

Bill Richardson
Governor

Jon Goldstein
Cabinet Secretary
Jim Noel
Deputy Cabinet Secretary

Arthur "Butch" Blazer
Division Director
Forestry Division



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact:

Dan Ware, Public Relations Coordinator: 505-476-3336

Governor Bill Richardson Announces \$15 Million in Stimulus Funding will Help Wildfire Efforts

10-Year Anniversary of Cerro Grande Sees Strong Statewide Forest Efforts

SANTA FE, NM – Governor Bill Richardson today announced \$15 million in federal stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act have been allocated to the State Forestry Division to help prevent catastrophic wildfire and improve forest and watershed conditions on state, private and tribal lands across New Mexico.

"The 10-year anniversary of the catastrophic Cerro Grande fire reminds us that wisely managing our forests is critical to our health, safety and quality of life," said Governor Richardson. "These funds also create jobs and stimulate local economies."

The projects are funded by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The funding will be administered by the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department's Forestry Division. The funding will help continue and expand similar projects statewide and help smaller communities establish and sustain their own forest treatment programs.

"These projects will help protect New Mexicans in the event of a wildfire, increase forest health, and gather information to target problem areas in the future," said Jon Goldstein, Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. "I am especially proud of the strong cooperative state/tribal relationship shown in the Santa Clara Pueblo project."

"Natural resources in Santa Clara Pueblo were dramatically impacted by the Oso fire in 1998 and the Cerro Grande of 2000," stated Santa Clara Pueblo Governor Walter Dasheno. "This funding allows us to hire twelve full-time and 30 seasonal positions to renew our ecosystem. We would especially like to thank Governor Bill Richardson and his staff, Butch Blazer, State Forester and Lindsey Quam, Resource Protection Forester for this partnership agreement."

A list of the approved projects is below:

Statewide Hazardous Fuels Treatment (\$4.5 Million) –These projects are designed to protect communities or other areas at risk of catastrophic wildfire due to population density and/or fuel loads. Projects will be conducted in the following areas:

- **\$1.8 million Capitan District** – Fort Stanton, Alto Mesa/Moon Mountain, Cox Canyon
- **\$1.4 million Cimarron District** – Black Lake, Colfax Riparian Restoration, Red River, Angel Fire
- **\$1.3 million Chama District** – San Juan County, Mesa de las Vejas

Santa Clara Pueblo Ecosystem Restoration (\$6.5 Million) – This project is designed to reduce hazardous fuels within the boundaries of The Pueblo of Santa Clara. The project will continue to exemplify successful work and serve as a demonstration project for future collaboration with tribes. Santa Clara Pueblo developed a community Wildfire Protection Plan that addresses the risk of wildfire to various values within Pueblo boundaries. The plan identifies several priority treatment areas that are in desperate need of hazardous fuel reduction treatment. This project is broken into three separate sections. The sections are Santa Clara Creek headwaters, Santa Clara Canyon and the Rio Grande River Bosque.

New Mexico Forest Inventory Analysis (\$4.0 Million) – This project will address a significant gap in forest inventory information. While data has been collected in all but a few states each year, to guide forest management decision making, no new data has been available for New Mexico for the last decade. In the meanwhile, New Mexico forests have experienced large scale wildfires, widespread tree mortality due to drought and insect epidemics, and differing pressures from forest industries from previous decades. The information derived from this project is essential to correcting unhealthy forest conditions, sizing economic opportunities to match available and accessible wood supply and tracking the impacts of climate and other ecological changes on New Mexico's forests.

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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.

Forestry Division
1220 South St. Francis Drive • Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
Phone (505) 476-3325 • Fax (505) 476-3330 • www.emnrd.state.nm.us/FD

