

**FY2025 Wildlife
Habitat Restoration
Project Opportunity**

**Cebolla Canyon
Exclosure**

Cebolla Canyon Exclosure Project

- The Cebolla Canyon exclosure surrounds 55 acres encompassing an earthen dam and sediment trap that holds water for the majority of most years. The tank is surrounded by over 11,000 acres of forest and meadow habitat that has been restored mechanically, chemically, and via prescribed fire over the past two decades. If livestock are allowed to access this water resource they pose a great threat of overgrazing the surrounding restored habitat.
- The current barbed wire fence exclosure intended to prevent livestock from accessing this water source faces intense pressure from livestock and from wildlife crossing it and is impossible to maintain despite BLM's best efforts to do so.
- BLM recently repaired the earthen dam after a blowout, the Habitat Stamp Program has funded forest restoration work in the surrounding area, and NGOs are addressing headcut erosion downcanyon from this site.



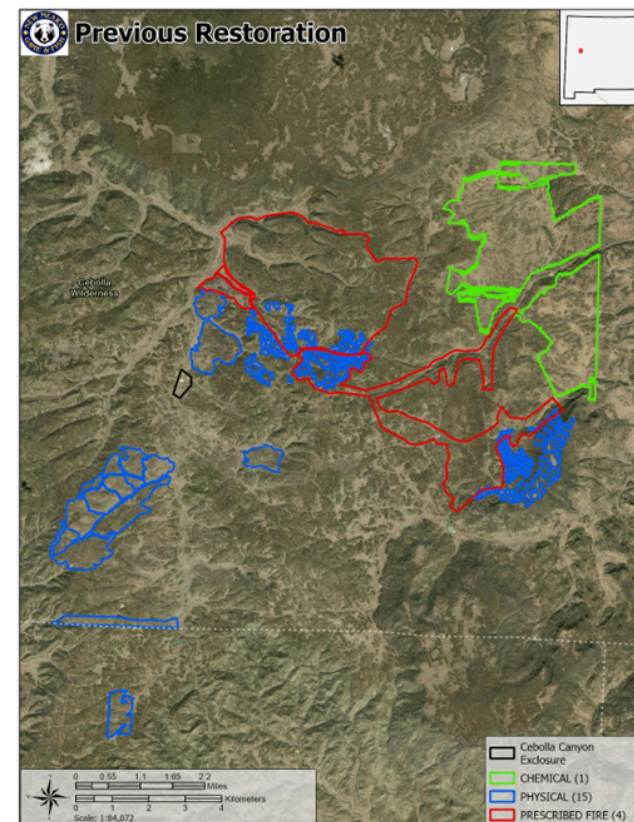
Project Contacts:

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Proposed Management Action

- The NMDGF, in collaboration with the BLM, will contract the removal of the present barbed wire fence and installation of a pipe and cable fence that will require little to no maintenance, better excluding cattle and providing wildlife better access to this water resource.
- HSP funds will be utilized for the purchase of material, labor wages to operate machinery for removing the barbed wire fence and installing the pipe and cable fence.
- Following this implementation, the NMDGF and BLM will enter into a monitoring phase to evaluate the efficacy of this restoration effort, and adjust land management decisions in response to those monitoring reports.

Google Earth Link: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/5mDzoVFq8q9dmeZV9>

Estimated
Budget: \$200,000

Project Name:

Cebolla Canyon Exclosure Project

Project relation to CAC advice or priorities:

This project benefits several wildlife game species. The Cebolla Canyon sediment trap functions as a dirt tank, holding water for most of the year, and is one of the few water sources this deep into the canyon. It lies in the middle of over 11,000 acres of completed forest and meadow habitat restoration. Effectively excluding livestock from this water source will protect the surrounding restored habitat from the overgrazing that will occur if livestock are allowed access to this water. Once implemented, this project will protect the Cebolla Canyon water resource and surrounding restored forest and meadow habitat from livestock degradation, preserving water and forage availability for wildlife.

