



▣ **Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration in the Zuni Mountains**

**Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands
Zuni Mountains Collaborative
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For more information, contact:

Steve Hattenbach, Forest Supervisor
Cibola National Forest
Albuquerque, NM
505-346-3900
steven.hattenbach@usda.gov

James “Jay” Turner, Stewardship Staff Officer
Cibola National Forest
Albuquerque, NM
505-346-3814
James.Turner1@usda.gov

Eytan Krasilovsky, Deputy Director
Forest Steward’s Guild
Santa Fe, NM
505-470-0185
eytan@forestguild.org

Shawn Martin, Forest Silviculturist
Cibola National Forest
Albuquerque, NM
505-346-3856
shawn.a.martin@usda.gov

Table of Contents

Executive Summary:..... ii

Proposal Overview: 1

Past Performance:..... 2

Applying Learning to the Future:..... 5

Readiness to Implement Extension: 6

Economic, Social, and Ecological Context:7

Desired Conditions 9

Ecological Restoration Strategy 11

Wildfire Risk Reduction 12

Benefits to Local Communities:..... 13

Utilization of Forest Restoration Byproducts:.....14

Collaboration:14

Multi-party Monitoring:.....16

Unit Capacity: 18

Project Funding:19

Attachments

Attachment A: ZML Project Maps

Attachment B: ZML Planned Treatments

Attachment C: ZML Utilization of Forest Restoration Byproducts

Attachment D: ZML Collaborative Membership

Attachment E: Letters of Commitment;

Zuni Mountain Collaborative

Cibola County Letter of Support

Congressional Letter of Support

Attachment F: ZML Project Funding

Attachment G: ZML Letter of Commitment CNF&NG Leadership

Executive Summary

CFLRP Project Name: Zuni Mountains CFLR 012

National Forest(s): Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands (CNF&NG)

Length of Requested Extension (in years): 10

Situated in west-central New Mexico, the Zuni Mountain Landscape (ZML) is comprised of moderate terrain dominated by ponderosa pine and piñon-juniper ecosystems. Historically this landscape has been culturally important to several Native American Pueblos and Tribes including Laguna, Acoma, and Zuni Pueblos as well as the Navajo Nation and the Ramah and Bread Springs Navajo Chapters, and remains so today. Since the late 19th century, the landscape has been critical to surrounding communities and their economic wellbeing through timber, grazing, mining, and game. In fact, the ZML was heavily logged with the arrival of the railroad in the 1880s (Dick-Peddie 1993). Logging continued through the 1980s albeit at a lower intensity. With the decline of logging and mining in the area, rural communities of Cibola and McKinley counties lost their wood harvesting and processing infrastructure. The area is a popular recreational destination and is economically important to both counties and the cities of Grants and Gallup.

The overarching goal for this extension is to support a restored landscape where vegetation is resilient to climate change, resistant to uncharacteristic crown fires, and supports healthy animal and human communities. The Puerco project adds 35,000+ new acres for restoration through this project will and continue to provide a long-term supply of wood for existing and appropriately scaled wood utilization businesses. Recent forest-based economic development has yielded 93 stable, good paying jobs per year that support local worker retention and contributes \$2.3 million in total labor income annually (Treatments for Restoration Economic Analysis Tool - TREAT 2020). The ZML has created a suite of restoration-oriented wood utilization, treatment, and hauling businesses over the past decade.

The most significant restoration needs include restoring ecosystem structure, composition, processes, and hydrologic function; and increasing forest resiliency to pests, pathogens, and climate change. Core Treatment activities will include mechanical/hand thinning, prescribed fire, decommissioning through obliteration or other methods of up to 200 miles of unauthorized roads, restoration of up to 19 springs and up to 250 acres of riparian areas including associated stream habitats for threatened, endangered, and sensitive aquatic species, clean or reconstruct approximately 15 existing dirt tanks and construct 2 new dirt tanks, reconstruct approximately 15 miles of fence and 1 corral, install approximately 3 new cattle guards, re-drill 3 existing wells and establish 3 new wells, and install or extend 2 pipelines. CFLN funds will be used primarily for restoration treatments that provide material to Mount Taylor Manufacturing (MTM). These treatments will be leveraged for additional NFS and partner funds to complete additional restoration activities listed above.

Acreege of the Zuni Mountain landscape:

Table 1. Land ownership and estimated acres to be treated within the ZML.

Landowner (USFS, BLM, Tribal, Private, State, etc.)	Acres within the total CFLRP landscape	Estimated number of acres to be treated during proposed extension
USFS - Cibola	178,257	30,000
Private	60,701	4,200
Tribal	6,676	0
State	6,659	1,000
BLM	1,165	0
DOD	6	0
TOTALS:	253,464	35,200

Total number of **NEPA ready** acres: 81,000. Total number of acres in **NEPA process**: 0

Collaborative/partners who will engage in implementing the extension:

Mt. Taylor Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest, members of the Zuni Mountains Collaborative (ZMC) such as the Forest Steward’s Guild, Mount Taylor Manufacturing, Forest Fitness LLC, NM HighInds University, Lava Soil and Water Conservation District, and Great Old Broads for Wilderness. The ZMC also includes a wide array of businesses, educators, non-profits, local government, extension agents, academics, as well as Tribal, state, and federal agencies.

Total amount of **CFLRP funding** requested:

The Cibola NF is requesting a total dollar amount of in FY22: **\$1,000,000**. Total dollar amount requested for life of project: **\$10,000,000**. Total dollar amount provided as Forest Service match in FY22: **\$400,000**. Total dollar amount provided as Forest Service match for life of project: **\$4,000,000**. Total timber value for services in FY22: **\$15,000**. Total dollar amount of timber value for services for the life of the project **\$150,000**. Total dollar amount provided in Partnership Match in FY22: **\$420,000**. Total dollar amount provided in Partnership Match for life of project: **\$4,200,000**. Total in-kind amount provided in Partnership Match in FY22: **\$165,000**. Total in-kind amount provided in Partnership Match for life of project: **\$1,650,000**. Time frame for the project (from start to finish): **2022 – 2031**.

Proposal Overview

The Zuni Mountain Landscape (ZML) sits on the Continental Divide and forms part of the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau. The history of the range includes ancient and continuing use of the mountains by local native peoples, including the Zuni, Acoma, and Navajo. The ZML is home to an array of wildlife such as deer, elk, turkey, and bear but also to threatened, endangered and sensitive species like the northern goshawk, Mexican spotted owl and Zuni bluehead sucker. The project is situated in Cibola and McKinley counties, two of the most economically disadvantaged in the state. During scoping for the Puerco Project, the Bread Springs Chapter of Navajo requested that the Forest consider expanding the project boundary westward to include lands adjacent to the reservation that could provide fuelwood and training opportunities for forest restoration.

The Zuni Mountain Landscape is one of 10 Shared Stewardship Priority Landscapes identified in New Mexico. In November 2019 the Chief of the Forest Service and the New Mexico State Governor signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing to a Shared Stewardship approach to managing forestlands in New Mexico. Shared Stewardship is a national initiative to address cross-boundary land

management issues with state, tribal, and other local partners. The most effective approach to wildland fire management is shared stewardship of the wildland fire environment, shared ownership of the challenges, and a shared commitment to meeting those challenges. As the scale of wildfires grows, the scale of coordinated planning needs to expand accordingly. By setting priorities together, we can better focus our land management efforts across boundaries.

The 2012 CFLRP award for the Zuni Mountains allowed for restoration of areas identified for treatment under the Bluewater Landscape Restoration Project, located in the eastern Zuni Mountains. An average of 1-2,000 acres/year have been restored under the 2012 CFLRP. The Puerco Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project Decision was signed in April of 2020 and includes the western portion of the Zuni Mountains. As 2021 comes to a close, only a few hundred acres will remain to be treated in the Bluewater Project and restoration has begun in the Puerco Project. Without a CFLRP extension, restoration could not continue at the pace and

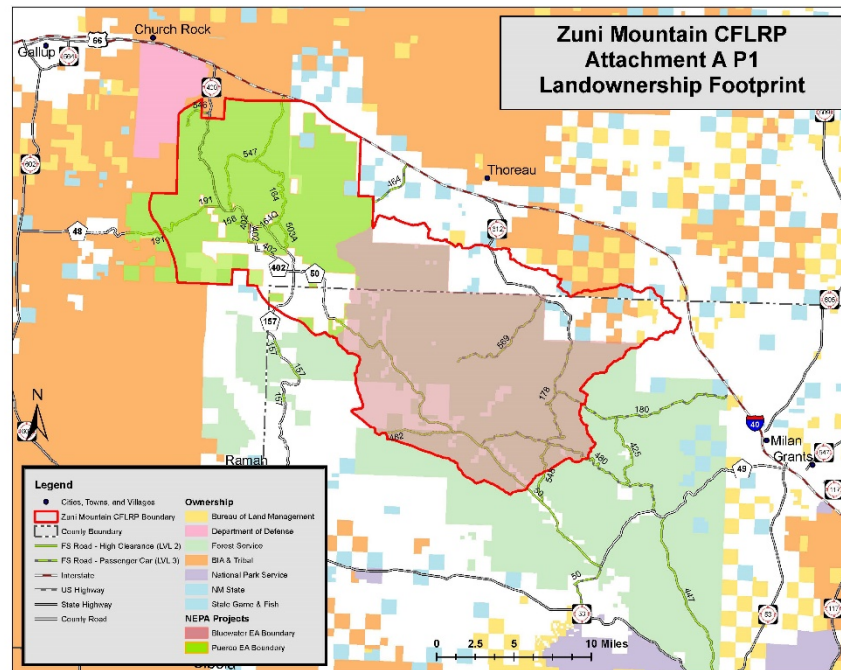


Figure 1. ZML Footprint and Ownerships

scale seen in the last decade with support of the CFLR Program. The original proposal committed 80% of CFLRP funding to implementation of restoration of ponderosa pine stands, which has been very cost effective, and there are no reliable alternatives available to replace this source of capital.

Restoration treatments would be dependent upon the ability to secure competitive funds from other sources. Without CFLRP funding, it is expected that restoration treatments would be reduced by 50-75% of the acres currently treated. Without a long-term commitment, the local sawmill that relies upon a consistent supply of timber through restoration treatments in the ZML would have to close its doors. Effects to the local economy in terms of job loss and labor income would be significant. Wildfire risk would increase as reintroduction of low intensity fire would be almost impossible without restoration treatments that reduce hazardous fuels and continuous canopies. Habitat for the threatened and endangered Zuni bluehead sucker and Mexican spotted owl would be at greater risk from wildfire.

Past Performance:

The efforts of the Cibola NF&NG and ZMC have been highly effective in achieving the original restoration performance measures and promoting community awareness about forest restoration in frequent fire forest types. The following key accomplishments (Table 2) were selected in 2012 to highlight our ecological restoration goals. Through collaborative processes and increased social license gained through transparency of implementation and an adaptive management strategy, many accomplishments exceed 100% of the lifetime goal. Context is provided below where goals were not fully accomplished.

Key CFLRP Lifetime Goal Performance Measure¹	Cumulative CFLRP Lifetime Goal Accomplishment To Date (2012-2020)	Percent of CFLRP Lifetime Goal Accomplished To Date (2012-2020)
Terrestrial habitat enhanced (acres)	HBT-ENH-TERR Goal: 19,000 Achieved: 23,677	125%
Hazardous fuels treatments in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) (acres)	FP-FUELS-WUI Goal: 46,000 Achieved: 26,968	67%
Hazardous fuels treatments outside the WUI (acres)	FP-FUELS-NON-WUI Goal: N/A Achieved: 3,744	Acres moved to FP-FUELS-WUI
Timber volume sold (ccf) TMBR-VOL-SLD	Goal: 116,000 Achieved: 113,277	98%
Acres of forestlands treated using timber sales TMBR-SALES-TRT-ACRES	Goal: 18,575 Achieved: 11,149	60%
Forest vegetation established or improved (acres)	FOR-VEG-EST Goal: 1,900 Achieved: 8,578 FOR-VEG-IMP Goal: 19,000	451% 130%

¹ Planned CFLRP Performance Measure Goals can be found in Attachment B.

	Achieved: 24,214	
Biomass (green tons – “BIO- NRG” Agency performance measure)	Goal: 360,000 Achieved: 134,572	37%
Roads improved or maintained (miles)	RD-HC-MAIN Goal: 120 Achieved: 217 RD-PC-MAINT Goal: 450 Achieved: 621	180% 138%
Miles of passenger car system roads reconstructed Miles of high clearance system roads reconstructed	RD-PC-RCNSTR Goal: N/A Achieved: 5.7 RD-HC-RCNSTR Goal: N/A Achieved: 2.2	Exceeded ²
Trails improved or maintained (miles)	Goal: N/A Achieved: 7.2	Exceeded ²
Soil and water resources protected, maintained, or improved (acres)	S&W-RSRC-IMP Goal: 15,333 Achieved: 18,998	124%
Manage noxious weeds and invasive plants	INVPLT-NXWD-FED-AC Goal: 500 Acres Achieved: 104 Acres	21%
Invasive plant species treatments (acres)	Goal: N/A Achieved 1,410	Exceeded ²
Miles of property line marked/maintained to standard	LND-BL-MRK-MAINT Goal: 15 Achieved: 17	113%
Number of priority acres treated annually for native pests on Federal lands	SP-NATIVE –FED-AC Goal: 4,700 Achieved: 5,739	122%

Table 2. ZML accomplishments 2012-2020.

