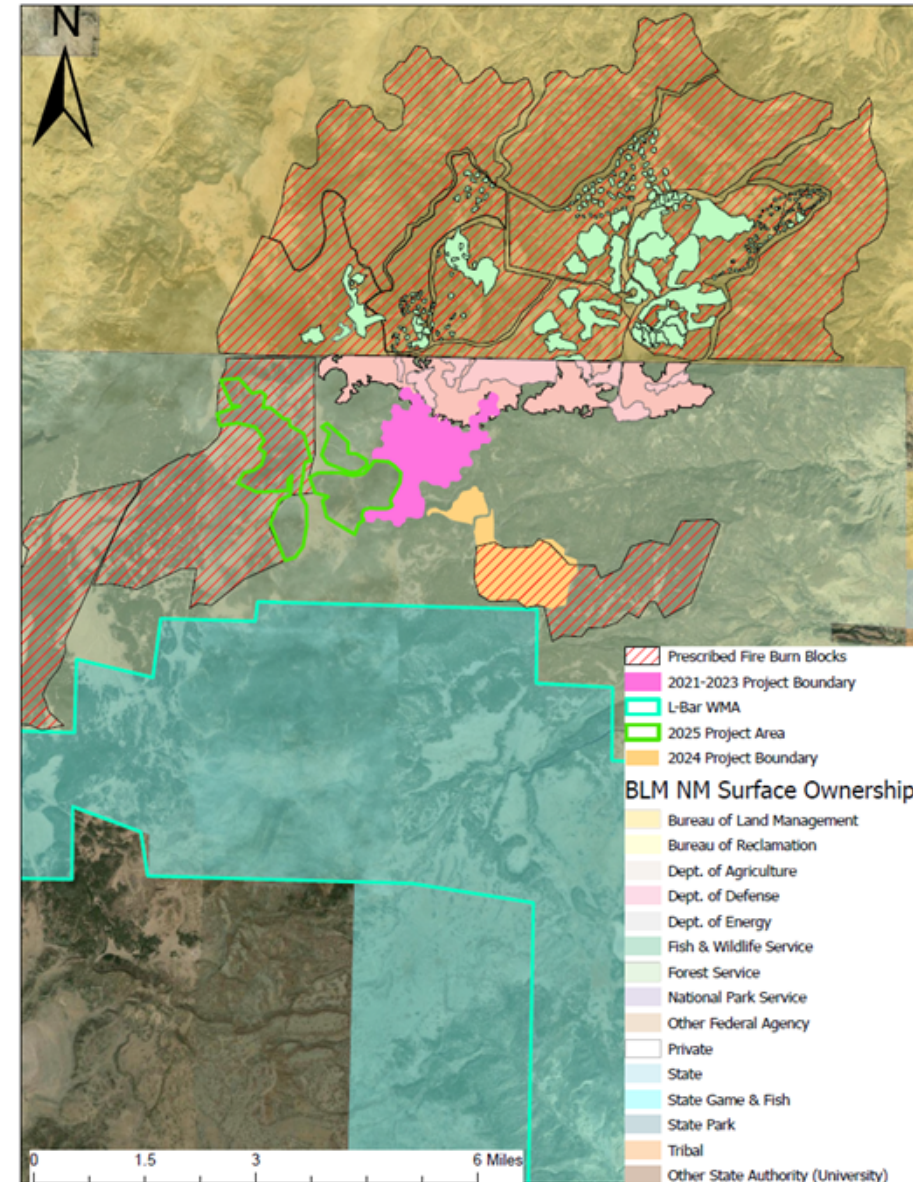




Black Mesa Habitat Restoration Project (Ponderosa Forest Thinning)

Background Information

- The Black Mesa area of the Cibola National Forest sits between the IC grant of the Rio Puerco BLM to the North, and the newly acquired L Bar Ranch of the NMDGF. The Rio Puerco BLM and the Cibola National Forest have been partners with the NMDGF in restoration efforts throughout this landscape for over a decade. We have worked together to thin thousands of acres of Ponderosa Pine in an effort to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, improve and restore wildlife habitats, and allow for fire to be used as a management tool.
- As a continuation of these efforts, a new block of Ponderosa Pine dominated forest has been identified for more thinning efforts on the Black Mesa portion of the Cibola National Forest (Green polygon on map to right). This area is in close proximity to the NMDGF recently acquired L Bar Wildlife management area
- These forests will be thinned to promote health and resilience and allow for reintroduction of low intensity surface fire. In addition to tree thinning, the shrubby browse will also be trimmed back to promote new growth of fresh shoots, which will provide an abundance of highly nutritious browse for mule deer.
- This effort will be one of the finishing touches for the thinning work, paving the way for future prescribed burns or managed wildfires to maintain this landscape.



