

New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute Fiscal Year 2025 Summary Federal Work Plan

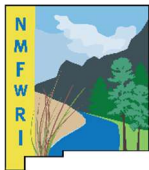
Congressional Annual Appropriations to SWERI for FY 2025

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NMFWRI Mission Statement

The NMFWRI works to reduce catastrophic wildfires and restore resilient, fire- and climate-adapted ecosystems. We collaborate with partners and engage communities to bridge scientific and local knowledge and build capacity in landscape-scale adaptive management.

NMFWRI Vision Statement

The NMFWRI envisions a fire- and climate-adapted New Mexico that prioritizes cross-boundary collaboration for healthier human and ecological communities, sustainable economies, and social justice.

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New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute Fiscal Year 2025 Federal Work Plan

Fiscal Year: October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025

Operational Period: July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027

Funding Source: Annual Federal Appropriations to SWERI and NMFWRI

Introduction

The New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute (NMFWRI)¹ is a federal-state partnership that promotes and supports adaptive management practices to engender healthy forests, sustainable communities, and restorative economies in the Southwestern United States. NMFWRI staff apply science-based and traditional knowledge to develop technologies and encourage land management practices that reduce the risk of high-intensity and catastrophic wildfires. The NMFWRI is based at New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU),² with offices in Las Vegas and Rio Rancho, NM. NMFWRI staff contribute expertise through partnerships with organizations and affected entities around New Mexico and the Southwest, with the goal of building capacity and developing projects that lead to healthier and more resilient ecosystems and communities.

Authorizing Legislation

FY 2025 marks the NMFWRI's 20th anniversary. In 2004, Congress passed the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act (SWERI Act),³ which authorized similar institutes in six Intermountain West states, and further directed the creation of three institutes, forming an alliance known as the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI). In addition to the NMFWRI, other SWERIs include the Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI) at Northern Arizona University (NAU) and the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) at Colorado State University (CSU). Following the protocol in the SWERI Act, the Secretary of Agriculture acting through the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) formally designated the three SWERIs in February 2005,⁴ bringing these institutes to life. In June, 2005, the State of New Mexico and NMHU solidified their support for the NMFWRI and SWERIs, as the New Mexico Governor and NMHU President joined their counterparts in Arizona and Colorado to sign a Charter⁵ that established the SWERIs as a federal-state partnership and outlined the purpose, structure, duties and implementation strategy for the SWERIs.

NMFWRI FY 2025 Work Plan

This Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 2025) Work Plan details how the NMFWRI will apply funds from Congressional Annual Appropriations. The Work Plan will be implemented during the Operational Period, which runs from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027.

While this Work Plan focuses on federally appropriated funds, these are not the only source of funds for the NMFWRI. As a federal-state partnership, the State of New Mexico also contributes to the NMFWRI through the New Mexico Higher Education Department. The NMFWRI also receives substantial in-kind

¹ New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute; See <https://nmfwri.org/>.

² New Mexico Highlands University; See <https://www.nmhu.edu/>.

³ Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-317, 118 Stat. 1204 (Oct. 5, 2004), codified as amended at 16 U.S.C. §§ 6701 to 6707 (2023), See <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2022-title16/pdf/USCODE-2022-title16-chap86.pdf>.

⁴ Decision Memorandum for the Secretary [of Agriculture], February 20, 2005; See <https://sweri.eri.nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/designation.pdf>.

⁵ Charter for the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes, June 13, 2005. See https://sweri.eri.nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Charter_Final_Signed.pdf.

support from NMHU, as well as extramural funding through contracts to carry out specific projects. The NMFWR I is a non-commercial entity dedicated to public service, and does not sell any products or services.

Overview of NMFWR I Operations

Programs, Positions and Staff

NMFWR I staff are organized into three programmatic areas: Administration, Coordination and Organizational Development; Technical and Applied Science Programs; and Civic and Community Action Programs. As of July 2025, the NMFWR I staff consists of the following positions:

Administration, Program Support and Organizational Development

- Administration
 - NMFWR I Director, Dr. Alan Barton
 - Deputy Director, Administration & Chief of Staff, Gilbert “Buddy” Rivera
 - Deputy Director, Operations & Development, Dr. Edward Martinez
 - Budget & Finance Manager, Kristine Bellmore
 - Administrative Coordinator, Marla Martinez
- Program Support
 - Communications Manager, Open
 - Public Information Specialist, Staci Matlock
 - Education & Outreach Assistant, Raymundo Melendez
 - Student Workers, as needed
- Research Associates
 - Civic & Community Action, Dr. Michael Roberts
 - Technical & Applied Science, Dr. Nathan Tomczyk

Technical and Applied Science Programs

- Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) Program
 - GIS Program Manager & Administrator, Patti Dappen
 - GIS Specialist & Data Manager, Katie Withnall
 - GIS Research Specialist, Dana Heusinkveld
 - Digital Outreach & Content Specialist, Open
- Monitoring Program
 - Monitoring Program Manager, Kathryn Mahan
 - Monitoring Crew Logistic Support, Carmen Melendez
 - Data Manager & Analyst, Corey Beinhart
 - Ecological Monitoring Specialist, Emily Yannayon
 - Monitoring Crew Lead, Clay Goetsch
 - Monitoring Crew Lead, Robert Magill
 - Monitoring Technician, Abigail Han
 - Monitoring Technician Assistant, Alex Withnall
 - Monitoring Technician, Seasonal, Vincent Vispo
 - Student Workers, including Summer Field Crew

Civic and Community Action Programs

- Collaboration Program
 - Collaboration Program Manager, Crystal Medina
 - Collaboration Specialist, Alejandro Collins
 - Collaboration Specialist (VISTA), Open

- Conservation Science Center (CSC) Program
 - Conservation & Restoration Education Program Manager, Shantini Ramakrishnan

Statutory Purposes and Duties

The SWERI Act defines the purposes and duties of the SWERIs and creates a framework for the three Institutes to align their operations, cooperate with federal agencies, collaborate with partners and serve affected entities.

