

Forest Restoration in New Mexico: Fuel Prep Thinning on the Carson, Cibola, and Santa Fe National Forest

Background Information

- Prescribed fire is the ultimate tool for restoring fire-adapted forests. In order to utilize prescribed fire, however, managers must have treated units in place to facilitate safe and effective prescribed burns.
- Fuels preparation is an ongoing need for national forests in New Mexico, especially those that are regularly able to use prescribed fire. Fuels prep treatments are helpful in creating the opportunity for managed wildfire as well.
- Forest thinning and creation of fuelbreaks, handlines, dozer lines, and piles provide strongholds for fire implementation and management.

Project Contacts

Caitlin Ruhl, NMDGF, Caitlin.ruhl@dgf.nm.gov

Abel Salaz, SF National Forest, abel.salaz@usda.gov

Jonathan Romero, Carson National Forest,
Jonathan.Romero@usda.gov

Dennis Carril, Cibola National Forest,
Dennis.Carril@usda.gov

Proposed Management Action

- Contribute to ongoing need of thinning for fuels preparation on Forest Service lands, readying multijurisdictional landscape for prescribed fire and/or managed wildfire
- May occur on Carson, Cibola, or Santa Fe National Forest
- **Budget Estimate: \$ 250,000**



Forest Restoration in New Mexico: Santa Fe, Carson, and Cibola National Forests



Forest thinning to prepare units for
prescribed fire across forest
service and regional wildlife
habitats in New Mexico



Forest Restoration: Santa Fe, Carson, Cibola National Forests

Project Contacts



SANTA FE NATIONAL FOREST

Abel Salaz

Abel.Salaz@usda.gov



CARSON NATIONAL FOREST

Jonathan Romero

Jonathan.Romero@usda.gov



CIBOLA NATIONAL FOREST

Dennis Carril

dennis.carril@usda.gov



Caitlin Ruhl

Caitlin.Ruhl@dgf.nm.gov

Brock Lorenzen

Brock.Lorenzen@dgf.nm.gov

Rea Petrullo

Andrea.Petrullo@dgf.nm.gov

Forest Restoration

CHALLENGE?

A loss of natural fire regimes in fire-adapted forest has decreased forest health and resiliency and coincided with increased risk of catastrophic wildfire, this limits habitat quality and threatens the long-term presence of healthy forests

GOAL?

- Thin forest units for fuels preparation to facilitate prescribed fire or managed wildfire
- Ultimately, shift forest wildlife habitat to a more natural state with improved fire resiliency and better understory and cover conditions for wildlife

