

Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition
April 16, 2025 Quarterly Meeting Notes

Disclaimer: This meeting notes, recorded by Maya Hilty, are not voted on by the Coalition; they are posted in the spirit of facilitating transparency and collaboration but may contain mistakes.

10:00 Welcome

In attendance: **Maya Hilty**, Forest Stewards Guild; **Champe Green**, Santa Fe-Pojoaque SWCD; **Teresa Seamster**, Sierra Club; **Carlos Saiz**, Forest Stewards Guild; **Sandy Hurlocker**; **Julie Hasty**, Santa Fe Watershed Association; **Jacob Key**, Santa Fe National Forest; **Porfirio Chavarria**, Santa Fe Fire Department; **Jonathan Frenzen**; **Eytan Krasilovsky**, Forest Stewards Guild; **George Ducker**, New Mexico Forestry Division; **Monica Naranjo**, Pueblo of Tesuque DENR; **Megan Rangel-Lynch**: Forest Stewards Guild FAC NM; **Ariel Patashnik**, Santa Fe Conservation Trust; **Steve Robinson**, Fireshed Ambassador; **Jesse Law**, Overlook Homeowners Association; **Alan Hook**, Santa Fe Water Division; **Katlyn Cummings**, Watch Duty; **Zakary Pressley**, Watch Duty; **Lawrence Crane**, New Mexico Forestry Division; **Crystal Medina**, NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute; **Brent Bonwell**, Santa Fe Fat Tire Society

10:05 Implementation Committee Updates

Jacob Key: Community science bird monitoring project is moving forward this spring with the Audubon Center and Forest Stewards Guild. Volunteers are resurveying points from pilot monitoring project in 2023.

Thinning around Tesuque units was just completed in about 700 acres of dry mixed conifer. That contract was originally \$2,000/acre and was modified up about \$700/acre because of steep topography. There have been some hiccups in state funding for mastication units by Glorieta – units 1-2 did not get done last fall, but will get done. The Pecos side is working on HPCC recovery. There are heritage surveys on the docket that need to get done, including in Lower Tesuque Basin.

The only pile burns done this past winter were around Black Canyon Campground, but only did 10 out of 50 acres before we ran out of snow.

We are still looking to burn North Aztec Springs this fall.

The city has been doing thinning work around water infrastructure.

Alan Hook: Porfirio Chavarria and the Guild helped thin around the city's infrastructure – it was a lot of work hauling out slash because we're not doing pile burning in the WUI. We hope to continue work around St. John's College. We also went with Will Joy at The Nature Conservancy to look at dense vegetation on TNC's property and will talk to Lawrence Crane at State Forestry to try to coordinate a potential prescription in the near future. We have funding to push this

forward and get it done. Particularly now, PNM's public safety power shutoffs have been making everyone nervous; we're making sure we will have water availability in case power is off for 24 hours.

Jacob Key: Treatments are seasonally restricted for Mexican Spotted Owls so we won't be doing cutting until the end of August/September. We expect to probably go into at least Stage 2 restrictions in SFNF before June, possibly Stage 3 restrictions would not be unforeseeable, so we probably won't be doing much this summer.

We need implementation plans to keep the public informed of the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project EA. I'm working on a newsletter to post to our webpage once in the spring and once in the fall. In the fall, if partners have any projects in planning or completion, we can include that. The big goal is to be transparent with the public about where we're going and what we're doing.

Eytan Krasilovsky: Kudos for the webpage updates, it's a good idea for partners to share their work. The Coalition MailChimp can direct people to the newsletter.

Are you set up for heritage surveys or need support?

Jacob Key: Obligations and contracting is shut down until further notice so we cannot contract it out. We have plenty of archies to be able to do it, it's more of a matter of directing their focus across the Forest. Districts are moving toward helping each other. It will get done. If contracting does open up, there's money for it. The focus of this administration is cutting timber.

Eytan Krasilovsky: We have a lot of retired archaeologists in Santa Fe, so we might be able to rally more bodies if necessary.

An update from us: Our private lands pile burn in Aztec Springs on TNC land didn't happen this year because there was no snow.

Sandy Hurlocker: If the heritage surveys don't happen this year, what does that do to the plan?

Jacob Key: In the Tesuque Basin, way down low in the PJ, we have not reconned units, so there's still work to do on the implementation side. The upper half of Tesuque basin still has the heritage survey. The heritage surveys we need are for what we'd be trying to implement in 2-3 years.

Sandy Hurlocker: If timber is the focus, there's no timber here. I don't think this would be prioritized.

Jacob Key: We have units identified for the timber increase that's desired. We're set for a few years—I think it's doable.

Sandy Hurlocker: Ask for help if you need it.

Jacob Key: I'll have to ask if they are willing to entertain that.