Although not listed as goals in the original proposal, we were able to achieve 1 mile of Stream Habitat Enhanced and decommission 25 miles of roads, both of which helped improve habitat conditions for the Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Zuni Bluehead Sucker.

There were 3,744 acres of hazardous fuels treatments recorded outside of WUI, but the entire project area is considered WUI because of the large amount of private inholdings spread throughout the ZML, so those acres were included with FP-FUELS-WUI.

Timber Volume Sold includes fuelwood sales. The Cibola NF’s annual volume target is 75% fuelwood, reflecting the importance of and reliance of our publics on fuelwood to heat their homes. Combined with the small, low volume timber coming out of the project area, it makes

² “Exceeded” refers to performance measures achieved that did not have an accomplishment goal in 2012.

sense to include fuelwood volume in this total. The inclusion of fuelwood adds 17,889 ccf to the total bringing the percent achieved from 72 to 98%.

Acres of forestlands treated using timber sales includes 1,047 acres that are completed on the ground (FACTS ID - NWTSTEW17), but which are part of a larger FACTS “accomplishment” that cannot be reported as “completed” until all 3,044 acres are finished.

Biomass totals underachieved for several reasons; 1. because of the already low value of the timber removed, the mill does not want to incur the costs of hauling smaller diameter material, and 2. the requirement to maintain a minimum of 5-7 tons/acre of coarse woody debris for soil protection and wildlife habitat objectives.

Accomplishment for RD-PC-MAINT shows 49% attainment (221 miles) in INFRA. However, under the NWTF agreement main haul routes are bladed 2 times per year in the spring and fall of 40 miles each. The roads in the project area have been maintained annually over the past 10 years. A conservative estimate of 400 miles was included for a total of 621 miles.

Building off the successful collaboration and relationships created through the Zuni Mountain CFLRP, the Forest worked with local governments and municipalities to sign the Zuni Mountain Trails EA (2017), which proposes to close approximately 23 miles of NFS Roads, decommission approximately 2 miles of roads and rehabilitate 138 miles of unauthorized roads. To date 7.2 miles of trail have been improved within the CFLR footprint.

Invasive Plant Species treatments includes 930 acres of Yellow bluestem survey, 429 acres of thistle inventory, and 51 acres of Russian olive inventory. Management of noxious weeds and invasive plants through chemical or manual treatment is much lower than anticipated, but treatments are poised to ramp up now that surveys and inventory have documented locations to treat. The district now has a YCC crew that it has started to utilize for mechanical treatments.

The number of priority acres treated annually for native pests on Federal lands is far greater than what is shown as accomplished in reporting databases. Using TMBR-SALE-TRT-AC (11,149 ac) and assuming that half (5,574 acres) significantly reduced bark beetle risk or targeted mod-high dwarf mistletoe infested stands, with an additional 165 acres funded by Forest Health Protection, would give an estimate of 5,739 acres treated for native pests.

Treatments funded through the CFLRP helped leverage a landowner agreement and purchase orders with New Mexico Forestry Division signed that enabled work to start on several private ranches in the Zuni Mountains. The funding source is through the state Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) that the Governor signed into law in March 2019. The Forestry Division has identified up to 4,200 acres of private land in the vicinity, which will supplement the wood supply when it is unavailable on the National Forest and provide a long-term reliable wood supply.

The Zuni Mountain CFLRP provides an estimated 93 direct and indirect full and part-time jobs associated with harvesting, milling, processing, monitoring and other project activities which

contribute about 2.3 million dollars into the local economy. According to 2019 employment numbers for Cibola County, (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Dec 2019) there were 7,647 people employed and the CFLR employs about 1.2% of them. This is equivalent to 4,000 jobs in Bernalillo County, the largest county in New Mexico, highlighting the fact that these jobs have a huge impact in the local area.

In addition to TREAT, the Forest Stewards Guild (The Guild) also tracks jobs directly through surveys and interviews with contractors and others working on restoration. Full time equivalent (FTE) does not always tell the whole story regarding jobs and economic impact. With a single FTE multiple people may have benefited from the wages and training that one FTE represents. The Forest Stewards Youth Corps (FSYC) is a good example of this. While the program only accounted for .7 FTE due to its seasonal nature, four young people were

employed and gained skills and experience working in the Zuni Mountains CFLR landscape. Over the course of the CFLR, the FSYC program has supported 5-6 youth jobs annually, with additional Ft. Wingate based crew of 6, in 2012 – 2014. By two important measures, FTE and individuals employed, the Zuni Mountain CFLR continues to provide job training and employment opportunities for local communities. Youth and fire fighter training also provide a bridge to longer term and higher paying jobs through programs like the Forest Stewards Youth Corps³ and the Guild’s CFRP grant⁴.

Forest restoration treatments in the Zuni Mountains show improvements toward restoration objectives, including resilience to fire and drought across a 6,500 acre forest monitoring area⁵.

Applying Learning to the Future:

Through the adaptive management process, several key lessons were learned. Initially, forest restoration treatments were implemented toward the lower end of the range of desired conditions, approximately 35-45 ft² of basal area per acre. It was determined through a collaborative multi-party monitoring process that after prescribe burning some treated stands that post treatment mortality was reduced below desired densities. In response, the post

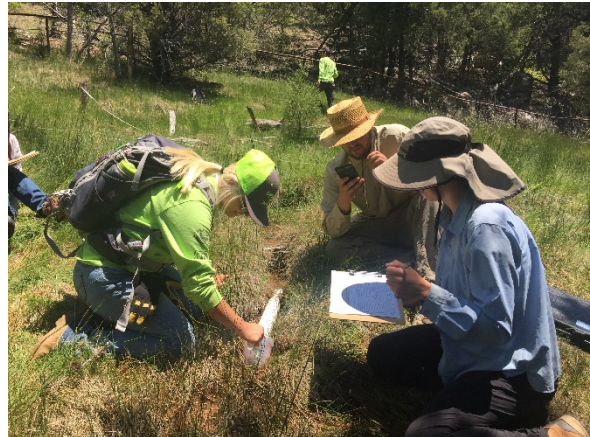


Figure 2. Forest Stewards Guild Youth Crew stream monitoring.

³ <https://foreststewardsguild.org/fsyc-program/>

⁴

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57a36192f5e231c1eb0805f4/t/5df018e18d1a5a7f9020022f/1576016097956/Mt_taylor_hire_announcement_2018.pdf

⁵

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57a36192f5e231c1eb0805f4/t/5e614f3965f6e80c57a7a0f2/1583435581090/MonitoringUpdateFinal.pdf>

treatment basal area targets were increased by 10-20% to account for residual mortality. In response to concerns from members of the collaborative group, the Forest adopted a large and old tree retention policy in 2014 so that all trees with old age (pre-fire suppression) characteristics were retained. In addition, a 24" upper diameter limit was enacted to retain the largest trees that did not exhibit old tree characteristics.

Moving forward, the ZML will take an approach that is even more reliant upon collaboration with our partners and a shared stewardship approach. The Zuni Mountains have been selected as a Top Ten Shared Stewardship Priority Landscape with a cross jurisdictional focal area by the state of New Mexico. This ensures the state will prioritize funding up to 25% of acres treated within the footprint (~500 acres/year). This will restore private lands in between treatments on NFS lands to connect and achieve a more comprehensive restoration across the entire landscape.

The approach to mechanical treatments will remain largely unchanged, focusing on ground-based harvesting methods. Over the past several years district fire managers have successfully utilized aerial ignitions to implement low-intensity prescribed burns that mimic the natural fire regime. Acres treated by prescribed fire went from hundreds of acres burned each year to thousands of acres burned starting in 2018, and this level of treatment is expected to resume in FY21 and continue for the life of the project.

In addition to embracing the NM state's shared stewardship initiative, the Puerco Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project (signed in 2020) takes a more comprehensive approach to forest restoration. The Bluewater Project had a more narrow focus, with implementation being tied primarily to timber, meadow restoration, and prescribed fire. The Puerco project includes more non-vegetation management activities that will compliment traditional restoration activities and improve overall watershed function without the construction of any new roads.

Readiness to Implement Extension:

The Decision Notice for the Puerco Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project was signed in April 2020, completing a comprehensive analysis that began back in 2011 after submittal of the original Zuni Mountain CFLR proposal. The Puerco Project will build off of the successes of the Bluewater Project and extend restoration activities into over 80,000 acres of the western Zuni Mountains. Currently the CFLRP Project has achieved 61% completion in mechanical harvest across the ZML, 16% is funded and ready for treatment, and 23% still needs funding to complete the project in the CFLRP foot print.

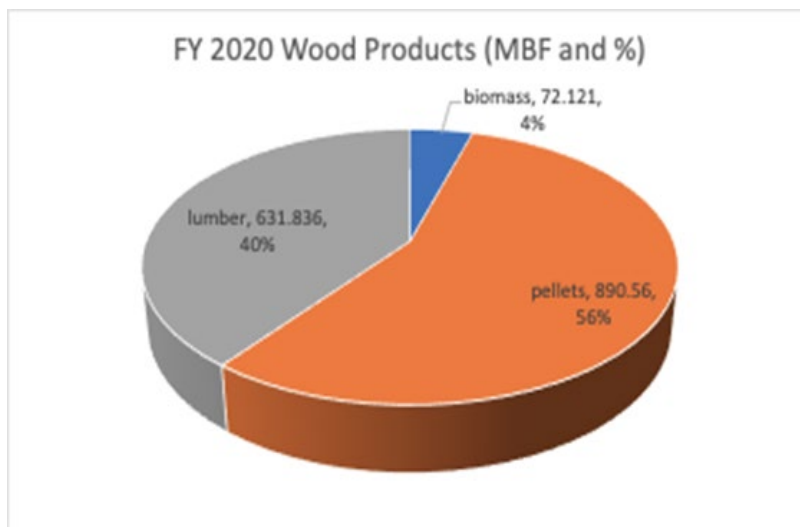
The forest renewed its 10-year stewardship agreement with the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) in 2017, which will be in effect through the end of fiscal year 2027. This agreement allows the forest to add in acres for implementation through modifications as funding is received through the CFLR Program, Cibola NF&NG matching funds, or through partner contributions. There are currently about 6,011.5 acres paid for in the agreement, which will allow for restoration treatments to continue for another 2-3 years. In addition to the NWTF Agreement, the Cibola uses a variety of agreements with the State of New Mexico Department of Forestry and Game & Fish Departments to implement other restoration treatments in the CFLR footprint as well as wildlife and heritage surveys. There is also a monitoring agreement in

place with the Guild to facilitate Collaborative meetings, maintain the website and collect and analyze pre- and post-treatment monitoring data.

The analysis and decision for the Puerco Project coincided with the Cibola NF's plan revision and incorporated standards and guidelines from the new plan where appropriate. The revised forest plan is expected to be in place by 2022. A project specific plan amendment was also included to adopt the updated Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Plan, which will also be incorporated into the revised forest plan.

Economic, Social, and Ecological Context:

Many Cibola and McKinley County residents and visitors are within 2-3 hours of eight national park service installations, in addition to many other natural and cultural public attractions. There are 5 national forests and numerous lakes to attract campers, hunters and fishermen. Cibola National Forest lands are abundant throughout the southern portion of the McKinley and northwestern portion of Cibola County. Promotional emphasis has been placed on these areas to boost tourist revenue in the nearby communities of Grants, Milan, McGaffey, Breadsprings, Bluewater, Ramah, and Zuni, where hospitality accommodations related to these Forest destinations could be provided, as well as in nearby Gallup (Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments 2012).



The efficient and creative use of small diameter wood in the Zuni Mountains continued in FY 2020. Each of these divisions is supported by and in turn supports utilization of woody biomass generated by restoration work in the CFLR. The pie chart (Figure 3) provides a breakdown of the types of products being created. Extension of the CFLR is integral to MTM and the local economy.

Figure 3. MTM 2020 product distribution.

All timber greater than 7" diameter is hauled to the Mount Taylor Manufacturing (MTM) sawmill in Milan, NM, which is 40-60 miles each way depending on the route and location of the restoration unit. MTM is the only remaining sawmill in central New Mexico. As the project has progressed westward over time, the hauling distance has increased leading to higher transportation costs. Because of extensive railroad logging carried out in the ZML in the early 1900's, the forest is even-aged and comprised of mostly small diameter trees (<18" DBH). MTM has four divisions and has manufacturing facilities in two cities. It has a sawmill that produces pallet cants and timbers and two mills that produce wood fuel pellets and wood smoker pellets

for barbecuing. The company also produces wood material for playground surfaces, mulches for landscaping, and products for animal litter and bedding.

Cibola and McKinley counties both have unemployment and poverty rates of 26.1% and 34.8% respectively. These rates are higher than both the state and national averages,⁶ with people below the poverty line respectively (accessed March 2021). Sustaining or creating restoration related jobs will significantly improve the socioeconomic conditions of the local area and adjacent Native American Tribes and Pueblos. Paired with the jobs, the landscape restoration effort will continue to help stabilize and grow local businesses, both directly and indirectly.

