

## Black Lake TREX



Funded by the Collaborative Forest Restoration  
Program (CFRP), Region 3 of the USDA Forest  
Service



### Southwest Fire Science Consortium Webinar Series **Black Lake Prescribed Burn: Lessons Learned in Capacity Building for Prescribed Fire**

**January 15, 2014**

Eytan Krasilovsky, Forest Guild



Photo: Mark Meyers

## Sections

- Context: CFRP and the SLO
- History of the Project
- Elements of Coordinating a TREX
- Engaging with the Public
- The Controlled Burn
- After Action Review



Photos: Mark Meyers



# Context: What is the CFRP?

Since 2001 the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) has funded 175 projects including close to **500** partners in planning and implementing collaborative forest restoration and small diameter utilization projects in **20** counties across New Mexico. These projects have restored over **30,000 acres** and created over **700** jobs.



Photo: Mark Meyers



This project directly addresses public law 106-393 (Community Forest Restoration Act, 2000) objective (B), to “**re-establish fire regimes approximating those that shaped forest ecosystems prior to fire suppression.**”



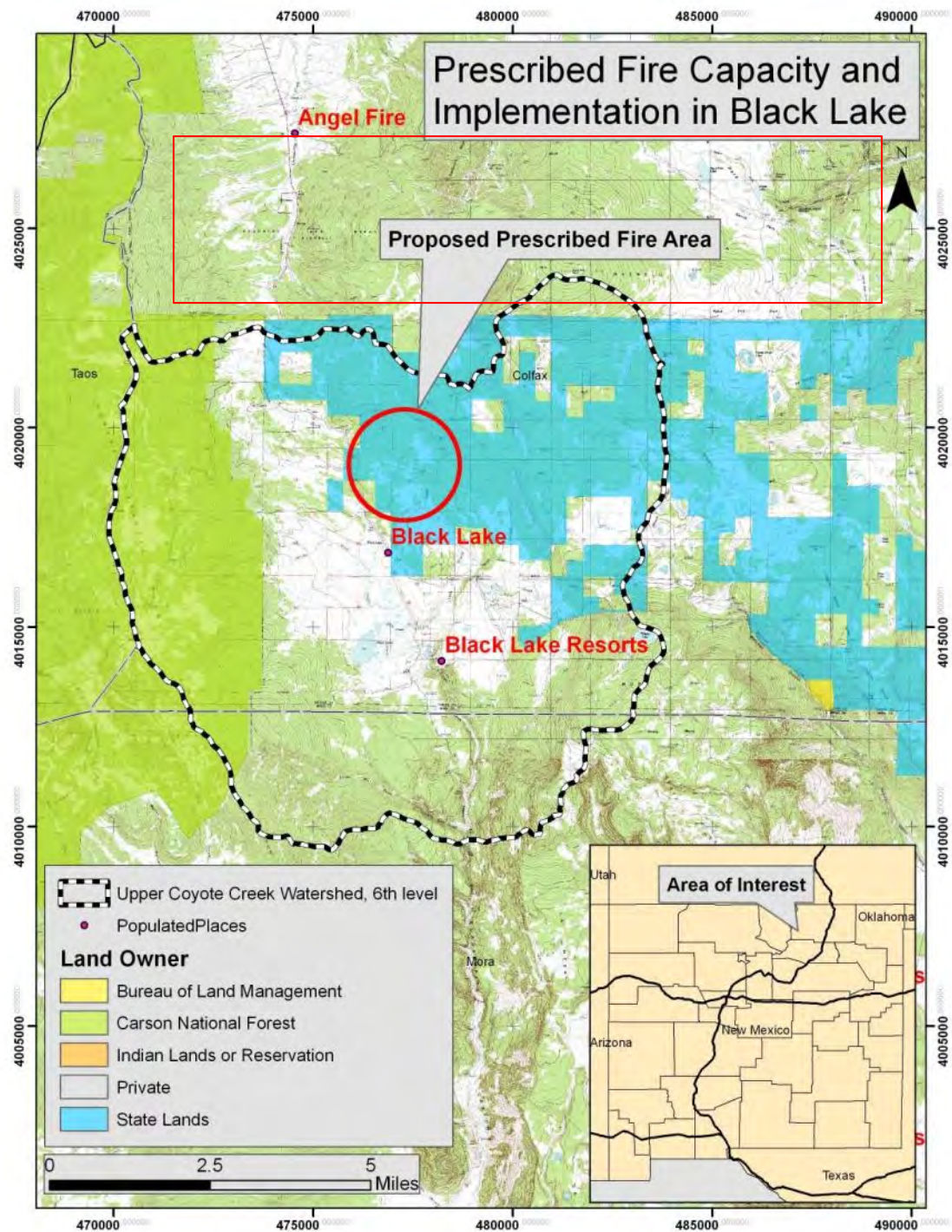
# Context: The New Mexico State Land Office