The SWERI Act states that **PURPOSES** of the SWERI are “to promote the use of adaptive ecosystem management to reduce the risk of wildfires, and restore the health of forest and woodland ecosystems in the interior West,” and “promote the use of collaborative processes and adaptive ecosystem management.”⁶

Thus, the **GENERAL PURPOSES AND CONDITIONS** of the SWERI are:

- (1) Promote the use of adaptive ecosystem management;
- (2) Reduce the risk of wildfires;
- (3) Restore the health of forest and woodland ecosystems in the interior West;
- (4) Promote the use of collaborative processes;
- (5) Prepare an Annual Work Plan that ensures the proposed work of the Institute serves the informational needs of affected entities.⁷

The **DUTIES** of the SWERI as defined in the SWERI Act⁸ are:

- (1) Develop, conduct research on, transfer, promote, and monitor restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments to reduce the risk of severe wildfires and improve the health of dry forest and woodland ecosystems in the interior West;
- (2) Synthesize and adapt scientific findings from conventional research to implement restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments on a landscape scale using an adaptive ecosystem management framework;
- (3) Translate for and transfer to affected entities any scientific and interdisciplinary knowledge about restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments;
- (4) Assist affected entities with the design of adaptive management approaches (including monitoring) for the implementation of restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments; and
- (5) Provide peer-reviewed annual reports.

Institutional Alliances and Partnerships

The Institutes that comprise the SWERIs are a key alliance that is crucial to the NMFWRI’s success. The NMFWRI also works closely with the Forestry Department at NMHU and the John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center operated by New Mexico State University (NMSU) and located in Mora, NM, both key NMFWRI alliances. The SWERIs collaborate with a diverse set of partners and affected entities to build capacity in forest restoration. These partners and affected entities include land managers and regulators, such as federal, state, local and Tribal agencies; interested or affected stakeholders; concerned

⁶ SWERI Act § 5(a)(1 & 2), *op. cit.*, footnote 3.

⁷ The SWERI Act states “as a condition of the receipt of funds made available under this Act, for each fiscal year, each Institute shall develop in consultation with the Secretary, for review by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, an annual work plan that includes assurances, satisfactory to the Secretaries, that the proposed work of the Institute will serve the informational needs of affected entities.” *See* SWERI Act § 5(f), *op. cit.*, footnote 3.

⁸ SWERI Act § 5(c), *op. cit.*, footnote 3.

citizens; organizations representing natural resource users; traditional groups, including land grants and acequias; state and local representatives; and political subdivisions of states, such as soil and water conservation districts. SWERI administrators and staff respond to the current needs of partners and affected entities while also anticipating and preparing for future challenges.

Project Formulation and Work Plan Development

The projects and deliverables in the NMFWRI's FY 2025 Work Plan respond to needs identified by partners and affected entities through collaborative work and documentation. The FY 2025 Work Plan continues themes and specific projects initiated over the last several years in GIS, Monitoring, Collaboration, Outreach, Research, and Public Information. Today, more of our work is carried out in collaboration across programs and with our SWERI alliance. Accordingly, in FY 2025, the NMFWRI is adding a new theme to our Work Plan: Cross-Program and Cross-SWERI Projects.

The USFS is a key partner to the SWERIs. As part of the preparations for this work plan, NMFWRI and ERI held a joint meeting with Region 3 leadership on Nov. 22, 2024 to discuss elements of our work plans, and to solicit feedback and ideas from regional USFS personnel. Subsequently, we have worked with our liaisons in the Regional Office in the development of this work plan, and with our Congressional delegations and the USFS Washington Office on the budget to accompany this work plan.

Due to changing priorities in Washington, the federal appropriation to the NMFWRI and the SWERIs was reduced by 55 percent for FY 2025. As a result, this work plan is scaled down significantly from recent years, and NMFWRI administrators are adapting our operations, including seeking funding from other sources. The staff at the NMFWRI are proud to serve the people of New Mexico and the United States, working closely with our partners throughout New Mexico and the West. We are thankful for the annual funding provided by Congress that contributes to our ability to do important work on behalf of and for the people of New Mexico.

Summary of NMFWRI Programmatic Themes for FY 2025

Substantive Themes

■ Theme 1: Community Engagement, Science Communication, & Restoration Education

The NMFWRI's Conservation Science Center staff increase awareness and understanding of ecological processes within forested ecosystems and watersheds throughout New Mexico and the related impacts of wildfire, including managed wildfires. Through collaborative work, projects aim to build capacity of community stakeholders and remove barriers to adaptive management to land managers. Project focus areas include: Tribal outreach, K-16 education, coordination and implementation of technical trainings, and development of materials and handbooks for supported learning of up-to-date science.