Mountain biking continues to become an important source of recreation and tourism dollars in the Zuni Mountains, benefitting Cibola and McKinley County, as well as the Cities of Grants and Gallup. Events such as the 24-hours in the Enchanted Forest, Quartz Crusher, and Zuni Mountain 100 draw cyclists from around the Southwest to the Zuni Mountains. Trail improvements, realignments, and new signage continue on the Puerco side of the CFLR. It is often beneficial to complete restoration work before trail improvements to minimize mitigation and rehabilitation, and better fit them into the newly restored landscape

Increased demand for mountain bike trails in the Zuni Mountains has led to the development of unauthorized trails and informal parking areas. In addition, a century of cross-country motorized travel has left the Zuni Mountains scarred with numerous unauthorized travel routes. There are state, county, private roads, and many unauthorized routes in the CFLRP area. System roads provide access for a wide variety of recreational opportunities, cattle grazing, mining, forest and resource management sites. The road system has more miles than can be adequately maintained. Road and trail maintenance budgets have declined substantially over the last several years, resulting in a large backlog of deferred maintenance needs.

Sixteen watersheds at the 12-digit hydrologic unit code scale intersect the Zuni CFLR project. Watershed condition in the Zuni CFLR project area varies from functioning at risk to functioning properly. Five of the twelve these indicators used to determine watershed condition are expected to be improved by the activities implemented in the ZML. These indicators include riparian, water quality, road and trails, soil condition, and fire condition. Restoration of the forests in the upper Zuni River watershed will reduce the risk of high severity fire eliminated populations and provide the best hope of increasing water availability for the Zuni Bluehead Sucker (Baker 1999, Ffolliott and Thorud 1977; Kaye et al 1999). Because sediment from roads poses a direct threat, the project will reduce unauthorized use of limited-access roads near existing Zuni Bluehead Sucker populations through new gates and other appropriate measures.

Management focused on maintaining and improving habitat for the Mexican spotted owl (MSO) continues to play a large role in our forest management. In 2019-2020, a court-ordered injunction paused most harvesting activities on all national forests in NM while the FS and USFWS worked with external partners to improve our process for documenting treatment compatibility with the MSO Recovery Plan. Additional conservation emphasis will be placed on

⁶<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mckinleycountynewmexico,cibolacountynewmexico,NM,US/LFE041219>

nesting/roosting recovery habitat in the pine-oak ecosystem type. Continued treatments will be based on a consistent regional MSO management strategy, and future mitigations related to MSO are expected to decline as these treatments help increase habitat suitability and resultant population growth. Treatments in ponderosa pine types outside of MSO recovery habitat will continue to focus on improving habitat for the northern goshawk, a Forest sensitive species.

Model projections of forest response to climate change suggest that forests in the Southwest will be less abundant. As the climate becomes warmer and drier, the areas suitable to support temperate and montane forests will shift northward and upward in elevation (Elias Et al 2015). The option that offers the most broad-scale promise is the promotion of resilience. Resilient forests accommodate gradual changes in climate and also have the ability to return toward a prior condition after disturbance either naturally or with management assistance. The focus of vegetation management to achieve restoration goals includes “a focus on re-establishing the composition, structure, pattern, and ecological processes” (U.S. Forest Service, 2014).

The ZML is dominated by ponderosa pine forest types, with a significant component of pinyon-juniper woodlands, most of which is classified as Fire Regime 1 (0-35 year frequency, dominated by low intensity fires). The greatest risk to the health, resilience and function of the ZML are large high-intensity crown fire events. Such events put a variety of key ecosystem components in jeopardy. Given that about 80 percent of the landscape is classified in FRCC III, or highly departed from its historic range of variability, the primary goal of the ZML strategy is to move the landscape towards FRCC I, or a low departure. High stand densities and a single species mix also make the ponderosa pine type vulnerable to bark beetle infestation. Invasive species, such as bull and musk thistle, are present, but not a significant problem. Monitoring, survey and inventory data has helped to identify additional areas for treatment.

Proposed Extension and Treatments:

Desired Conditions

Desired conditions for the ZML is to complete the full suite of forest, grassland, and watershed restoration treatments to promote resilience to wildfire, bark beetles, climate change and

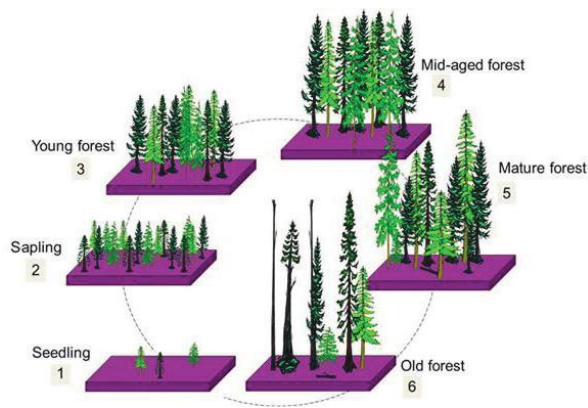


Figure 4. Illustration of the development of tree groups from seedlings to old trees.

invasive species. This includes completing the remaining acres in the Bluewater project and continued implementation of mechanical and fuel reduction treatments westward into the Puerco project. These treatments will be followed up with the reintroduction of frequent, low-intensity fire on 15-30 year cycle. Our approach focuses on the restoration of key elements similar to the historical composition and structure of vegetation in ponderosa pine and dry mixed conifer forests: (1) species composition; (2) groups of trees; (3) scattered individual trees; (4) grass-forb-shrub

interspaces; (5) snags, logs, and woody debris; and (6) variation in the arrangements of these elements in space and time (Reynolds et al 2013). Restoration strategies for frequent fire forests in the southwest are built upon decades of foundational research conducted at the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes located across the four corners states. Because of the legacy of railroad logging in the ZML, restoration treatments will focus on creating uneven-aged conditions and managing for retention of large and old trees.

Restoration treatments will create vegetation conditions that are resistant and resilient to the effects of climate change and because of them, the Zuni Mountains maintain their forest extent over time in response to climate change. Vegetation structure is in low departure from reference conditions and desired seral state proportions are applied at the landscape scale where contributions from all seral stages and low overall departure from reference proportions are positive indicators of integrity. Ecosystems contain a mosaic of vegetation conditions, densities, and structures. This mosaic occurs at a variety of scales across landscapes and watersheds, reflecting the disturbance regimes that naturally affect the area. Natural ecosystem functions (energy flow, hydrologic and nutrient cycling) facilitate the shifting of plant communities, structure, and ages across the landscape over time.

Restoration treatments will maintain soil condition as satisfactory, and soil functions are sustained and functioning properly as defined by current Forest Service protocols. Post treatment hydrologic features such as streams, springs, and wetlands have higher potential to support native fish, other aquatic species, or both. Hydrologic features will better provide habitats that are resilient or adaptive to natural or human-caused disturbances and projected warmer and drier climatic condition. Habitat conditions and compatible multiple uses contribute to the recovery of federally listed species and the persistence of species of conservation concern.

Under these desired conditions, invasive species do not disrupt the structure or function of ecosystems, species life cycles, or populations, and minimize impacts to native wildlife or plant species. Frequent, low-intensity fires protect, maintain, and enhance resources and move ecosystems toward desired conditions on a landscape scale. Wildland fire functions in its natural ecological role on a landscape scale and across administrative boundaries, under conditions where safety and values at risk can be protected. Regular use of fire mitigates high-severity disturbances and protects social, economic, and ecological values at risk.

By the end of the extension, the ZML expects to have completed mechanical forest restoration treatments on approximately 35,000 acres of fire-dependent forest types and returning the historical fire return interval back to less than 35 years (Reynolds Et al 2013). Modeling done for forest plan revision in the Southwestern Region shows that these forest types can be managed economically and sustainably on 20 to 30-year cutting cycle (Youtz and Vandendriesche 2012) depending upon site quality. By 2050, it is desired to be working back through the Bluewater project area on the next 30-year cutting cycle. Stand conditions will have greatly improved after having reintroduced low-intensity fire across the entire ZML.

Ecological Restoration Strategy

In the Puerco project area, restoration treatments were selected through a collaborative process with the Forest/District interdisciplinary team and external multi-party team, taking into account forest structure, condition, fire history, departure and access. We will continue working with our partners to select economically feasible areas for treatment within priority watersheds and habitats using a shared stewardship approach. Treatments align with both Cibola and McKinley County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) priorities.

Uncertainties associated with future climate changes make the development of restoration strategies increasingly complex and challenging. The scenario of future hotter, more severe, and more frequent droughts in the Southwest (see Karl and others 2009) includes increased competition for water and increased frequency and extent of high-severity fire, insect, and disease disturbances. Restoring the characteristic composition, structure, and spatial pattern in frequent-fire forests would thereby: (1) reduce tree densities and canopy continuity; (2) recreate grass-forb-shrub plant communities; (3) reduce competition for space, water, and nutrients (Covington and others 1997); and (4) provide for the re-establishment of characteristic disturbance regimes (Covington and others 1997; Fulé and others 2002b; Kolb and others 1998).

To combat climate change, North et al. (2009) recommends enhancing forest resilience by increasing the physical diversity within a forest, such as promoting higher density and canopy cover in local cool/moist areas, and encouraging lower densities of fire-resistant trees on southern slopes. Additionally, thinning should occur on the basis of crown strata or age/species cohorts to facilitate the structural heterogeneity of the forest stand (i.e. - uneven aged conditions).

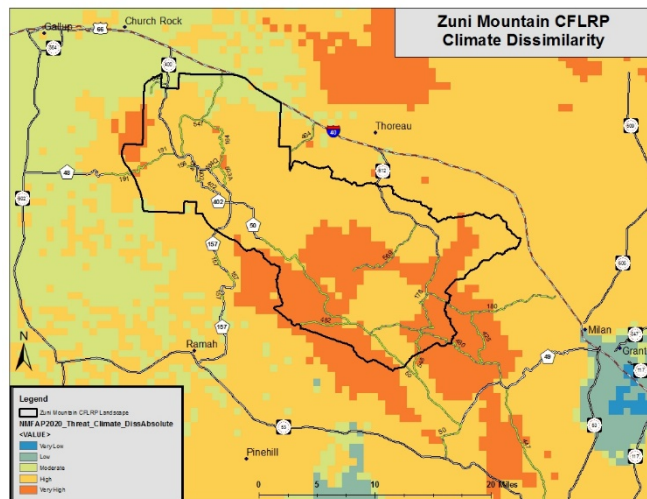


Figure 5. Degree of change in current to future projected climate.

Lydersen et al. (2013) demonstrated that the contemporary forest is more homogeneous than it was historically, and the historical variability that likely provided diverse microclimate and habitat conditions and fostered resilience to a variety of stressors and disturbances such as fire, insects, and drought has been lost. The strategic restoration framework promoted in the ZML aligns with recommendations from the Southwest Regional Climate Hub and California Subsidiary Hub Assessment of Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies (2015).

As mentioned the ZML is a focal area within a priority landscape that will provide a host of benefits important to not only the state of New Mexico, but also Tribal, local governments, and

private landowners. The Puerco project boundary was expanded during the analysis process to include culturally significant lands adjacent to the Bread Springs Chapter of Navajo, but are not included in the CFLRP footprint. Proposed treatments on these lands would provide an easily accessible source for personal fuelwood as well as potential economic opportunities for tribal members.

Wildfire Risk Reduction

The risk of uncharacteristic wildfire will be reduced through mechanical treatments that will break up the dense, even-aged forest canopy by restoring historic gaps and creating regeneration openings. Overstocked mid-aged trees will be reduced to historic densities and the majority of large and old trees will be maintained as treated stands are moved toward historic uneven-aged structure and “clumpy-groupy” arrangement. The historic frequent fire regime will be more easily restored after mechanical treatments have reduced ladder fuels and the risk of active crown fire. Regular maintenance burns will be implemented on a recurring basis every 10-30 years. This combination of treatments will maintain a more resilient forest that is resistant to disturbances such as climate change.

Hazardous fuels treatments will consist mostly of mechanical and hand thinning in ponderosa pine at a pace of between 1,500-2,000 acres per year. Prescribed fire will follow mechanical treatments to restore the fire regime and improve the condition class. These acres were chosen through environmental analysis using a multi-discipline approach that factored in existing/desired conditions, departure, wildfire risk, resilience, and accessibility.

Utilizing fire for resource benefit is always an option depending upon fire location and resources at risk and has been successfully utilized across the forest in the last decade. Managing naturally ignited wildfire for resource benefit across the Zuni Mountains was identified as a locally specific priority action in the Cibola County CWPP. The amount of private land mixed into the ZML makes it challenging, but if a fire were to occur within or adjacent to past treatments, strong consideration would be given to management for resource benefits to restore the natural fire cycle and reduce costs. Continued use of aerial ignitions to implement low-intensity prescribed burns will continue to be utilized to accomplish burn blocks consisting of thousands of acres which will reduce costs and minimize duration of smoke impacts to local communities.