Photo: David Godwin







# History of the project

A timeline of the factors that lined-up to convene a Training Exchange on state trust lands near Black Lake NM.

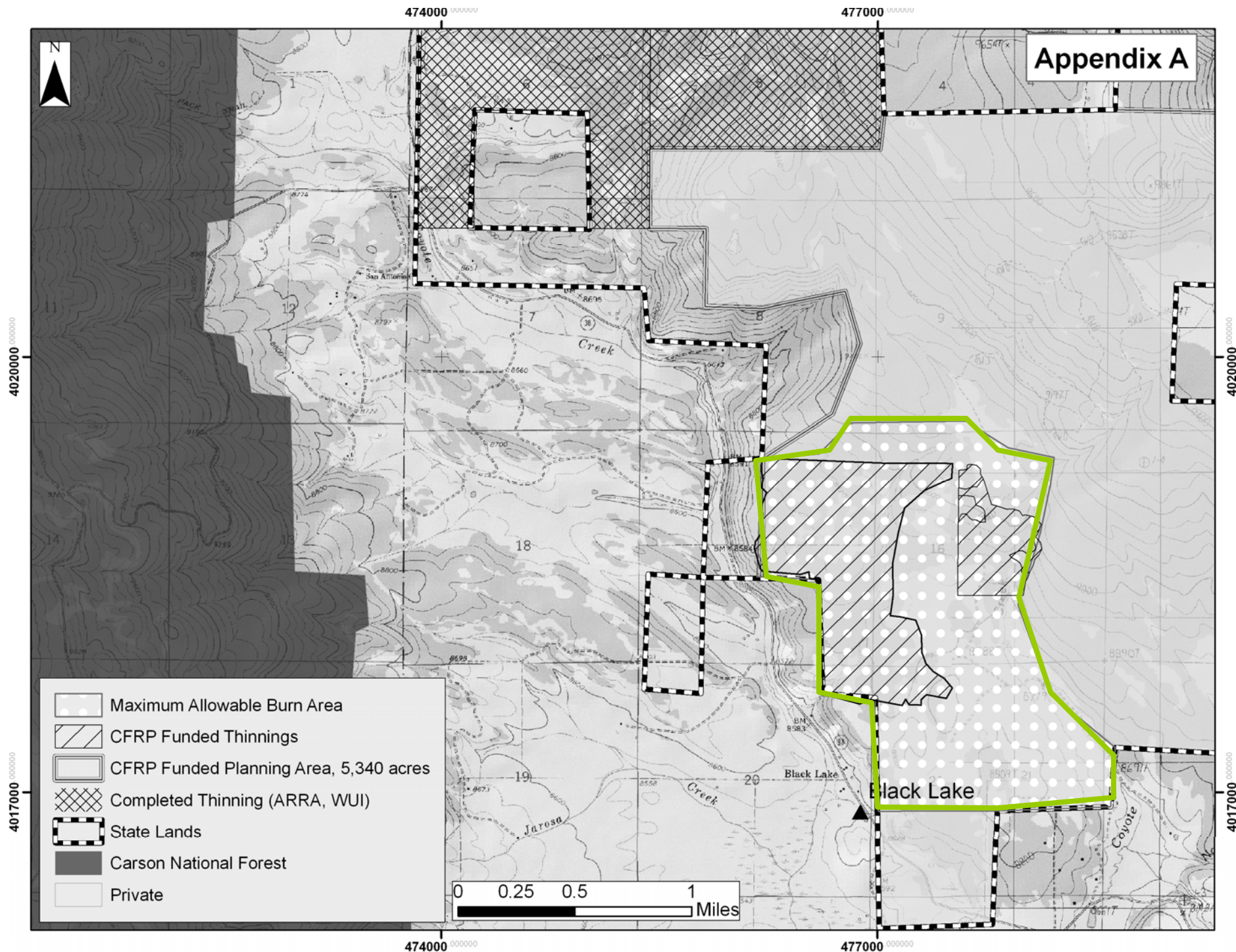
2005-2006	2007 - 2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
82 controlled burn completed	300 acres NEPA	40 acres thinning	250 acres thinning			
	260 acres thinning	5000 acres NEPA	Partners coordinate and submit Black Lake TREX grant to CFRP	Black Lake TREX phase I implemented (105 acres burned)	Phase II planned September/October	
		Burn plan developed				
	Capacity building for wood removal and utilization					
	80 acre state funded fuel-breaks completed nearby	350 acre ARRA thinning completed nearby				

