

Impacts of the Hermits Peak Calf Canyon Fire

341,735 acres
 300-400 homes
 Displaced and evacuated families
 Economic disruption and emotional trauma

After fire, now floods:

- High burn severity: 21% (Gallinas) and 24% (Rural San Miguel and Mora counties)
- Soil erosion, loss of life in watersheds and forests
- Downstream flooding is disrupting daily life

Immediate Needs and Concerns:

- Effective disaster response
- Short-term economic relief, restore stability
- Equity implications for low income families (i.e. lack of insurance, cost to rebuild)

Land-based Livelihoods are Especially Vulnerable

- Farming and Ranching
- Logging and Forestry
- Hunting and Outfitting

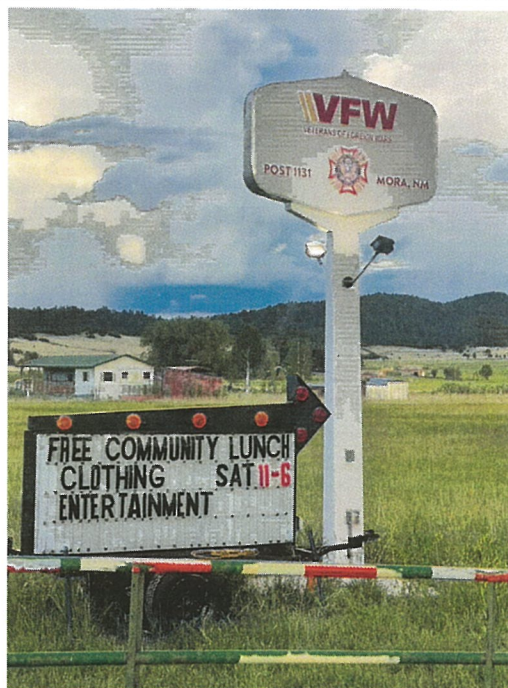


Disaster Response and Recovery: Blessings and Gaps

The needs of displaced and evacuated families have been challenging to meet. At the time when most help was needed by evacuees, resources were uncertain. People who lost homes face an **uncertain future**. Thankfully, many community members have donated and volunteered for disaster relief.

Local governments may apply for funds from FEMA on a reimbursement basis. Local governments, including counties, acequias, and mutual domestics do not have the reserves or cash flow to cover disaster expenses or to wait for FEMA reimbursement. State government may be able to assume the up front cost and be reimbursed by FEMA.

Planning and development resources are needed for communities to effectively mobilize resources for recovery and restoration. Existing state and federal resources are a puzzle that requires coordination to connect the pieces effectively. The state could provide recovery planning grants to build capacity in local communities.



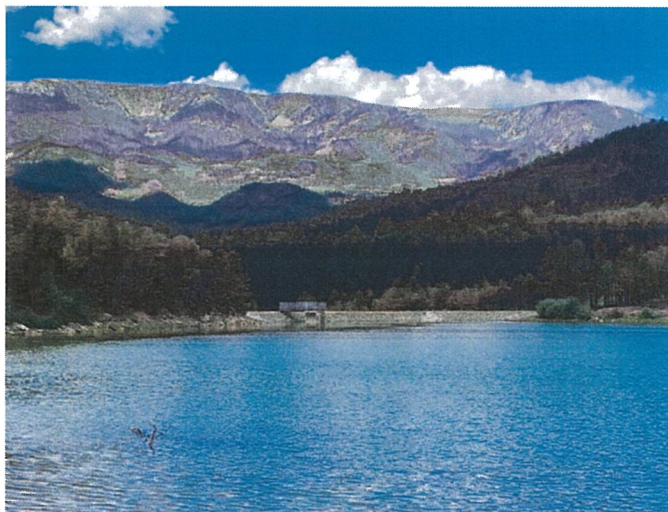
Watersheds and Forests are the Key to our Future

- City of Las Vegas, 90% of municipal supply is from the Gallinas watershed
- Watersheds are the headwaters of 80+ acequias in the HPCC burn scar of San Miguel and Mora counties which support \$30 million in crops and livestock
- Grazing associations support livestock industry
- Forests and watersheds support our agricultural, forestry, and hunting industries
- Watersheds, rivers, and acequias recharge the aquifers that support numerous community water systems and private wells.