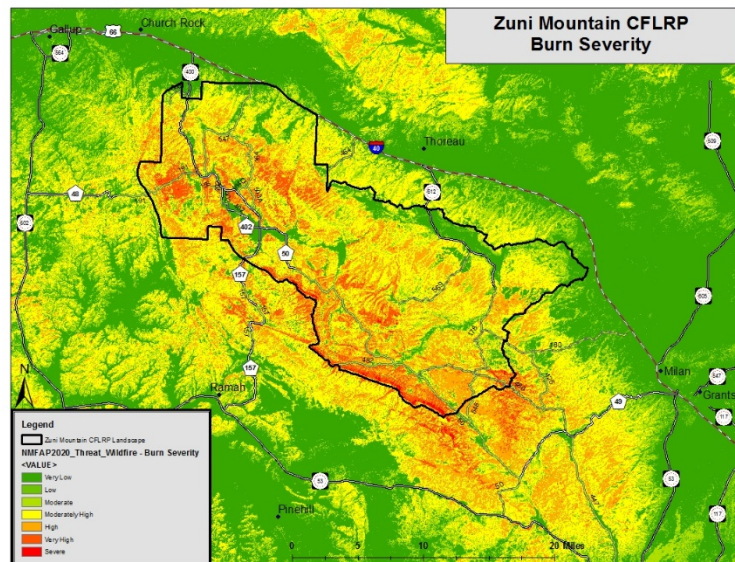


Figure 6. Predicted Burn Severity

We will continue to work with the State of NM to strategically implement treatments that build off of each other’s on-going and past treatments on federal, state and private lands.

Additionally, we will continue to utilize agreements such as Building Capacity for Prescribed Fire in the Zuni Mountains (the Guild), and Prescribed Fires For Wildlife Habitat Restoration (NMGFD) to work with other local partners through training and implementation to restore fire across the ZML. Working with groups such as the NM Native Plant Society and Great Old Broads for Wilderness, we will continue to inventory and monitor for invasive species and native fish habitat.

Benefits to Local Communities:

Economic and social goals include maintaining and creating restoration related jobs through thinning operations and wood processing at MTM that will continue to provide sustainable well-paying jobs to surrounding local communities. Local natural resource crews that have trained and gained experience through work implemented in the ZML, such as Alamo and Ramah Navajo, will continue to be prioritized for non-commercial thinning operations. Additional opportunities with the Bread Springs Chapter of the Navajo Nation will be initiated on adjacent lands included within the Puerco Project Decision Notice

The Cibola National Forest and Zuni Mountain Trail System are listed as strengths that Cibola County might utilize as building blocks to generate economic growth (Comprehensive Plan 2015). Paired with jobs, the overall landscape restoration effort will contribute to increased tourism and continue to help stabilize and grow local businesses, both directly and indirectly. Continued restoration treatments will help reduce risk ratings for communities like Bluewater Acres and McGaffey/Tampico Springs identified in the McKinley County CWPP (2018), and McGaffey Pines and Bluewater identified in the Cibola County CWPP (2020). Both prioritize fuel treatments along boundaries with private lands.

Investments in fuels reduction on National Forest System lands act as an economic stimulus to rural communities and have been shown to generate millions of dollars of economic output as well as hundreds of jobs sustained or created (Hjerpe and Kim 2008). Similar results are expected from implementation of the proposed treatments and the ZML strategy. Findings from the five-year multiparty monitoring report from the White Mountain Stewardship Contract (Sitko and Hurteau 2010), also in Region 3, indicates that wood utilization businesses will make additional capital investments and hire more people. The anticipated ripple effect in the economies local to the ZML is likely to have a greater impact due to their already economically depressed condition and accompanying high unemployment rates.

The park-like conditions associated with a resilient, restored forest are often favored by active and passive recreationists and vehicular tourism. Tourism to and across the ZML has a recognized benefit to the local economies (CRC & Associates 2007; La Rouche 2001; and IAFWA 2002). In addition to tourism, quality active and passive recreation provides significant benefits to local economics. Since 2009 mountain biking use in the ZML has increased dramatically with the introduction of a 24-hour race event. This event, supported by the NM Council of Governments Economic Development Department, brings cyclists to the ZML from around the Western states and is accompanied by volunteer trail maintenance crews. Continuation and expansion of active recreation such as this will strengthen the local economic stimulus.

Utilization of Forest Restoration Byproducts:

The ZML wood harvesting and wood utilization businesses have been steadily increasing their capabilities from relatively no capacity in 2000 to the capacity to treat roughly 1,300 acres of ponderosa pine and 1,000 acres of piñon-juniper restoration per year in 2012 to the current capacity of approximately 2,000 acres of ponderosa pine and 1,000 acres of piñon-juniper restoration. The first 10 years strengthened and stabilized existing businesses, and this extension will continue to do the same over the next decade. The CFLRP provides treatment subsidies which are the missing link to realizing landscape-scale forest restoration in the ZML, particularly as operations move farther away from the mill. That is why 80 percent of the requested funds have been put towards on-the-ground restoration, and will continue under an extension.

Wood utilizers are currently handling wood from approximately 2,500 acres per year across jurisdictions, but have the ability to ramp up to 3-3,500 acres. Both the wood harvesters and the wood utilizers from the ZML currently also treat acres and procure wood from adjacent forest thinning treatments. These adjacent forest thinning projects help fill in the gaps of inoperable time periods on Forest Service land and provide the much needed supply of material to both MTM and local wood harvesters. Continued implementation of the ZML strategy will guarantee subsidized acres and material using active stewardship, and potential good neighbor authorities that will enable these businesses to remain stable. Annual funding commitments from the USDA Forest Service are needed to provide a stable future for the restoration industry in central New Mexico and subsidize the cost of restoration where product value can not cover restoration cost.

The Cibola National Forest and Mount Taylor Ranger District have completed the Puerco Project NEPA, which will add 10 additional years of wood supply to the restoration economy. These decadal investments have established a sustainable wood supply for utilization as well as having a stabilizing effect on these businesses.

MTM is currently working on adding a firewood component to their existing list of products. This will provide a utilization component when harvesting piñon and/or juniper trees and also provide more options for processing any harvested material into additional value added products based upon best financial realization. This will increase employment in Cibola County which is one of the poorest counties in New Mexico, one of the poorest states in the union. MTM continues to grow and invest into the project with full commitment to continued long-term forest restoration in the Zuni Mountains.

Collaboration:

The ZML has a 15+ year history of collaboration with diverse partners that precede CFLRP funding. From the start, these efforts have been transparent and open to all. Current meetings and events are posted to the website and shared with our broad email list. All meeting notes are posted to the website, which has a form to allow interested parties to contact the collaborative.

A catalyst for collaboration in the landscape occurred in late 2005 when the Bluewater One Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) grant led by the Guild brought Ramah Navajo Chapter Forestry, Zuni Pueblo Forestry, and MTM together to initiate the implementation of the Bluewater EIS. The CFRP project implemented over 1,500 acres of treatment, purchased an in-woods self-loading chipper for MTM, and formed the Wood Industries Network (WIN). WIN was an informal regional collaborative designed to build up the restoration harvesting sector. These efforts evolved over the following few years to form the Zuni Mountains Collaborative (ZMC), whose members co-developed the 2012 proposal.

Over the past decade, the ZMC and its members have worked on ecological and socioeconomic monitoring as well as co-learning for adaptive management. We have leveraged funds, implemented harvesting and prescribed fire across jurisdictions, offered youth education, and much more.

ZMC faced a significant challenge in 2015 related to an accusation of high-grade logging by concerned local citizens. The ZMC addressed this challenge with a series of facilitated meetings that invited the public. These working meetings delicately navigated the issues and relationships with a professional facilitator; they also led the ZMC to develop the Old and Large Tree Retention Strategy which was adopted by the CNF&NG for the landscape. This event was crucial in building and maintaining support for the effort among the Great Old Broads for Wilderness and the New Mexico Native Plant Society, two members of the ZMC whose involvement in the program has since grown.

Other accomplishments of the ZMC include the 2015 and 2016 prescribed burns at the Cottonwood Gulch Foundation's basecamp property adjacent to the CNF&NG. The burns followed several years of thinning coordinated by the New Mexico State Forestry Division (NMSFD) and were collaboratively implemented with a mix of federal, private, NGO, and local fire service support. These burns protected the camp from wildfire and reduced wildfire risk to the CNF&NG.

The ZMC represents diverse interests that include local government, landowners, fire services, tribes, wood harvesting and processing businesses, conservation groups, and federal land management agencies. At a recent ZMC meeting, members offered the following feedback:

"The Zuni Mountains CFLR has helped native plant species to thrive."

-Sue Small, NM Native Plant Society, Conservation Committee Chair

"Living alongside the Zuni Mountains in the Timberlake subdivision, I really appreciate the improvements to the forest including wildfire protection and improved habitat for wildlife. The Zuni Mountains CFLR has provided much needed job opportunities for the local community."

-Ron Schali, Teacher and Resident in the landscape.

"This is one of the top 10 landscapes identified in the recently published New Mexico Forest Action Plan. This is receiving much more attention than simply Federal Funding. The State of NM has committed a high amount of funding to augment projects in this critical watershed."

-Todd Haines, District Forester, Bernalillo District, NMSFD.

"The collaborative process associated with the Zuni Mountains project has provided a forum for a diverse group of stakeholders to connect. This is a huge investment toward future partnerships and the relationships that are essential to solving all kinds of climate-related problems including catastrophic wildfire."

-Gabe Kohler, Forest Steward's Guild.

An unexpected development within the ZMC occurred in 2019 when the MSO injunction in NM threatened to shutdown forest industry, similar to what happened in the 1990s. It was through the strong collaborative relationships within the ZMC that the NMSFD was able to swiftly pivot onto private lands with the then brand-new FAWRA authority. This pivot saved MTM and the restoration business infrastructure the ZMC has worked hard to nurture over the previous decades.

For many years, the ZMC and the CNF&NG have had a strong working relationship that has enabled an environment of learning and adaptation. This is often done informally during field meetings or in small groups. Co-learning and adapting has occurred on various topics from prescribed fire, to silviculture, water monitoring, and more. This adaptation is often documented in meeting notes or in annual reports. One instance from 2015 was more formally documented and describes an extensive remarking effort based on initial treatment feedback⁷.

The first decade of CFLR implementation and our experience during the pandemic have taught us that the ZMC works best through in-person field meetings. Nonetheless, our team adapted during this time through the use of virtual meeting platforms. Members of the ZMC met for several meetings (held via Zoom) and conference calls that culminated in our 3/31/21 All Hands ZMC meeting to focus on the proposal extension. The draft ZMC letter of commitment was developed, and we captured feedback from ZMC members via Google Forms on how they would like to engage in future implementation. Developing action items from our meetings has been critical to fostering our collaborative environment. In summer 2021, we will convene our first field meeting since the onset of the pandemic.

Multi-party Monitoring:

The project has continuously invested in multi-party monitoring, which in turn has informed project planning and management. The Guild works closely with the CNF&NG on the multi-party monitoring effort covering ecological and socioeconomic indicators. Many other ZMC partners support the monitoring efforts by providing data, assisting with data collection, serving on either the vegetation or water sub-groups, or providing feedback at our regular All Hands meetings where monitoring updates are provided.

An example of an update is the 2020 report⁸, which uses an array of plot data to show progress toward our ecological goals, including the protection of large trees. This update report also shows that our ecological vegetation monitoring is directly linked to project goals and credibly demonstrates that our treatments are altering the landscape over time toward our broader ecological goals. The plot-based vegetation monitoring data is our most rigorous due to the scale of the plot arrays and the number of plots. We ensure data quality by having the Guild use a competitive bid process that prioritizes best value over lowest price per unit. The successful bidder then collects data that is later inspected by the Guild to meet Common Stand Exam (CSE)

⁷ <http://www.zunimountainscollaborative.org/s/ZMCFLRP-adapting-to-effects-1.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.zunimountainscollaborative.org/s/MonitoringUpdateFinal.pdf>

handbook accuracy standards before the data is delivered to the CNF&NG who, in turn, often conducts spot inspections of their own. Once everything passes, all data are uploaded to the Field Sampled Vegetation (FSVeg) database. The Guild also keeps all the EXAMS files as backup, and has contracted with reputable researchers to support CNF&NG staff and ZMC members with analysis and interpretation.

The monitoring plan will be revised to include updated measures contained within the National Strategy for the 5-year monitoring report due in 2027. Our monitoring, to date, has been designed with the collaboration of leaders from the CNF&NG and ZMC and is discussed collectively at each All Hands meeting. The findings are used to evaluate treatments and the need for changes. For example, we reviewed and discussed monitoring results during a 2019 field visit to permanent monitoring plots in the Bluewater showcase area. Our data demonstrated that large trees were retained by both thinning and burning treatments. We also determined that our careful use of water and foam protected previously fire-scarred legacy trees. A ZMC member noticed that post-thinning and burning insect activity had caused some large tree mortality. The discussion led the silviculturist and fire manager to modify future prescriptions and operations to avoid this.

Our monitoring efforts aims to identify changes in vegetation as well as track changes in scarce water sources with a focus on Zuni bluehead sucker habitat. Our vegetation monitoring includes an array of 130 permanent plots, multiple arrays of over 1000 level II CSE plots, and riparian health assessments. Our water-source monitoring includes a permanent remote weather station⁹, a system of instream data loggers, and seasonal field visits. We also track socioeconomic variables through a feedback loop established between ZMC members and agency line officers, which includes a consistent annual tracking form combined with interviews to gather additional data.

