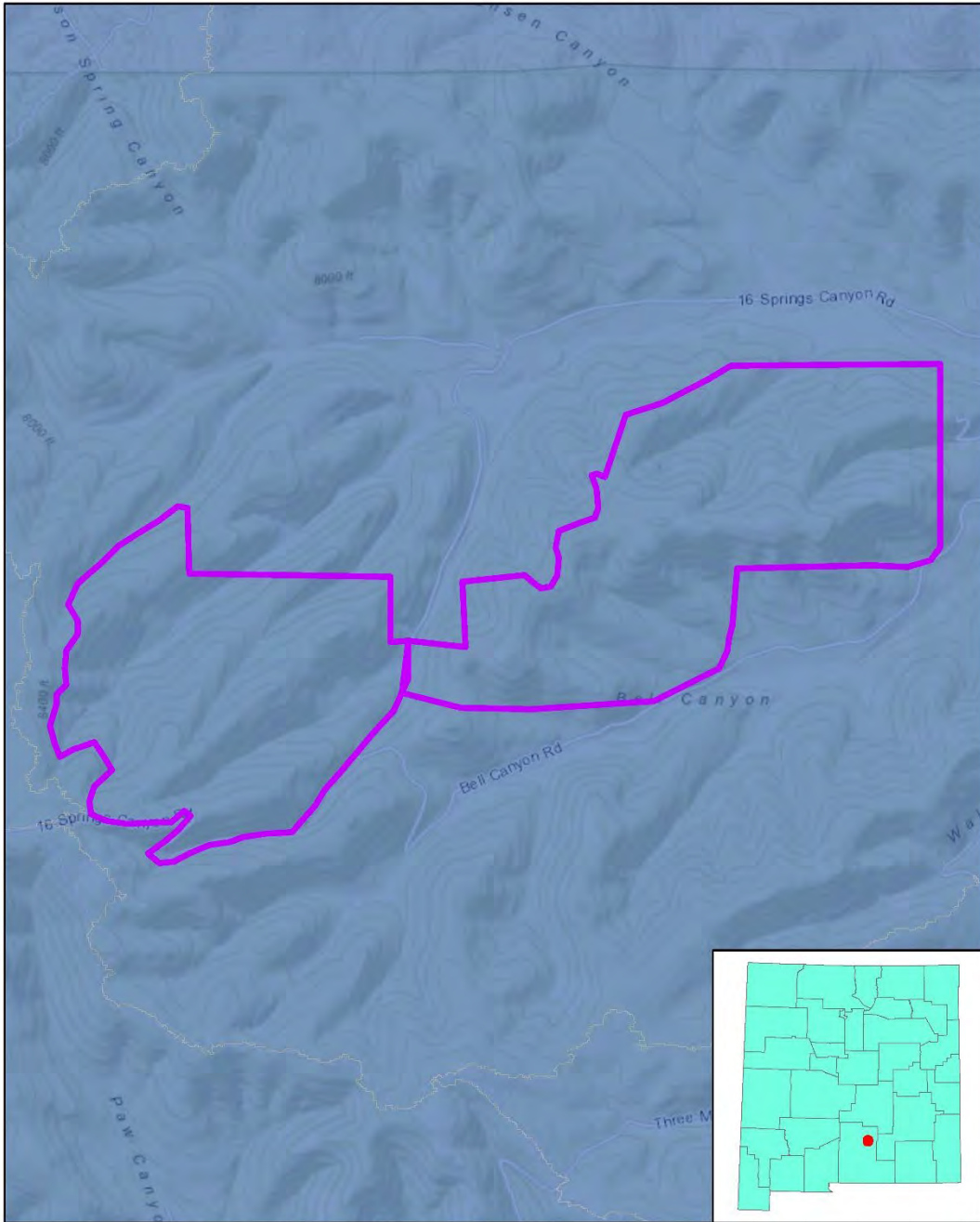
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

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)

