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## PROJECT INFORMATION

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**Project Title:** WUI haz fuel thinning treatment on private and state land.  
**Project Type:** FOREST MANAGEMENT, WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE  
**Latitude/Longitude (DMS):** 33.738820 / -105.737829  
**County(s):** LINCOLN  
**Project Description:** Fuels removal and follow up chipping or mastication. One year of work if funded for 2026.

## REQUESTOR INFORMATION

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**Project Organization:**  
**Contact Name:** Nick Smokovich  
**Email Address:** [nick.smokovich@emnrd.nm.gov](mailto:nick.smokovich@emnrd.nm.gov)  
**Organization:** New Mexico Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department - State Forestry Division  
**Address:** 304 W. 2nd Street, Capitan NM 88316  
**Phone:** 5753542231

## OVERALL STATUS

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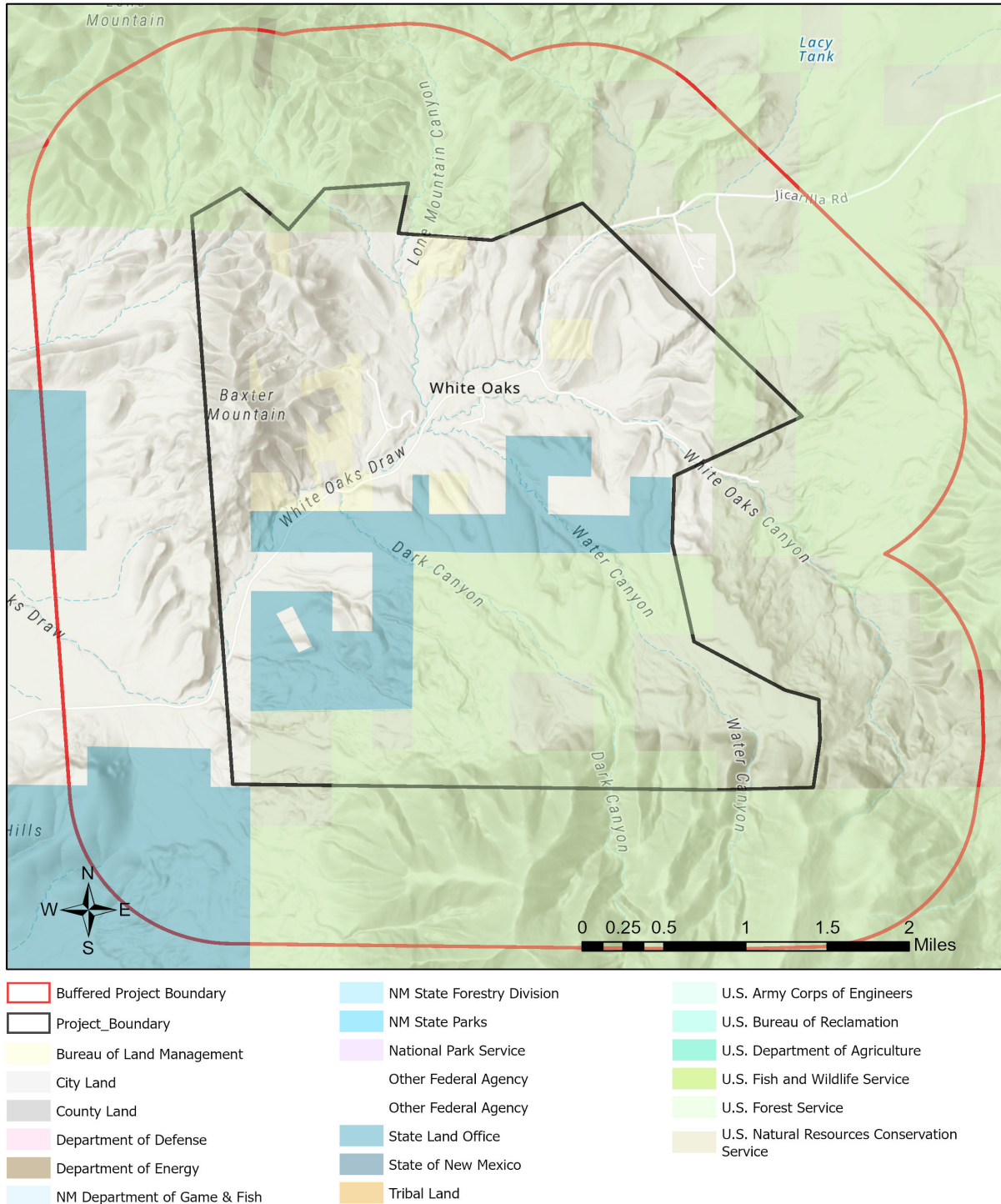
This report contains an initial list of recommendations regarding potential impacts to wildlife or wildlife habitats from the proposed project; see the Project Recommendations section below for further details. Your project proposal is being forwarded to a New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) biologist for review to determine whether there are any additional recommendations regarding the proposed actions. A Department biologist will be in touch within 30 days if there are further recommendations regarding this project proposal.

