



Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project

Project Update- Spring 2025

What is the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project?

The Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project (SFMLRP) is a 50,000-acre vegetation management project within the 107,000-acre greater Santa Fe Fire shed. A fire shed is a way to delineate where fires ignite and are likely to, or not to spread to communities. The primary goal of this project is to create ecosystem resilience and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire. The SFMLRP area is categorized as having high wildfire risk due to over a century of fire exclusion, heavy fuel loading, and historic grazing practices. The project focuses on introducing fire to the landscape as an ecological process within frequent fire forest types and reducing fuels/fire hazards within pinon/juniper areas (especially the wildland urban interface). The Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF) has been successfully conducting treatments within this Fireshed, particularly the Santa Fe Municipal watershed, for over 20 years, with treatments totaling over 16,000 acres. The SFMLRP treatments are expected to occur over the next 15 to 20 years, followed by maintenance prescribed fire as needed and directed by the SFNF land management plan.

What have we been doing?

Public Participation

The SFNF is committed to public participation throughout planning and implementation. Shortly after signing the decision in May 2023, the SFNF and SF County Commissioners held an Open House at Santa Fe Community College to provide opportunities for the public to ask questions and discuss the project. The Open House was well attended by the public and partners.

To meet the intent of the 2022 Chief's Prescribed Fire Review, the SFNF held numerous public meetings about planned or upcoming treatments specifically on prescribed fire within the Greater Fire shed.

The SFNF appreciates these opportunities to listen to our communities and strives to rebuild trust. Outcomes from these meetings, along with weather conditions have led the SFNF to postpone prescribed fire projects. We continuously work to mitigate public concerns, by removing legacy piles and strengthening control lines.

Additionally, the forest has coordinated with Defenders of Wildlife throughout the implementation phase. We've collaborated on identifying bird species presence and habitat and incorporated that information into thinning prescriptions. We look forward to working with this group and others to ensure as many objectives as possible may be achieved in this area.

We hope to continue working with our communities, partners and stakeholders throughout the implementation of the SFMLRP. We will continue to have public meetings and events for planned prescribed fire projects. We also invite the public to request field trips within the project area.

Conditions-Based Management (CBM) Approach for Proposed Vegetation Thinning and Prescribed Burn Treatments

The NEPA process did not define specific treatment units, but rather general areas and conditions throughout the project area where treatments would be most likely to occur and the suite of tools that would be used.

To implement the SFMLRP, the USFS follows the steps outlined below to evaluate on-the-ground conditions to inform the appropriate forest treatments and prescriptions to be applied in specific locations within the project area to move towards desired conditions described in the Final Environmental Assessment.

SELECT	Consult NEPA document for selection criteria to determine which conditions to address with management activities and where.
VALIDATE	Gather information to ensure conditions and likely impacts of management activity are within the range of environmental effects evaluated in the NEPA document.
EVALUATE	Monitoring and adaptive management cycles evaluate whether activities are meeting desired goals and identify potential adjustments.

CBM approach uses a process to select, validate, and evaluate management activities. We use the following questions to both select and validate actions to meet the goals and objectives of the decision.

1. Identify treatment area boundary and conduct field reconnaissance and inventory.
2. Coordinate with resource specialists and applicable partnering agencies to determine the appropriate design features and mitigation measures necessary to implement proposed treatment(s).
3. Conduct a review for Mexican spotted owl (MSO) nest/roost habitat and PACs (protected activity centers) and complete the USFS MSO Habitat Project Checklist to ensure compatibility of treatments with the MSO Recovery Plan.
4. Consider any previous forest restoration treatments or disturbed areas that could be used to build a prescribed fire boundary and identify safe anchor points that would facilitate the implementation of prescribed fire.
5. Define prescribed fire unit boundary using topography, vegetation/fuel condition, and proximity to previously treated or disturbed areas that provide safe anchor points.
6. As necessary, vegetation thinning would be required to prepare a prescribed fire unit boundary for safe and effective implementation.
7. As necessary, delineate thinning units within the burn block to facilitate the reintroduction of fire and move the landscape closer to desired conditions.

In May 2023, SFNF signed the decision to begin project implementation. To safely and effectively reduce wildfire risk, the SFNF will be using a variety of tools. The work targets small diameter dry mixed conifer forests, through thinning, piling slash, fuelwood gathering, and prescribed fire. Work started with treatment unit perimeter thinning and building control line for future prescribed fire projects.

In 2024, the focus was to continue perimeter thinning and building control lines in Tesuque Basin. Additionally, the Forest has been working closely with Glorieta Adventure Camps through the Wyden Amendment Authority. The Wyden authority allows the Forest Service to enter into agreements with non-federal partners to protect, restore, or enhance fish and wildlife habitats, and other natural resources. For the past 10 years, The Camps has been conducting fuels reduction treatments. Moving forward, the SFNF is working collaboratively to expand that those treatments onto federal lands. Additionally, 148 acres of hand thinning and piling were completed within the Santa Fe watershed, above McClure reservoir.

In 2025, prescribed fire unit prep was completed around the Bear Wallow trail and west of the Windsor trail, totaling 117 acres. Hand thinning, which began in 2024 was completed in spring 2025 along the Windsor and Big Tesuque Trails, covering about 299 acres. Work is planned around Glorietta Adventure camps, including 389 acres of mastication. In addition to this, other units in the Tesuque basin and around Hyde Memorial State Park are in the selection and validation phases (see map below under planning).