## Elements of Coordinating a TREX: Collaborators

HR Vigil Small Products, 5, CRWB, FFT1, and three FFT2s
NM State Land Office, 1, FFT2 and agency representative
Coconino National Forest, 1, FFT2
Bandelier National Monument, RX gear cache
Fire Learning Network of the Nature Conservancy, 1, radio cache, coordination and leadership, burn plan review, and project support
Angel Fire Fire Department (AFFD), 5, two engines
Moreno Valley Fire Department – Black Lake Station, 4, engine, public outreach, and water tender
TFO of the Bureau of Land Management, support and weather station
NRG Consulting, 3, burn boss, division chief, and safety officer
Cimarron District, NM State Forestry, support at public meetings
Carson National Forest, support and presenter
Santa Clara Pueblo, 3, two FIRB-Ts and one FFT1, presenter
<b>Twin Willows Ranch</b>
Joe and Mark Torres, Grazing Lessee, support, water tank, and cattle resting
Norbert Vigil, Grazing Lessee, support
Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, 4, FFT2-T
Highlands University, 4, and presenter
Alcon Wildfire Attack, 4, engine and crew
Student Association for Fire Ecology, 3, ENGB, FFT1, and FTT2
Tall Timbers Research Station, 1, FEMO
TNC Maryland Chapter, 1, CRWB
Glacier Technologies, 1, FFT1-T
Forest Guild, 3, Project coordination and administration