■ Theme 2: Geospatial Analysis & Support

The NMFWRI GIS program serves as an important center of restoration-based GIS, remote sensing, and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) expertise in northern New Mexico, producing tools that offer technological solutions to restoration-based issues while strengthening connections to affected entities. Projects include GIS support to collaborative groups, geospatial technology training for land managers and natural resource professionals, and continued development and maintenance of the New Mexico Fire Viewer. The NMFWRI's New Mexico Vegetation Treatment Geodatabase paved the way for a nationwide wildfire and fuels treatment database and viewer, made possible by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. GIS program staff apply remote sensing to visualize and monitor forests in New Mexico, using drones and 360-degree cameras to capture and assess forest conditions and adaptive management applications.

■ Theme 3: Monitoring Ecosystem Response & Reducing Barriers to Adaptive Management

The NMFWRI's Monitoring team collects and analyzes data on ecosystem response to restoration, providing a scientific basis for restoration treatments and adaptive management practices. Monitoring staff train partners and affected entities in monitoring practices, and each summer the Monitoring Program prepares New Mexico's future forestry work force by employing student interns and offering them training and valuable practical experience in forest restoration. The NMFWRI also maintains a growing archive of monitoring data collected in New Mexico as a valuable resource for the state.

■ Theme 4: Collaboration & Partnerships

The NMFWRI's Collaboration team advances collaborative conservation by promoting and coordinating partnerships, developing collaborative capacity in rural communities, creating and facilitating networks of collaborative organizations, improving communications among collaborative groups and the public, and supporting administrative needs of volunteer groups. The Collaboration Program employs AmeriCorps-VISTA volunteers who work closely with community-based collaborative groups on projects that create greater economic opportunities.

■ Theme 5: Research Coordination & Communication

The NMFWRI's Research Associates increase the Institute's capacity at translating and communicating scientific and traditional knowledge to a wide range of affected entities. Research associates conduct research that supports the work of all NMFWRI programs, and collaborate with staff to develop research and policy briefs, white papers, and scientific manuscripts rooted in the NMFWRI's projects.

■ Theme 6: Cross-Program and Cross-SWERI Projects

Increasingly, the NMFWRI is developing specific projects that combine work from different programs or that involve collaboration with staff from other SWERI institutes. Some staff members take on responsibilities to work for more than one program. These cross-programmatic projects are included in Theme 6.

Administrative Themes

■ Theme 7: Communication & Public Information

NMFWRI staff connect with partners, affected entities, and the public through a variety of media, including through press releases and publishing articles in traditional media and by managing our own website and social media accounts.

■ Theme 8: Professional & Organizational Development

The NMFWRI supports ongoing professional development opportunities for staff, including attendance and presentations at conferences, participation in training opportunities, and membership in professional societies. In addition, the NMFWRI promotes organizational development and well-being by maintaining positive, non-partisan relationships with state and federal legislators and agency personnel, sponsoring regular educational staff outings, and ensuring staff have sufficient training and equipment to conduct their work safely.

Cross-Cutting Themes

■ Theme C1: Comprehensive Approach to Wildfire

As the NMFWRI has grown, so has our capacity and ability to expand our work. In the past, we focused our work on promoting pre-fire mitigation practices. Today, we can take a more holistic, comprehensive approach to wildfire mitigation, response and recovery. Working across programs, NMFWRI staff provide outreach to landowners and partnering organizations, community trainings, decision-support

tools, education and workforce development aimed broadly at pre-fire, during-fire and post-fire conditions.

■ **Theme C2: Integrating Scientific and Traditional Knowledge**

The SWERI Act charges the three institutes with synthesizing, adapting, translating and transferring scientific findings and knowledge to affected entities. However, much of New Mexico's rich culture is shaped by the traditional practices of long-standing communities and organizations—including Pueblos, land grants and acequias—where residents draw on generations of traditional knowledge in their policies and practices. Accordingly, the NMFWRI adapts and synthesizes scientific and traditional knowledge to reach its partners and affected entities with practical, useful and culturally relevant information.

■ **Theme C3: Community & Economic Development**

The NMFWRI works closely with our partners and affected entities to sustain the value of ecological restoration by collaborating to promote strong communities and local economies. This includes outreach to underserved and underrepresented groups and engaging them in participatory planning. NMFWRI programs design projects that contribute to social and economic organization by promoting vibrant and just communities and providing information and tools derived from practical, applied research. These contribute to communities that are secure and resilient, that can plan with confidence for their common future. The NMFWRI can promote environmental justice by carefully evaluating the individual and social justice outcomes of our programs and projects, and by developing and conducting research on social impacts and environmental justice in forest restoration.

■ **Theme C4: Participation, Cooperation, Collaboration**

Forest management and restoration works best in New Mexico when it is carried out by communities working collaboratively with each other, federal and state government, local and national non-governmental organizations, businesses, tribes, and other entities. The NMFWRI advocates for participatory and cooperative governance that is inclusive and collaborative, and works with partners and affected entities to promote effective collaborative work.

