

Habitat Stamp Update

January 10, 2025

New Mexico State Game Commission Meeting
Santa Fe, NM



S. Liley, January 10, 2024

Habitat Stamp Background

- **Inception**

Started on experimental basis in 1986.

- **Objective** [19.34.6.6 NMAC - Rp 19.34.6.6 NMAC, 4/1/2031]

To provide for a public land management stamp for hunting, fishing federal lands, creates a citizen advisory committee, and provides for expenditure of funds from stamp revenues.

- **Purpose of Program** [HSP Guidance Document 2022]

To plan, develop, maintain, and coordinate conservation and restoration programs that are designed to benefit wildlife and fish populations.

Rule renewed April 2021 [expires 3/31/2031]



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Habitat Stamp Background

Who is involved?

- FUNDED BY →

Stamp buyers (i.e. people that hunt and fish on USFS and BLM lands in New Mexico)

- GUIDED BY →

Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) members and public meetings

- IMPLEMENTED BY →
NMDGF, BLM, USFS

Habitat Stamp Background

Pre 2021 Rule Change

Post 2021 Rule Change

Stamp cost \$ 5

Stamp cost \$ 10

Annual budget ~ \$ 750,000 to \$ 1 million

Annual Budget ~ \$1.5 to \$ 2 million

5 regional CACs

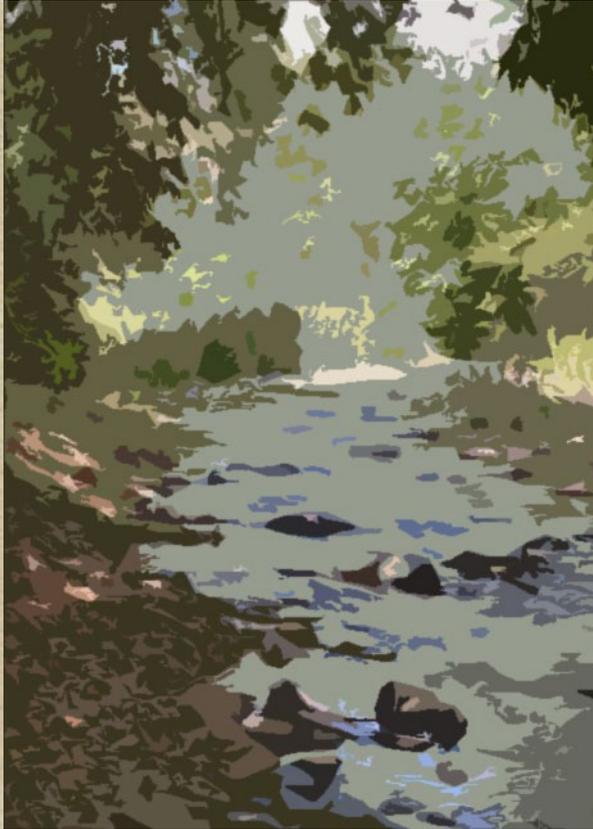
1 Statewide CAC, no regional boundaries

No specific requirement for projects primarily benefitting fish

Over a 5-year period, a minimum of 50% of funds spent on fish projects.



How it works...



- Project ideas can start from anywhere (BLM, USFS, NMDGF, CAC, Public).
- Projects that are fully developed are brought forward during CAC annual summer meeting.
- CAC representatives review project packages to decide on a final ranked project list.



Current CAC Meeting Schedule

June

New projects available for review

July

Public Meeting
Present projects to CAC and public

August

Public Meeting
CAC prioritizes projects

Sep-Dec

- Ongoing project implementation

January

Orientation meeting (when needed) for new CAC
Annual report following audit

February or March

Public Mtg
Annual update with HSP
Implementation Report

April-May

- Ongoing project implementation



Current CAC Members

Name	Term End	Representation
Lief Ahlm	March 31, 2029	At Large
Mark Mattaini	March 31, 2029	District 3
Jeffrey Arterburn	March 31, 2026	Fish/Wildlife Habitat Protection
Mark Cadwallader	March 31, 2029	District 1
Manuel L'Esperance	March 31, 2029	Farm and Ranch
Art Vollmer	March 31, 2026	District 4
James Cain	March 31, 2026	District 2
John Pearce	March 31, 2026	District 5
Ronald Loehman	March 31, 2029	At Large