The Regional Economy Must Diversify

According to a study by UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research, An Assessment of the San Miguel County Economy in 2011:

- Short- and medium-term, recruit new industries
- Long-term, build home-grown industries such as wood production, arts & culture, expand exports.



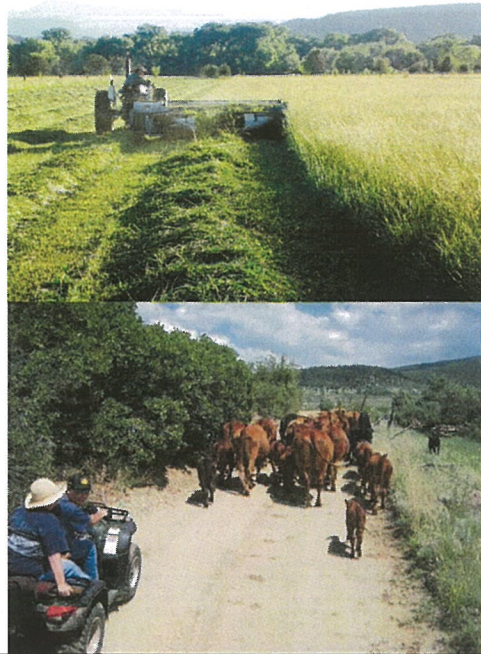
Value of Agriculture, Forestry, and Hunting/Angling

New Mexico Agriculture \$2.6 billion
 Acequia Counties Statewide \$188 million
 San Miguel and Mora Counties \$30 million
 Average Market Value per Farm \$20,356

** Source: USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture. Counties are Rio Arriba, Taos, Mora, Lincoln, San Miguel, San Juan, Cibola, Grant, Sandoval. Note that county-level data also includes other agriculture including that on tribal lands.*

Expenditures by Residents and Non-Residents per County
 San Miguel, Hunting and Angling \$47,291,284
 Mora County, Hunting and Angling \$7,049,972

** Source: The Economic Contributions of Fishing, Hunting, and Trapping in New Mexico in 2013: A statewide and county-level analysis*



Invest in Restoration and Reforestation

Federal government ignited the fire and should make major investments in watershed and forest restoration. State agencies can help leverage federal funds.

Restorative justice for land-based communities requires resources to rebuild our economy with agriculture, forestry, and other natural resource-based industries.

Resources are needed to:

Support logging industry immediately to utilize burned timber with investment in equipment, workforce training, business planning, and marketing/distribution.

Expand seedling production for reforestation and develop a 10-20 year plan to reforest the HPCC burn area.

Watershed and river restoration projects to support hydrological function which provides us with clean water.

Right: Photo from the NMSU John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center in Mora, NM.



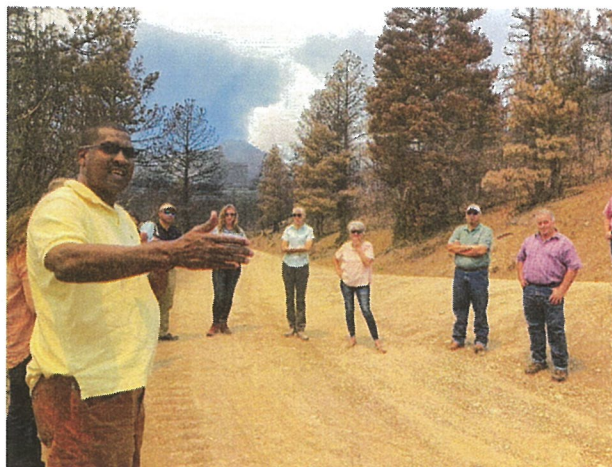
Community-Based Projects are Underway

Forest industry family businesses are convening to develop a plan to salvage burned timber while it still has value. Economic Development Department assisting to prepare an EDA grant to invest in capacity of local sawmill operators.

The NM Acequia Association is partnering with Rio Grande Return and High Watermark on watershed restoration projects including a proposal to the River Stewardship Program for river restoration and burned area stabilization.

Grassroots organizations such as the Hermits Peak Watershed Alliance and local educational institutions such as NMHU Forest and Watershed Institute and Luna Community College are holding trainings on land restoration.

The NMAA and other partners are conducting outreach for participation in USDA disaster programs through NRCS and FSA as well as working on proposals for more resources such as the USFS/NRCS Joint Chiefs Program and the Watershed Flood Prevention and Operations Program.