Theme 1: Community Engagement, Science Communication and Restoration Education

Budget: \$ 62,929

Purpose: Theme 1 projects are focused on sharing holistic approaches to natural resources management, partnership cultivation among formal and informal educators, leadership growth and career exploration, reaching audiences spanning K-16 student populations, pre-service and in-service educators, outdoor learning providers and sites, community organizations focused on youth capacity building and college attainment, tribal initiatives in natural resources, and inter-agency cooperative land management efforts.

Staff: Theme 1 is carried out by staff in the NMFWRI's Conservation Science Center Program:

- Shantini Ramakrishnan, Conservation and Restoration Education Program Manager

Outcomes: Successful implementation of Theme 1 leads to:

- Meaningful engagement of K-12 youth in STEM and increased understanding of New Mexico's forest and woodland ecosystems and the ecological processes that drive and sustain thriving watersheds, through immersive instruction and field experiences
- Youth leadership that cultivates future natural resource managers and decision-makers who are grounded in a broad understanding of land management challenges and human dimensions, along with the skills to navigate these complexities

Theme 1 Projects

Theme 1 projects have been reorganized significantly in this FY 2025 Work Plan as compared to the FY 2024 Work Plan. Due to the expansion of workforce development and related training, efforts related to former projects 1.2/Landowner Engagement, 1.3/Outreach on Monitoring and Forest Restoration, 1.5/Knowledge Transmission, and 1.9/Workforce Development are now reflected in Theme 6.1/FIRENM. Due to staffing changes, Theme 4.6 has taken leadership of former project 1.1/Northern New Mexico Fuel Wood Working Group, while Themes 2.2 and 3.2 have taken leadership of former project 1.4/Forest Action Plan and Shared Stewardship.

Theme 1. Community Engagement, Science Communication and Restoration Education		
FY 2025 Projects	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
1.1 K-12 Education & Outreach (Continuing)	<u>Audiences:</u> K-12 students; Formal and informal educators; Outdoor learning providers; Regional higher education institutions <u>Outcomes:</u> Increased public support for forest and watershed restoration; Increased capacity for outdoor educators, pre-service and in-service teachers to serve youth communities; Increased college readiness and preparedness; Recruitment of youth into conservation careers	Federal/State approps.; Private donors; Grants
1.2 Tribal Education & Capacity Building (Continuing)	<u>Audiences:</u> Tribal nations; Partnering agencies <u>Outcomes:</u> Enhanced support to Tribal communities for improved local management of Tribal lands and management interests on and off reservation; Recruitment of Tribal youth into conservation or STEM careers; Increased opportunities for Tribal professionals to share lessons learned and practices with other land managers in pre- and post-fire landscapes	Federal/State approps.; Private donors; Grants
1.3 Undergraduate & Graduate Student Support (Continuing)	<u>Audiences:</u> NMHU undergraduate & graduate students, plus faculty; Community college partners; Regional higher education institutions <u>Outcomes:</u> Increased opportunities to introduce students to future STEM employers/mentors, explore STEM careers in forestry, ecology, biology, and related fields, and build related skill sets	Federal/State approps.; USDA-HSI LISTOS grant; National Science Foundation (NSF); Alliance for Minority Participation; Private donors; Grants

Theme 2: Geospatial Analysis and Support

Budget: \$ 152,596

Purpose: NMFWR's Geospatial Information System (GIS) program serve as a hub for restoration-focused GIS and provides innovative technological solutions to restoration challenges, providing support

to collaborative groups, delivering geospatial technology training for land managers and natural resource professionals, and maintaining and enhancing decision-support tools such as the New Mexico Fire Viewer (www.nmfireviewer.org) and the New Mexico Vegetation Treatment Geodatabase (www.vegetationtreatments.org).

Staff: Theme 2 is carried out by staff in the NMFWRI's GIS Program and affiliated staff:

- Patti Dappen, GIS Program Manager & Administrator
- Katie Withnall, GIS Specialist & Data Manager
- Dana Heusinkveld, GIS Research Specialist
- Dr. Nathan Tomczyk, Research Associate for Technical and Applied Science

Outcomes: Successful implementation of Theme 2 leads to:

- Empowered partners and communities making informed decisions on planning, fire suppression, and resource management through advanced decision-support tools such as the New Mexico Vegetation Treatment Geodatabase and the New Mexico Fire Viewer.
- Greater integration of GIS and related technologies in natural resource management, leading to more effective adaptive management strategies.
- The ongoing development and maintenance of web-based maps and forest visualization tools to encourage landowners and to actively engage in and support forest restoration efforts.