# Appendix A





# RX Fire at Black Lake CFRP



4017000

RX\_HoldingLines

Id

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

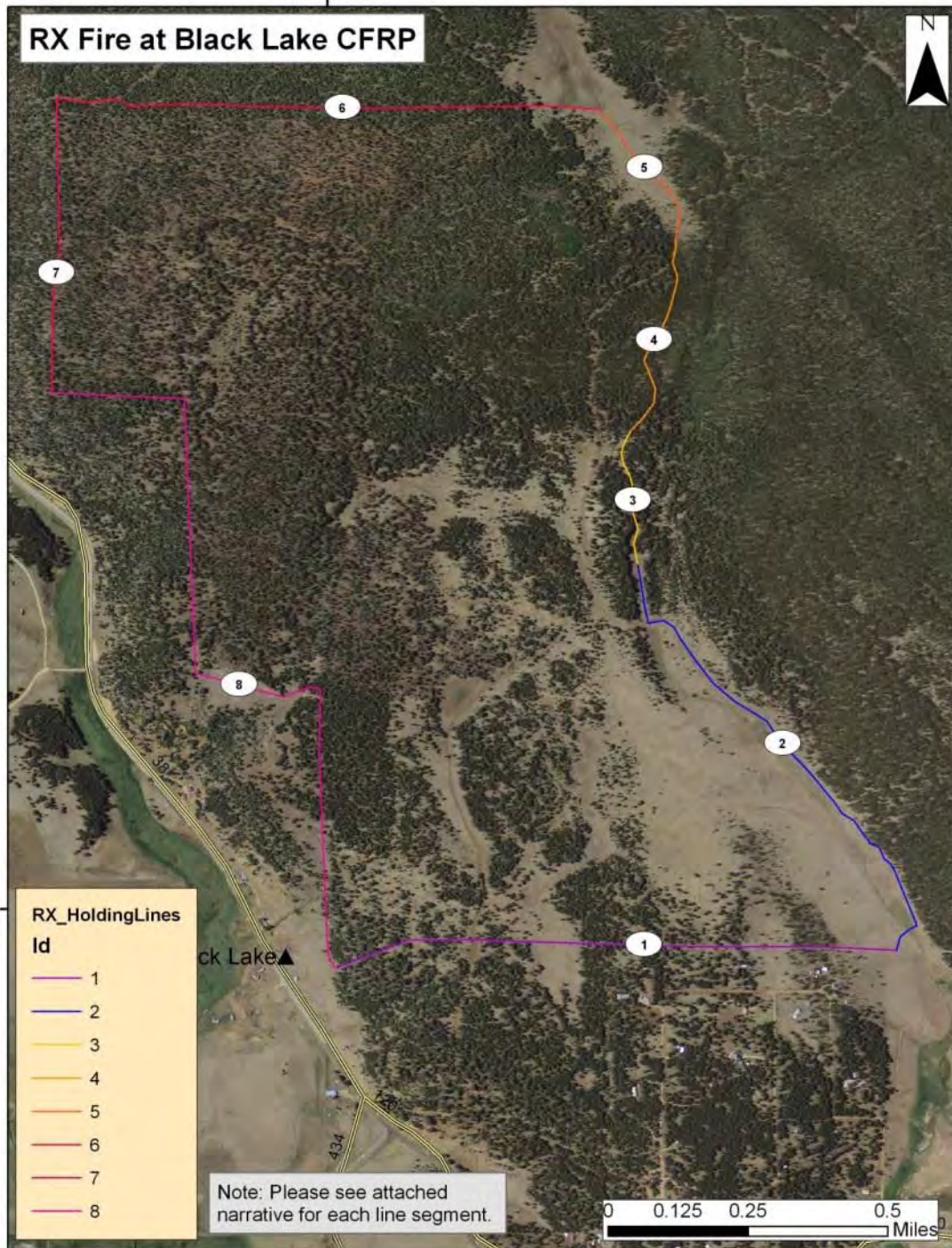
Black Lake▲

Note: Please see attached narrative for each line segment.

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

4017000

477000









# Elements of Coordinating a TREX



Photo: Jacquie Binford-Bell

1. Guidance from the Fire Learning Network (from proposal to implementation)
2. Shared liability between the SLO, the Guild, and NRG Consulting
3. Liability waivers for all types of participants
4. Local Fire Departments on board
5. Burn plan ready and reviewed
6. Funding for support engines, lodging, transportation, stipends, travel reimbursements, drip-torch mix, and food (which was leveraged from non-federal sources).
7. Public meetings and communication

## 2013

September 2012	January – July	August - September	October
Field meeting with partners and FLN	Burn boss bid process	Coordinate installation of Taos BLM mobile RAWS station	Assemble cadre and burn organization, email local email list, activate burn plan, finalize 130/190, deliver pack tests, convene class room presentation sessions , begin burning, host press and VIP day, mop-up.
Map and create control line on-site	Develop agreements with partners	Develop organization chart	
Finalize MOUs with BLM and Angel Fire	Convene partner field meeting	Confirm cadre quals, and coordinate NWCG status	
	Collect ecological data	Deliver 130/190 remotely	
	Announce TREN opportunity		Convene public meeting on site within a month of burn.



