



State and Private Forestry Fact Sheet

New Mexico 2019



Investment in State's Cooperative Programs

Program	FY 2018 Final
Community Forestry and Open Space	\$0
Cooperative Lands - Forest Health Management	\$324,475
Forest Legacy	\$0
Forest Stewardship	\$281,876
Landscape Scale Restoration	\$299,718
State Fire Assistance	\$2,233,284
Urban and Community Forestry	\$270,200
Volunteer Fire Assistance	\$463,747
Total	\$3,873,300

NOTE: This funding is for all entities within the state, not just the State Forester's office.

The Forestry Division provides leadership in New Mexico's approach to managing its complex ecological needs. Although the Division's primary responsibility is to sustain healthy and productive forests on approximately 8.7 million acres of the state's private forests and woodlands, the Division recognizes the interconnectedness of forest lands and other vegetative landscapes, of watersheds and waterways, of land management practices, and of the many entities, state and others, which are responsible for stewardship of the land. This understanding provides the foundation for the Division's efforts, which are collaborative, interdisciplinary, and focused on long-term sustainability. The Forestry Division also empowers New Mexico communities to protect, enhance, and utilize their forest resources as well as having the lead responsibility for wildland fire management on approximately 43 million acres of non-federal, non-municipal, and non-tribal lands.

The cooperative programs are administered and implemented through a partnership between the State of New Mexico, the USDA Forest Service and many other private, non-profit, and government entities.

Program Goals

- Provide protection & safety of the public and firefighters.
- Develop qualified, equipped fire fighters to safely suppress & manage fire.
- Conduct planning and restoration efforts at a watershed and landscape scale through multiple agency/partner agreements and collaborative strategies.
- Assist communities vulnerable to damage from wildland fires, insects, & invasive species.
- Enhance the economic viability of NM communities while protecting their natural resources.
- Provide technical assistance & promote current forest & watershed management science.

Key Issues

- Declining forest and watershed health.
- Threat of destructive wildfires in critical watersheds and the wildland-urban interface.
- Increased occurrence and extent of insect and disease outbreaks.
- Forest resiliency and adaptability.
- Urban forest canopy loss without adequate replacement plans.
- Fragmentation of forest landscapes.

Forest Facts and Accomplishments

Selected Facts	Value	FY 2018 Accomplishments	Value
Population	2,059,179	Landowners Receiving Educational or Technical Assistance	1,442
Acres of Forest Land	24,600,818	Acres Covered by New or Revised Forest Stewardship Plans	12,253
Acres of Nonindustrial Private Forest Land	6,331,000	Acres in Important Forest Resource Areas Covered by New or Revised Stewardship Plans	381
Number of NIPF Landowners	81,000	Volunteer Fire Departments Assisted	50
Acres of Federal Land Under State Fire Protection	5,202,479	State Fire Communities Assisted	763
Acres of Private Land Under State Fire Protection	34,157,000	Coop Forest Health Acres Protected	1,380
Number of Rural Fire Departments	368	Forest Legacy Project Acquisitions	0
Cities and Towns	102	Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	28
Forest Based Employment	308	Population Living in Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance	1,067,942
Economic Impact of Forestry (by rank)	0	Urban Forestry Volunteer Assistance	1,613
State Forestry Budget (All Sources)	12,638,000		

Program Highlights

Community Forestry and Open Space

New Mexico State Forestry Division does not have a Community Forestry and Open Space Program.

Conservation Education

New Mexico Forestry Division has a long legacy of providing a wealth of conservation education knowledge to residents and visitors to New Mexico. The Division continued a tradition of more than three decades of helping lead the state's Project Learning Tree program. Project Learning Tree trained dozens of education professionals statewide in how to use forest and watershed health issues as part of their daily curriculum. The Division played an active role in conducting the New Mexico Envirothon, which gets teams of high school students together annually to complete in areas such as forestry, aquatics, wildlife, soils, and other special environmental issues. The Division reached out to New Mexicans with conservation education at large annual events such as the New Mexico State Fair, distributing conservation tree seedlings and talking with residents and visitors about the role trees play in our daily lives.