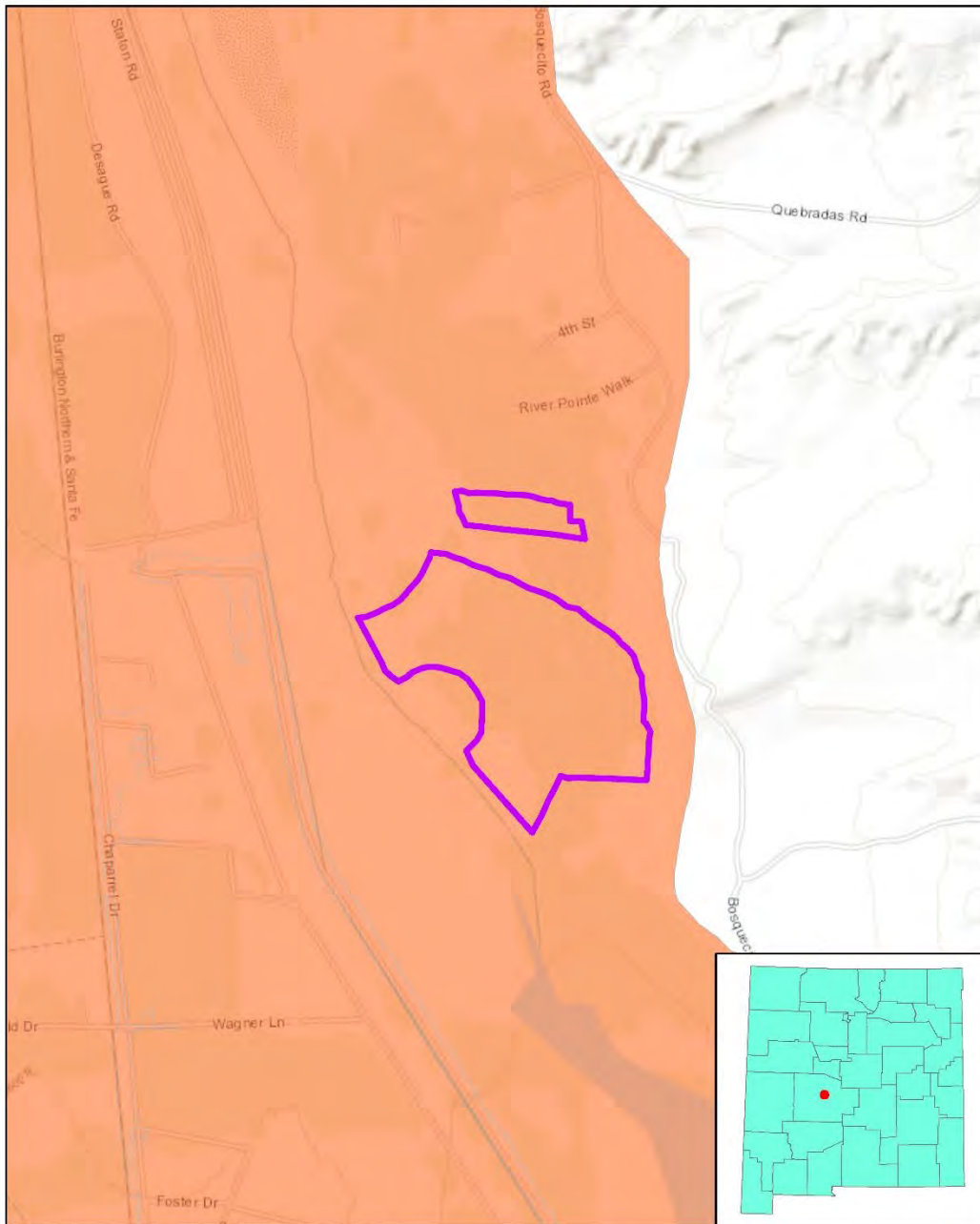
- 1 of 3 values are at risk
- 2 of 3 values are at risk
- 3 of 3 values are at risk
- Risk to Riparian

0 0.275 0.55 1.1 Miles





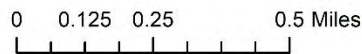
Socorro Escondida Wildlife Management Area



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
 Scale: 1:17,917
 Date: 11/13/2020