Completed acres by treatment type & year

YEAR	Action	# of projects	acres
2023	Prescribed (Rx) burn prep	1	69
2024	Pile burning	6	807
	Hand thinning	1	148
	Rx burn prep	2	117
2025	Hand thinning	3	688
	Rx Burn Prep	1	28

This Santa Fe Fireshed landscape includes other NEPA decisions such as the Santa Fe Watershed EIS and Pacheco Canyon Resiliency projects. This information includes all treatments within the greater fire shed.

Implementation Plan

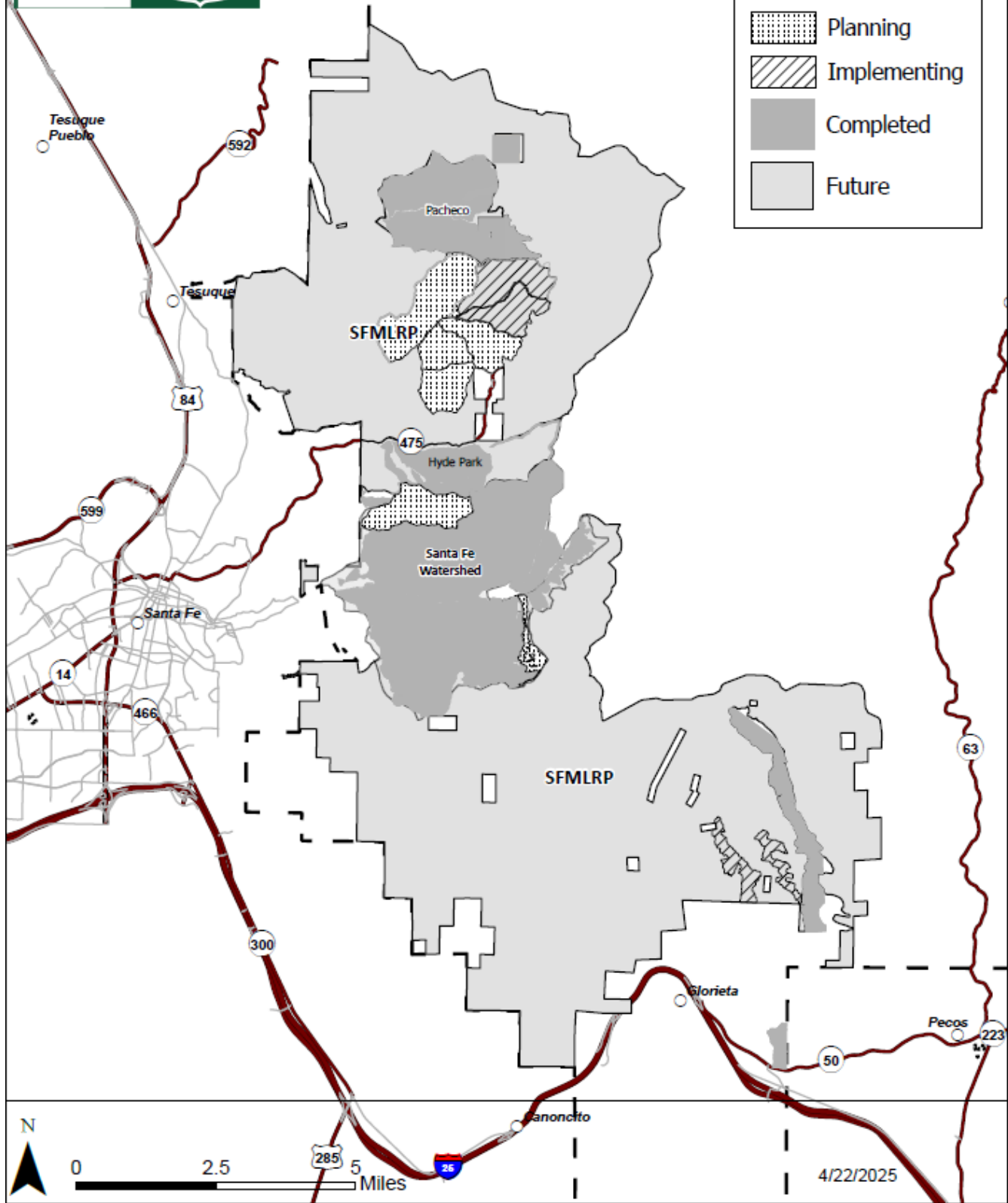
The treatment unit design and planning (selection and validation) has been a key element in the implementation effort. This process can be complex because we are designing projects to safely and effectively reintroduce fire on the landscape for ecological benefit while maintaining public and fire fighter safety in steep remote areas. To achieve these goals the SFNF is anchoring treatments from previous treatments (Pacheco canyon, Hyde Park, and Glorieta Adventure Camps), identifying control lines, building handline, and preparing for future staged treatments. Then we identify forest structure, composition, fuel loading, and wildlife habitats to write unit or matrix thinning prescriptions. Finally, areas are planned for prescribed fire with low-moderate fire intensity. This could be pile, jackpot, or broadcast burning.

Below is a map of completed, planned and future treatments.



Legend

- Planning
- Implementing
- Completed
- Future



Additional information and how to stay informed

We continue to work with communities, partners and stakeholders throughout the implementation of the SFMLRP. We are committed to creating opportunities to discuss this project including public meetings, events and field trips. Additionally, if you would like to stay informed and up to date, please visit the SFNF webpage, Facebook, or X accounts.

[Santa Fe National Forest Home Page](#) - Santa Fe National Forest Home Page is a place for notifications, opportunities, project updates and events on the Forest.

[Santa Fe Mountains Project Page](#) - The project page is a great place for project details, environmental documents and how to subscribe to the mailing list.

[Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition](#)- Check out the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition Website for other projects and community opportunities in and around the area.



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