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...since reauthorization

- 41 projects completed
- \$ 5,881,611 spent



- 10,850 acres of forest restoration
- 52 miles of fence conversion for connectivity
- 5.5 acres wetland protected
- 62 acres stream and lake rehabilitated
- 5 water renovations



Summary – Expenditures Since Renewal

Sikes Fund Expenditures (3 years)
July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024



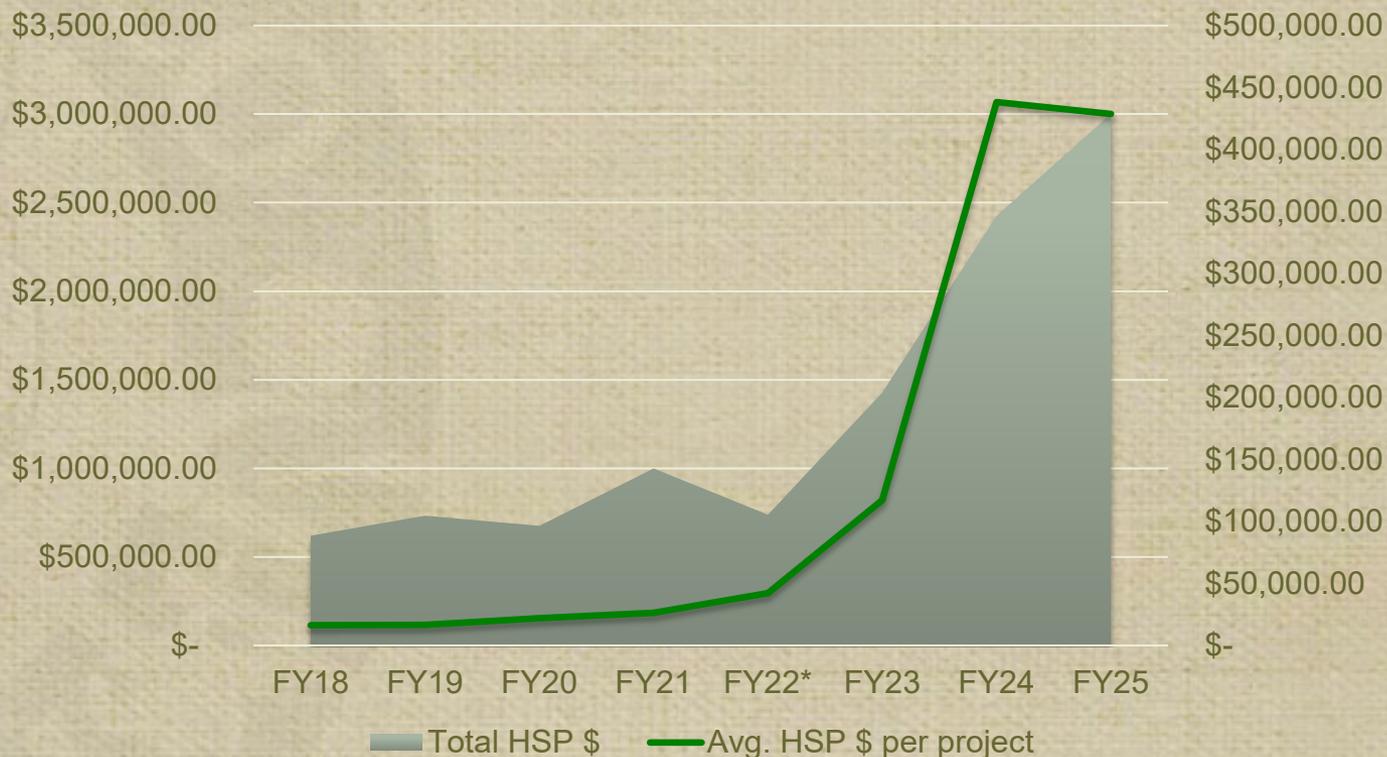
- Fish Project Expenditures
- Wildlife Project Expenditures

- April 2021 - New rule requires minimum of 50% of funds spent on projects that benefit fish over a five-year period [FY22-FY26].
- Based on cost estimates for projects prioritized in FY25 projects, the split will be 54% fish, 46% wildlife going into FY26.