Theme 2. Geospatial Analysis and Support		
FY 2025 Projects	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
2.1 New Mexico Fire Viewer	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWRI affected entities; Land managers; Tribal agencies; Interested public <u>Outcomes:</u> Continued development and updating to the NM Fire Viewer.	Federal/State approps
2.2 Post-Fire GIS Applications and Outreach and ArcGIS HUB	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWRI affected entities; Land managers; NMFD; Federal, State & Tribal agencies; NGOs; Interested public <u>Outcomes:</u> NMFWRI continues to host/manage and provide outreach for the HPCC Hub site as a source of information and support to those impacted during long-term recovery. GIS support will be provided for the Hub post-fire template provided at no cost to community leaders to use as needed.	Federal/State approps
2.3 New Mexico Vegetation Treatment GeoDatabase	<u>Audiences:</u> USFS; Land managers; Tribal agencies; NGOs; Collaboratives & watershed associations; Interested public <u>Outcomes:</u> Hosting and maintaining of the New Mexico Vegetation Treatment GeoDatabase; Working collaboratively with and receiving data from agencies across the state.	Federal/State approps

FY 2025 Projects	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
2.4 Geospatial Tools for Ecological Monitoring, Assessments and Adaptive Management.	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWRI staff; NMFD; NMHU, Other agencies; Collaboratives & watershed associations; Landowners <u>Outcomes:</u> Provide ad hoc GIS support to all NMFWRI programs and other educational and outreach initiatives. Assist in tracking and mapping NMFWRI's areas of operation across New Mexico.	Federal/State approps
2.5 Forest Visualization of Desired Conditions	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFD; Land & range managers; NGOs; Private landowners <u>Outcomes:</u> Ability to showcase forest desired conditions to a much larger stakeholder group online with no in-person contact or travel required. Forest Visualization of Desired Conditions leverages NMFWRI's expertise to use remote sensing technologies to monitor and visualize forests in New Mexico. Remote sensing technologies, such as drones and 360-degree cameras, offer a unique perspective to visualize forest conditions pre- and post-treatment, and to capture and assess forest conditions and adaptive management applications.	Federal/State approps
2.6 Geospatial Outreach and Training for Communities and Partners	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWRI affected entities; NMFD; Other agencies; Tribal agencies, individuals, & students; Place-based collaborative groups & watershed associations <u>Outcomes:</u> Support for the New Mexico Collaboration HUB Site; Improved application of geospatial technology to assist in the coordination and implementation of conservation and restoration programs and projects;	Federal/State approps

Theme 3: Monitoring Ecosystem Response and Reducing Barriers to Adaptive Management

Budget: \$ 297,176

Purpose: The NMFWRI's Monitoring Program maintains a professionally managed field crew to collect data on short- and long-term ecosystem response to restoration treatments and disturbances, providing hands-on training opportunities for students and recent graduates to help build New Mexico's forestry workforce. Projects include creating a statewide monitoring data repository and suite of analytical tools, building a database of groups participating in ecological monitoring, and building statewide capacity for ecological monitoring and restoration work through trainings and technical support.

Staff: Theme 3 is carried out by staff in the NMFWRI's Ecological Monitoring Program and affiliated staff and students:

- Kathryn Mahan, Monitoring Program Manager
- Carmen Melendez, Crew Logistics Support

- Corey Beinhart, Data Manager & Analyst
- Emily Yannayon, Monitoring Specialist
- Clay Goetsch, Crew Lead
- Robert Magill, Crew Lead
- Abigail Han, Monitoring and GIS Specialist
- Alex Withnall, Technician Assistant
- Vincent Vispo, Technician (Seasonal)
- Michael Branch, Taryn Schlosser, Student Interns (Technician Aides)
- Dr. Nathan Tomczyk, Research Associate for Technical & Applied Science

Outcomes: Successful implementation of Theme 3 leads to:

- A unique long-term dataset of high-quality ecological monitoring data that provide insights on treatment effectiveness and response to disturbance, offering researchers and practitioners opportunities to better understand how fire interacts with treatments, how long treatments remain viable, and how to produce and maintain resilient, fire adapted ecological and human communities
- A forestry workforce with access to high quality data and an understanding of how to apply data, tools and data synthesis in planning, management decisions, and research for adaptive management decision-making
- Better coordination among partners and affected entities through trainings that increase awareness of the importance of monitoring data, and that build capacity to develop, implement and learn from monitoring strategies
- Increased knowledge of restoration practices and challenges among FWRI staff, partners, and affected entities
- Trained and competent workers entering New Mexico's natural resources workforce, as college graduates in forestry and conservation management who have gained practical experience in field methods can transfer these skills directly to work in agencies and organizations

Theme 3. Monitoring Ecosystem Response and Reducing Barriers to Adaptive Management		
FY 2025 Projects	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
3.1 NMFWRI Field Crew Monitoring of Ecosystem Response to Restoration Treatments and Disturbances (Continuing)	<u>Audiences:</u> USFS, NMSLO, NMFD & other land managers; NGOs; Private landowners; Students <u>Outcomes:</u> High-quality ecological monitoring data on treatment effectiveness and response to disturbance; Trained students and workforce development; Skilled professional crew well-informed of on-the-ground conditions; share out of monitoring findings to decision-makers	Federal/State approps
3.2 Identification of Statewide & Regional Needs & Opportunities (Continuing)	<u>Audiences:</u> USFS, NMSLO, NMFD & other land managers; NGOs; Private landowners; F&WHCG <u>Outcomes:</u> Share and receive feedback on draft strategies designed to address need and opportunities identified in the FAP monitoring survey	Federal/State approps