Background Info

1909



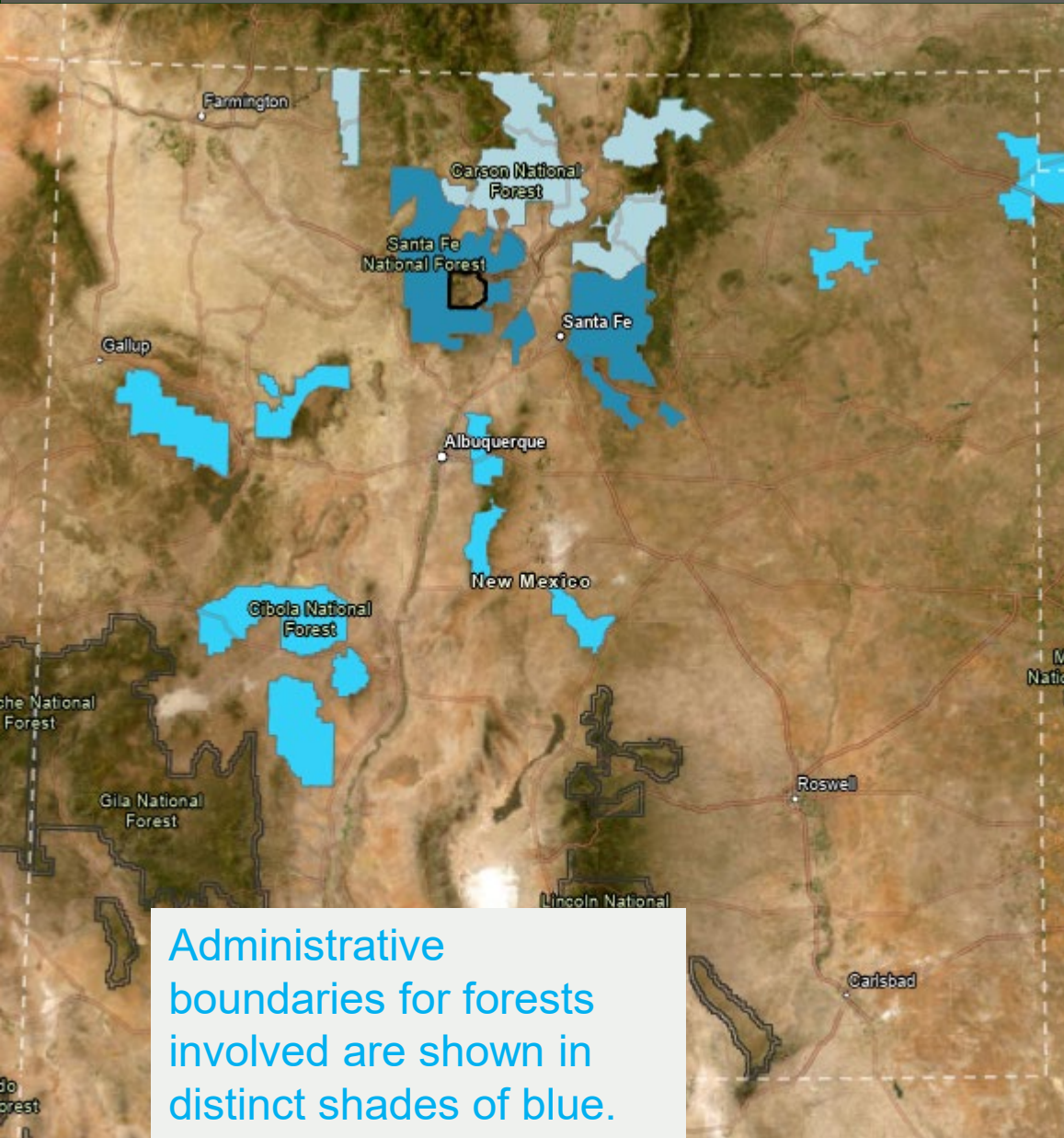
Photos:
<https://www.swfireconsortium.org/>

1979



“Southwestern US ponderosa pine forests generally evolved with low-severity, high-frequency, surface fire regimes occurring ...5-25 years...” *

Background Info



Administrative boundaries for forests involved are shown in distinct shades of blue.

- Fuels preparation plans have been collaboratively generated for multiple forests in NM (Carson, Santa Fe, Cibola)
- Numerous units identified within each forest aimed at landscape approach
- Plans meet objectives of both agencies.



- Available acres to accomplish :
 - 303 acres and 7.3 fireline miles on Cibola
 - 7,965 acres Carson
 - 604 and 5 miles fireline acres Santa Fe
 - Supporting tens of thousands of prescribed fire acres
- Treatments include hand or mechanical thinning, piling, slash pullback for fuelbreak, construction fire line prep
- This project would earmark \$250,000 of habitat stamp proceeds toward this large-scale, multi-year effort.

Carson, Cibola, and Santa Fe National Forests

❖ Mechanical Prep Polygons highlighted in neon blue



Map





Project Summary

Project estimate \$250,000

to contribute to ongoing mechanical fuels treatments across Santa Fe, Carson, and Cibola national forests

Project relation to CAC advice or priorities:

This project would contribute to the ongoing landscape scale forest restoration occurring on three national forests in New Mexico. Specifically, funds would contribute to fuels preparation for prescribed fire, enabling forest restoration at large scales and supporting forest health and longevity.

Project Specific Details:

Contribute towards over 1,000 acres of fuels preparation across multi jurisdictions, accomplishing the necessary step of setting the stage for prescribed fire to be implemented.

Historical Data:

These forests would have experienced wildfires on the order of every 2-25 years but their long term suppression as well as other land management decisions has resulted in a situation where extreme fire behavior and catastrophic loss of forest is possible.

Itemized Use of Funds:

\$ 250, 000 across the three forests

Comprehensive Project Analysis:

Please see the attached design packet and presentation for these details.

Monitoring Plan/ Strategy:

The USFS has a longterm strategy and approach to monitor forest health and has created a schedule to rotate prescribed fire through established blocks, and to identify areas in need of prescribed fire and take management actions necessary to prepare the landscape so that prescribed fire can be implemented

Project Emphasis Species:

Deer, Elk, and Turkey

