

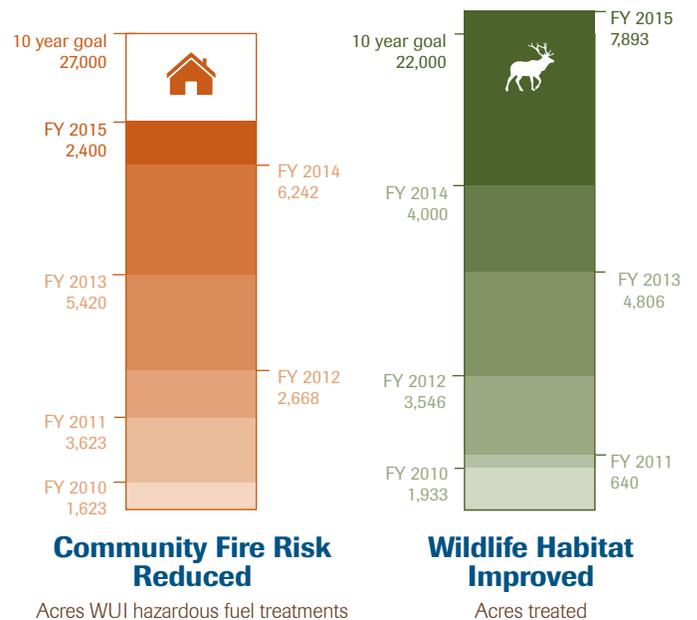


Alamo Bog, Jemez Mountains. Sediment cores from this unique wetland provide a record of forests and fire going back almost 9,000 years. © David Solis

The Southwest Jemez collaborative landscape consists of 210,000 acres within the Jemez River watershed in north-central New Mexico. Southwest Jemez CFLR activities reduce fire risk while providing local jobs, in a area that has experienced devastating fires. The project will improve wildlife habitat, watershed conditions, and restore landscapes that contain over 4,500 heritage sites of the Jemez Pueblo Ancestral lands.

Partners

- Amigos de Valles Caldera
- Bandelier National Monument
- Forest Stewards Guild
- Hawks Aloft
- Los Alamos National Laboratory
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- New Mexico Environment Department
- New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute
- New Mexico Forest Industry Association
- New Mexico State Forestry Division
- New Mexico State University
- New Mexico Trout
- Northern Arizona University
- Pueblo of Jemez
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Texas Tech University
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trout Unlimited
- USDA Systematic Entomology Laboratory/ Smithsonian Institution
- USGS
- U.S. Bureau of Indian Education
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. National Park Service
- University of Arizona
- University of Maryland
- University of Nevada, Desert Research Institute
- University of New Mexico
- U.S. Forest Service
- Valles Caldera National Preserve
- Village of Jemez Springs
- WildEarth Guardians
- Wild Turkey Federation





Ann Cooke

Ann Cooke’s involvement in forest health is bookended by two historic fires.

In 2000, Cooke stood in her living room holding her two-week old newborn, with her roof opened in mid-construction, watching the smoke pour from the Cerro Grande Fire burning parts of Los Alamos, New Mexico, home to the famous nuclear research facility.

At that time she worried about her house; not because she thought it would burn, but rather whether the Los Alamos-based contractor would return. He might have had other priorities closer at home to attend to.

The second fire was the Las Conchas Fire eleven years later. At that time the fire was the largest in New Mexico history (although exceeded the following year by the Whitewater-Baldy Fire), and resulted in flooding that shut down drinking water reservoirs in Santa Fe and further downstream in Albuquerque. Again Cooke watched the billowing smoke as the fire burned on the mountain side southeast of her Sierras Los Pinos neighborhood- but this time with a closed roof of metal, state-of-the-art shingles, and boxed eaves.

In between those fires Cooke became involved in one of the nation’s first Firewise Communities, and helped lead local efforts to make her neighborhood less conducive to dangerous fires. Those efforts continue today, and the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) program plays a role in providing her community the tools they need to become better adapted to fire.

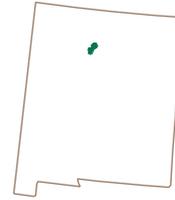
Previously, the plan for dealing with fires was to “prepare to evacuate and close the forest,” says Cooke.

Over the past six years the Southwest Jemez CFLR project has provided more tangible actions to improve the health of the forests, reducing the risk of catastrophic fire on more than 25,000 acres, and improving wildlife habitat on nearly 23,000 acres.

“Over the years I have detected attitude changes for many of my neighbors here, from a mentality of working against the Forest Service and their perceived abuses to one of working with the Forest Service to improve forest health,” Cooke notes.

“Our challenge today is recognizing that fire has a natural role in these mountains, and we don’t have the choice of stopping fires altogether,” she adds. “We don’t want to be selecting for fires that we can’t put out.”

“CFLR helps us manage our forests with fire in a more realistic way, and I encourage my neighbors to prepare for the eventuality of fire instead of depending upon the mistaken supposition that fire can’t happen here.”



Total acreage of landscape: 210,000

2015 Results

- 99 jobs created or maintained on average per year
- \$6.4 million in total labor income
- 2,400 acres of hazardous fuels reduced
- 3,582 CCF of timber sold
- 7,893 acres of rangeland restored



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Thinning treatments by the Forest Guild Youth Conservation Corps @ Anne Janik

Monitoring fish populations in San Antonio Creek. © Bob Parmenter