FY 2025 Projects	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
3.3 Capacity-building & Technical Support (Continuing)	<u>Audiences:</u> USFS, NMSLO, NMFD & other land managers; Tribal agencies; NGOs working in monitoring & adaptive management <u>Outcomes:</u> Coordination across programs and partners for trainings and awareness of the importance of monitoring data; Increased capacity to develop, implement and learn from monitoring strategies	Federal/State approps
3.4 NMFWRI Monitoring Data Repository (Continuing)	<u>Audiences:</u> USFS, NMSLO, NMFD & other land managers; Tribal agencies; NGOs working in monitoring & adaptive management <u>Outcomes:</u> Monitoring data available via the NMFWRI website; data management support for partners; New data synthesis support materials; Increased awareness and use of monitoring data and tools in decision-making	Federal/State approps
3.5 Support for FIRE NM	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWRI staff; Land managers; Congress <u>Outcomes:</u> Increased knowledge of restoration practices and challenges among NMFWRI staff and affected entities	Federal/State approps
3.6 Lessons Learned from NMFWRI's Monitoring Work (Continuing)	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWRI staff; Land managers; Private landowners; NGOs; Partners and affected entities <u>Outcomes:</u> Increased knowledge of monitoring program challenges and best practices among NMFWRI staff & affected entities	Federal/State approps.; NMFD; GRGWA; NGOs; Federal & state agencies; Tribal partners; SWERI

Theme 4: Collaboration and Partnerships

Budget: \$ 111,445

Purpose: The NMFWRI Collaboration Program seeks to serve place- and project-based collaborative groups and watershed associations in New Mexico as a resource to build and expand collaborative and organizational capacity, promote and coordinate partnerships, foment collaborative capacity in rural communities, and provide support to volunteer groups.

Staff: Theme 4 is carried out by staff in the NMFWRI's Collaboration Program and affiliated staff:

- Crystal Medina, Collaboration Program Manager
- Alejandro Collins, Collaboration Specialist
- Dr. Michael Roberts, Research Associate, Civic & Community Action
- Dr. Alan Barton, NMFWRI Director

Outcomes: Successful implementation of Theme 4 leads to:

- Increased operational capacity to build relationships and partnerships among affected entities focused on a common landscape or goals
- Improved local and regional capacity in the understanding of collaborative processes
- A wider range of tools and resources and increased use of technology, available to collaborative groups to improve collaborative capacity and increase opportunities for collaboration

- Capacity for collaborative conservation, leadership, and project implementation through community-engaged workshops and trainings

Theme 4: Collaboration and Partnerships		
FY 2025 Projects	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
4.1 Statewide Operational Support to Collaborative Groups	<u>Audiences:</u> Collaborative groups & partnering organizations <u>Outcomes:</u> Enhanced local and regional capacity for understanding collaborative processes, building relationships, and resolving conflicts	Federal/State approps
4.2 Regional Collaborative Networking and Initiatives	<u>Audiences:</u> Collaborative groups, networks & partnering organizations; Community residents and leaders <u>Outcomes:</u> Increased interaction among statewide and regional collaborative groups and networks; Improved access to resources and strategies for addressing community needs; Stronger coordination among stakeholders to support forest health	Federal/State approps
4.3 Collaborative Maps and Technological Applications	<u>Audiences:</u> Collaborative groups & partnering organizations, Funders & support entities; Community residents & leaders; General public <u>Outcomes:</u> Maintenance of roster and NM Collaboration Hub (e.g., purposes, locations, and resources) for collaborative groups and support organizations; Increased ability for collaborative groups to share information and strategies with each other	Federal/State approps
4.4 Supporting Local Economies Through Collaboration	<u>Audiences:</u> Collaborative groups & partnering organizations, Community residents & leaders, Funding entities, Land management & regulatory agencies <u>Outcomes:</u> Strengthened and expand community connections; Increased economic resources for communities; Enhanced capacity for local economic development	Federal/State approps
4.5 Planning and Design of Events to Build Collaborative Capacity	<u>Audiences:</u> Collaborative groups & networks, Land management & regulatory agencies, Community residents & leaders <u>Outcomes:</u> Enhanced collaborative leadership in conservation through community-based workshops and trainings	Federal/State approps
4.6 Wood for Life/NM Fuelwood Working Group	<u>Audiences:</u> Tribal and rural communities; NGOs; Collaborative groups & networks; Land management & regulatory agencies; Community residents & leaders <u>Outcomes:</u> Identification of communities in need of fuelwood resources; Improved communication and coordination among interested parties; Increased awareness of the challenges associated with fuelwood harvesting and transportation; Better understanding of overall stakeholder perceptions and challenges associated with accessing and distributing fuelwood	Federal/State approps

Theme 5: Research Coordination and Communication

Budget: \$ 105,134

Purpose: Research Associates work across NMFWRI programs to synthesize and share the information generated by the programs, to conduct primary and secondary research to further understanding of the fire-vulnerable human and ecological systems of the Southwest, and to further the NMFWRI's work with affected entities, through collaborative relationships with land managers and landowners, water systems managers, NGOs, academic researchers at Highland University and other universities, and colleagues at the other SWERIs.