Project Specific Details:

The current barbed wire fence is not capable of withstanding the intense stress resulting from wildlife and livestock attempting to access the water resource and is rendered an ineffective livestock exclosure despite best efforts by BLM to maintain it. This barbed wire fence will be replaced with a pipe and cable fence that requires little to no maintenance and effectively excludes livestock from this water resource.

Historical Data:

Restoration efforts in the surrounding forest and meadow habitat have included mechanical thinning, prescribed fire, and chemical treatments. The tank was also recently repaired by BLM after the earthen dam blew out. NGOs are currently working to address head-cutting erosion down canyon from this site. Livestock were historically excluded from this area to protect the resource for wildlife use. However, the barbed wire fence currently in use cannot reasonably withstand the amount of livestock pressure it faces.

Itemized Use of Funds:

Removal of barbed wire and installation of pipe and cable fence- \$200,000

Comprehensive Project Analysis:

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

Monitoring Plan/ Strategy:

Cebolla Canyon tank is monitored by BLM staff, including Range, Wildlife, Hydrologists and other specialists. Following completion of this project, the NMDGF will enter into a monitoring phase of restoration results at Cebolla Canyon Exclosure.

Project Emphasis Species:

Mule deer, Elk, and Turkey

Cebolla Canyon Exclosure Project



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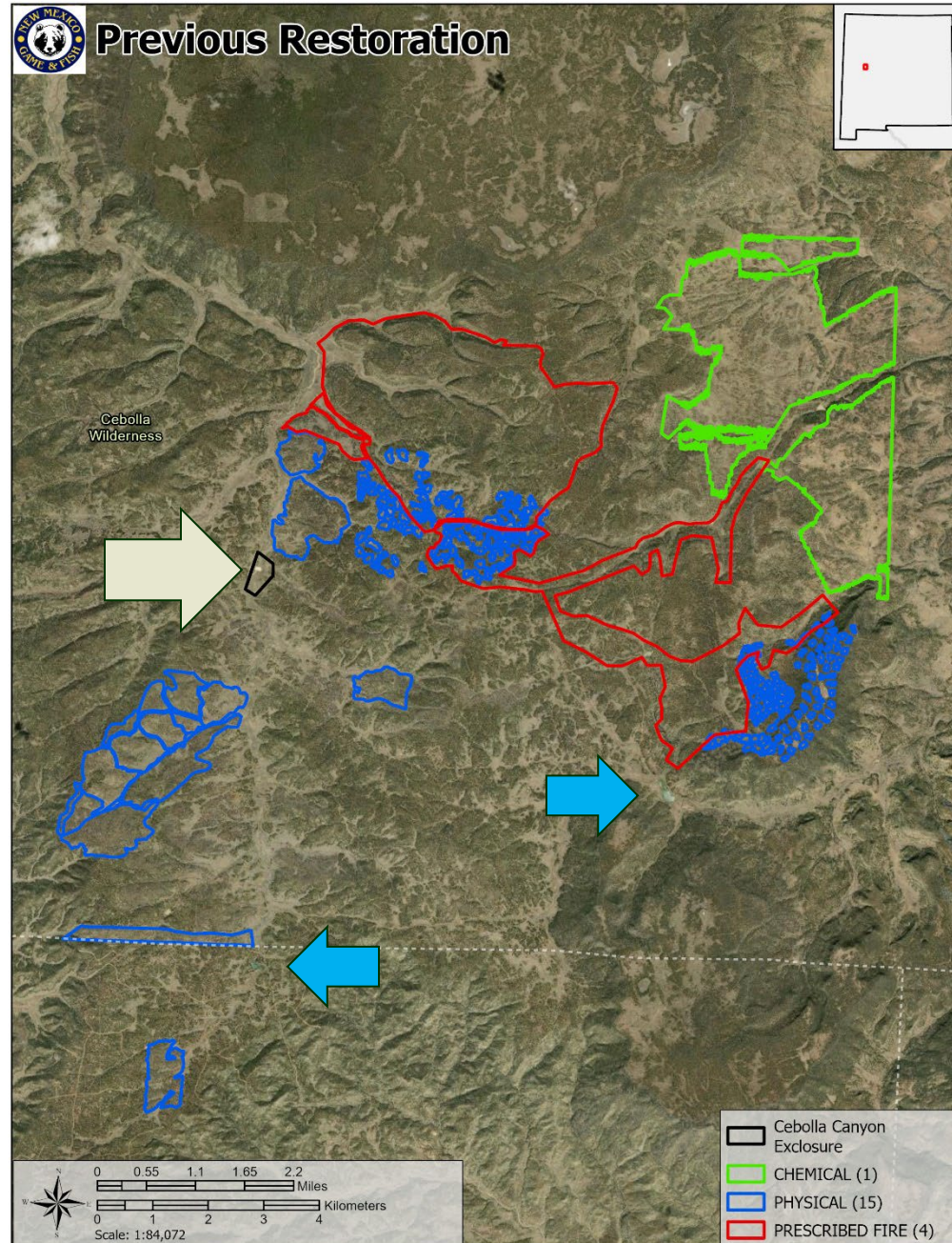
Restoration efforts over the past two decades have focused on restoring the natural resiliency and functionality of this landscape, and improving wildlife habitat. The Red polygons are RX fire burn blocks, the Blue polygons are mechanically thinned areas, and the Green polygons have been chemically.

