

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

Sarah Cottrell Propst
Cabinet Secretary

Todd E. Leahy, JD, PhD
Deputy Cabinet Secretary

Laura McCarthy, State Forester
Forestry Division



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Public Appointees Join Forest & Watershed Restoration Act Advisory Committee

SANTA FE, NM – The first public meeting of the Forest and Watershed Restoration Act (FAWRA) Advisory Board took place last week in Santa Fe. Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham appointed Kathy Holian, Steve Hernandez, and Brent Racher on July 8 as public members of the FAWRA Board after they were nominated by House Speaker Brian Egolf and Senate Pro Tempore Mary Kay Papen.

Ms. Holian is a former Santa Fe County Commissioner and forest landowner representing nonprofit conservation organizations with a focus on ecological restoration science; Mr. Hernandez is an attorney for the Carlsbad Irrigation District representing local government; and Mr. Racher is President of the New Mexico Forest Industry Association and a forest restoration business owner.

The FAWRA Board is made up of ten-members representing the public and state agencies, including the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division; State Land Office; Office of the State Engineer; Environment Department; Department of Game and Fish; Economic Development Department; and State Fire Marshal's Office. The current Chair is State Forester Laura McCarthy, EMNRD Forestry Division.

“The idea of collaborating across agencies on forest and watershed health is not a new idea,” said EMNRD Cabinet Secretary Sarah Cottrell Propst. “For the first time, this new law will dedicate a core level of funding to accelerate projects that restore forests and watersheds for the future.”

The FAWRA was created by House Bill 266 ([HB 266](#)), sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Peter Wirth (D-Santa Fe) and Representative Paul Bandy (R-Aztec) and passed unanimously in both the House and Senate. The bill was signed into law by Governor

Lujan Grisham on March 15, 2019. The law provides \$2 million annually to the EMNRD Forestry Division for the purpose of restoring forests and watersheds in the State of New Mexico. The FAWRA Board was established to evaluate and recommend projects that increase the adaptability and resilience of forests to recurring drought, insects, disease, wildfire, and extreme weather events. Projects can also be funded to protect water sources, restored burned areas, thin overgrown forests, supply wood products, or improve wildlife habitat.

“The seven state agencies that came together at the first (FAWRA) meeting agreed upon criteria to evaluate and recommend projects to implement with the \$2 million available this year,” said State Forester, Laura McCarthy. “Their work lays the foundation for leverage and co-funding of projects that will reduce wildfire risks and protect critical water sources.”

The EMNRD Forestry Division is tasked with administering, implementing, and reporting on approved projects. Annual funding is provided through the Land Grant Permanent Fund.

The next meeting of the [FAWRA](#) Board is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., August 6, 2019, in Santa Fe. For more information log onto nmforestry.com.



First meeting of the Forest and Watershed Restoration Act Advisory Board, July 9, 2019, Santa Fe, NM.



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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.