Sandy Hurlocker: If you want help with the newsletter, the Communications Committee would be glad to help.

10:15 Communications Committee Updates (Sandy Hurlocker & Jonathan Frenzen)

Sandy Hurlocker: We've been talking about how we can use the fire camera to communicate with the public.

We also talked about pushing stories to the New Mexican in January and need to take the initiative to submit stories and op-eds. Jonathan and I can help partners do so.

Eytan Krasilovsky: This is a perfect time to pull together an op-ed.

Sandy Hurlocker: We can start an op-ed over email.

Ariel Patashnik: And then the Steering Committee could look at it.

An article about the bird monitoring project might make sense.

Porfirio Chavarria: We could also promote Wildfire Prep Day May 3.

Jonathan Frenzen: We scraped together funds for a fire camera which will be up and operating this spring as snow melts off Tesuque Peak. We learned that Alert West, the software provider for the camera, has a partnership with an app called WatchDuty. Alert West pushes their camera feeds to Watch Duty. We need to tell the public it's there and how to access it. The best site to access will likely be Watch Duty.

I read about the Watch Duty app after the LA fires. This app had Sam Berry's press release for a 14-acre pile burn that was planned and cancelled. I was impressed. The only way I'd seen press releases before was posted on a mailbox. So this was a great improvement.

10:30 WatchDuty Presentation (Katlyn Cummings)

Katlyn Cummings explained how WatchDuty works. It is a fast-growing free emergency alerting service app, which includes notifications for prescribed fires. This presentation was recorded.

Ask Maya Hilty for a copy of the recording.

10:50 WatchDuty Discussion

Ariel Patashnik: What is the connection between Alert West and WatchDuty?

Katlyn: You can see Alert West camera feeds in the app, which will show on the map.

Jonathan Frenzen: How many reporters/contributors are there in NM and AZ?

Katlyn/Zakery Pressley: We have at least 5 reporters in AZ and 1 or 2 in NM. All staff reporters have access to the regional channel, but we do encourage locals to get involved.

Jonathan Frenzen: If we support this app, we should make sure press releases get into the app and also spread the word about looking for volunteers and motivating them to participate.

George Ducker: This is a great tool.

Champe Green: Can this be a resource for flood risk?

Katlyn: Not at this time but we are working on developing flood notifications.

Jacob Key: Have you gotten pushback in politically sensitive areas because you're sharing information ahead of the Forest Service? That can be a challenge for the Forest. Because we could be getting questions we don't have the answer to.

Katlyn: If we get smoke, we're not going to post information until we have info from an official source.

Jacob Key: We just want to make sure the Forest Service and Watch Duty are working together. There may need to be grace on collaborating on information before publishing. Our PIO is interested in doing that.

Sandy Hurlocker: This will improve communication.

Jacob Key: I think the prescribed fire piece is really helpful, too.

Zakery: We are not guessing at things. We're here to un-silo information.

Eytan: Alert West will also have connections to local suppression agencies once the camera is up.

Jacob Key: Our PIO just needs to alleviate the flood of calls around fire.

Alan Hook: We find this exciting. We recently got contact from Pano AI. Are you different?

Katlyn: Pano AI is similar to Alert West regarding AI detection of smoke using cameras. Pano AI's information sharing is different from Alert West.

Ariel: We can put out to our networks the needs for contributors. What's the status of funding for the fire camera?

Jonathan Frenzen: Guild is our fiscal sponsor. It's funded by Santa Fe Community Foundation but we need buy in from government agencies. Hopefully as this grows Matt Hurteau at UNM will take the ball from the Guild to expand the system. There's a similar effort going on in AZ. We're the last state in the mountain West getting this going. Forest Service is giving permission for camera placement but Washington office is not contributing funding. But the Forest Service has been very supportive.

Jacob Key: We know this is the new technology and we need to get on board and collaborate. It's also good because the lookout tower on the east side of Tesuque burned, and this can give a good view instead.

Champe: I thought Santa Fe-Pojoaque Soil and Water Conservation District might be able to contribute money and asked our board, which has always been interested in wildfire mitigation. For us, it was a no brainer to give \$5,000. I'd like to explore other funding opportunities through the NM Department of Agriculture for another camera or maintenance of the first one.

Teresa Seamster: We have a mycorrhiza study starting in late summer and are working with UNM. Have you encountered any security risk to the camera?

Jacob Key: There will always be some security risks.

Jonathan Frenzen: Right now we're using existing towers. If we put in a new tower, it would be costly (maybe \$75K) to ensure its security.

11:15 Partner Updates

Jesse Law, Overlook HOA: In Overlook HOA, we have 2 peaks we could put cameras on. We actively want to do things but are underfunded. The HOA has gone to county GIS to ask for map of all HOAs in the county, so one contact could spread information out to all membership.