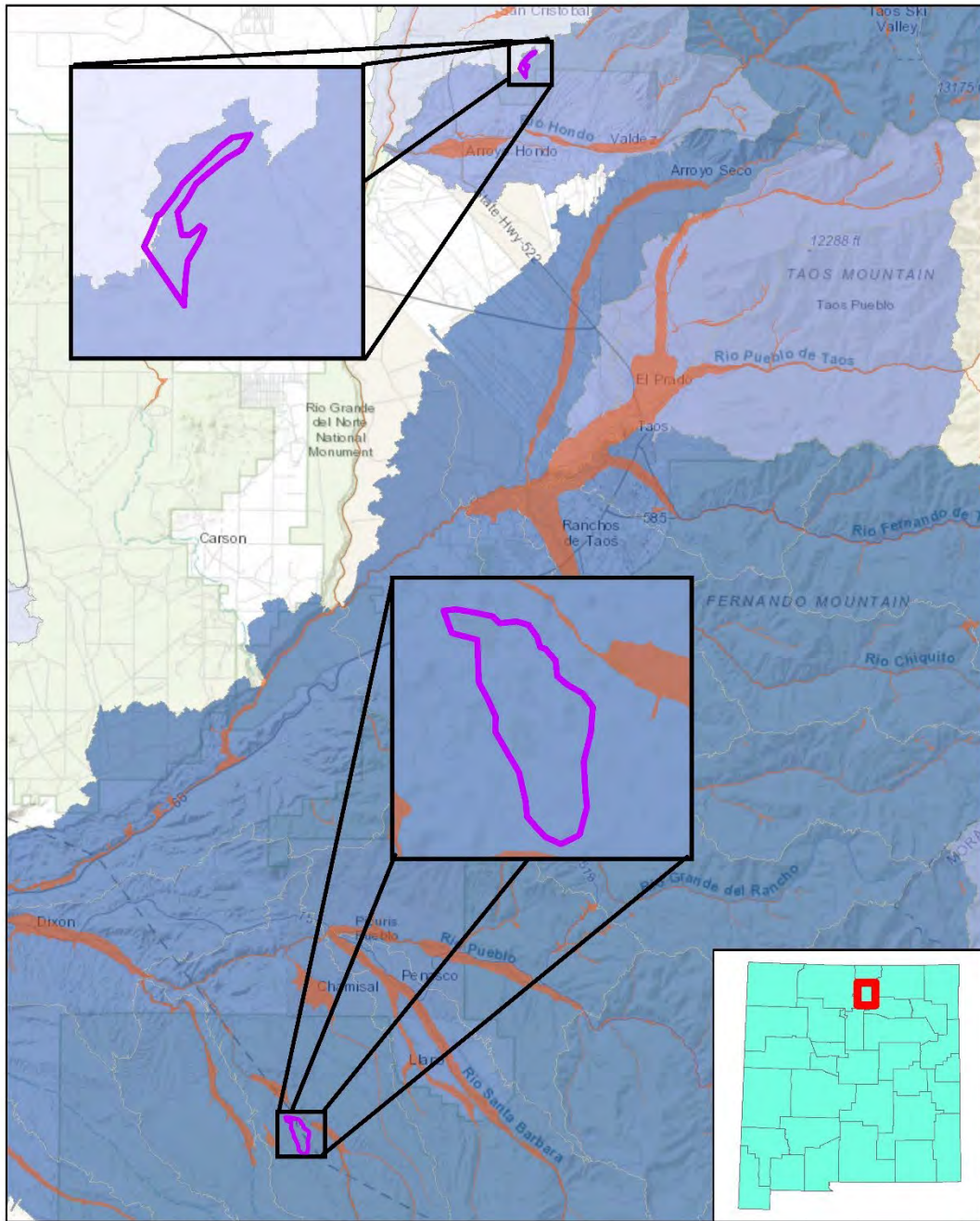
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





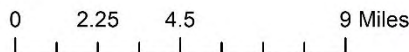
Trampas to San Cristobal Forest Restoration