Cooperative Fire Protection

The Cooperative Fire Five Year Plan, plus the Forest action plan, prioritizes the Division's objectives and needs in cooperative fire funding to sustain the Division's ability to achieve its mission of preventing and suppressing unwanted fires within 43 million acres of protected state and private land. This also includes the treatment of fuels to protect communities and improve forest health. In 2018, we have 58 CWPP's identifying 654 communities at risk from wildland fire. Of the 654 communities, 300 are listed as high risk, 237 are listed as moderate risk, and 117 are listed as low risk from wildfire.

Economic Action

New Mexico provides access to technology transfer and specialized business and marketing technical assistance that promise to advance the science of healthy forest and woodland ecosystems and acceptable practices for reducing hazardous fuels. New Mexico State Forestry continues to provide technical assistance and administer forest harvest practice standards on commercial timber sales on private forest lands in New Mexico. While overall, the timber industry is still down in New Mexico, there remains a steady harvest of wood for lumber, mine timbers, utility poles, vigas/latillas, and mill residues. New Mexico State Forestry is a participant in several forest industry related organizations state wide, such as local wood clusters, the New Mexico Forest Industry Association, local biomass facility initiatives, and the San Juan-Rio Chama Watershed Partnership.

Forest Health Protection

The Cooperative Forest Health Program works within the State Forestry Division to deliver technical and monetary assistance to landowners and managers of forested lands throughout New Mexico. Technical assistance is provided by direct response to phone/email requests, education programs, training, and site visits. In 2018, the program manager responded to 16 requests for technical assistance, identified 1 insect/pathogen samples, and conducted 12 site visits. Monetary assistance is provided to private landowners through a cost-share program called The Forest Health Initiative. The goal of FHI is to administer federal dollars to reduce the risk of bark beetle and pathogen infections on private land. The Division batched 11 new FHI projects in 2018; 8 thinning treatments (73.5 acres) and 3 management plans (1,226 acres). CFHP collaborates with the USFS to conduct annual insect and pathogen surveys of New Mexico's forests and woodlands. Most data is collected by aerial survey. During the 2018 aerial survey season, 309,000 acres of statewide forestlands had some degree of detectable insect and/or pathogen activity. This follows a decreasing trend in damage since 2013. This trend is largely due to a reduction in overall bark beetle activity due to favorable moisture conditions from spring precipitation and moderate-to-strong summer monsoons. Despite improved drought conditions, spruce in high-elevation landscapes continue to suffer from a widespread and severe spruce beetle outbreak. Just over 45,000 acres of spruce mortality were observed in 2018. This represents an explosion in spruce beetle activity since the previous decade, when annual observations were consistently <1,000 acres. Other locations across the state, especially in the mixed-conifer zone, experienced outbreak levels of defoliating insects in 2018. The risk of damage to our state's mixed conifer will continue until imbalanced tree species distributions and overly dense forest conditions abate.

Forest Legacy

In 2017, the Forest Legacy Brazos Cliffs project - which will protect approximately 3,620 acres in Rio Arriba County from development - was funded for \$3,480,000.00 through the USDA Forest Service. The Conservation Easement should be finalized by the end of fiscal year 2019 providing an approved appraisal in completed before then. An additional application for Phase II for 2740 acres was submitted for FY2019 Funding and resubmitted for FY2020 funding since that status of applications for FY2019 have not yet been released.

Forest Stewardship

Assisting non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners develop long-term forest stewardship plans for the management of their forests and natural resources. •Development, improvement, and implementation of a State Forest Stewardship Strategic Plan, guided by NASF's "Principles and Guides for a Well Managed Forest", including incorporation of management timeframes to assist in monitoring progress toward objectives and revision of plans, as needed. •Outreach to assure accessibility of the FSP program to all NIPF landowners. Continuing education and recognition programs. •The Stewardship program saw 13 new or revised Forest Stewardship Management plans prepared in this reporting period for a total of 381 acres defined as Important Forest Resource Areas on private forested land in New Mexico. In addition to this, 605 landowners have received technical assistance relating to their private forest lands, with an additional 837 landowners participating in educational programs relating to forest stewardship, fire prevention and forest management. •Stewardship continues to provide leadership in support of the Back Yard Tree Farm Program. Fire, forest ecology and other forestry related topics have been presented seasonally. This is an interagency effort targeting the high-risk, urban/wildland interface areas. Using the Tree Improvement Grant, the New Mexico State University John T Harrington Forestry Research Center has been working on the development of seed zones for seed collection and planting *Pinus ponderosa* for the greater southwestern US. Development of proper guidelines will allow forest landowners that range from private to the US Forest Service to collect and plant proper seed sources for restoration and reforestation efforts. The seed zones and seed transfer guidelines will be developed using morphological and physiological data from recently planted *Pinus ponderosa* restoration and provenance sites.

