

**Henry P. Roybal**  
*Commissioner, District 1*

**Anna Hansen**  
*Commissioner, District 2*

**Rudy N. Garcia**  
*Commissioner, District 3*



**Anna T. Hamilton**  
*Commissioner, District 4*

**Ed Moreno**  
*Commissioner, District 5*

**Katherine Miller**  
*County Manager*

## **M E M O R A N D U M**

**DATE:** April 9, 2019

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** *Anna T. Hamilton, Santa Fe County Commissioner, District 4*  
*Anna Hansen, Santa Fe County Commissioner, District 2*

**VIA:** Katherine Miller, County Manager

**RE:** A Resolution Urging the United States Forest Service to Conduct a Comprehensive Environmental Analysis in Accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act Prior to Commencing the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project. (Commissioner Hamilton and Commissioner Hansen) (Item Tabled at the March 26, 2019, Meeting)

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### **SUMMARY**

This resolution expresses Santa Fe County's support for having a comprehensive analysis of environmental impacts conducted for the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, prior to project implementation.

### **BACKGROUND**

The U.S. Forest Service is in the early stages of planning a 50,000-acre forest fuel treatment project within the Santa Fe Fireshed called the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project. The designated project areas are northeast and southeast of Santa Fe (Figure 1). As a major action with federal involvement, this project is subject the NEPA process, intended to provide an assessment of environmental impacts, as well as plans for any needed impact mitigations, prior to project implementation. This resolution encourages the U.S. Forest Service to recognize the magnitude of this action and conduct a comprehensive and objective NEPA analysis, which will allow for a comprehensive assessment of cumulative impacts, mitigation of any adverse impacts, and strong public involvement.

### **ACTION REQUESTED**

Commissioner Hamilton and Commissioner Hansen respectfully request the Board of County Commissioners support and approve this item.