Summary (FY22-present)

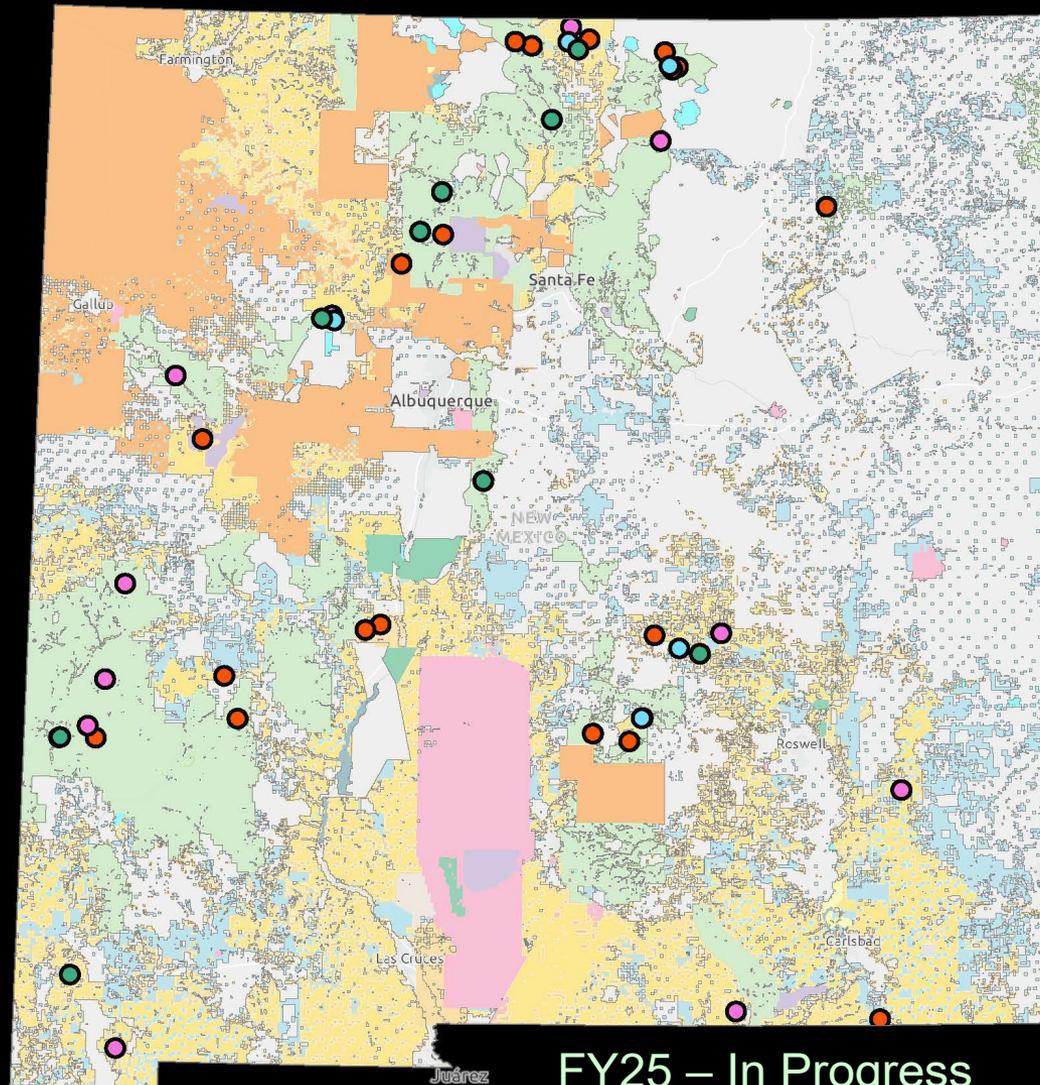
HSP Budget FY2018-FY2025



* First year under new rule

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Habitat Stamp Projects FY22-25