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

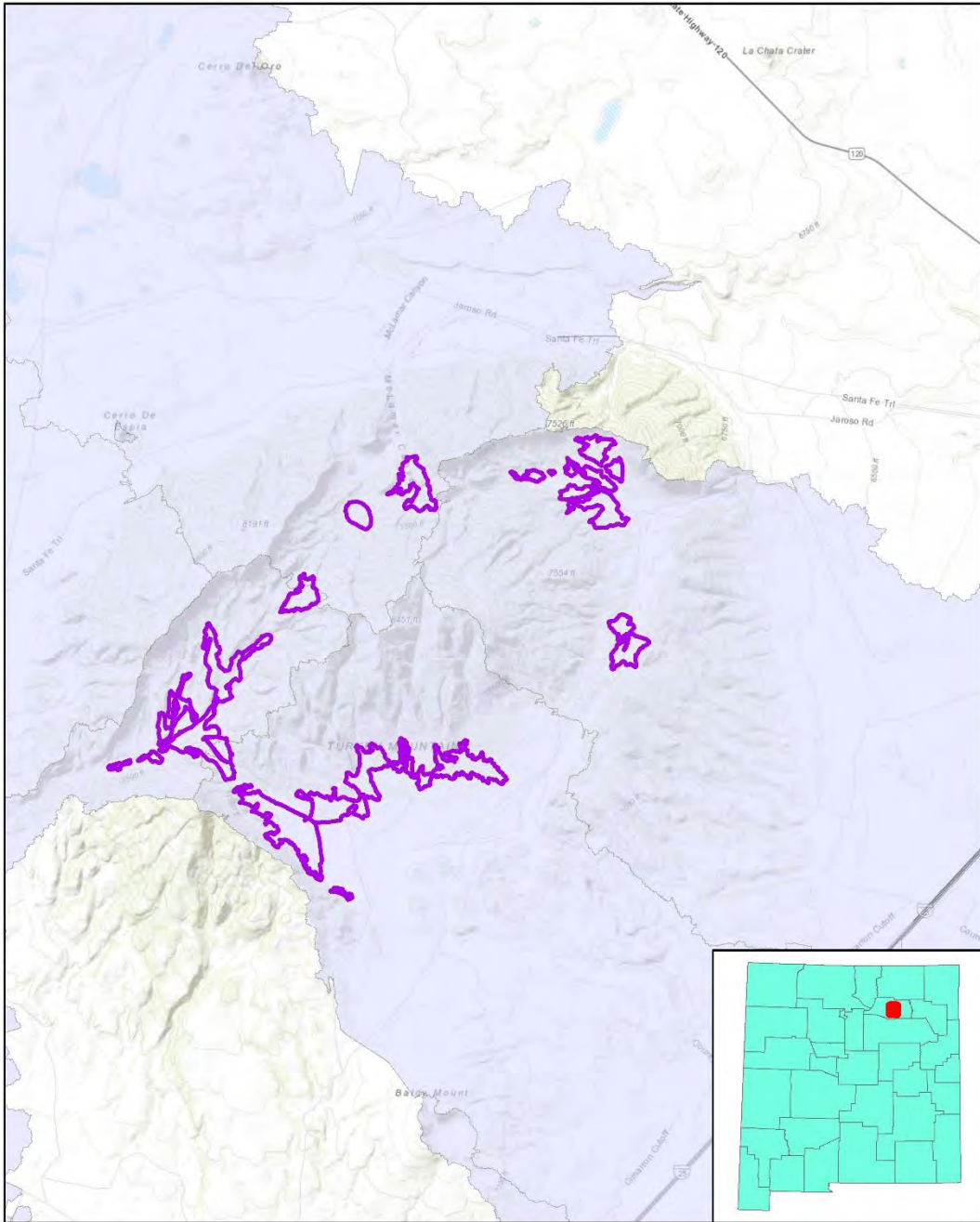
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