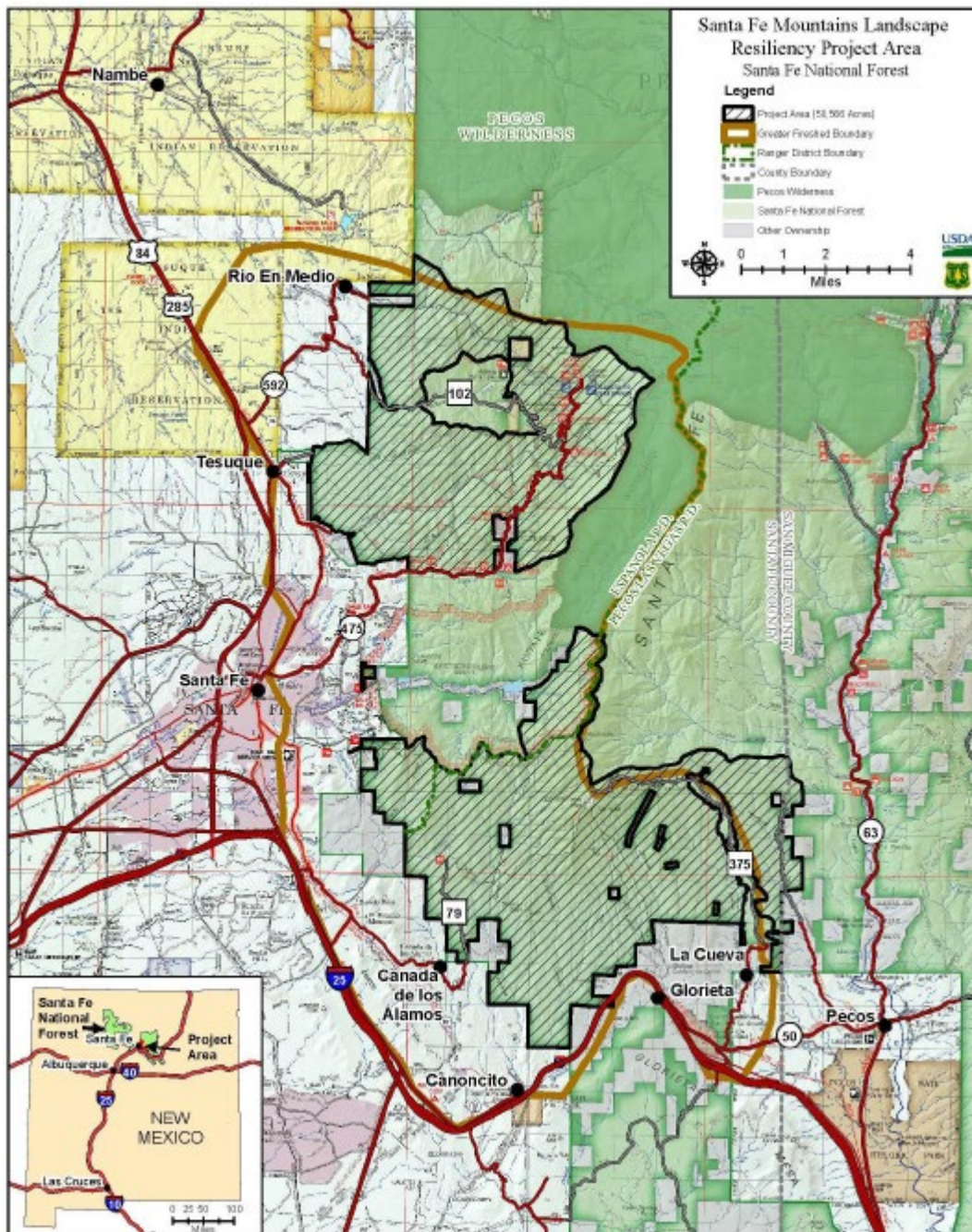


Figure 1. Map showing the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed and the location of the proposed U.S. Forest Service Santa Fe Mountains Resiliency Project.

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
SANTA FE COUNTY  
RESOLUTION NO. 2019 – \_\_\_\_\_**

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A RESOLUTION URGING THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE TO CONDUCT A  
COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT PRIOR TO COMMENCING THE SANTA  
FE MOUNTAINS LANDSCAPE RESILIENCY PROJECT

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**WHEREAS**, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service), along with the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition (Coalition), has designated 168 square miles (107,520 acres) of National Forest and private lands in northeastern Santa Fe County and surrounding areas as the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed (Fireshed); and

**WHEREAS**, the Coalition's mission is to use a proactive, collaborative approach to improve the health and long-term resilience of forested watersheds and communities by addressing wildfire; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fireshed is a focus for mechanical thinning of trees and other vegetation and prescribed burning in order to reduce fuels and protect resources including critical water sources; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fireshed provides recreation and outdoor enjoyment to more than 100,000 Santa Fe County residents and thousands of visitors each year and is home to the Santa Fe Ski Basin, Hyde Memorial State Park, Santa Fe Municipal Watershed, portions of the Pecos Wilderness and Tesuque and Nambe Pueblos, extensive inventoried roadless areas and high value habitat for breeding birds and other wildlife; and

**WHEREAS**, the Forest Service is in the early stages of planning a 50,000-acre forest resiliency project within the Fireshed called the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project, during which the likelihood of substantial impacts will be determined; and

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners (Board) passed a resolution in 2010, Resolution No. 2010-110, in support of Wilderness designation for Inventoried Roadless Areas which are adjacent to the Pecos Wilderness that may be impacted by the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project; and

**WHEREAS**, the Forest Service is part of the Fire Research Consensus project that includes collaboration between the University of California, The Nature Conservancy, the USGS, the Forest Service and others, and in 2017 published a “Consensus Statement on the role of wildfire in forested landscapes of the western United States” that can inform the proposed Santa Fe Mountain Landscape Resiliency Project; and

**WHEREAS**, National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) is our national charter for the environment, intended to help public officials make decisions based on comprehensively understanding environmental consequences before actions are taken and mandating, to the fullest extent possible, citizen involvement in such decisions; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Project may have a significant effect on the environment and should not qualify as a categorical exclusion under NEPA; and

**WHEREAS**, under NEPA, “significance” requires consideration of both context and intensity of potential effects, 40 CFR 1508.27; and

**WHEREAS**, context refers to the geographic, biophysical, and social context in which effects would occur, and intensity refers to the severity of impact, and includes consideration of a number of variables, such as effects on public health and safety, potential for adverse effects on threatened and endangered species, the degree to which effects are uncertain, and others; and

**WHEREAS**, the NEPA analysis process must include analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Project on a variety of resources, including the impacts of the prescribed burning on air quality and public health, threatened and endangered species, inventoried roadless areas, water quality, soils, vegetation and wildlife; and

**WHEREAS**, unless the Forest Service determines at the outset that a full environmental impact statement (EIS) is necessary to analyze the Project’s impacts, the Forest Service should complete a thorough environmental assessment and, if warranted by the findings of the EA, a full EIS; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board understands that the Forest Service is committed to conducting substantially more public outreach than what is necessarily required under its NEPA regulations.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board as follows:

1. The Board supports and encourages the Forest Service to conduct a comprehensive and objective NEPA analysis prior to commencing the Santa Fe Mountains Landscape Resiliency Project.

2. The Forest Service should provide effective notice to the public through multiple means, conduct public outreach, and assure that the public is otherwise well-informed about the proposed Project and has multiple and convenient opportunities to fully participate in the NEPA process.

3. The Forest Service should complete the NEPA analysis, which should incorporate a broad range of forest and fire ecology research and an evaluation of all reasonable alternatives to the proposed Project, before taking any action in the Fireshed.

**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED ON THIS 9<sup>th</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2019**

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SANTA FE COUNTY**

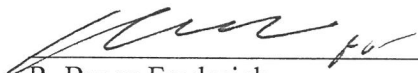
By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Anna T. Hamilton, Chair

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Geraldine Salazar  
Santa Fe County Clerk

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved as to form:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
R. Bruce Frederick  
Santa Fe County Attorney