This multi-party monitoring approach has led to a strong sense of trust, accountability, and transparency among ZMC members that has been built over the years. For example, Susan Ostlie of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness Rio Grande Broadband Chapter, who has been part of this effort for over 5 years, said, *“I have seen major improvements in the openness of the forests in the Bluewater area down to Post Office Flats. There are more grasses and healthier, larger trees; they seem to have room to breathe now. The light coming through the restored areas is encouraging, without the ground looking like it is getting fried by too much sun.”*

Monitoring data are archived at the Guild and CNF&NG and available to the public upon request. Monitoring updates at All Hands meetings are the most common way people receive data summaries. These summaries are emailed to attendees in the form of PowerPoint presentation slides. The ZMC has also hosted the SW Jemez CFLR for a field meeting focused on monitoring efforts and co-learning. We also coordinate with the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute, the University of New Mexico, and the Spring Stewardship

⁹ Quality Analysis and Control of Zuni Mountain Weather Station Data & Evaluation of Weather and Discharge Relationships on the Rio Nutria: http://www.zunimountaincollaborative.org/s/Gregory_Report.pdf

Institute on aligned water-source monitoring efforts on the CNF&NG. The Guild attended the R2/R3 CFLR meetings and presented on monitoring efforts.

The project's multi-party monitoring approach and design is well suited to the extension, and it has proven to be resilient to unexpected events. For example, beginning in 2011, the ZMC was involved in planning a CFRP project that ultimately became the Puerco EA to collect plot data west of the continental divide. The project's thinning efforts moved to the Puerco EA area at the end of 2020. Due to that long lead time, the ZMC and the multi-party monitoring team have been collecting extensive baseline vegetation plots in that area since 2012. We also installed our weather station in that landscape due to an initial gap analysis showing a need to capture precipitation and temperature changes in that area. As a result, nearly a decade of stream and riparian data has been collected in critical habitat for the Zuni bluehead sucker. Furthermore, 80 additional MSO habitat plots have been surveyed in that decision area in 2020.

Monitoring data has been used in emergencies as well. In 2018 there was a series of wildfires that occurred in the landscape. The effects of these fires were captured by our plot and photo point array. We have remarkably been able to re-read some of the affected plots. Additionally, NMSFD provided a photopoint-based assessment of one of the fires, and the ZMC centered an All Hands meeting around these events that proved very meaningful to the members.¹⁰

The extension proposal process and our 3/31/21 meeting have provided opportunity for ZMC members to share their interest in particular areas in the landscape and will serve to clarify key multi-party monitoring roles. This was also an opportunity for the District Ranger, Stewardship Staff Officer, and the Forest Supervisor to emphasize their support for the project and its robust monitoring component to provide project accountability and “close the feedback loop” between monitoring and management.

Unit Capacity:

The CNF&NG has demonstrated its capacity and ability to manage this scale of investment by restoring over 20,000 acres (mechanical & prescribed fire treatments) and completing NEPA analysis for a project that will provide an additional 35,000 acres over the next 10 years. The Mt Taylor RD timber staff will continue to manage on-the-ground implementation with support from the Cibola SO for managing the NWTF Stewardship Agreement and silvicultural needs.

The ZML is participating in a regional pilot program promoting Forest Products Modernization that is utilizing mobile tablet technology to digitally mark restoration units rather than designating individual leave trees. Enterprise TEAMS has been utilized to prepare over 3,000 acres in the Puerco Project that will be harvested in the next several years. Uniformity was created by past railroad logging the ZML. As a result, we are participating in a Region 3 pilot project that will utilize load count scaling to determine volume while minimizing cruising requirements. Both of these efforts will increase efficiency and reduce sale layout and prep costs.

¹⁰ <http://www.zunimountaincollaborative.org/blog/2018/8/3/puerco-project-nepa-comment-period-open-and-july-all-hands-meeting-summary>

As the project moves westward away from the mill, transportation costs have increased, and average tree diameter has decreased. As a result, the cost per acre for mechanical treatment in the NWTf Stewardship Agreement has been renegotiated and increased by 20%. The increased cost is reflected in this extension proposal in order to sustain the amount of acres treated over the past 10 years. After the extension expires, the exit strategy will be to maintain a larger proportion of the ZML with prescribed fire. Mechanical treatments would likely continue on fewer acres and shared stewardship opportunities with the State of NM and other partners would be pursued. If CFLRP is not reauthorized, the forest would consider applying for other available funds such as submitting a Joint Chief’s proposal. Otherwise, restoration treatments would be dependent upon the ability to secure competitive funds from other sources. Without CFLRP funding, it is expected that restoration treatments would be reduced by 50-75% of the acres currently treated, and the future of MTM would be in jeopardy.

Project Funding:

NMSFD has committed to the ZML by making it one of 10 Shared Stewardship Priority Landscapes in the state. We also expect to continue to partner with NMGFD and will leverage past and ongoing restoration work to compete for regional USFS funding¹¹.

The District and the CNF&NG can provide matching funds to the CFLRP funding within its current budget capacity without expecting contributions from the Region. In a federal fiscal environment where funding has moved towards competitive allocation while base funding is often diminishing, the ability of the various Regions around the country is becoming limited to supply additional matching funds for landscape-scale projects. Since 2012, the CNF&NG has matched almost \$12 million dollars, which is about a 1:1.5 match. Although not extended by CFLRP, the Region remains committed to the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI), which will reduce available funds that might otherwise be available through a competitive process.

NMSFD has committed up to \$500,000 per year for work in the ZML on private lands over the next 10 years, which will provide approximately 500 acres of treatment per year. In addition, it is anticipated that another 150-300 acres/year of NFS lands can be treated using FAWRA funds. The project anticipates significant non-federal investments surrounding the ZML, particularly by restoration thinning and utilization businesses, the State of New Mexico, and by the National Wild Turkey Federation’s Stewardship Agreement. NMGFD has invested over 1 million dollars for on-the-ground treatments. The New Mexico State Land Office and NMSFD manage over 20,000 acres in and around the ZML and restore approximately 160 acres annually. These investments are expected to be maintained.

In the 2012 ZM CFLRP proposal¹², the Forest committed 80% of CFLRP funding to implementation, 15% to monitoring and 5% discretionary. The ZML has never relied heavily on

¹¹ <https://apnews.com/article/wildfires-forests-forestry-fires-new-mexico-14b13c861e0ffc7fd722dd8cb7e50229>

¹²

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57a36192f5e231c1eb0805f4/t/5f1a00420eb9c26ae4bbd5c3/1595539526236/ZuniMountainCFLRP_02062011_pm.pdf

CFLRP funds to pay salary and expenses, so adaptation to Budget Modernization is not expected to be a challenge moving forward unless the Salary and Expenses (S&E) “tap” continues to be as heavy as it was in 2021.

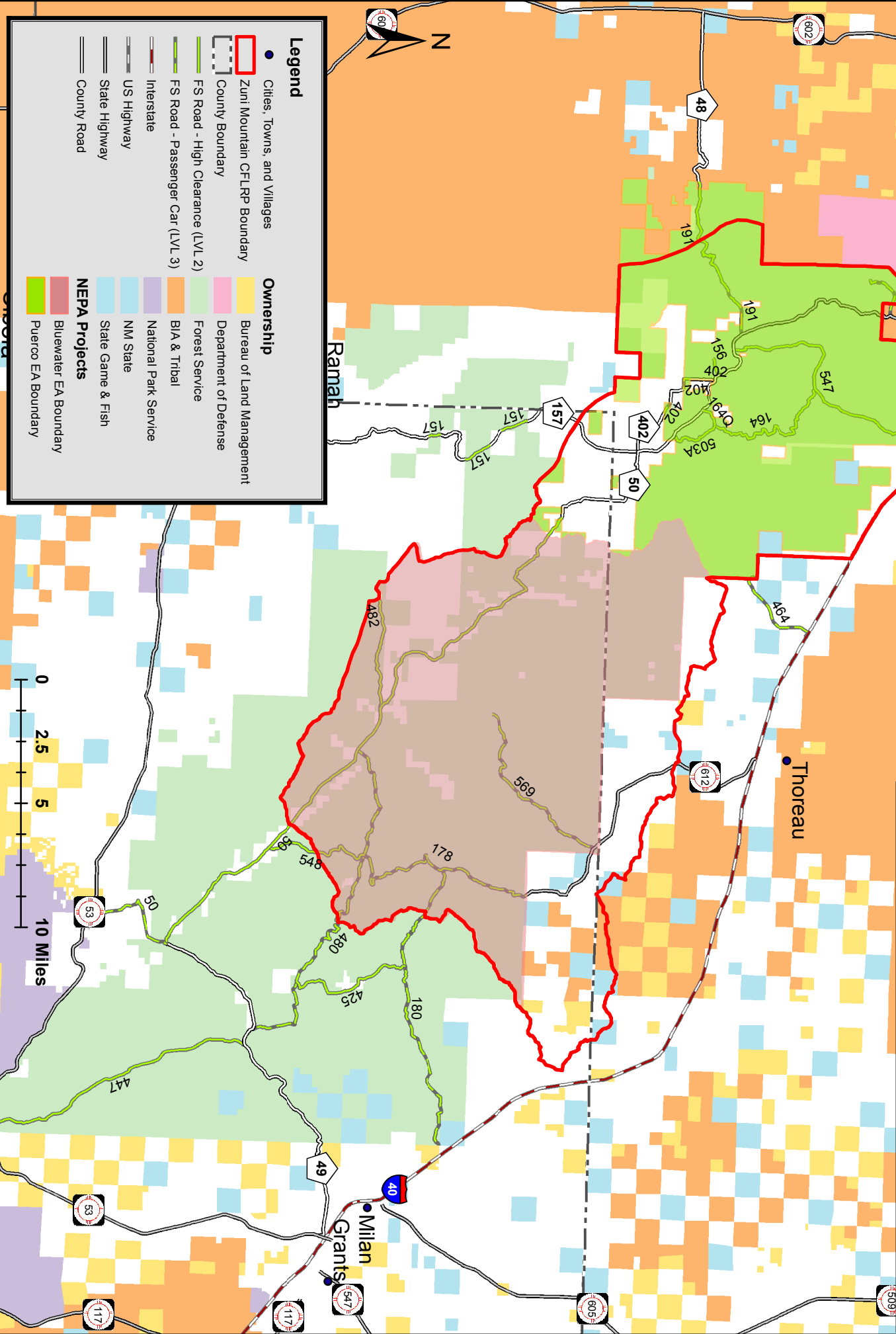
Under Budget Modernization in FY21, \$281,000 (35%) was used for S&E, which cuts directly into the amount that can be used for implementation. Prior to 2021 CFLN was never used to fund personnel to this level. The methodology of the budget office to use a national average to determine CFLN to convert to S&E is not consistent with the CNF&NG’s strategy to fund treatment in the CFLRP project. If the S&E tap is reduced to align with our proposal, then budget modernization will have little direct effect.

The estimated multi-party monitoring budget is appropriate for the project extension as it will enable the ZMC and the Guild to:

- update the monitoring plan to align with the national Strategy and R3 guidance,
- continue our plot-based vegetation monitoring,
- continue our stream and riparian monitoring efforts, and
- continue our regular All Hands and field meetings that foster our learning and adaptive management approach; integrating line officers and Forest leadership in the informal but functional process.

This is based on a decade of experience with the Guild and our network of partners investing in multi-party monitoring, collaboration, and fostering a transparent and accessible project culture.

**Zuni Mountain CFLRP
Attachment A P1
Landownership Footprint**



Legend

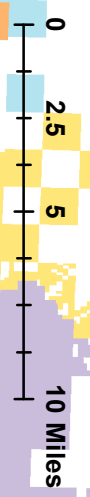
- Cities, Towns, and Villages
- ▭ Zuni Mountain CFLRP Boundary
- ▭ County Boundary
- ▭ FS Road - High Clearance (LVL 2)
- ▭ FS Road - Passenger Car (LVL 3)
- ▭ Interstate
- ▭ US Highway
- ▭ State Highway
- ▭ County Road

Ownership

- ▭ Bureau of Land Management
- ▭ Department of Defense
- ▭ Forest Service
- ▭ BIA & Tribal
- ▭ National Park Service
- ▭ NM State
- ▭ State Game & Fish