FY25 – In Progress

Legend

- FY25 Projects
- FY24 Projects
- FY23 Projects
- FY22 Projects

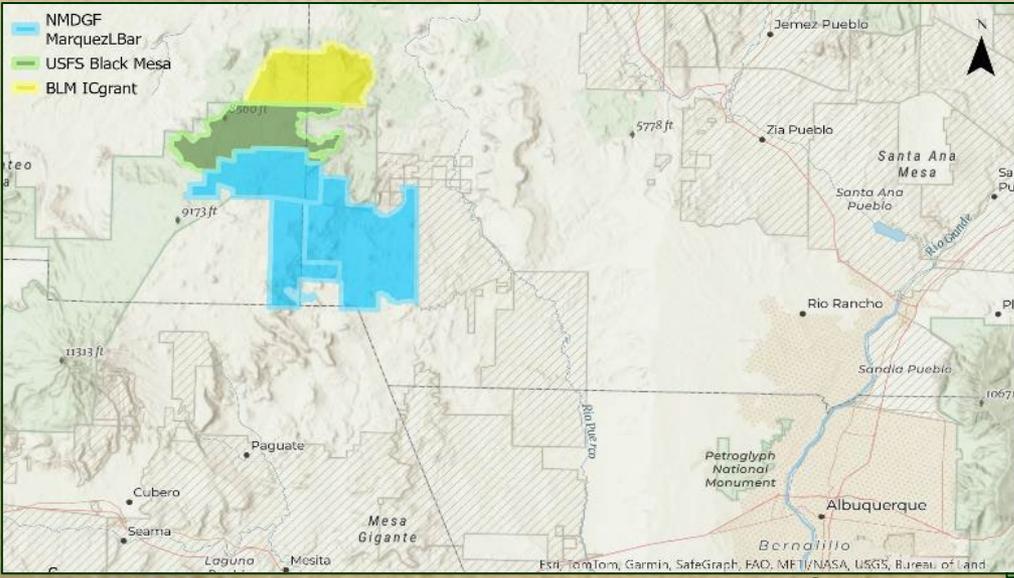


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Project Spotlight – Cibola National Forest, Black Mesa

Project type → Forest Restoration

- Overarching objective : return frequent-fire forests to natural conditions where they can be safely managed through prescribed fire or managed
- Project objective: conduct forest thinning in preparation for prescribed fire.
- HSP funded \$293,158 of thinning on Black Mesa since the 2021 rule change with additional 350,000 prioritized in FY25

