

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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**NM State Forestry and the BLM Announce Forest and Watershed
Restoration Agreement**

Santa Fe, NM – The New Mexico State Forestry Division has entered into an agreement with the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to conduct thinning treatments within vital forests and critical watersheds statewide that are at high risk of wildfire, according to State Forester Tony Delfin.

The agreement allows State Forestry and the BLM to collaborate on forest and watershed restoration projects on BLM owned public lands that will enhance natural resources as well as provide better protection against wildfire.

“This partnership with the BLM is similar to the agreement we signed with the US Forest Service last year, which has allowed us to begin work on several important projects across the state,” said Delfin. “There is potential for work to be done on thousands of acres of public land that will not only benefit the natural resources but also help us protect and enhance the quality of life for communities that they surround.”

In 2014, Governor Susana Martinez authorized \$6.2 million in state severance tax funds to be used to affect landscape scale watershed restoration treatments on public lands where forests and watersheds have been in decline for years due to drought and impacts from disease and insect infestation. Several of these projects are already underway.

Under the new agreement, staff from New Mexico State Forestry and the BLM will work together to identify at-risk forest and watershed areas where project work will take place as funding becomes available.

“By leveraging state money with federal funds, we’ll be able to develop larger projects that will restore a greater number of acres of public land,” said Delfin. “By being able to work across jurisdictional boundaries, we’re creating stronger partnerships that will not only benefit and protect our lands, but set an example for effective project work in the future.”

“We look forward to collaborating with State Forestry on projects that will help protect communities from wildfire. Agreements like this and working together are critical to address the threat of wildfire and to improve the health of our State’s woodlands and watersheds,” said Acting BLM New Mexico State Director Aden Seidlitz.

According to the agreement, each project is to be completed within two years from their start date.

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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.

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