Staff: Theme 5 is carried out by NMFWRI's Research Associates and affiliated students:

- Dr. Nathan Tomczyk, Research Associate for Technical & Applied Science
- Dr. Michael Roberts, Research Associate for Civic & Community Action
- Student Research Assistants and Interns

Outcomes: Successful implementation of Theme 5 leads to:

- Quantifying the ecological impact of watershed and forest restoration
- Advancing understanding and practice of collaboration and interagency coordination in the arenas of water governance, fire mitigation, and post-fire restoration with an emphasis on community-level needs and priorities

Theme 5. Research Coordination and Communication		
FY 2025 Projects	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
5.1 Quantifying the Ecological Impact of Forest, Watershed & Riparian Restoration	<u>Audiences:</u> Scientific community; Federal & State agencies; Landowners; Interested public <u>Outcomes:</u> A manuscript, a story map, and a data pipeline approach to rapidly assess treatment effectiveness following a wildfire. In the future I plan to expand this work with a more explicit watershed focus <u>Note:</u> Continuation of Projects 7.2 & 7.3 in the FY 2024 Work Plan	Federal/State approps,
5.2 Refining Management of Mixed Conifer Forests	<u>Audiences:</u> Scientific community; Collaborators at CFRI & NMHU Forestry Dept.; USFS Forest Inventory Analysis <u>Outcomes:</u> A scientific publication and two versions of a tool to key out forest communities—a simple one that can be printed on paper, and an advanced computer application that has higher accuracy <u>Note:</u> Continuation of Project 7.4 in the FY 2024 Work Plan	Federal/State approps,

FY 2025 Projects	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
5.3 Shedding Light on Community-level Wildfire Mitigation and Post-fire Restoration	<u>Audiences:</u> USFS; NMFD; NMRWA & public water systems; New Mexico Acequia Association and local acequia groups; Land grant communities; Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASC); UNM; NMSU; NMHU; Landowners and interested public <u>Outcomes:</u> Co-production of frameworks for community-engaged source water protection planning and community-level post-fire recovery; Potentially, white papers, presentations at academic conferences, workshops, and town halls; A long-term outcome is stronger community relationships in the USFS's Wildfire Resiliency Strategy's Enchanted Circle Priority Landscape & in communities impacted by the HPCC fire; Another long-term outcome is a network of community-engaged scholars & practitioners in N.M. <u>Note:</u> Continuation of Project 7.7 in the FY 2024 Work Plan	Federal/State approps, NM Community Foundation (potential)
5.4 Communicating Research Results	<u>Audiences:</u> Researchers, agencies, partners, affected entities <u>Outcomes:</u> Presentations, publications, white papers, research briefs <u>Note:</u> Continuation of Project 7.8 in the FY 2024 Work Plan	Federal/State approps.

Theme 6: Cross-Program and Cross-SWERI Projects

Budget: \$ 67,783

Purpose: Theme 6 projects highlight collaborative work across programs at NMFWR and with our SWERI alliance.

Outcomes: Successful implementation of Theme 6 leads to:

- Community members demonstrate greater knowledge and understanding of natural resource issues and engage more actively in their communities, resulting in fire-adapted communities and increased community capacity in post-fire recovery
- Increased workforce capacity in forestry, applied restoration, post-fire recovery, emergency response, and incident management
- Increased coordination between land management entities and private working lands to facilitate landscape level management actions
- Long-term health of collaborative programs and processes at national, regional and local scales

Theme 6: Cross-Program & Cross-SWERI Projects

FY 2025 Projects	Programs	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
6.1 Fire-Informed Restoration Education for New Mexico (FIRENM)	• Conservation Science Center • Ecological Monitoring	<u>Audiences:</u> Community/Landowner; Subcontractor/Practitioner; Field crew (NGO, Tribal or other); Manager/Professional; Instructor Training/ train the trainer; Youth; Reskill populations; Workforce <u>Outcomes:</u> We support an empowered and informed community and workforce, deeply invested in preserving and enhancing rural landscapes. The management and restoration of landscapes are driven and maintained by the local community with access to education, training, reskilling and upskilling in partnership with well-informed management agencies. FIRENM serves as NMFWRIs primary initiative for restoration education and promotes cultural acceptance of fire-adapted behaviors, and resilient landscapes under future climate conditions.	Federal/State approps,
6.2 Assessing Collaborative Governance of the CFLRP Program	• NMFWRI • CFRI • ERI	<u>Audiences:</u> USFS Washington Office, SWERI alliance, CFLRP coordinators <u>Outcomes:</u> Lessons to share with other CFLRPs to inform the ongoing implementation of the CFLRP program at the local, state, and federal level <u>Note:</u> This is a continuation of Project 7.6 in the NMFWRI FY 2024 Work Plan	Federal/State approps,
6.3 SWERI Leadership Retreat	• NMFWRI • CFRI • ERI	<u>Audiences:</u> Leadership team members from NMFWRI, ERI & CFRI <u>Outcomes:</u> Coordination of Cross-SWERI projects; Relationship and partnership building, advancing collaboration	Federal/State approps,

Theme 7: Communications & Public Information

Budget: \$ 128,229

Purpose: The Communications & Public Information staff produces and coordinates strategic communications to promote NMFWRI programs, scientific research, and events using traditional and new media tools to help NMFWRI staff and partners bridge traditional knowledge and new scientific research for land managers, agency partners, and the public regarding wildfire mitigation, post-fire restoration, and adaptive management for forest and watershed health.