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**About this report:**

- This environmental review is based on the project description and location that was entered. The report must be updated if the project type, area, or operational components are modified.
- This is a preliminary environmental screening assessment and report. It is not a substitute for the potential wildlife knowledge gained by having a biologist conduct a field survey of the project area. Federal status and plant data are provided as a courtesy to users. The review is also not intended to replace consultation required under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), including impact analyses for federal resources from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) using their [Information for Planning and Consultation tool](#).
- This report contains information on wildlife species protected under the ESA and the [Wildlife Conservation Act \(WCA\)](#), [Species of Greatest Conservation Need \(SGCN\)](#), and Species of Economic and Recreational Importance (SERI). Species listed under the ESA are protected from take at the federal level and under the WCA are protected from take at the state level. SGCN are identified in the [State Wildlife Action Plan \(SWAP\) for New Mexico](#); all of these species are considered to be of conservation concern but not all of them are protected from take at the state or federal level. The harvest of all SERI is regulated at the state level. The Department has no authority to designate critical habitat for species listed under the WCA; only the USFWS can designate critical habitat for species listed under the ESA.
- The New Mexico Environmental Review Tool (ERT) utilizes species observation locations and species habitat suitability models, both of which are subject to ongoing change and refinement. Inclusion or omission of a species within a report cannot guarantee species presence or absence within your project area. To determine occurrence of any species listed in this report, or other wildlife that may be present within your project area, onsite surveys conducted by a qualified biologist during appropriate, species-specific survey timelines may be necessary.
- The Department encourages use of the ERT to modify proposed projects for avoidance, minimization, or mitigation of wildlife impacts. However, the ERT is not intended to be used in a repeatedly iterative fashion to adjust project attributes until a previously determined recommendation is generated. The ERT serves to assess impacts once project details are developed. The [New Mexico Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool](#), the data layers from which are included in the ERT, is the appropriate system for advising early-stage project planning and design to avoid areas of anticipated wildlife concerns and associated regulatory requirements.

## WUI haz fuel thinning treatment on private and state land.



Texas Parks & Wildlife, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS  
 NHNM, USGS, USFS, US Census Bureau, NMDGF  
 Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS

