

**New Mexico Forest Action Plan Review Team Meeting  
Minutes**

July 13, 2018  
Albuquerque Open Space Visitor Center  
1:30 to 3:30 pm

Background

In 2010, under direction from the federal government, New Mexico issued its Forest Action Plan (FAP). A ten-year update of the plan is required. This NM FAP Review Team was formed to kick off the process of updating the Forest Action Plan, and is meeting for the first time.

Present at Meeting

Kent Reid (NM Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute) facilitated the meeting. He opened the meeting with introductions.

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Jacobo Baca      | NM Land Grant Council                       |
| Alan Barton      | NM Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute |
| Charles Biery    | NM State Forestry Division                  |
| Anne Bradley     | The Nature Conservancy                      |
| Andrew Frederick | NM State Forestry Division                  |
| Martha Graham    | NM Rural Water Association                  |
| Gizelle Hurtado  | NM Dept. of Agriculture                     |
| Kim Kostelnik    | NM Forest Industry Association              |
| Mark Meyers      | NM State Land Office                        |
| Matt Piccarello  | Forest Stewards Guild                       |
| Kent Reid        | NM Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute |
| Susan Rich       | NM State Forestry Division                  |
| Mary Stuever     | NM State Forestry Division                  |
| John Waconda     | US Forest Service                           |
| Jim Wanstall     | NM Dept. of Agriculture                     |

Review of 2010 FAP Process

Anne Bradley described the process used to develop the original 2010 Statewide Natural Resources Assessment & Strategy and Action Plan (aka NM Forest Action Plan or FAP). Anne led the team from TNC which was contracted by State Forestry to develop the plan and data models and, with help from Forest Stewards Guild and Trust for Public Lands, guide the collaborative process. **Content** of the FAP, originally called for in the 2008 Farm Bill, was **in part directed by requirements set by the federal government**. New Mexico elected to look at **all lands and all resources** and to do the **assessment on a watershed basis** in keeping with the intent of the State Forest and Watershed Health Plan.

## Review of 2015 Interim FAP Update

Susan Rich spoke about the interim update of parts of the FAP completed by State Forestry in 2015 as required by the US Forest Service. The 2015 update included a **FAP Review report**, a new **National Priorities section** describing actions contributing to the three national (and four state priorities), a revised table laying the **Forestry Division's themes/goals, objectives and strategies**, and an **evaluation of the spatial layers** that were used to develop the 8 core models in the original plan. Since 2015, the Division adopted the **NM Rare Plant Conservation Strategy** as an appendix to the FAP, and drafted **priority landscape maps** using stakeholder input from the NM Forest and Watershed Management Coordinating Group.

For this current effort, the State Forester has asked that this current effort produce:

- An outline of what in the FAP **needs updating**
- **GIS models** (and components) needed to put the 2020 update together
- Input on what would be the **most useful format**

## Format

Discussion about format asked how the FAP is currently being used and determined that users prefer having both **hard copies** and an **interactive website** with links to the data models and underlying layers. The links would enable users to access **continuous updates of spatial data and metadata**. They also asked for a **connection** to other key databases, such as the **Statewide Water Plan** and the **NM Opportunities Map** as a way to look at where we stand – what's been treated, what's burned, and what's planned since the 2010 FAP.

In 2010, about 250 copies of the FAP were printed. A comparable number should be printed this time.

The **Idaho FAP** was cited as one example of state plan that's simple, has clear priority areas and is easy to follow because it **ties actions directly to priority areas**.

## Core Data Models

Kent Reid led a review of the **8 core data models**. Attendees who had participated in developing the original FAP noted that a **Technical Advisory Team** of critical stakeholders and subject matter experts was called together for each of the 8 core data models to advise on where spatial data could be gotten, what's important to include, and how to combine data layers. TNC's GIS analyst worked with the teams via web/phone meetings in live time.

Kent asked whether we need to re-do that process or consult with subject matter experts regarding which data are available and substitute in best and most current data set. The consensus was to use a hybrid process:

- If the group determines the existing model is still valuable and the underlying data are still valid, keep those.
- Call together stakeholders and experts to review the underlying data layers, check assumptions/justifications, and determine if there are better or more up-to-date data available.