Mount Taylor Ranger District - Cibola National Forest

Project Contacts:

USFS - Shawn Martin
NMDGF - Daniel Lusk

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Proposed Management Action

- NMDGF, in collaboration with the Cibola NF, will contract the thinning of 700 acres.
- Current costs are projected at \$500/acre
- Cibola National Forest and NMDGF will share inspection duties, and will collaboratively finalize the prescription with the contractor on site prior to implementation.
 - Google earth link

Estimated Budget : \$350,000

Black Mesa Habitat Restoration Project



Black Mesa Habitat Restoration Project



Project Contacts



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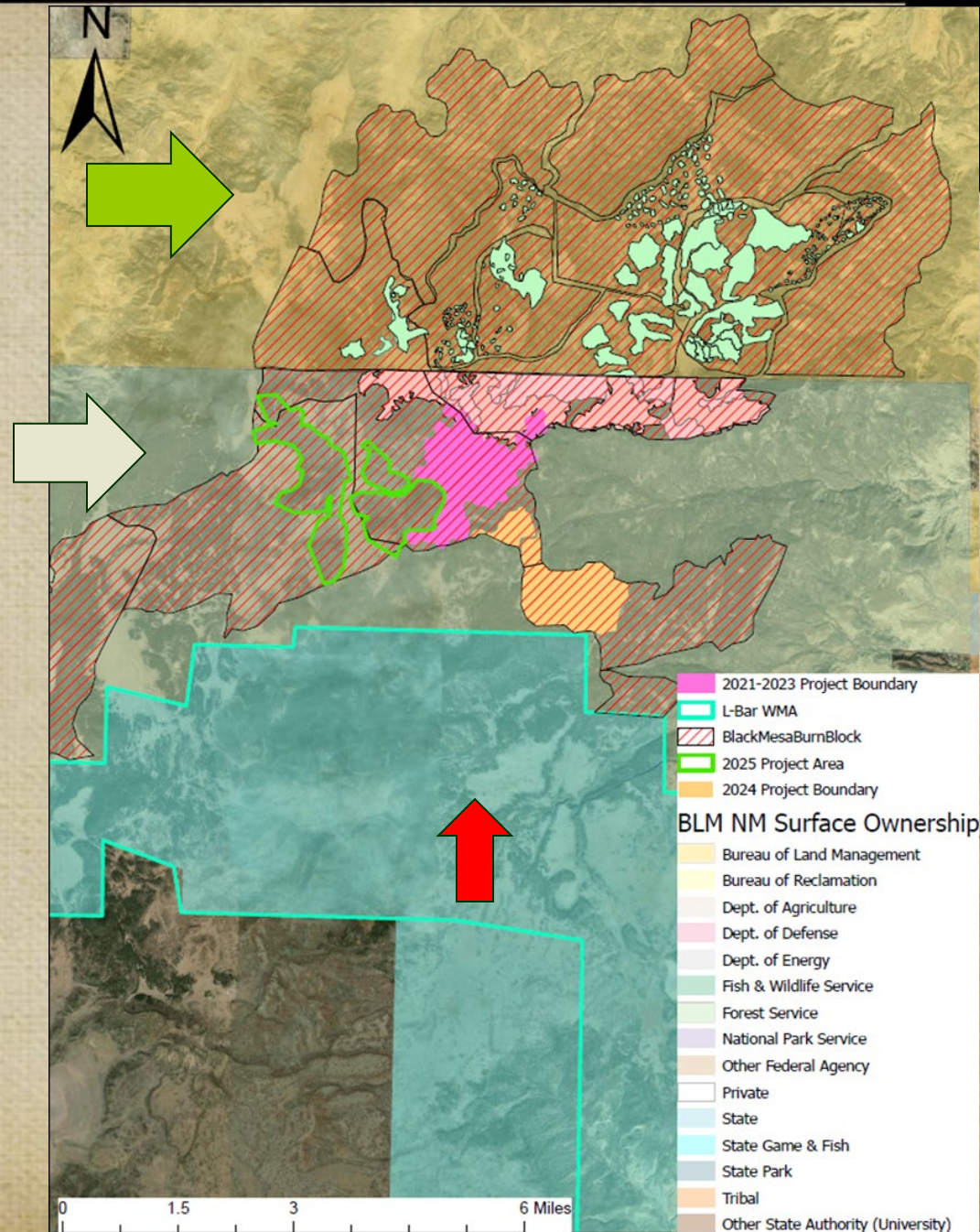