# What we did well:

Coordinated with Moreno Valley Fire Department (MVFD) and Angel Fire Fire Department (AFFD). Quote from Chief Coss, “We need to get these communities used to smoke in the air in the fall.”







# What we did well:

- Offered opportunities for 6 fire fighter type 2 (FFT2) trainees and offered training and qualification (task book) opportunities for local, regional, and national practitioners.



What we did well: Provided ecological and policy context for prescribed fire through expert presentations.





# What we did well:

Changed the public perception of using controlled burning in the media locally and nationally



# What we did well:



## Sangre de Cristo Chronicle

Vol. 40, No. 41, 24 Pages

Thursday, October 10, 2013

sangrechronicle.com

75 Cent

■ **ANGEL FIRE**  
Pickleball champions PAGE 6

■ **EAGLE NEST**  
Village Searches for Engineer PAGE 10

■ **RED RIVER**  
Oktoberfest Returns PAGE 12

■ **CIMARRON**  
Canyon Inn Burns Down PAGE 14

### Beneficial blaze



A firefighter tends to the controlled burn outside of Black Lake on Oct. 2. Thirty-four fire professionals participated in the controlled burn.

## Crews burn 105 of 900 acres near Angel Fire, plan to return

### Angel Fire property owners protest cell tower

BY JESSE CHANEY  
Managing editor

ANGEL FIRE — Citing mainly health and aesthetic concerns, several homeowners are protesting the planned construction of a new cellular tower expected to improve wireless telephone service in southern Angel Fire and Black Lake.

"I am writing you to protest the development of a cell tower in the Aspens," Milan and Marcia Barker, who own a home near the proposed construction site, wrote in an email to Angel Fire Community Development Director Mark Rivers. "The planned tower would be unsightly, lower property values, bring additional unwanted traffic, and studies have shown health risks for those people in close proximity to equipment."

Comcast Wireless has applied for a conditional use permit to build the 120-foot-tall monopole tower on a utility easement within the Country Club 1B Amended subdivision in southwest Angel Fire.

### 12. FORESTS:

#### Fighting fire with fire brings both benefits and challenges, N.M. project shows

April Reese, E&E reporter

Published: Friday, October 4, 2013

BLACK LAKE, N.M. — Silhouetted against a wall of gray smoke, a fire specialist in a yellow hard hat wove through a stand of ponderosa pine trees Tuesday, igniting small branch piles with a special "drip torch" that looked like a super-sized candle ignition rod.

It was day two of a three-day prescribed burn on state forestlands intended to protect the small community of Angel Fire, about 8 miles north of here, from the kind of treetop-incinerating wildfire that scorched 156,000 acres in nearby Los Alamos in 2011.

It took about three years to plan and secure funding for the controlled burn project — in large part supported by a \$137,000 grant from the federal Collaborative Forest Restoration Program — and the Black Lake project team was happy to finally see fire meet wood.

"This is doing a real good thing for the community," said Herman Vigil, who owns a small forest restoration business hired to help carry out the burn.

The project is a prime example of both the promise and the challenges of prescribed fire. While hundreds of thousands of acres across the country are in need of fuel treatments like this one, inadequate funding, a persistent public wariness of controlled burns and a lack of trained personnel are undermining forest managers' ability to get the job done, fire experts say.