NEPA Projects

- ▭ Blewater EA Boundary
- ▭ Puerco EA Boundary



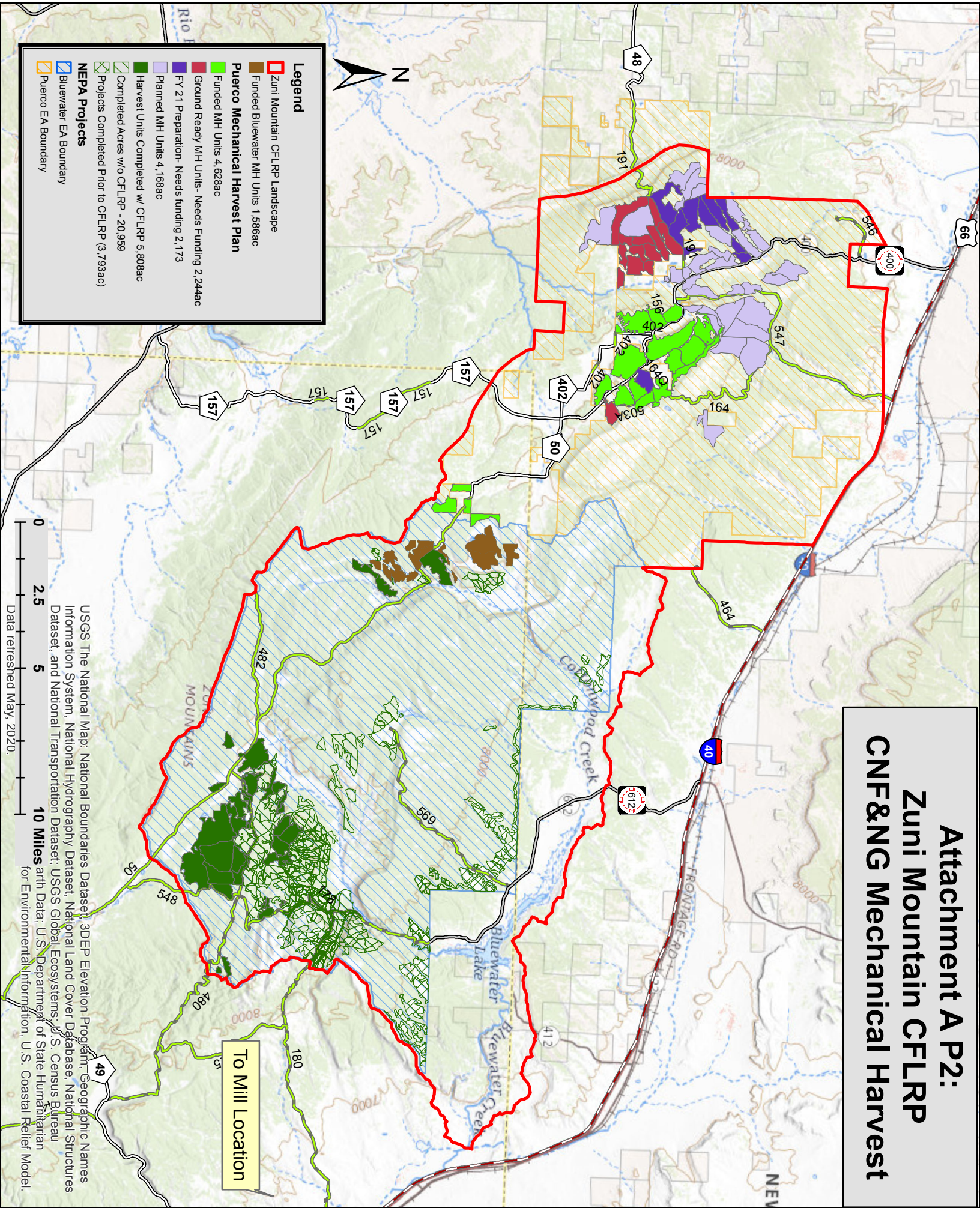
Gallup
Church Rock

Thoreau

Ramah

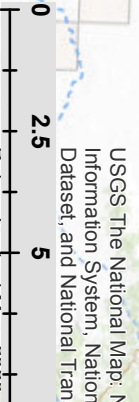
Milan
Grants

**Attachment A P2:
Zuni Mountain CFLRP
CNF&NG Mechanical Harvest**



Legend

- Zuni Mountain CFLRP Landscape
- Funded Bluewater MH Units 1,586ac
- Funded MH Units 4,628ac
- Ground Ready MH Units- Needs Funding 2,244ac
- FV 21 Preparation- Needs funding 2,173
- Harvest Units Completed w/ CFLRP 5,808ac
- Completed Acres w/o CFLRP - 20,959
- Planned MH Units 4,168ac
- NEPA Projects
- Bluewater EA Boundary
- Puerco EA Boundary



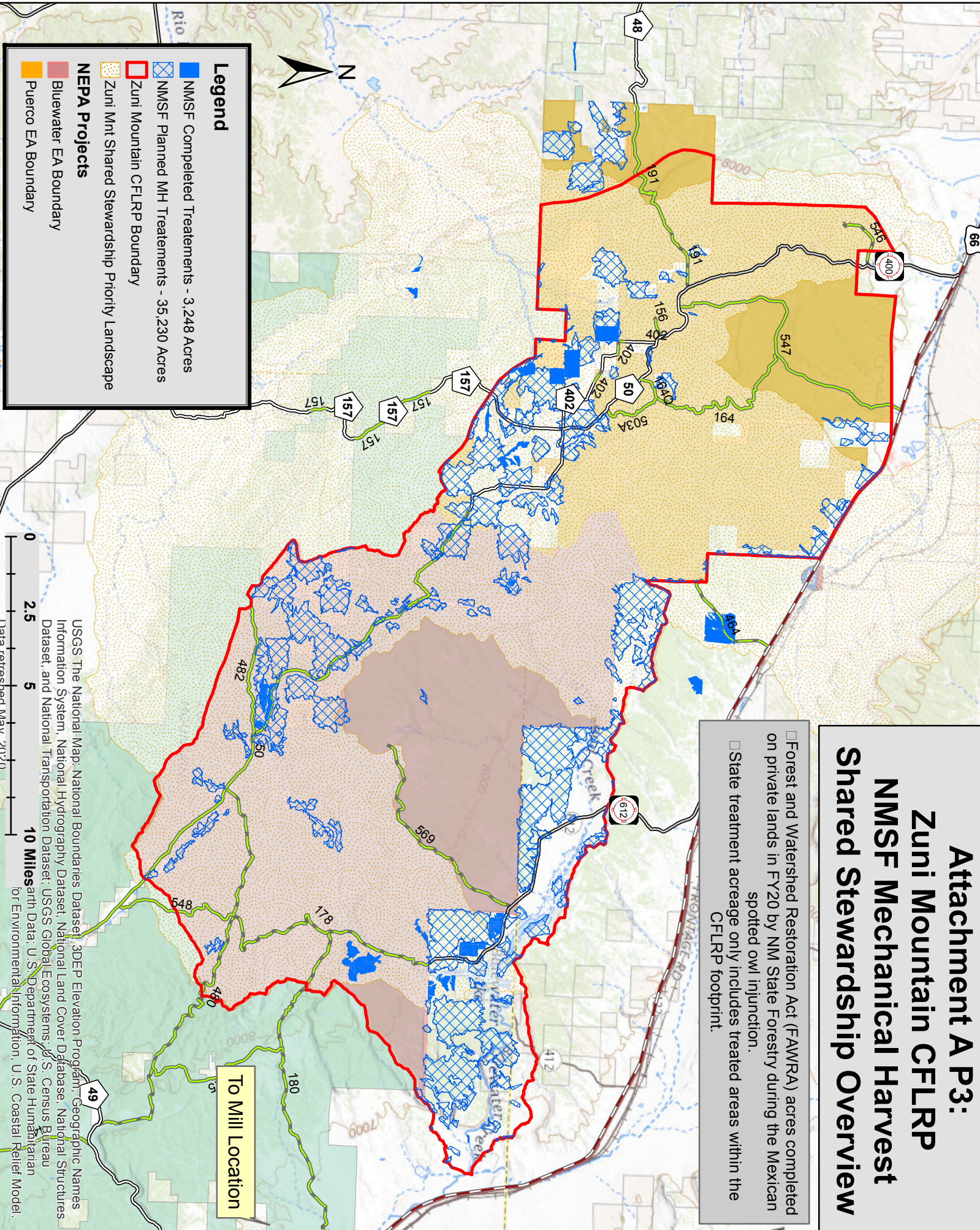
To Mill Location

USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset; 3DEP Elevation Program; Geographic Names Information System; National Hydrography Dataset; National Land Cover Database; National Structures Dataset; and National Transportation Dataset; USGS Global Ecosystems; U.S. Census Bureau; earth Data; U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Information; U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Information; U.S. Coastal Relief Model.

Data refreshed May, 2020.

Attachment A P3: Zuni Mountain CFLRP NMSF Mechanical Harvest Shared Stewardship Overview

- Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) acres completed on private lands in FY20 by NM State Forestry during the Mexican spotted owl injunction.
- State treatment acreage only includes treated areas within the CFLRP footprint.



Legend

- NMSF Completed Treatments - 3,248 Acres
- NMSF Planned MH Treatments - 35,230 Acres
- Zuni Mountain CFLRP Boundary
- Zuni Mnt Shared Stewardship Priority Landscape

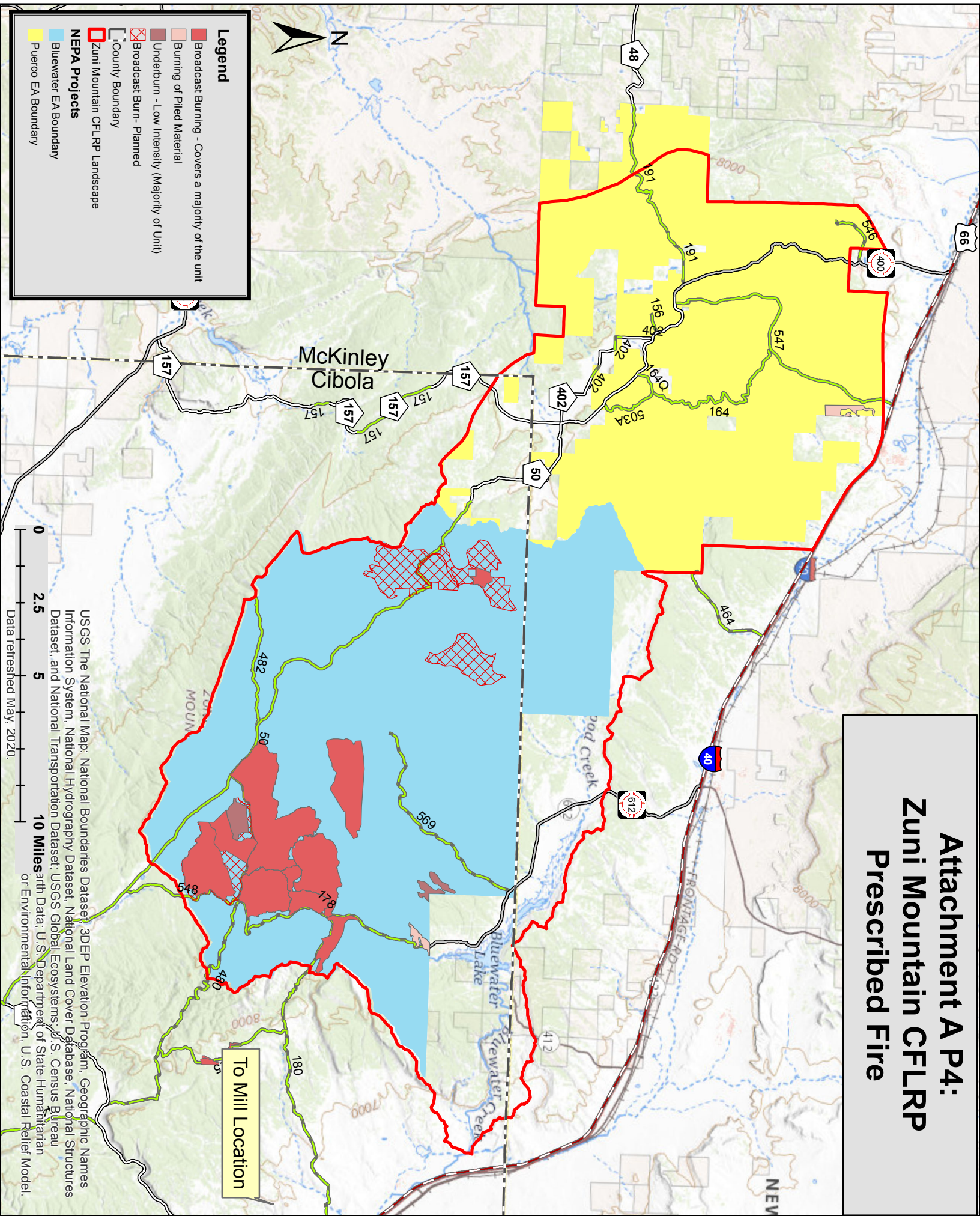
NEPA Projects

- Bluwater EA Boundary
- Puerco EA Boundary

USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset; 3DEP Elevation Program; Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography Dataset, National Land Cover Database, National Structures Dataset, and National Transportation Dataset; USGS Global Ecosystems; U.S. Census Bureau Earth Data; U.S. Department of State Humanitarian Information; U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Coastal Relief Model.
Data refreshed May, 2020.

10 Miles

**Attachment A P4:
Zuni Mountain CFLRP
Prescribed Fire**



Legend

- Broadcast Burning - Covers a majority of the unit
- Burning of Piled Material
- Underburn - Low Intensity (Majority of Unit)
- Broadcast Burn- Planned
- Zuni Mountain CFLRP Landscape
- County Boundary

NEPA Projects

- Bluewater EA Boundary
- Puerco EA Boundary

USGS The National Map: National Boundaries Dataset, 3DEP Elevation Program, Geographic Names Information System, National Hydrography Dataset, National Land Cover Database, National Structures Dataset, and National Transportation Dataset; USGS Global Ecosystems; U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census; U.S. Department of State Humanitarian or Environmental Information; U.S. Coastal Relief Model.

0 2.5 5 10 Miles
Data refreshed May, 2020.

To Mill Location

2012 CFLRP PROJECT EXTENSION PROPOSAL – ZUNI MOUNTAINS

ATTACHMENT B: ZML Planned Treatments.