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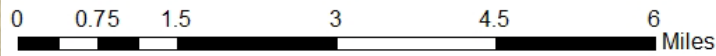
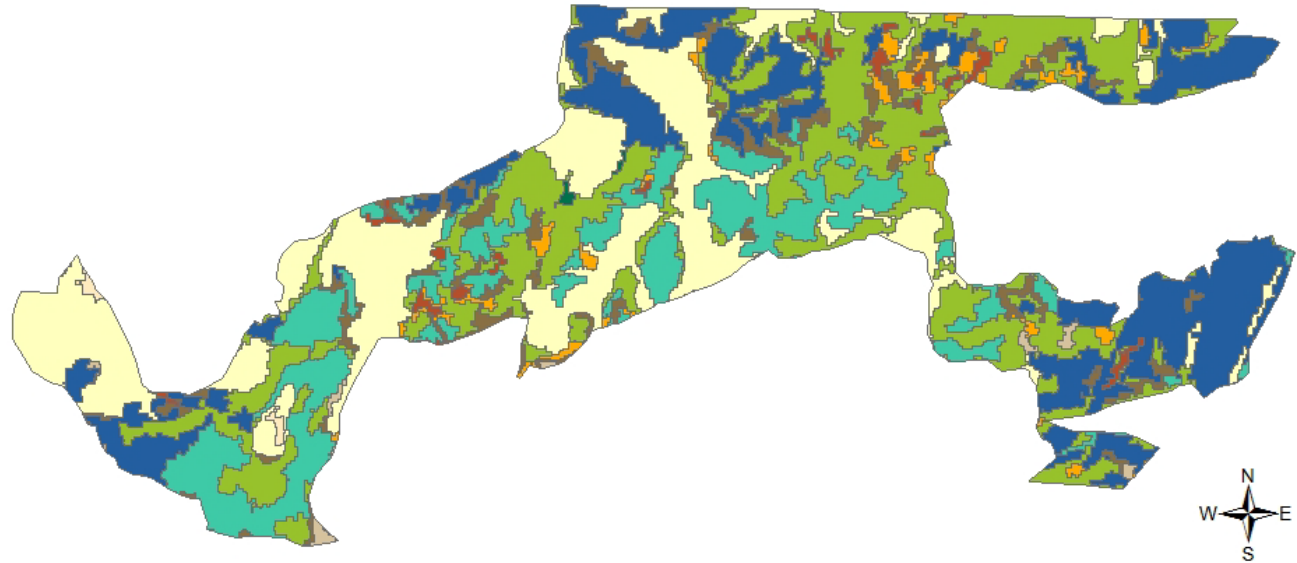
IC Grant (Green Arrow), Black Mesa (White Arrow), L Bar WMA (Red Arrow)

Restoration efforts over the past decade have been focused upon restoring the natural resiliency and functionality of this landscape. The Red Cross Hatched polygons are RX fire burn blocks, and the solid polygons are the areas that have been thinned (turquoise and pink) and the areas proposed to be thinned (green)







The thinning efforts serve as an immediate benefit to wildlife habitat, while also allowing the land management agencies to more safely and confidently plan future prescribed fire activities to maintain these restored forests.







Black Mesa Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project Existing Mid-Scale Vegetation Conditions