State Forestry's GIS Specialist Charles Biery is currently in the process of going through the 2015 review of all component data layers.

### Data Gaps in Current Models

What gaps and opportunities exist in the current data models, that should be updated for the 2020 FAP Update?

### **Model 1: Fish & Wildlife**

The Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies has produced a **Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT)** which serves as a useful model for the NM FAP.

We need to add new data layers or update the data layers from 2010, using the best and most current data.

Data Gaps in the Fish & Wildlife model include:

- Soils – data are better but are not complete – this is still a high priority
- Data sharing – this is still done species-by-species – still a high priority
- Habitat assessment links for NM – unknown
- Bats / Birds Flyway – unknown
- Loss of Habitat – unknown
  - The USFS has its Imperiled Watersheds Database that may help in identifying habitat loss
- Natural Vegetation Classification
- Trigger Points – flag conditions to avoid
  - Need to look at quantitative and qualitative impact of transition from conifer forests to early seral conditions following a fire (Mary S.)
- Prairie Chicken habitat is a low priority

Potential Technical Team members:

We need to identify technical experts who can assess new and existing data sources

Bottom Line: Retain this model

## **Model 2: Development Potential**

WUI areas have expanded, and the **definition of WUI has expanded** since 2010.

E911 data may be a source.

Data Gaps in the Development Potential model include:

- 2000 Housing layer
- 2030 Housing Layer

Potential Technical Team members:

We need to identify technical experts who can assess new and existing data sources

Bottom Line: Retain this model but investigate the purpose of this model and how it has been used

## **Model 3: Economic Development Potential**

**Site specific feasibility studies** conducted in the past 10 years could improve analysis in some areas.

Data Gaps in the Economic Potential model include:

- Carbon Capture / Storage – may be available via FIA
- Surface & Groundwater value – check new State Water Plan
- Recreation value (active vs. passive by spatially discrete units)
  - Vistas / Scenic value in parks, tourism – check with State Parks Division and State Tourism Department
  - Ski area value (USFS Visitor Use data) – check with State Tourism Department
- SSURGO / STATSGO – soils and range

Potential Technical Team members:

- County Economic Directors
- NM Association of Counties

Bottom Line: Retain this model

## **Model 4: Forest Health**

The **definition of forest health has changed** in the past 10 years – we need to update the definition to reflect current usage. In the past, forest health was associated with insects and disease; today, the definition is broader and incorporates watershed health.

NMSFD – we should have a layer for Insects and Disease and a layer for Watershed Health.

For an insects & disease layer, the challenge is using annual insects & disease data for a 10-year plan. We should be looking at **changes and trends in forest health**.

Data Gaps in the Forest Health model include:

- Stand exams and Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) – huge improvement in these data
- Invasive species at the statewide level – high priority  
Need statewide mapping
- Aspen & high altitude forests  
Baseline has been collected  
FIA data
- Gallery forests & low altitude forests  
Need statewide data

Potential data sources: NMNH, FWRI, or LIDAR may be used to collect these data

Potential Technical Team members:

We need to identify technical experts who can assess new and existing data sources

Bottom Line: Retain this layer as Insect and Disease layer, and consider adding a Watershed Health layer

## **Model 5: Forest Fragmentation and Green Infrastructure**

There was some discussion as to the **usefulness of this layer**. This isn't used much in western states. It has an application in P.R. projects. How would it help NMSFD?

One consideration is the effects of roads on fragmentation and green infrastructure.

We should consider the layers that went into the Green Infrastructure model and determine whether we want to incorporate any into the fragmentation layer. Perhaps use Green Infrastructure data for something else.

Potential Technical Team members:

If this layer is retained, we need to identify technical experts who can assess new and existing data sources

Bottom Line: Consider dropping this layer

### **Model 6: Water Quality & Supply**

This map **needs updating more than any of the others**. All of the layers should be updated.