Staff: Theme 7 is carried out by the NMFWRI's Public Information staff and affiliated staff and students:

- Staci Matlock, Public Information Specialist
- Interns

Outcomes: Successful implementation of Theme 7 leads to:

- Increased awareness among legislators, partners and the public about the NMFWRI's purpose, programs and goals
- Increased participation by the public in efforts to build wildfire resilient communities, forests, and watersheds.
- Increased products (videos, technical manuals, landowner guides) to assist with the transfer of traditional and scientific knowledge in adaptive ecosystem management.

Theme 7. Communication & Public Information		
FY 2025 Projects	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
7.1 Expand Library of Communications Products	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWRI staff; Partnering agencies and organizations; General public <u>Outcomes:</u> A comprehensive and easy-to-use archive of NMFWRI multimedia products, research papers and information, with copies available online and in print; new communications product development (landowner and technical guides, game app, podcast, video series)	Federal/State approps
7.2 Build Knowledge of the NMFWRI through Public Information	<u>Audiences:</u> General public; Partnering agencies <u>Outcomes:</u> Increased understanding of the NMFWRI's mission and goals and the science around adaptive management; Increased engagement by the public in NMFWRI technical trainings, surveys, and workshops.	Federal/State approps
7.3 Enhance Inter-SWERI Communications	<u>Audiences:</u> SWERI; Partnering organizations; Federal and state land management and regulatory agencies; General public <u>Outcomes:</u> Enhanced consistent communications between the SWERI; Increased understanding of the purpose and mission of the SWERI	Federal/State approps
7.4 Media Support to NMFWRI Programs and Partners	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWRI staff; Community groups; Partnering agencies; Lawmakers <u>Outcomes:</u> Produce printed materials and promote events, workshops, meetings, trainings, and grant opportunities in support of all NMFWRI projects, including the Wildfire Resiliency Training Center (WRTC) at Luna Community College (LCC), and collaborative work with NMFWRI partnering organizations	Federal/ State approps, USDA
7.5 Maintain and Enhance the NMFWRI's Social Media Presence	<u>Audiences:</u> General public, partners, lawmakers, NMFWRI staff <u>Outcomes:</u> Support and maintain a robust social media presence to advance the goals of NMFWRI and knowledge of adaptive management practices for healthy forests and watersheds	Federal/State approps

Theme 8: Professional and Organizational Development

Budget: \$ 74,708

Purpose: Theme 8 addresses the well-being, safety and professional development of NMFWR staff, as well as the development of the organization itself.

Staff: The NMFWR Administration is primarily responsible for implementing Theme 8. The NMFWR Director and Deputy Directors lead the initiatives aimed at staff well-being. The Leadership Team and Administrative Coordinator work together to carry out the projects in Theme 8.

Outcomes: Successful implementation of Theme 8 leads to:

- An increased ability for the NMFWR to put into practice effective organizational and institutional functioning, and increased recognition of the NMFWR as a key center of excellence in New Mexico and the Southwest
- NMFWR staff members that are better prepared, more knowledgeable and better connected to other professionals in their fields by taking advantage of opportunities for professional development, including travel to professional conferences, and NMFWR and SWER retreats and workshops
- Increased means of communication and opportunities for cross-program collaboration among NMFWR staff, resulting in stronger ties and coordination across NMFWR programs and projects, better understanding of each of the NMFWR programs, a strong staff esprit-de-corps, and staff retention
- Increased collaboration and communication with SWER and FORT alliance partners

Theme 8. Professional and Organizational Development		
FY 2025 Projects	Audiences/Outcomes	Funding Sources
8.1 Staff Professional Development	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWR staff <u>Outcomes:</u> Presentations at professional conferences; Participation in webinars and trainings	Federal/State approps
8.2 Organizational Development	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWR staff, partners & affected entities <u>Outcomes:</u> Increased coordination and organizational capacity; FY 2026 Work Plan and Budget; Monthly updates for partners & affected entities; Coordinating planning with partners & affected entities; 2025 Annual Report; NMFWR Staff and SWER retreats	Federal/State approps
8.3 Organizational Health and Well-Being	<u>Audiences:</u> NMFWR staff <u>Outcomes:</u> Staff participation in educational field days and learning events; Staff represent the NMFWR with clothing and items bearing the NMFWR logo; Staff use safety equipment and take training to conduct their work safely; NMFWR provides staff with tools and equipment for safe and healthy working environments	Federal/State approps

NMFWRI Fiscal Year 2025 Summary Federal Budget

Item	Cost	Item	Cost
Salaries	\$450,884	Equipment	\$0.00
Fringe Benefits	\$202,898	Supplies	\$78,715
Student Wages	\$8,094	Travel	\$71,000
Consultants	\$97,500	Indirect @ 10%	\$90,909
		TOTAL	\$1,000,000

The overall budget includes four categories of personnel costs and three categories of operational costs. Personnel-related budget categories include salaries for term and temporary full- and part-time NMFWRI staff, fringe benefits provided by NMHU to employees, student wages for NMHU and other students employed as interns, and temporary consultants hired for specific projects. Operational categories include equipment over \$5,000 in value, materials and supplies, and travel. The funder provides 10 percent of the total budget to NMHU for overhead costs.

Breaking down the budget by category, approximately 45% of the FY 2025 federal grant goes to salaries, 20% to fringe, 1% to student intern wages, 10% to consulting services, 8% to materials and supplies, 7% to travel, and 10% to NMHU overhead.