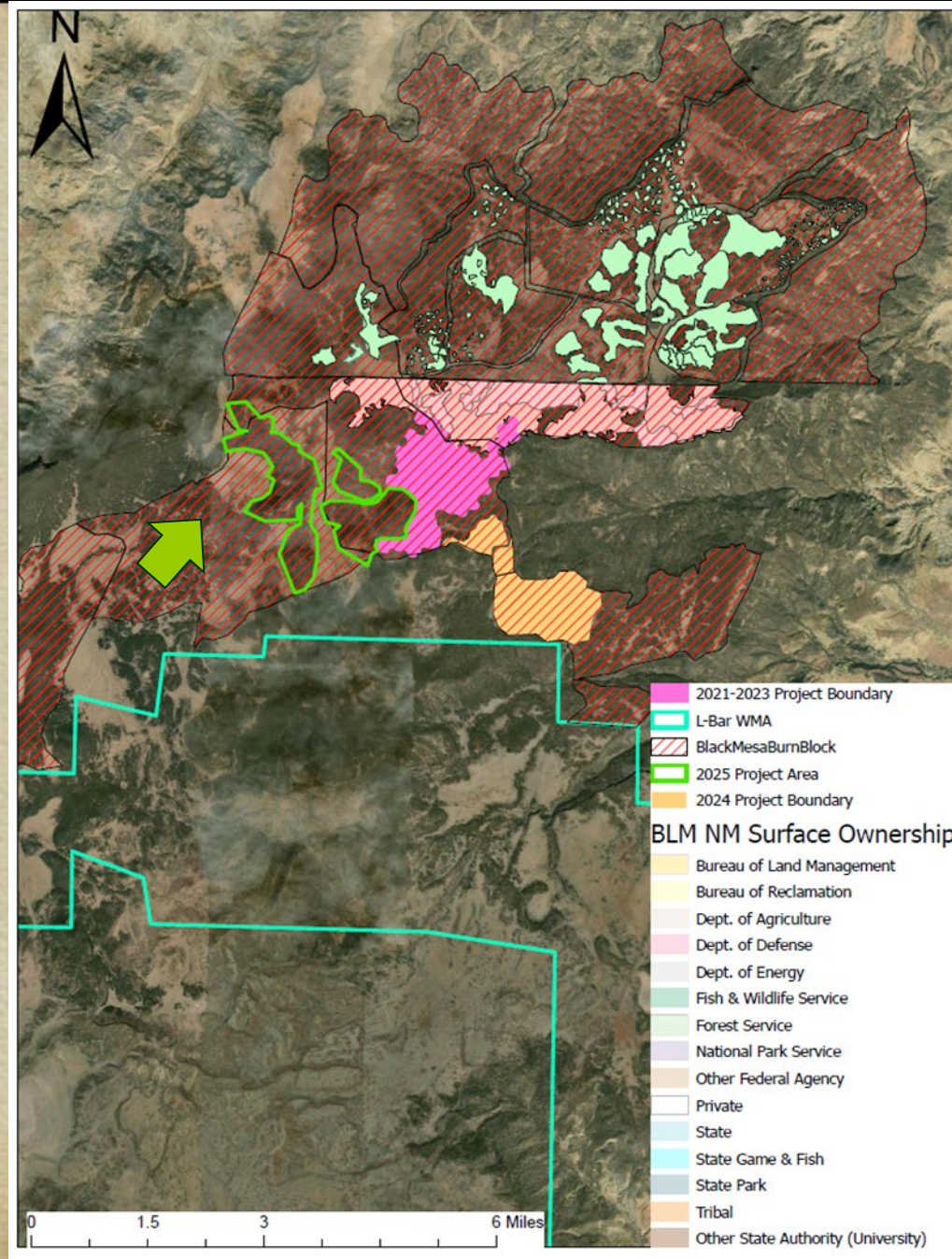
Legend

BlackMesa_Mid Scale_DominanceType	
	gambel oak
	grama mix
	grass mix
	juniper, pinyon, pinyon-juniper
	ponderosa pine mix
	rubber rabbitbrush

DT_MU_DESC	
	broom snakeweed
	deciduous shrub mix
	deciduous-evergreen tree mix
	douglas-fir