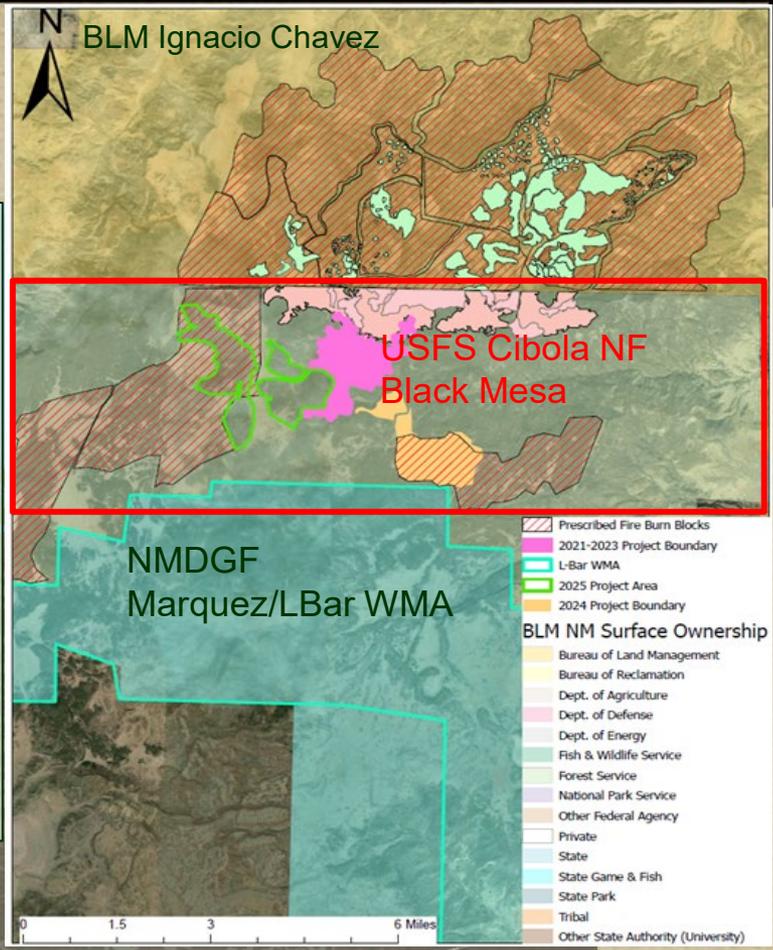


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Project Spotlight – Cibola National Forest, Black Mesa

Highlights

- Restoration in this area has been cross boundary and landscape scale (~100,000 acres BLM, USFS, NMDGF)
- HSP has contributed to landscape for last decade
 - Recently, HSP has supported forest thinning on USFS Black Mesa with 1,300 acres thinned since rule change
- BLM has followed up with Rx fire on Ignacio Chavez and USFS is scheduled to start Rx fire on portion of Black Mesa in 2025



Map Guide

- Red hashed polygons = Rx burn blocks
- Solid polygons (any color) = Thinned areas
- Green polygon (no fill) = HSP prioritized thinning for FY25



Project Spotlight – Gila National Forest, Willow Creek



Goals

- Reduce erosion/sedimentation
- Create fish habitat
- Reduce stream temperature
- Protect infrastructure
- Improve a road crossing for aquatic organism passage



Project Spotlight – Gila National Forest, Willow Creek

Excavation of Pools



Little Turkey Creek



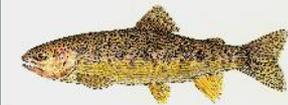
Point Bar & Habitat Boulders



Bank Stabilization & Improved Fish Habitat



HSP funded \$1,316,190 of restoration work in Willow Ck since the 2021 rule change



Project Spotlight – Gila National Forest, Willow Creek

Highlights

- HSP project complemented by larger watershed restoration efforts including projects facilitated by Trout Unlimited, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and funding from Inflation Reduction Act through USFS.
- Post wildfire system that prompted a native fish restoration opportunity as well as habitat restoration.



Jill Wick and Gila Trout. Photo courtesy of New Mexico Dept. of Game and Fish

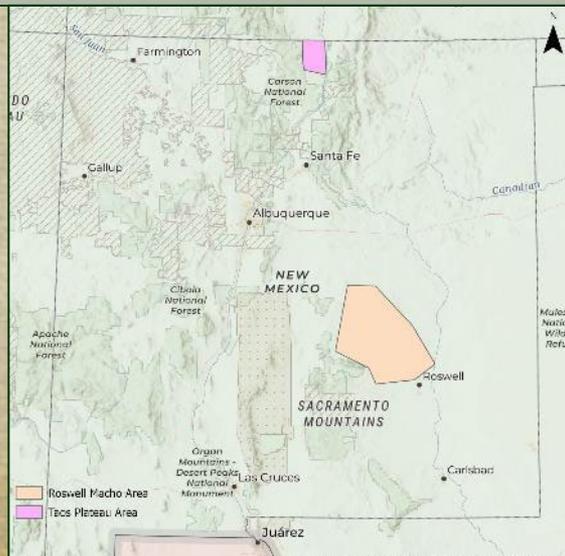


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Project Spotlight – BLM Roswell and BLM Taos, Wildlife Habitat Connectivity