**Special Status Animal Species Potentially within 1 Miles of Project Area**

| Common Name                                    | Scientific Name                             | USFWS (ESA) | NMDGF (WCA) | NMDGF SGCN/SERI | USFS              | USFS SCC    | BLM           |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
| <a href="#">Sacramento Mountain Salamander</a> | <a href="#">Aneides hardii</a>              |             | T           | SGCN            | Sensitive Species |             |               |
| <a href="#">Barking Frog</a>                   | <a href="#">Craugastor augusti</a>          |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Plains Leopard Frog</a>            | <a href="#">Lithobates blairi</a>           |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Northern Leopard Frog</a>          | <a href="#">Lithobates pipiens</a>          |             |             | SGCN            | Sensitive Species | USFS R3 SCC | BLM SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">American Bittern</a>               | <a href="#">Botaurus lentiginosus</a>       |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Common Black-Hawk</a>              | <a href="#">Buteogallus anthracinus</a>     |             | T           | SGCN            | Sensitive Species |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Aplomado Falcon</a>                | <a href="#">Falco femoralis</a>             |             | E           | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Peregrine Falcon</a>               | <a href="#">Falco peregrinus</a>            |             | T           | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Mountain Plover</a>                | <a href="#">Charadrius montanus</a>         |             |             | SGCN            | Sensitive Species |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Western Burrowing Owl</a>          | <a href="#">Athene cunicularia hypugaea</a> |             |             | SGCN            | Sensitive Species | USFS R3 SCC | BLM SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Mexican Spotted Owl</a>            | <a href="#">Strix occidentalis lucida</a>   | LT          |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Common Nighthawk</a>               | <a href="#">Chordeiles minor</a>            |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Lewis's Woodpecker</a>             | <a href="#">Melanerpes lewis</a>            |             |             | SGCN            |                   | USFS R3 SCC | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Williamson's Sapsucker</a>         | <a href="#">Sphyrapicus thyroideus</a>      |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Bank Swallow</a>                   | <a href="#">Riparia riparia</a>             |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Pinyon Jay</a>                     | <a href="#">Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus</a>   |             |             | SGCN            |                   | USFS R3 SCC | BLM SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Clark's Nutcracker</a>             | <a href="#">Nucifraga columbiana</a>        |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Juniper Titmouse</a>               | <a href="#">Baeolophus ridgwayi</a>         |             |             | SGCN            |                   | USFS R3 SCC | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Pygmy Nuthatch</a>                 | <a href="#">Sitta pygmaea</a>               |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Western Bluebird</a>               | <a href="#">Sialia mexicana</a>             |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Mountain Bluebird</a>              | <a href="#">Sialia currucoides</a>          |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Bendire's Thrasher</a>             | <a href="#">Toxostoma bendirei</a>          |             |             | SGCN            |                   | USFS R3 SCC | BLM SENSITIVE |