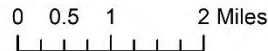
Turkey Mountain Watershed



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

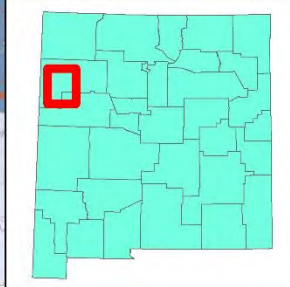
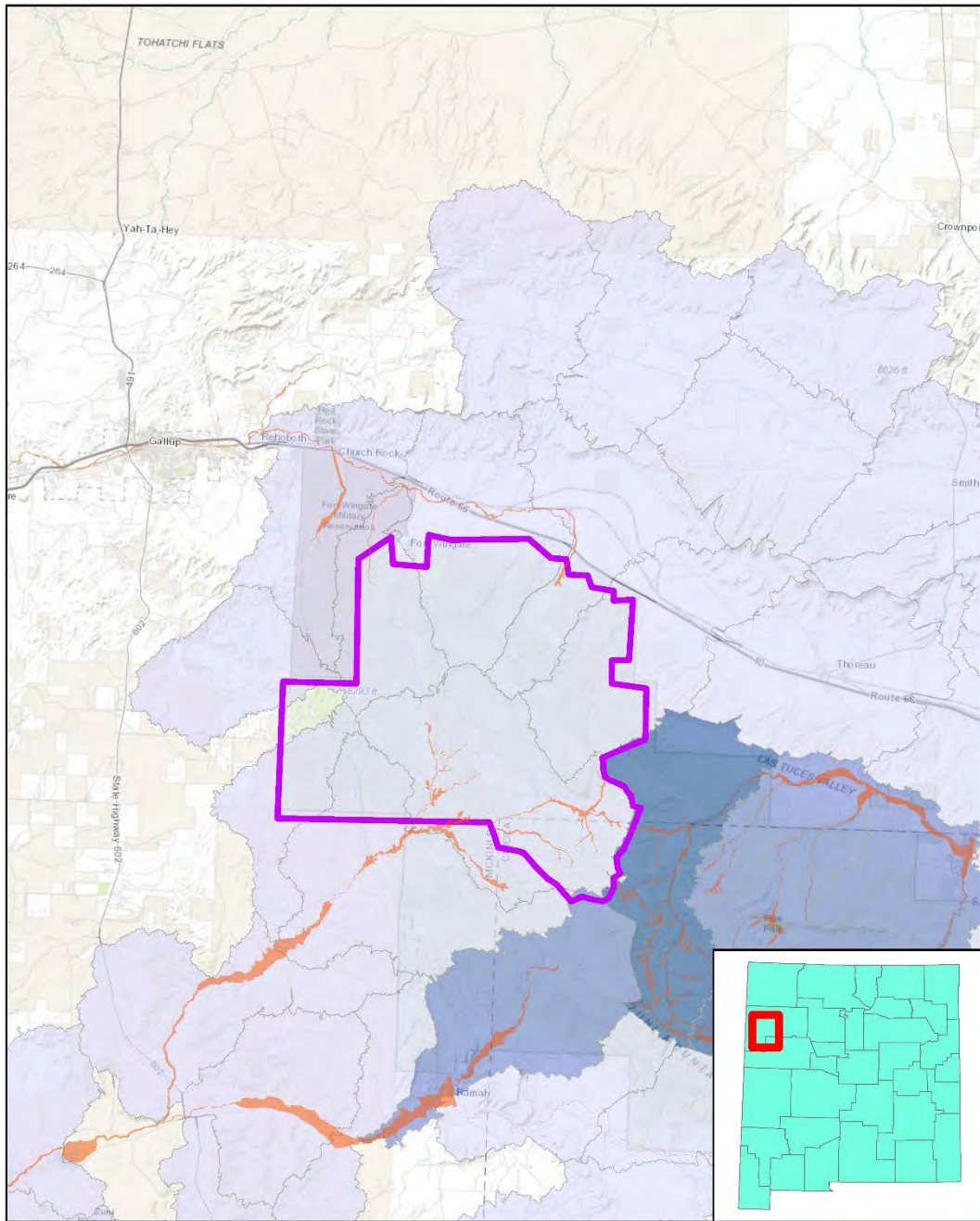
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





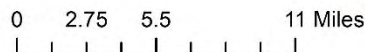
Zuni Landscape Restoration



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMSF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
 Scale: 1:396,083
 Date: 11/13/2020