Project type → Fence conversion

- Overarching objective : Increase landscape permeability and decrease fence entanglement and separation risk.
- Project objective: Open travel corridors for wildlife and improve their access to habitat in north central (Taos Plateau) and southeastern (Roswell) New Mexico to benefit wildlife.
- HSP contributed \$ 792,005 to fence conversion on Taos Plateau and Roswell's Macho area since the 2021 rule change



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Project Spotlight – BLM Roswell and BLM Taos, Wildlife Habitat Connectivity

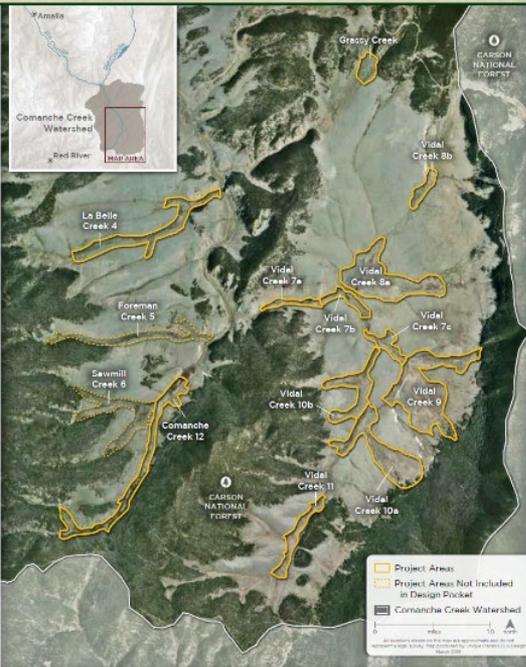
- **Highlights**
 - **Over 100 miles fence converted**
 - **HSP funds represent one important source for these landscape scale projects.**



Project Spotlight – Carson NF, Valle Vidal Restoration: Vidal, Comanche, Costilla, and La Belle Ck

Project type → Stream and meadow restoration

- Overarching objective : Restore stream and meadow system to benefit the many wildlife and fish species that depend on this watershed
- Project objectives: Enhance overall wetland function and improve fish and riparian habitat by stabilizing banks, placing instream structures, and developing pools that work in concert to increase water table, and reconnect floodplain.
- HSP funded \$ 1,228,382 of stream and meadow restoration work on Valle Vidal since 2021 rule change



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Project Spotlight – Carson NF Valle Vidal Restoration: Vidal, Comanche, Costilla, and La Belle Ck

Highlights

- Restoration in this 27,430 acre watershed has been long-term, collaborative, and comprehensive.
- Partners include federal and state management agencies, Trout Unlimited, The Quivira coalition, the EPA and even Coca-Cola.
- NMDGF stocked Rio Grande cutthroat trout, Rio Grande chub, and Rio Grande sucker into Costilla, Comanche, and other tributaries in Nov 2022, completing a decades long native fish restoration project.



Up and coming... Gila National Forest, Whitewater Creek Recreation Area

Goals

- Increase hydraulic diversity
- Create shelter habitat for Gila trout
- Increase pool frequency and depth
- Reduce width-to-depth ratio
- Reduce streambank erosion potential
- Increase channel shading with native riparian vegetation.



Status

FY23 - HSP funds designs, FY24 - USFS covers compliance, FY25 CAC ranks as top prioritized project (\$500,000), estimated start date February 2025



Ongoing...Carson, Santa Fe, and Cibola Prescribed fire

Goal: Use prescribed fire to return forest wildlife habitat to more natural state with improved fire resiliency and better understory and cover conditions for wildlife



Administrative boundaries for forests involved are shown in distinct shades of blue. Green stars represent forests where we are working toward agreements to set up future HSP projects.



Status FY25 CAC prioritizes project (\$250,000), Winter 2024 burns on Santa Fe and Carson, planned burns on Cibola Spring 2025

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Questions?



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