Landowner Assistance

The New Mexico Forestry Division provides technical and financial assistance to NM landowners through 7 field offices, the Forest and Watershed Health Office, and the Conservation Seedling Program. In FY18 the Seedling Program distributed 68,292 trees and shrubs for conservation purposes.

Landscape Scale Restoration

The Rare Cienega's Project, a multi-agency partnership is working collaboratively to restore high-priority

sites in valuable wetland habitat by expanding and connecting already-completed projects around the City of Santa Rosa. Cienega's are one of the most endangered ecosystems in the arid Southwest. These alkaline, spongy desert wetlands fed by springs and seeps mitigate flooding, improve water quality, harbor endangered species, and provide an urban refuge for both wildlife and people. Dense stands of highly volatile non-native salt cedar and Russian olive trees have invaded these rare wetlands and the riparian corridor, increasing wildfire risk, impairing hydrology, and degrading habitat for seven threatened and endangered species. This project will treat 1,600 acres with another 600 acres of final re-sprout treatment for invasives within the highest priority areas near. To date 256.7 acres of treatments have been accomplished by New Mexico State Forestry Inmate Work Crews. The City of Santa Rosa has provided in-kind chipping of slash and completed additional mechanical control by bulldozing surface materials and removing root crowns on lands adjacent to treatment areas.

The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition - A NM State Forestry Partnership

The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition uses a pro-active, collaborative approach to improve the health and long-term resilience of forested watersheds and communities by addressing wildfire. The Coalition works to build support, understanding, and shared knowledge of the role of fire in an adaptive framework to realize our goals. Our primary goal is to identify and implement high priority on-the ground projects that make the Fireshed and its communities more resilient to wildfire while maintaining and restoring resilient landscapes. This goal will be realized when fire is used as a tool for management throughout our fire adapted forests, and communities in and adjacent to these forests become fire adapted - they understand the role of fire and are prepared for its occurrence.

Urban and Community Forestry

The New Mexico UCF Program continues to work to empower communities to develop and sustain healthy community forests for the benefit of our citizens and the environment. 64% of the state's population lives in a community either fully managing an urban/community forest program or developing one, and eleven communities were recognized for the Tree City USA program. Tree New Mexico continues to maintain an on-going Professional Services Agreement with Tree New Mexico to conduct urban and community forestry related volunteer management and coordination statewide, and through these efforts launched the Albuquerque NeighborWoods Tree Planting Program, serving the neediest communities in our largest metropolitan area. The UCF program is utilizing the Landscape Scale Restoration Grant funding received to address inventorying of historic district urban forests, and to conduct community training and management planning. Training with certified arborists on tree risk assessment and inventorying of historic districts happened in 13 communities statewide in FY18. Communities Provided Urban Forestry Program Assistance: 27. Population Living in Communities Provided Assistance: 1,167,942. Urban Volunteer Assistance: 1,613 hours.

Watershed Restoration Initiative

At the convening of the 2014 legislature, Governor Susana Martinez declared 2014 the Year of Water and signed legislation that provided \$6.2 million for a new Watershed Restoration Initiative. The effort was expanded in 2015 with approval of \$3.5 million to fund watershed restoration treatments as well as communities at risk projects, with another \$2.5 million approved in 2016 and \$1.1 million 2018. The commitment of the state dollars mentioned above, leveraged \$9.5 million more in Pittman-Robertson federal funds through the NM Department of Game and Fish and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. To date, the State and its partners have undertaken 71 separate projects covering 35,153 acres in 19 watersheds identified as high priority in the NM Forest Action Plan and many being conducted on federal lands.

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