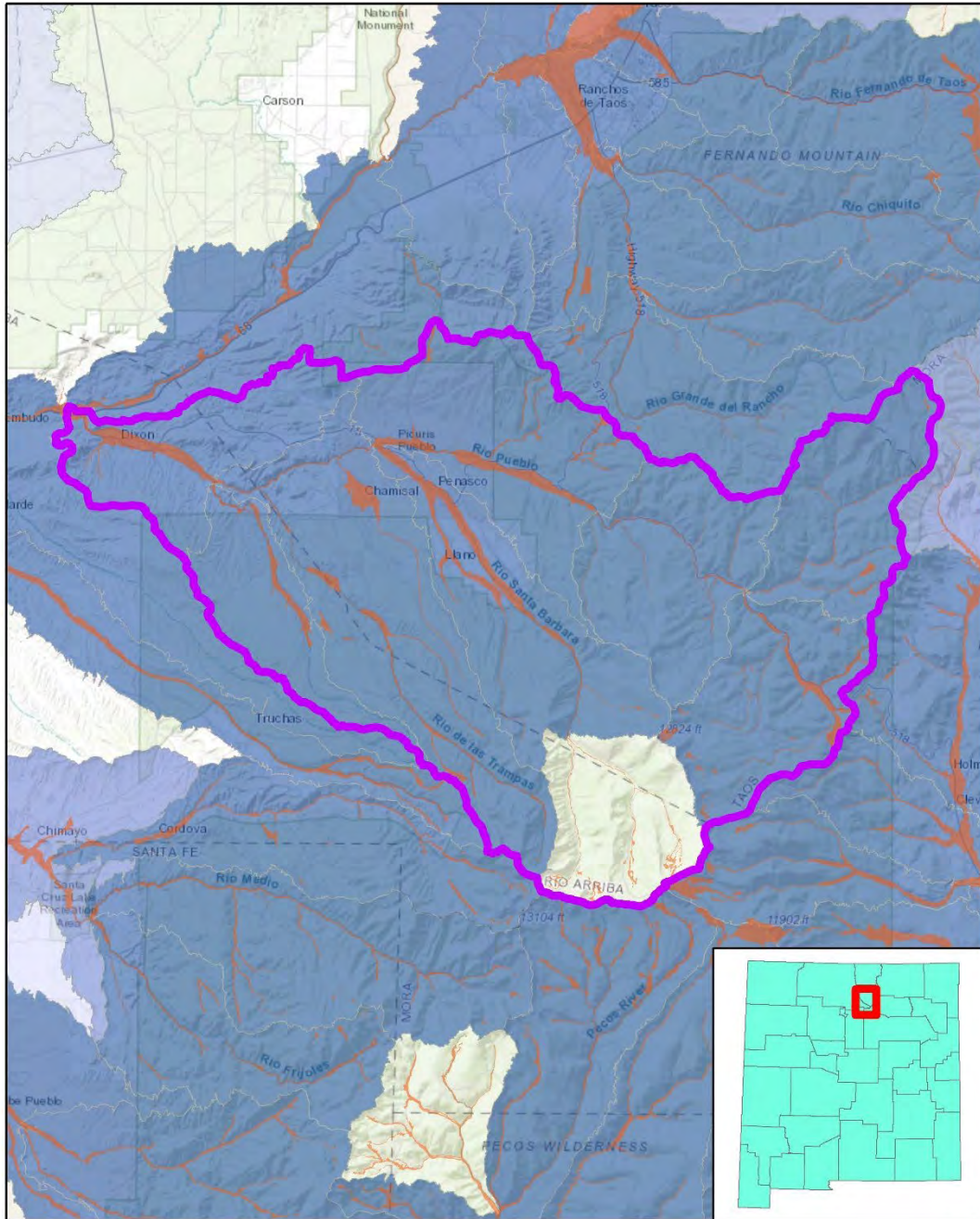
Top 500 Watersheds
 (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





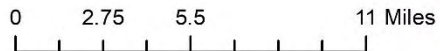
Tres Rios Watershed Coalition



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
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 Date: 11/29/2023