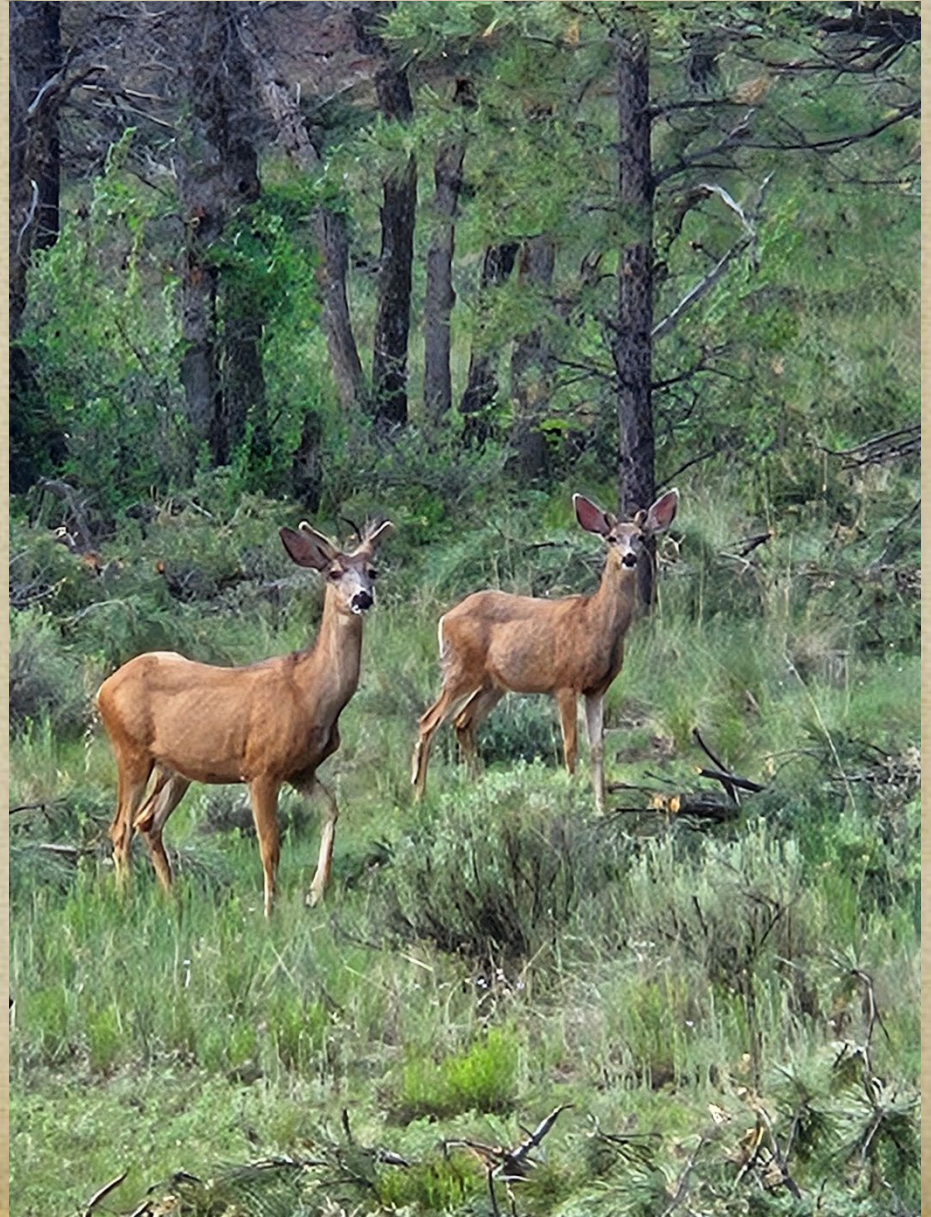


- Cross Boundary Landscape Management
- The combined efforts of the BLM, USFS and NMDGF have allowed for this landscape to be managed in a truly collaborative effort.
 - This is a rare accomplishment on New Mexico publicly accessible lands
- With the completion of thinning efforts such as this one, prescribed fire can be planned for across land management boundaries, as shown by the red cross hatched polygons.
- The green polygon depicts the proposed project area of 1300 acres, where-in approximately 700 acres will be thinned in preparation of future rx burn activities.



Summary of Project

700 Acres
\$500/Acre
\$350,000 Budget estimate



Project Name:

Black Mesa Habitat Restoration Project

Project relation to CAC advice or priorities:

This project represents one of the best examples of cross-boundary, multi-agency landscape scale restoration and management of wildlife habitat within New Mexico. CAC members have expressed an interest and emphasis on cross boundary efforts at several CAC meetings. This project will connect many year's worth of thinning efforts to the upper boundary of the recently acquired LBar, a State Game Commission property. This project will pave the way to future department efforts to improve the resiliency of the forests on the LBar, with a goal of having a cross boundary management plan with the USFS as well as the BLM.

Project Specific Details:

This project is aimed at improving the health and resiliency of approximately 700 acres of Ponderosa Pine forests on the Cibola national forest. This will allow for the proposed burn block that encompasses the project area to be scheduled for a prescribed fire around the year 2028.

Historical Data:

This project is an extension of over a decade's worth of restoration efforts, occurring on both BLM and USFS lands. For future context, this project will help to facilitate an additional layer of cross boundary landscape scale management with the LBar State Game Commission Wildlife Management Area to the south.

Itemized Use of Funds:

700 Acres of lop and scatter mechanical thinning (Chainsaw Crews)
\$500/Acre
Estimated Budget \$350,000

Comprehensive Project Analysis:

A comprehensive analysis is provided on the summary slide and accompanying presentation. This project is focused upon restoring the resiliency of the Ponderosa forest in this landscape and enhancing the habitat of the wildlife that occupy it.

Monitoring Plan/ Strategy:

Within this landscape there is a longterm reference condition stand of Ponderosa that serves as a template for adaptive management of this forest. Additionally, a multi year forest health research project is currently taking place within this landscape to provide information about forest management actions such as this one.

Project Emphasis Species:

Mule Deer, Turkey, and Elk