Also, I hiked Aztec Springs with TNC. The Thinning isn't contoured. Flash flooding is blowing 15-foot cutouts. It's great that it was thinned, but piles weren't horizontal to the slope. That would slow erosion.

Also Overlook HOA is happy to be used as a demo site.

Eytan Krasilovsky: We're hoping to complete the Aztec Springs but non TNC land next winter. We're excited about the Aztec North broadcast burn.

AHAL received funding through a key stone agreement. So hopefully we can lend a hand for the fall prescribed burn season.

Our summer youth crews are also almost fully hired.

George Ducker: Our Forest Health Report from 2024 was just released online. In 2024, we found double the mortality on conifer surveyed from 2023, and also increases in defoliation and damage.

Fire conditions in the state are grim. Many counties are implementing burn bans until further notice. I'm not sure if counties will move into restrictions. That information accessible on the State Forestry webpage. National Forests are in Stage 1 in a few places.

Two pieces of legislation did pass last session: 1) SB33 the Wildfire Prepared Program, will put grant money into communities for home retrofits and establish certification standards for retrofits. We will look for 80% community buy-in for retrofits. We were not given any money for this program so we will fine-tune our approach with our Fire Planning Task Force to hopefully set up standards and the roll-out and workforce capacity, so we can hit the ground running in 2026 when we hopefully receive the money. 2) HB53 will create an in-state lumber grading program that will allow distributors to use wood that has previously been relegated to firewood/fuelwood. 3) Also, HB175 about WUI buffers passed.

Champe Green: The Santa Fe-Pojoaque SWCD is the fiscal agent for the Eldorado CWPP. The final draft will probably be read next month.

We're still trying to get our non-federal lands money spent. It's a slog because we're fighting bark beetle, drought, and a narrow time frame for doing work on small private acreages where people are more sensitive to bug kill

Teresa Seamster: We have piles of firewood that we don't want.

I'm really glad to see SB33 passed.

Our first soil sampling project was citizen science and now we have university backing to continue.

I've talked with Glorieta Camps about biochar. We're willing to fund this. It would be about buying kilns and educating the community. There's a lot of interest from Glorieta, it's just a matter of pulling it together with the right people. We'd want community buy-in. There's actually a company in Santa Fe that buys the biochar.

Monica. The Pueblo of Tesuque is awaiting awards from BIA – RTRL and HFR grants. We received National Forest Foundation grant for fuels capacity. We have 3 department members

red-carded and are trying to develop a new crew now; we have 3 staff in that and they're in the process of getting red-carded through BIA.

Megan Rangel-Lynch: We have microgrants available to FAC NM members/leaders until May 2 for event support or implementation. We're trying to start up in-person exchanges again, such as a pile burn workshop, so let me know if you're interested. We're also putting on a home assessment workshop at this year's WUFS.

Ariel Patashnik: Since the Apache Canyon pile burn was postponed, we did lop and scatter of some piles and removed others. We have some piles remaining. Biochar could be a possibility. We're getting a forest management plan done for the property.

Carlos Saiz: AHAL is looking for burns to help out with. The Guild also put in a New Mexico Counties grant for a chipper for our ambassador program.

Julie Hasty: Our field trips into the upper watershed have started for the spring; we're still working around construction at Nichols. Our climate masters hike is on May 10. We'll do summer hikes unless the forest is closed. We also have a trip up to McClure Reservoir on July 24th for partners to see how a field trip might work.

Porfirio Chavarria: I've been busy with home assessments and am also looking into writing a WUI code for the city.

Jonathan Frenzen: We're meeting with the city about integrating cameras with the city and talking about future camera locations.

Lawrence Crane and Crystal Medina: *no updates due to Zoom audio breakdown*

12:15 Brainstorm/Planning for Fireshed Coalition Field Trip

Jacob Key: We should tour the work in Tesuque Basin. We can carpool from parked cars at the Chamisa Trailhead and hike down to the Chamisa Trailhead.

Ariel: Should we make this a public field trip or not?

Jacob: We should invite the public. I think getting the public out and seeing it will help people understand the why behind it. We could split into two groups if necessary.

Ariel: We could plan for a little later than July 16 to hopefully be out of fire restrictions.

Julie Hasty: Don't do July 24!

Champe: We can invite some regular opponents of forest treatments. For example, Sarah Hyden had an article in the Green Fire Times very critical of the SFMLRP. I think there's value in getting people who disagree out in the field.

Sandy Hurlocker: We can invite people, but it may not change their minds.

Ariel: The steering committee should meet about the logistics.

Maya: Have there been collaborative projects with the Pueblo of Tesuque in the Tesuque basin?

Jacob/Sandy: We could go up Pacheco Canyon or by Tesuque Village. Ryan or Joseph could be speakers about the Vigil property. Ellis Margolis should be a speaker, too.

12:30 Adjourn