Core Restoration Treatment Types	Please provide additional background information for the prompts as needed	Year 1*	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Years 5-10	TOTAL	Key treatment objectives	Estimated % accomplished on NFS lands (across all years)	Other landownership types (other federal, tribal, state, private, etc.) where treatments will occur	For each item, indicate whether the expected output is the same as the original proposal, or if it has been adjusted (given changed conditions or lessons learned) to meet broader CFLRP proposal objectives.	For items that have been adjusted from the original proposal, (briefly) why have they been adjusted?
Hazardous Fuels Reduction (total of acres below)												
Subset of hazardous fuels treatments: Mechanical Thinning (acres)		2200	2200	2200	2200	13200	22000	Reduce tree densities, restore historic structure and arrangement	77	State and Private Lands	Adjusted goal	Additional acres treated due to expected funding from NMSF
Subset of hazardous fuels treatments: Prescribed Fire (acres)		4000	4000	4000	4000	24000	40000	Reduce fuels post thinning activities; maintain natural range of variability across the landscape	100		Original goal	
Subset of hazardous fuels treatments: Other (acres)												
Wildfire Risk Mitigation Outcomes - Total acres treated to mitigate wildfire risk		2200	2200	2200	2200	13200	22000	Break up canopy to reduce crown fire potential	77	State and Private Lands	Adjusted goal	Additional acres treated due to expected funding from NMSF
Subset of Wildfire Risk Mitigation Outcomes - Acres within the WUI	WUI Designation based upon local assessment	2200	2200	2200	2200	13200	22000	Protect life, property and resources	100		Adjusted goal	No accomplishments set in original proposal
Invasive Species Management (acres)		40	40	40	40	240	400	Reduce known infestations and prevent new	100		Adjusted goal	Reduced to reflect local capacity
Native Pest Management (acres)		500	500	500	500	3000	5000	Reduce bark beetle risk and dwarf mistletoe				
Road Decommissioning (miles)		5	5	5	5	30	55	Improve wildlife habitat and watershed conditions	100		Adjusted goal	No accomplishments set in original proposal
Road Maintenance and Improvement (miles)		42	42	42	42	252	420	Sustain and improve access for multiple use	100		Adjusted goal	No accomplishments set in original proposal
Road Reconstruction (miles)												
Trail Reconstruction (miles)		6	6	6	6	36	60	Improve/enhance recreation opportunities	100		Adjusted goal	No accomplishments set in original proposal, new NEPA
Wildlife Habitat Restoration (acres)		1900	1900	1900	1900	11400	19000	Improve wildlife habitat	100		Original goal	
Soil and Watershed resources enhanced or maintained (acres)		1500	1500	1500	1500	9000	15000	Maintain/improve watershed conditions	100		Original goal	
Priority watersheds moved to improved condition class (number)	Will designate two priority watersheds and WRAPs developed in Puerco Project				1	1	2	Improve watershed condition	100		Adjusted goal	Completed Puerco project NEPA, will complete WRAPs
Stand Improvement (acres)		1900	1900	1900	1900	11400	19000	Improve forest health & resiliency, reduce fire hazard	100		Original goal	
Reforestation and revegetation (acres)		190	190	190	190	1140	1900	Restore native vegetation	100		Original goal	
Timber Harvest (acres)**	100% ground-based	2200	2200	2200	2200	13200	22000	Maintain/create jobs and contribute to local economy	77	State and Private Lands	Adjusted goal	Additional acres treated due to expected funding from NMSF
Rangeland Vegetation Improvement (acres)	Integrated Range Target	1900	1900	1900	1900	11400	19000	Maintain/improve range conditions	100		Adjusted goal	No accomplishments set in original proposal
Biomass (green tons – “BIO-NRG” Agency performance measure)		10000	10000	10000	10000	60000	100000	Reduce fuel loads, improve utilization	100		Adjusted goal	Reduced to reflect last 10-year average
*Assume funding requested for Year 1 will be allocated in Fiscal Year 2022												
**Note that timber volume produced from the treatment is estimated in a separate attachment - Attachment C.												

ATTACHMENT C: ZML Utilization of Forest Restoration Byproducts.

Fiscal Year	Estimate of acres awarded annually that will generate restoration byproducts	Total projected annual harvested volume (ccf) from NFS lands	Expected percentage commercially utilized* from NFS lands
2022	2200	10030	10030
2023	2200	10030	10030
2024	2200	10030	10030
2025	2200	10030	10030
2026	2200	10030	10030
2027	2200	10030	10030
2028	2200	10030	10030
2029	2200	10030	10030
2030	2200	10030	10030
2031 (max years under extension)			
TOTALS:	19800	90270	90270
	<i>Estimated % of TOTAL acres accomplished on NFS lands:</i>	77	
	<i>Estimated % of TOTAL acres accomplished on other landownerships within the CFLRP boundary:</i>	23	

Attachment D: List of Collaborative Memembers

Forest Service staff representative(s) working with collaborative: (Please provide list of key staff):

Collaborative Member/Partner Name	Organizational Affiliation (if applicable)	Was this person involved in proposal development?	Primary Issue Category	Second Issue Category	Third Issue Category	If "other," briefly describe
<i>Example</i>	<i>ABC Club</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Forest Products</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Drinking</i>
G Matthew Allen	Mt. Taylor Manufacturing	Yes	Forest Products	Environmental	Community Development	
Clay Benton	New Mexico Forestry Division	Yes	State	Forest Products	Environmental	
Douglas W. Decker	McKinley County New Mexico	Yes	County	Tourism	Community Development	
Patricia Dorsey	National Wild Turkey Federation	Yes	Wildlife	Forest Products	Other	Stewardship agreement
Robert M Findling	The Nature Conservancy - New Mexico	Yes	Wildlife	Environmental	Fire Ecology	
Todd Haines	New Mexico Forestry Division	Yes	State	Forest Products	Other	Funding and cross-boundary work
Jeremy Hanlon	Forest Fitness, LLC	Yes	Forest Products	Fire Management	Community Development	
Eytan Krasilovsky	Forest Stewards Guild	Yes	Fire Ecology	Youth	Other	Capacity building, cross-jurisdictional, collaboration
Matt Piccarello	Forest Stewards Guild	Yes	Youth	Community Development	Other	Collaboration, monitoring
Leonora Pepper	Forest Stewards Guild	Yes	Watershed	Community Development	Other	Monitoring, collaboration
Shawn Martin	Cibola National Forest	Yes	Federal	Environmental	Forest Products	
John Williams	Cibola National Forest	Yes	Federal	Forest Products		

Edward Baca	Mt. Taylor Ranger District - Cibola National Forest	Yes	Federal	Fire Management	Fire Ecology	
Yolynda Begay	Mt. Taylor Ranger District - Cibola National Forest	Yes	Federal	Community Development	Other	Line officer, collaboration
Livia Crowley	Cibola National Forest	Yes	Federal	Watershed		
Ian Fox	Southwester Region - USDA Forest Service	Yes	Federal	Forest Products	Community Development	
Consuelo Lemaire	Mt. Taylor Ranger District - Cibola National Forest	Yes	Federal	Wildlife		
Jim McGrath	Native Plant Society of New Mexico	Yes	Environmental	Research	Fire Ecology	
Mark Meyers	New Mexico State Land Office	Yes	State	Fire Ecology	Other	Funding and cross-boundary work
Susan Ostlie	Rio Grande Valley Broadband of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness (and landowner in Zuni Mountains)	Yes	Wilderness	Environmental	Fire Ecology	
Shirley Piqosa	Pueblo of Acoma, Forestry Program	Yes	Tribal	Community Development	Environmental	
R Kent Reid	NM Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute	Yes	College/University	Forest Products	Other	Silviculture, monitoring
Gloria M. Skeet	Baahaali Chapter of the Navajo Nation	Yes	Tribal	Community Development	Other	Protection of sacred lands
Sue Small	Native Plant Society of New Mexico	Yes	Environmental	Fire Ecology	Other	Monitoring
Jordan Stone	Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions	Yes	Youth	Forest Products	Community Development	
Andrea Hazelton	Spring Stewardship Institute	No	College/University	Research	Watershed	
Anna Larson	Cibola County	No	County	Community Development	Tourism	
Raymond Lucero	Laguna Pueblo	No	Tribal	Community Development	Environmental	
Nelson Luna	Zuni Pueblo	No	Tribal	Watershed	Wildlife	
Jacob Davidson	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish	Yes	State	Wildlife	Other	Funding

Donald Auer	New Mexico Department of Game and Fish	No	State	Wildlife	Other	Funding
Vandee Silva	Bluewater Acres Fire Department	No	Fire Management	County	Other	Collaborative Prescribed Fire
Mike Henio	Ramah Navajo Chapter - Forestry Department	No	Tribal	Forest Products	Community Development	
Betsy Fulreader	Talking Talons Youth Leadership	No	Youth	Research	Other	Education
Rebecca Frus	University of New Mexico	No	Environmental	College/University	Research	
Joe Trudeau	Center for Biological Diversity	No	Environmental	Fire Management	Other	Large tree retention, insects.
Todd Shulke	Center for Biological Diversity	No	Environmental	Fire Management	Other	Large tree retention, insects.
Chad Gaines	Cibola Trails Alliance	No	Recreation (non-motorized)	Federal	Tourism	
Les Gaines	Zuni Mountain/Mt. Taylor Collaborative	No	Federal	Community Development	Tourism	
Larry Winn	McKinley / Lava SWCD	No	State	Environmental	Community Development	
Kevin Parrish	El Malpais National Monument	No	Federal	Fire Management		
Todd Richards	Rio Puerco Field Office, BLM	No	Federal	Fire Management		
Evan Williams	Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments	No	Community Development	Other	Tourism	Economic development, CWPP
Robert Kuipers	Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments	No	Community Development	Fire Management	Tourism	
Mary Jo Wallen	Timberlake Ranch Landowners Association	No	Fire Management	Community Development		
Rich Austin	McKinley County Fire Department	No	County	Fire Management	Other	Collaborative Prescribed Fire
Dustin Middleton	Cibola County Fire Department	No	County	Fire Management	Other	Collaborative Prescribed Fire

Jeremy Bailey	The Nature Conservancy - Fire Learning Network	No	Fire Management	Fire Ecology	Other	Cross boundary
Patricia Dominguez	Senator Heinrich's Office	No	Federal	Community Development	Other	Legislative representative
Lawrence Crane	New Mexico Forestry Division	No	State	Forest Products	Other	Cross boundary
Brant Hayenga	Resident	No	Environmental	Other		Large tree retention, insects.
Matthew Silva	Silva Ranch	No	Watershed	Forest Products	Fire Ecology	
Lara Jaramillo	City of Grants	No	Community Development	Forest Products	Other	Collaboration

Letter of Commitment Guidance and Considerations



March 31, 2021

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program – Advisory Committee

USDA Forest Service

1400 Independence Ave., SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

RE: Letter of Commitment from the Zuni Mountains Collaborative for the 2021 Extension Application of the Zuni Mountains CFLRP

To whom it may concern:

The undersigned represent active members of the Zuni Mountains Collaborative who are committed to the 2021 extension application put forward by the Cibola National Forest. This group was formed over 15 years ago and has remained deeply involved in the project including the development of the recent extension application. It is critical to the forests, watersheds, communities, and economy of the Zuni Mountains landscape that you select the Zuni Mountains project for extension funding.

The partners of the Collaborative have met and continue to meet regularly to contribute to project implementation, monitoring, prioritization, and evaluation. The collaboration crosses jurisdictional boundaries within the landscape and addresses diverse issues such as native plants, water quality monitoring, youth education, workforce development, adaptive management, and refining zones of agreement. We maintain a strong focus on restoration of ponderosa pine ecosystems through thinning and reintroduction of ecologically appropriate fire and are proud these efforts generate a variety of wood products and jobs in the landscape.

The Collaborative worked diligently in the past to develop our Old and Large Tree Retention Strategy and are proud that it was adopted by the Cibola National Forest for the project. Our array of monitoring plots show that old and large trees have been retained throughout the first 10 years of CFLR implementation.

The strength of the partnerships was particularly important during 2019 and 2020 when the Mexican Spotted Owl injunction halted all thinning and burning on national forests. The New Mexico Forestry Division invested heavily through their Forest and Watershed Restoration Act program to move harvesting onto adjacent private lands, working closely with Forest Fitness and Mt. Taylor Manufacturing, to keep the capacity, infrastructure, and jobs sustained.

Members of the Collaborative work collectively but each have their own focus and areas of interest within the broader scope of the landscape. For example, Forest Fitness, Mt. Taylor Manufacturing, and National Wild Turkey Federation focus on tree thinning, hauling, and wood processing and utilization; the Baahaali Chapter focuses on education and outreach, cross boundary treatments, and economic development with a passionate interest in a healthy landscape which the Navajo hold sacred; and

Attachment E – Letter of Commitment from Collaborative Members/Partners

Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions engages in education and outreach, fuelwood utilization, and cross boundary treatments.

The Native Plants Society of New Mexico and the Great Old Broads for Wilderness are invested in collaboration and beneficial ecological outcomes. The Nature Conservancy and the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute collaborate on desired conditions, monitoring, and habitat protection. The New Mexico State Land Office and Forestry Division fund and support critical work on public lands, private, and state trust lands. McKinley County collaborates to support economic investment, healthy forests, and the recreation economy. The Pueblo of Acoma collaborates to share and learn across boundaries and build networks for restoration within the landscape. The Cibola National Forest is heavily invested in collaboration across partners and topical issues with a particular focus on ecological outcomes, positive communication, transparency, and co-learning. The Forest Stewards Guild is focused on successful monitoring for adaptive management and fostering a collaborative space for shared learning, communications, and using the power of the collaborative to realize success and address challenges.

Eytan Krasilovsky of the Forest Stewards Guild is able to serve as a representative and point of contact for the signatories of this letter. Eytan can be reached at eytan@forestguild.org and 505-983-8992 ext 707.