Data Gaps in the Water Quality and Supply model include:

- NMED has updated water supply data layer; it is more accessible than in 2010
- Statewide Water Plan
- Check with Connie Maxwell, GIS analyst at the Water Resources Research Institute (WRRI) at NMSU
- Bureau of Geology is monitoring private and public water well levels and starting water quality data; Lots of information available
- Soil & Water Conservation Districts should be involved
- Data from the Office of the State Engineer was lacking, but more should be available now
- Applying this to forestry, having aquifer recharge data and debris flow potential data would be helpful

Potential Technical Team members:

NMED, Connie Maxwell, NM Tech, SWCDs, OSE

Bottom Line: Retain this layer; this model is widely used.

### **Model 7: Wildfire Risk**

One weakness is the definition of WUI areas – there is **no standard statewide definition of WUI**; instead, each county uses its own definition, based on its CWPP. There now are other alternate data sources [e.g. Google Earth], and good GIS data which is helpful in identifying and defining WUI areas and doing analyses

Data Gaps in the Wildfire Risk model include:

- Perhaps CWPP data should be used in a separate layer  
CWPP data recognizes self-identified risks
- Statewide data to assess wildfire conditions is still needed  
DOI, USFS, NPS have the most recent data
- Ecological health

- Vegetation manipulation actions
  - NMFWRI Opportunity Map is a potential source
- A comprehensive Values at Risk layer would be helpful
  - Tessa Nicolet has data for the USFS
  - Still needs to be done for NMSFD and partners

### **Model 8: Forests**

The **2015 update** of the FAP identified models that may need changing or eliminating and potential new sources of data for forests

Next Steps: Kent will review and evaluate this input, and will get back to the group.

Thank you to everyone for attending and contributing!

# FORMAT

①

(1) Hard copy 250 copies

(2) Website

interactive

links betw/ models / data

(3) Archive continuous updates  
of underlying  
layers

Connect to app. map

Key = priority landscapes

LD Model

state water plan - link together

planning - NEPA, CWPP



## Model 1 Fish & Wildlife ②

- ~~Prairie Chicken~~ habitat is low priority
- Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT)
  - Western Assoc. of F&W Agencies
- New data layers or update layers from 2010
  - use best & most current data
    - updated 2010 data
    - new sources of data
- Identify tech. experts who can assess existing & new data sources

### Data Gaps

- Soils - data are better but not complete  
Still high priority
- Data Sharing - still species by species still high
- Habitat litter - X
- Bats/Birds - Imperiled Watersheds Database  
USFS
- Loss of Habitat -

## Model 3 Economic Potential

- Feasibility Studies (site specific) in past 10 yrs. could improve analysis in some areas

## Data Gaps

- Carbon capture/storage
- surface/groundwater value
- vistas/scenic value - Parks, Tourism
- recreation value
- ski area value - USFS visitor use
- SSURGO/STATSGO - Soils

## Tech Team

County econ. directors  
NMAC

## Model 4 Forest Health

- Definition of forest health has changed - need to update definition

- watershed health?
  - insect & disease?
- } which layer does NMSFD need?  
→ BOTH

Change F.H. to I.&D.  
Add w/s health

## Data Gaps

- stand exam / FIA
- invasive species - needed statewide mapping
- aspen / ↑ alt. - baseline collected
- ↓ alt. / gallery - needed statewide

LIDAR - potential

## Model 2: Development Potential

- WUI areas - WUI definition has expanded
- E911 Data

→ Need to assess purpose of model

Keep for now

## Model 5 Fragmentation

- Is this layer necessary?  
How would it help NMSFD?  
Not used much in Western States

+ Roads effects

Use green infrastructure -  
incorporate to frag.

& use G.I. for something else

## Model & Water Quality / Supply

- All layers need updating
- NMED data more accessible than 2010
- Bureau of Geology has lots of info
- SWCDs - OSE
- For forestry -
  - aquifer recharge helpful
  - debris flow potential
- This model is widely used

## Wildfire Risk

- WUI - no std. definition across counties
  - good GIS data available to identify & define WUI
- WUI  $\neq$  CWPP
  - add CWPP layer?
- Updated LANFIRE data  $\rightarrow$  more realistic

## Data Gaps

- assessing wildfire conditions - still needed statewide  
DOI has this
- ecol health
- veg. manipulation - opp. map
- values at risk - Tessa Nicolet for USFS