The Black Lake burn was a team effort involving the Nature Conservancy, the New Mexico State Land Office, forest restoration contractors, two local fire departments and a national nonprofit organization of foresters called the Forest Guild that is based in Santa Fe. The 37-member crew also included students from states around the country participating in the Nature Conservancy's fire



A worker surveys part of the area burned in this week's Black Lake prescribed burn project, designed to reduce fuels to protect nearby communities from wildfire. Photos by April Reese.



# What we did well:

Provided controlled burning experience for wildfire suppression professionals. Many of the professionals involved in the project had wildfire suppression experience, but no direct experience with prescribed fire.

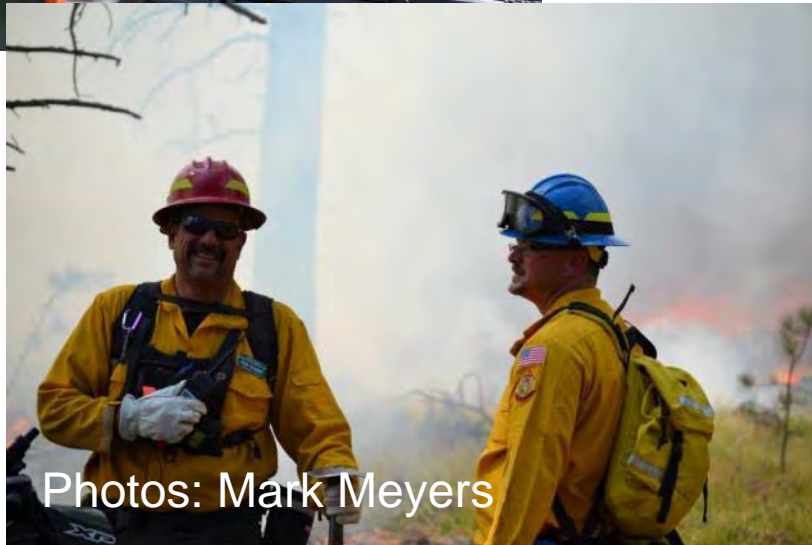


Photo: Mark Meyers



# What we did well:

- Build burn boss and FFT2 capacity in NM



Photos: Mark Meyers





# What we could do better:

- Training could have been better integrated with operations throughout the week.
- Directed lunch prep squad to add additional calories for lunches.
- Better manage private partner's time.



# What we could do better:

- Better coordination ahead of time clarifying the roles of agency/partner liaisons and resource advisors.



Photo: David Godwin



# What we could do better:

- Slash could be removed away from trees more and slash knocked down better.
- FFT2 trainees could have had separate training components on days 1 and 2 that would have been followed up with directed reinforcements by squad and firing bosses.





# What we learned:





# What we learned:

The burn plan was too detailed and had a restrictive upper temperature limit of 65 degrees that should have been 68 – 70 degrees. This had a bearing on acres treated.



# What we learned:

- A lack of integrating 130/190 field day components throughout the week led to some inefficient tool use and inefficient wet mop up techniques
- Morning preparation of IAPs and maps caused delays for morning meetings.



Photo: Reina Fernandez



# What we learned:

- Burning in a mixed severity fire regime like mixed conifer forests with aspen, is challenging and requires acceptance of crown scorch and mortality.



Photos: Zander Evans

# What we learned:

- Wildfire suppression professionals can expand their suite of techniques for burning PP and MC during shoulder seasons and in thinned sites such as taking advantage of having red slash.
- Last minute technical review of Burn Plan was too late. The changing role of NM State Forestry over time was a challenge.





# Planning your own TREX?



- Plan extra time to put agreements in place.
- Not all partners can volunteer time.
- Plan extra time to reach out to all the local fire personnel.
- When working in a WUI, plan extra time and resources to convene public meetings before and after the burn.
- Budget.
- Make time to engage with the Press and other important professionals.





# Black Lake TREX



Funded by the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP), Region 3 of the USDA Forest Service



Questions?