The signatories would like to emphasize that the Zuni Mountains Collaborative has made excellent progress towards our 2012 restoration goals, accomplishing those goals through collaboration, leveraging, and adaptive management. The additional time and funding needed will be critical to both protecting the landscape and providing continued support to the local economy.

Sincerely,

G Matthew Allen, Owner, Mt. Taylor Manufacturing

Clay Benton, Timber Management Officer, New Mexico Forestry Division

Douglas W. Decker, County Attorney, McKinley County New Mexico

Patricia Dorsey, Director of Conservation Operations – West, National Wild Turkey Federation

Robert M Findling, Director of Land Protection and Stewardship, The Nature Conservancy - New Mexico

Todd Haines, District Forester, New Mexico Forestry Division

Jeremy Hanlon, Owner/Principal, Forest Fitness, LLC

Eytan Krasilovsky, Deputy Director, The Forest Stewards Guild

Shawn Martin, Silviculturist, Cibola National Forest

Jim McGrath, Botanist, Native Plant Society of New Mexico

Mark Meyers, Forester, New Mexico State Land Office

Attachment E – Letter of Commitment from Collaborative Members/Partners

Susan Ostlie, Rio Grande Valley Broadband of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness (and landowner in Zuni Mountains)

Shirley Piqosa, Tribal Forester, Pueblo of Acoma Forestry Program

R Kent Reid, Director, NM Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute

Gloria M. Skeet, Chapter Manager, Baahaali Chapter of the Navajo Nation

Susan Small, Vice President, Native Plan Society of New Mexico

Jordan Stone, Executive Director, Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions

Cibola County Commission

Daniel J. Torrez, Chairman
Martha Garcia, 1st Vice-Chair
Christine Lowery, 2nd Vice-Chair
Ralph Lucero, Commissioner
Robert Windhorst, Commissioner

Cibola County
700 E. Roosevelt Ave., Suite 50

Grants, New Mexico 87020
Phone (505) 287-9431 – Fax (505) 285-5434



Kate Fletcher
County Manager

4/28/2021

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program
Advisory Committee USDA Forest Services
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 252505-003

Re: Letter of Support for the 2021 Extension Application of the Zuni Mountain CFLRP

To Whom It May Concern:

Cibola County supports the 2021 extension application of the Zuni Mountain CFLRP. This project is critical to Cibola County Residents because of the large amount of National Forest Lands within our County. The Mt. Taylor Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest encompasses 520,000 acres of land between Cibola and McKinley Counties. Restoration of this forest is critical to reduce the fire hazard and allow for economic development within the counties.

While Cibola County has not been an active participant in the Zuni Mountain Collaborative, we have received the benefits of the program. Cibola County is home to multiple companies who operate and provide jobs in our community because of the CFLRP. The extension of the CLFRP is critical to allow those jobs to continue in our county to help prevent additional unemployment claims. Cibola County's current unemployment rate as of March 2021 is 10.3% with over 1,000 unemployed. Retaining existing jobs is critical to Cibola County.

In addition to retaining jobs for our community, the CFLRP is critical for economic growth of the community through outdoor recreation. The Zuni Mountains and areas located within the CLFRP boundary have been designated and approved for a bi-county non-motorized trail that will connect Cibola and McKinley County through the Zuni Mountain Trails Project. The CFLRP benefits this trail system by enhancing views and reducing devastating fire risks for both residents and visitors to the area.

Thank you for your consideration in extending the Zuni Mountain CFLRP.

Kate Fletcher
Cibola County Manager

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

DELEGATION OFFICE
STATE OF NEW MEXICO
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

May 24, 2021

Chief Vicki Christiansen
US Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250-1111

Dear Chief Christiansen:

The New Mexico Congressional Delegation writes in support of the application submitted by the Zuni Mountains Collaborative for an extension of the Zuni Mountains Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project as funded by the United States Forest Service. This extension will allow the Zuni Mountains Collaborative to continue vital landscape restoration and thinning activities within the Cibola National Forest.

The Zuni Mountains Collaborative (Collaborative) is comprised of a diverse collection of stakeholders such as the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Forest Stewards Guild, and the Wood Industries Network that collectively work to restore landscapes within the Cibola National Forest and promote the sustainable use of forest resources by adjacent communities. In 2012, the Collaborative received CFLRP funding to implement a large-scale landscape restoration project across the Zuni Mountains area of the National Forest.

The Collaborative has effectively utilized its CFLRP funds to restore thousands of acres of ponderosa pine forest in this area through thinning activities and prescribed fires. The Collaborative reports that these activities have resulted in improved ecological health, the creation of hundreds of forest-related jobs, and reduced wildfire risk for communities adjacent to the Zuni Mountains in Cibola and McKinley counties.

If awarded, the Collaborative will utilize additional CFLRP funding to continue such landscape restoration programming in the western portion of the Zuni Mountains. We believe that the extension of the Collaborative's CFLRP project will further enhance the sustainability of this natural landscape and we commend the Zuni Mountains Collaborative for its innovative approach to public lands stewardship in western New Mexico.

The New Mexico Congressional Delegation proudly supports the requested extension of the Zuni Mountains Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project and we request that you give their application thorough consideration within your review guidelines.

Sincerely,

/s/ Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/ Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator

/s/ Teresa Leger Fernandez
United States Representative

ATTACHMENT F: ZML Project funding.

<u>Fiscal Year 1</u>	<u>Discretionary/Program Funding Planned</u>	<u>Salary and Expense Funding Planned*</u>
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$420,000	10,500
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$165,000	
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$15,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$400,000	
<i>Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands</i>	\$1,000,000	\$10,500
CFLRP Funding Request	\$1,000,000	
<i>Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands</i>	\$1,000,000	N/A (CFLN for discretionary/program expenses only)
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$500,000	24,500
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands		
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$10,000	
<i>Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands</i>	\$510,000	\$24,500
<u>Fiscal Year 2</u>	<u>Discretionary/Program Funding Planned</u>	<u>Salary and Expense Funding Planned</u>
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$420,000	10,500
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$165,000	
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$15,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$400,000	
<i>Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands</i>	\$1,000,000	\$10,500
CFLRP Funding Request	\$1,000,000	

2012 CFLRP PROJECT EXTENSION PROPOSAL – ZUNI MOUNTAINS

Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	N/A (CFLN for discretionary/program expenses only)
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$500,000	24,500
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands		
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$10,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$510,000	\$24,500
<u>Fiscal Year 3</u>	<u>Discretionary/Program Funding Planned</u>	<u>Salary and Expense Funding Planned</u>
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$420,000	10,500
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$165,000	
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$15,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$400,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	\$10,500
CFLRP Funding Request	\$1,000,000	
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	N/A (CFLN for discretionary/program expenses only)
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$500,000	24,500
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands		
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$10,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$510,000	\$24,500
<u>Fiscal Year 4</u>	<u>Discretionary/Program Funding Planned</u>	<u>Salary and Expense Funding Planned</u>
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$420,000	10,500
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$65,000	

2012 CFLRP PROJECT EXTENSION PROPOSAL – ZUNI MOUNTAINS

Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$15,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$400,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	\$10,500
CFLRP Funding Request	\$1,000,000	
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	N/A (CFLN for discretionary/program expenses only)
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$500,000	24,500
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands		
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$10,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$510,000	\$24,500
<u>Fiscal Year 5</u>	<u>Discretionary/Program Funding Planned</u>	<u>Salary and Expense Funding Planned</u>
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$420,000	10,500
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$165,000	
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$15,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$400,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	\$10,500
CFLRP Funding Request	\$1,000,000	
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	N/A (CFLN for discretionary/program expenses only)
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$500,000	24,500
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands		
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$10,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$510,000	\$24,500

2012 CFLRP PROJECT EXTENSION PROPOSAL – ZUNI MOUNTAINS

<u>Fiscal Year 6</u>	<u>Discretionary/Program Funding Planned</u>	<u>Salary and Expense Funding Planned</u>
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$420,000	10,500
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$65,000	
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$15,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$400,000	
<i>Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands</i>	\$1,000,000	\$10,500
CFLRP Funding Request	\$1,000,000	
<i>Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands</i>	\$1,000,000	N/A (CFLN for discretionary/program expenses only)
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$500,000	24,500
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands		
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$10,000	
<i>Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands</i>	\$510,000	\$24,500
<u>Fiscal Year 7</u>	<u>Discretionary/Program Funding Planned</u>	<u>Salary and Expense Funding Planned</u>
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$420,000	10,500
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$165,000	
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$15,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$400,000	
<i>Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands</i>	\$1,000,000	\$10,500
CFLRP Funding Request	\$1,000,000	
<i>Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands</i>	\$1,000,000	N/A (CFLN for discretionary/program expenses only)

2012 CFLRP PROJECT EXTENSION PROPOSAL – ZUNI MOUNTAINS

Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$500,000	24,500
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands		
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$10,000	
<i>Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands</i>	\$510,000	\$24,500
<u>Fiscal Year 8</u>	<u>Discretionary/Program Funding Planned</u>	<u>Salary and Expense Funding Planned</u>
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$420,000	10,500
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$165,000	
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$15,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$400,000	
<i>Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands</i>	\$1,000,000	\$10,500
CFLRP Funding Request	\$1,000,000	
<i>Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands</i>	\$1,000,000	N/A (CFLN for discretionary/program expenses only)
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$500,000	24,500
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands		
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$10,000	
<i>Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands</i>	\$510,000	\$24,500
<u>Fiscal Year 9</u>	<u>Discretionary/Program Funding Planned</u>	<u>Salary and Expense Funding Planned</u>
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$420,000	10,500
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$165,000	
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$15,000	

2012 CFLRP PROJECT EXTENSION PROPOSAL – ZUNI MOUNTAINS

USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$400,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	\$10,500
CFLRP Funding Request	\$1,000,000	
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	N/A (CFLN for discretionary/program expenses only)
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$500,000	24,500
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands		
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$10,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$510,000	\$24,500
<u>Fiscal Year 10</u>	<u>Discretionary/Program Funding Planned</u>	<u>Salary and Expense Funding Planned</u>
Partner fund contributions on NFS lands	\$420,000	10,500
Partner in-kind contributions on NFS lands	\$165,000	
Goods for Services or Revenue from GNA to be applied within CFLRP landscape	\$15,000	
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on NFS lands	\$400,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	\$10,500
CFLRP Funding Request	\$1,000,000	
Total CFLRP funding for NFS lands	\$1,000,000	N/A (CFLN for discretionary/program expenses only)
Partner fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$500,000	24,500
Partner in-kind contributions on non-NFS lands		
USFS Appropriated, Perm, and Trust fund contributions on non-NFS lands	\$10,000	
Total non-CFLRP funding for non-NFS lands	\$510,000	\$24,500

<p><i>*NOTE: Under the Agency's budget modernization effort beginning in FY21, funding for Salary and Expenses (S&E) will be covered by the S&E accounts held at the Regions - including funding a CFLRP Project Coordinator, a key role for CFLRP implementation. CFLN can no longer cover Salary and Expense items.</i></p>	
<p>Please provide an estimate of any funding needed for NEPA and environmental compliance in support of the CFLRP Project. You may copy/paste the response to the Tier 1 template and/or elaborate with additional details as needed. <i>NOTE: CFLN can only be used for implementation and monitoring (not planning).</i></p>	<p>No funding needed for NEPA or environmental compliance in the ZML.</p>



File Code: 1930; 2400; 2500
Route To: 2600; 3400; 5100

Date: May 18, 2021

Subject: Letter of Commitment to Zuni Mountains Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) Project

To: CFLR Federal Advisory Committee

The leadership team of the Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands (Cibola) fully supports the Zuni Mountains Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project 2012 Extension Proposal for the CFLR. The success of the CFLR efforts, to date, indicates the intention and ability of the Cibola, the Zuni Mountain Collaborative, partners, industry, and the public to prioritize restoration efforts in the Zuni Mountains. The Cibola will continue these efforts to protect communities from wildfire, improve watershed conditions, improve wildlife habitat, and provide recreational opportunities in a resilient, fire-adapted setting.

The Zuni Mountains are the backyard, backdrop, playground, tourism draw, and workplace for both residents and visitors. This landscape has been culturally important to Native American pueblos and tribes for centuries and remains so today. Since the late 19th century, the landscape has been critical to surrounding communities and their economic well-being through timber, grazing, mining, and recreation.

Our partnership with the Zuni Mountain Collaborative (ZMC) has been stable, strong, and successful. Having ZMC as a partner allows us to communicate more effectively about the need and value of forest restoration and allows us to incorporate the public's interests in a meaningful way. A seasoned collaborative and with involved partners has allowed us to make great strides in the ecosystem restoration of fire-adapted landscapes that is so critical to the mission of our agency and partners. This has led to improved trust and social license with the utilization of prescribed fire as a tool for forest restoration. One outcome of this trust is the collaboratively developed Large and Old Tree Retention Strategy which provides a mutual framework for understanding what we are striving to achieve.

While we have made great strides in restoration throughout the original CFLR timeframe, the work is not yet complete. Funding of this proposal will allow efforts to continue in sharing stewardship of this truly remarkable landscape on the Cibola, and in the protection of our neighbors and partner's lands. We will continue to serve as an example of what is possible with collaboration in a complex social, economic, and environmental landscape.

**STEVEN
HATTENBACH**
STEVEN HATTENBACH
Forest Supervisor

Digitally signed by STEVEN
HATTENBACH
Date: 2021.05.18 13:26:24 -06'00'

