

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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News Release

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New Mexico State Forestry's Bluewater Watershed Restoration Project Underway

Santa Fe, NM – Work on a 200-acre watershed restoration treatment project near Bluewater Lake State Park in western New Mexico has begun, according to New Mexico State Forestry.

The project, which continues work that began in 2012, will treat State Trust Land administered by the State Land Office that serves as an upper tributary to Bluewater Lake and will reduce tree density and lower the threat of catastrophic wildfire, while promoting forest and watershed health.

“The partnership we have with the State Land Office and the McKinley Soil and Water Conservation District has been an integral part of getting this project started,” said Bernalillo District Special Projects Forester Lawrence Crane. “Working with these agencies as well as the US Forest Service, who has conducted similar projects adjacent to this area, we’ll help protect this vital watershed that surrounds nearby communities.”

Funding for the Bluewater Watershed Restoration Project was approved by Governor Martinez during the 2014 legislative session as a part of \$6.2 million in severance tax dollars to be used to treat approximately 7,700 acres of 14 high priority watershed areas on public lands.

The Bluewater Watershed Restoration Project will take place in three phases, targeting Bluewater Creek and other nearby intermittent streams that flow into Bluewater Lake. This area was listed as a high priority by New Mexico State Forestry as part of a statewide assessment of at-risk watershed areas. The project will utilize hand crews and mechanical equipment to reduce overly dense piñon/juniper stands to improve the health of the existing ponderosa pine forest and reestablish open meadows. Cut materials will be chipped and scattered to help prevent erosion.

This project supports water quality objectives, promotes the growth of native vegetation and creates a forest ecosystem that is more resilient to wildfire and forest insect and disease issues.

New Mexico State Forestry is involved in the implementation of many other healthy forest projects including Governor Susana Martinez’s water initiatives to protect and promote healthy watersheds.

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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.