Above: USDA Undersecretary Homer Wilkes met with community leaders in Mora County to strategize around USDA resources for recovery.

Restoration Economy and Workforce Development

From the 2020 New Mexico Forest Action Plan A Collaborative Approach to Landscape Resilience:

- **Restoration Economy** is the driving force behind forest management activities and addresses the need to invest in workforce development for all of these strategies, and to rebuild and retool forest industry and wood processing to capture the by-products of restoration and manage forests for resilience in changing climate conditions.
- **Reforestation** addresses the need to reforest burned areas and bridge the state's reforestation backlog, and to do so with seedlings that will mature into trees capable of withstanding the anticipated growing conditions of the future.

Resources for workforce development in Mora and San Miguel Counties:

- Luna Community College
- NMHU Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute

Resources for reforestation:

- NMSU John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center
- Local forestry businesses

QUERENCIA IN ACTION: Post-fire Land Restoration

Free Workshops - Enroll Now!
Learn ways to reduce erosion, utilize burned trees and help seeds survive.

July 19-19: On-site erosion and sedimentation control to build what to build and how to build structures to retain soil and slow down water. 8 am - 1:30 pm each day. Meet at the Mora County Landfill 600 West the Cope Public Library at 8 am.

July 20-21: Erosion control with log structures. How to use charcoal trees for stabilize walls after a fire. 8 am - 1:30 pm. Meet at the San Cayetano Fire Station, 122121 AVA, at 8 am.

Enroll for the workshops at Lunahigh.org. For reservations, contact Karen Voreman at 505-451-5300 or via e-mail at kvoreman@luna.edu. Workshop are capped at 25 participants, so sign up soon!

Presented by Luna Community College and the New Mexico Watershed Stewardship Institute

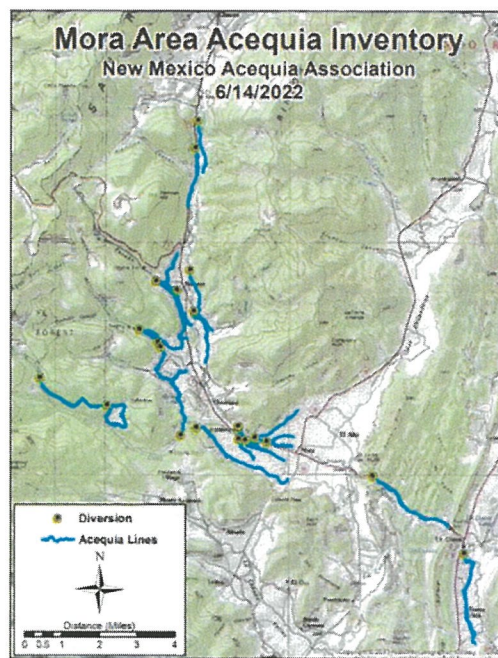
Climate Resiliency for Agriculture and Acequias

The NM Acequia Association has mapped most of the acequias in the HPCC burn scar. The immediate purpose is for applications to FEMA and other disaster programs. Long-term, maps can contribute to restoration planning and projects.

In areas where acequias must rebuild post-fire and post-flooding, climate resilient designs can be used. This will require flexibility in FEMA funding to improve upon pre-disaster conditions.

Climate change, drought, and a degraded watershed may result in **reduced surface water supplies**. Acequias will need robust management and decision tools to address water sharing and allocation of scarce surface water while also being adaptive to flood conditions.

The state can help by adapting the existing Acequia and Community Ditch Infrastructure Fund to **remove the cost share requirement** and support rehabilitation of acequias impacted by fire and floods. The fund should be used for up-front disaster response costs. \$2.5 million per year in recurring is allocated but the legislature can also make special appropriations.



Summary of Policy Recommendations

Local governments are limited in their ability to cover disaster expenses. State can assume up front disaster response costs and get reimbursed by federal government.

The state could provide recovery planning grants to build capacity in local communities.

Provide support for the forest industry and reforestation and support workforce development programs specific to the post-fire landscape and restoration economy.

Expand support for restoration programs such as the River Stewardship Program (NMED), Forest and Watershed funding (EMNRD), etc.

Support climate resilient designs for acequia infrastructure, remove the 10% cost share for the Acequia and Community Ditch Infrastructure Fund (ACDIF) at the ISC, expand funding, and expand purpose to include disaster funding.