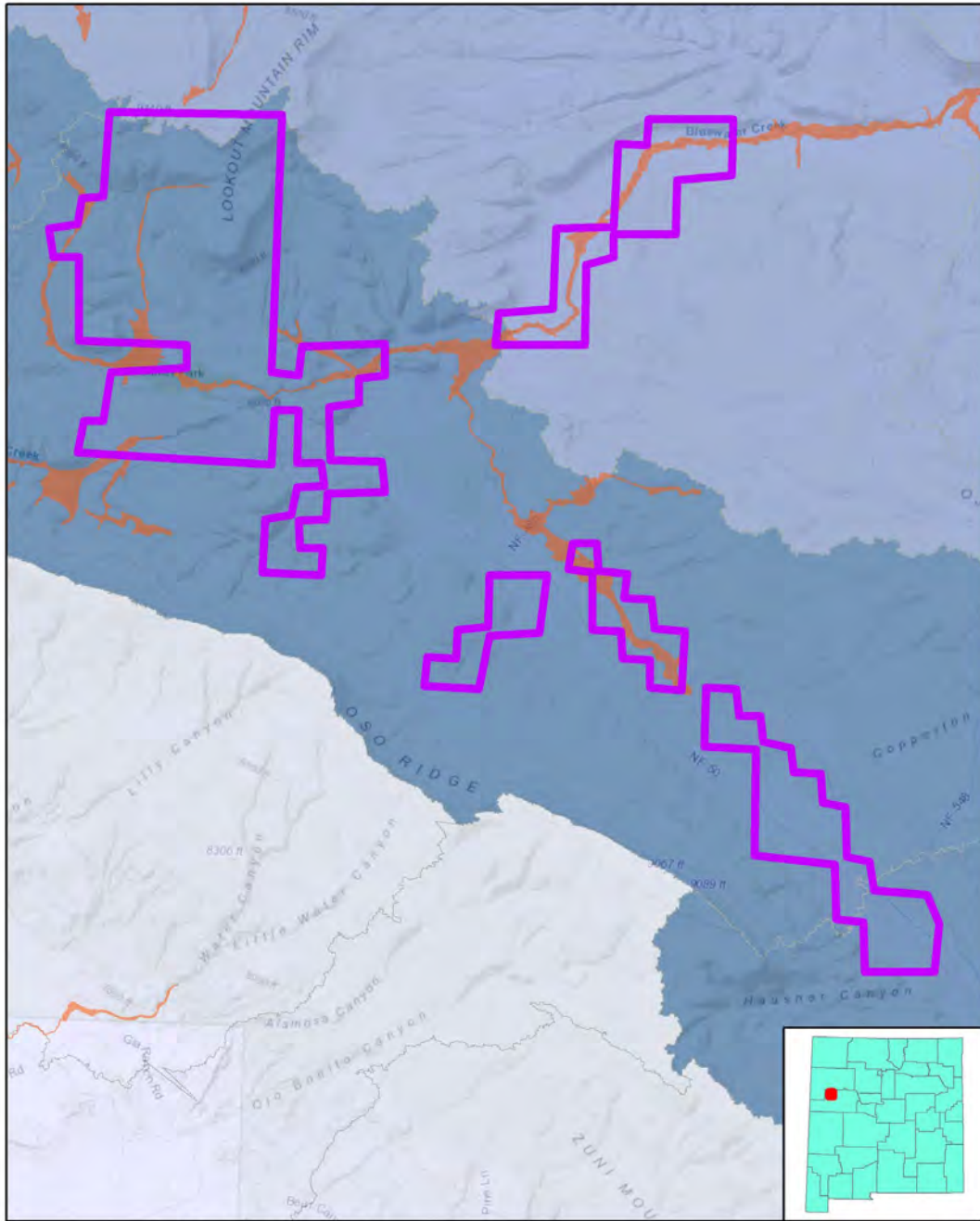
Top 500 Watersheds (Values at risk are wildfire damage, water sources and infrastructure, and wildlife habitat)

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





Zuni Phase I Private Landscape Restoration



Cartographer: Randall Fowler
 Data Source: NMF
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983
 UTM Zone 13N
 Scale: 1:62,845
 Date: 12/1/2023

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

