

NEW MEXICO OPPORTUNITY MAPPING PROJECT

WHAT IS IT?

The New Mexico Opportunity Mapping Project is a collaborative effort by agencies and NGOs to develop up-to-date, accessible information about forest and watershed restoration across New Mexico. The purpose of the Opportunity Mapping Project is to enable planners and managers from all jurisdictions to access data that can help them make decisions about how to invest or match their “next dollar” in a way that will complement past restoration work and achieve a larger-scale outcome.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The New Mexico Opportunity Mapping Project (OMP) is developed as an on-line database where any agency, organization or partnership effort can enter information about their project. The resulting maps and data can be accessed at various scales by any user through the “All About Watersheds” portal that is hosted by the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute (FWRI) and managed by the New Mexico State Forestry Division’s Forest and Watershed Health Office. Some potential uses include:

1. Multiple agencies coordinate their planning and funding to achieve a larger scale of impact, and to view accomplishments across ownerships.
2. Emergency managers can understand risks to forests and watersheds and gaps in efforts to protect communities, infrastructure and water supplies.
3. Agencies and collaborative groups get a picture of where projects on other ownerships have taken place to improve their own planning, funding decisions and reporting on outcomes.
4. Agencies and collaborative groups determine if they are proposing projects in areas with important values at risk or has been identified as a high priority in a pre-existing plan or report.
5. Agencies and collaborative groups zero in on a specific landscape where they are working to keep track of past projects, leverage funding, and plan connectivity of their future work.

Please note that private land data will only be included in an aggregated form that does not disclose specific project locations.

WHO IS WORKING ON IT?

The concept of the New Mexico Opportunity Mapping Project was created at a meeting of the Forest and Watershed Management Coordinating Group (FWMCG) convened by the State Forester. The partners who volunteered to assist include:

- New Mexico Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division (NMSF)
- USDA Forest Service, Southwest Region (USFS)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute (FWRI)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

The USDA Forest Service, National Partnership Office provided grants to the FWRI and TNC to support development of the Opportunity Mapping Project process and tools. All of the partner organizations regularly attend the FWMCG meetings and provide progress reports.

WHAT ARE THE PROJECT PHASES?

The project is being developed in multiple phases. Some are complete and some are on-going.

1. **NM Vegetation Treatment Database and Upload Tool.** Developed and maintained by FWRI, the geodatabase has information about completed, planned and historic vegetation treatments. The database and other existing data layers can be viewed as an interactive map and draft assessment tool at www.vegetationtreatments.org. The upload tool is under development. When complete, agencies and groups can use it to easily add new information to the Vegetation Treatment Database/NMWRAP (see below).

Status: The database structure is completed and data is continually being added. The draft assessment tool will remain active until the NMWRAP is running. A draft upload tool will be tested beginning in December 2017, with full operation by May 2018.

2. **NM Watershed Resource Assessment Portal (WRAP).** This tool is planned as the final phase of the project, allowing users to generate the maps and summary assessment data valuable in collaborative watershed planning and reporting.

Status: FEMA/NMDHSEM is funding the Earth Data Analysis Center (EDAC) at UNM to develop this portal. Completion is expected by September 2018.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Complete information in the NM Vegetation Treatment Database is essential for the NM Opportunity Mapping Project to fully achieve its potential. The best way to get involved is to provide data from the projects you are involved with to the FWRI. Until the upload tool is developed, the contact is Katie Withnall at kwithnall@nmhu.edu. Reports for specific landscapes using the Landscape Unit Assessment Tool are available to users. Requests (until the user interface download tool is developed) can be emailed to Joe Zebrowski at jpzebrowski@nmhu.edu.

Currently, the FWRI and TNC are providing support through the NM Opportunity Mapping Project to a multi-sector planning team for the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo Binational Forum on November 7-8 2017 in El Paso, Texas. The Binational Forum is hosted by Coca-Cola, Desert LCC, World Wildlife Fund and additional partners from Mexico. For more information on the Binational Forum contact Laura McCarthy at lmccarthy@tnc.org.

NEW MEXICO OPPORTUNITY MAPPING TEAM

- Susan Rich, NMSF
- Joe Norrell, Elaine Kohrman, and John Waconda, USFS
- Kris Chavez-Graham and Rick Strait, NRCS
- Kent Reid and Joe Zebrowski, FWRI
- Laura McCarthy, TNC