Fire: 5,600 acres

Mechanical: 2,655 acres

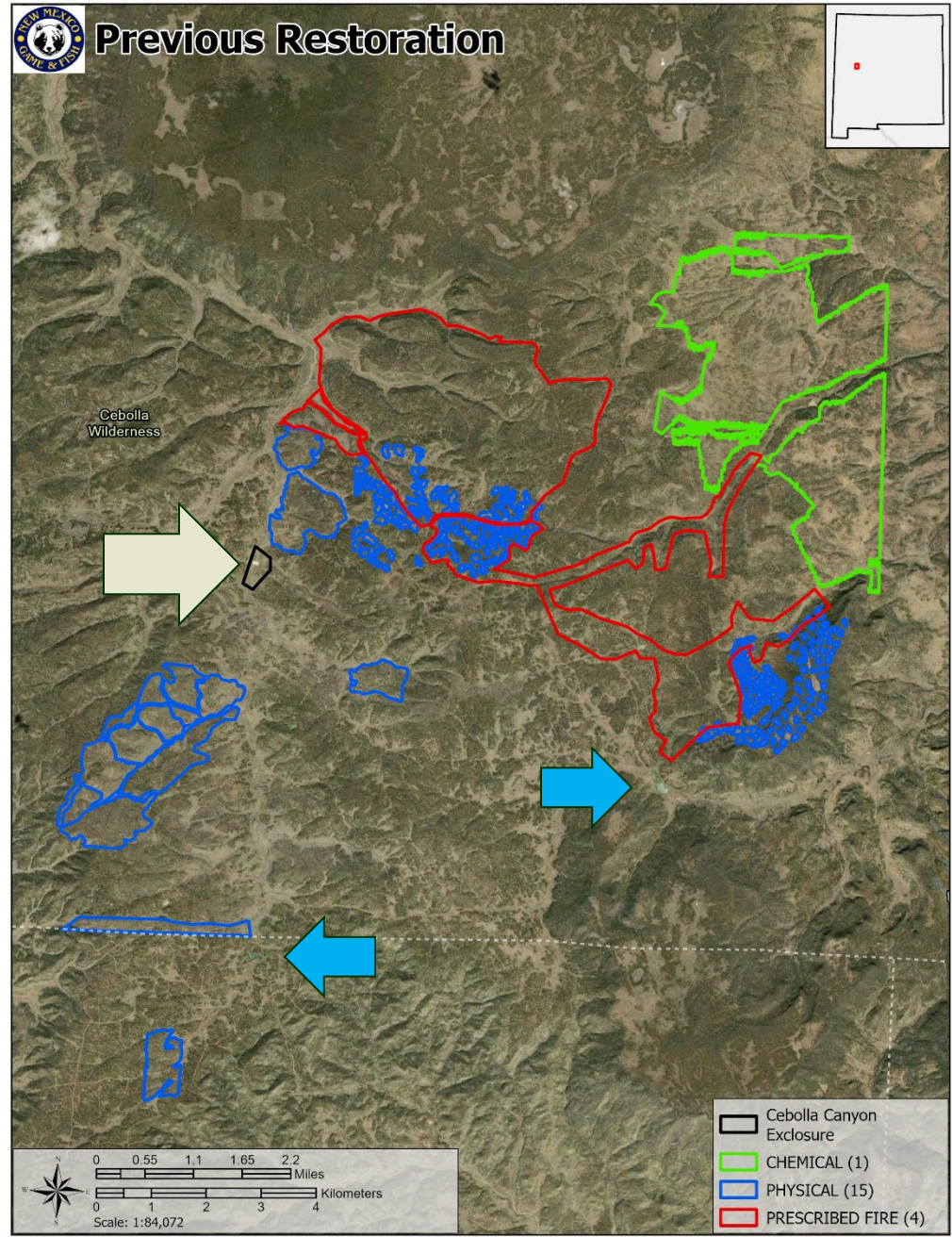
Chemical: 3,701 acres

An earthen dam, intended as a silt trap, is functioning as a large dirt tank holding water for much of the year (white arrow). This is the only reliable water source for several mile. The next closest reliable waters (blue arrows) are each ~5 miles away.



If this exclosure continues to fall into disrepair livestock will be able to park at this water source, using it to access forage in the surrounding treatment areas that were intended to improve wildlife habitat.

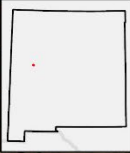
Not converting this barbed wire exclosure to pipe and cable jeopardizes thousands of surrounding acres of wildlife habitat that we have already investing in restoration on.



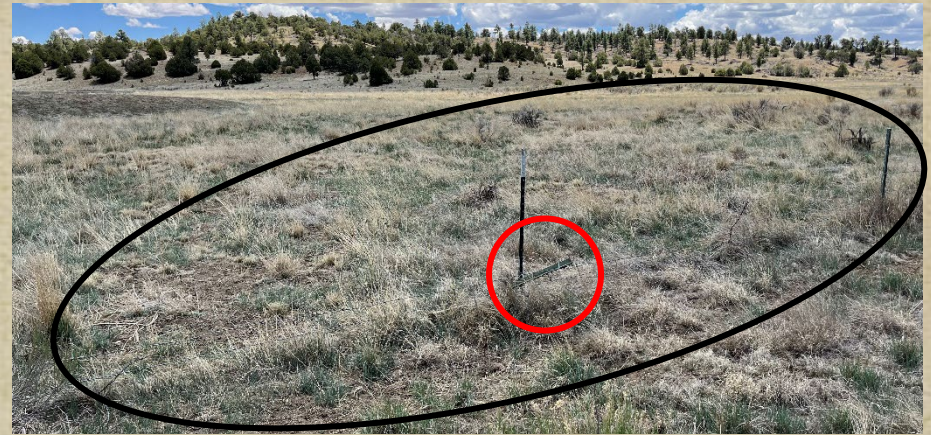
The present enclosure covers an area of 55 acres with a perimeter of 6,500 linear feet and is essential for protecting surrounding forest/meadow habitat for wildlife including elk, deer, and turkey. Excluding livestock from this area protects forage in the surrounding forest and at thousands of acres of restoration treatments from future livestock overutilization.



Cebolla Canyon Enclosure



The present barbed wire enclosure is damaged at many points from wildlife and livestock, requiring more maintenance than is reasonable or possible from BLM. Posts are falling over, barbed wire is cut, and strands are missing in numerous locations. Currently not an effective enclosure.



Removal of the existing barbed wire enclosure and replacement with a pipe and cable fence will protect the surrounding area from future livestock damage as a result of cattle parking on this water source. In turn, this will protect essential water infrastructure and surrounding restored foraging habitat for elk, deer, and turkey long into the future.



**Potential
Continuing Rio
Puerco BLM
Management:**



- ▶ Seeding for native riparian vegetation within enclosure
- ▶ Low tech process based erosion control structures to prevent downcutting of the wet meadow
- ▶ Continuation of BLM collaboration with Wild Earth Guardians to install erosion control structures with volunteers



Summary of Project

“Shovel Ready”

Budget: \$200,000