## Special Status Animal Species Potentially within 1 Miles of Project Area

| Common Name                                   | Scientific Name                                    | USFWS (ESA) | NMDGF (WCA) | NMDGF<br>SGCN/SERI | USFS                 | USFS SCC       | BLM              |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <a href="#">Sprague's Pipit</a>               | <a href="#">Anthus spragueii</a>                   |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                | BLM<br>SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Loggerhead Shrike</a>             | <a href="#">Lanius ludovicianus</a>                |             |             | SGCN               |                      | USFS R3<br>SCC | BLM WATCH        |
| <a href="#">Gray Vireo</a>                    | <a href="#">Vireo vicinior</a>                     |             | T           | SGCN               | Sensitive<br>Species | USFS R3<br>SCC | BLM WATCH        |
| <a href="#">Virginia's Warbler</a>            | <a href="#">Leiothlypis virginiae</a>              |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                | BLM<br>SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Black-Throated Gray Warbler</a>   | <a href="#">Setophaga nigrescens</a>               |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                | BLM WATCH        |
| <a href="#">Grace's Warbler</a>               | <a href="#">Setophaga graciae</a>                  |             |             | SGCN               |                      | USFS R3<br>SCC | BLM WATCH        |
| <a href="#">Black-Chinned Sparrow</a>         | <a href="#">Spizella atrogularis</a>               |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                | BLM WATCH        |
| <a href="#">Vesper Sparrow</a>                | <a href="#">Poocetes gramineus</a>                 |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                |                  |
| <a href="#">Chestnut-Collared Longspur</a>    | <a href="#">Calcarius ornatus</a>                  |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                | BLM<br>SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Cassin's Finch</a>                | <a href="#">Haemorhous cassinii</a>                |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                | BLM WATCH        |
| <a href="#">Evening Grosbeak</a>              | <a href="#">Coccothraustes vespertinus</a>         |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                |                  |
| <a href="#">Spotted Bat</a>                   | <a href="#">Euderma maculatum</a>                  |             | T           | SGCN               | Sensitive<br>Species | USFS R3<br>SCC | BLM<br>SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Pale Townsend's Big-Eared Bat</a> | <a href="#">Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens</a> |             |             | SGCN               | Sensitive<br>Species | USFS R3<br>SCC | BLM<br>SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Black Bear</a>                    | <a href="#">Ursus americanus</a>                   |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                |                  |
| <a href="#">Mountain Lion</a>                 | <a href="#">Puma concolor</a>                      |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                |                  |
| <a href="#">Elk</a>                           | <a href="#">Cervus canadensis</a>                  |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                |                  |
| <a href="#">Mule Deer</a>                     | <a href="#">Odocoileus hemionus</a>                |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                |                  |
| <a href="#">Pronghorn</a>                     | <a href="#">Antilocapra americana</a>              |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                |                  |
| <a href="#">Western Ribbon Snake</a>          | <a href="#">Thamnophis proximus</a>                |             | T           | SGCN               | Sensitive<br>Species |                |                  |
| <a href="#">Rock Rattlesnake</a>              | <a href="#">Crotalus lepidus</a>                   |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                |                  |
| <a href="#">Desert Massasauga</a>             | <a href="#">Sistrurus catenatus edwardsii</a>      |             |             | SGCN               |                      |                |                  |

Common Name hyperlink takes you to species account in [bison-m.org](https://www.bison-m.org/); Scientific Name hyperlink takes you to information in [NatureServe Explorer](#); ESA = Endangered Species Act, C = Candidate, LE = Listed Endangered, LT = Listed Threatened, XN = Non-essential Experimental Population, for other ESA codes see this [website](#); WCA = Wildlife

Conservation Act, E = Endangered, T = Threatened; SERI = Species of Economic and Recreational Importance; SGCN = Species of Greatest Conservation Need; USFS = U.S. Forest Service, Sensitive Species = A species likely to occur on USFS lands that is of concern for a potential reduction in population viability; SCC = Species of Conservation Concern; BLM = Bureau of Land Management, BLM SENSITIVE = A species that occurs on BLM lands and whose viability is at risk, BLM WATCH = Species that may be added to the sensitive species list in future pending new information regarding species status.

## Project Recommendations

Your proposed project activities may require a custom review for assessment of potential effects to wildlife. See the "OVERALL STATUS" section above to determine the likelihood that your project will be reviewed further based on its location. A Department biologist will confirm whether any additional conservation measures are needed. You should expect to receive any additional project recommendations within 30 days of your project submission. If the "OVERALL STATUS" section indicates that no further consultation with the Department is required based on its location, then you will only receive additional project feedback from the Department if a biologist deems it necessary.

All migratory birds are protected against direct take under the federal [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#) (16 U.S.C. Sections 703-712), and hawks, falcons, vultures, owls, songbirds, and other insect-eating birds are protected under New Mexico State Statutes (17-2-13 and 17-2-14 NMSA), unless permitted by the applicable regulatory agency. To minimize the likelihood of adverse impacts to migratory birds, nests, eggs, or nestlings, the Department recommends that ground disturbance and vegetation removal activities be conducted outside of the primary migratory bird breeding season of April 15-September 1. Breeding season may begin earlier for raptors or when working in low-elevation habitats such as deserts. If ground disturbing and clearing activities must be conducted during the breeding season, the area should be surveyed for active nest sites (with birds or eggs present in the nesting territory) and avoid disturbing active nests until young have fledged. For active nests, establish adequate buffer zones to minimize disturbance to nesting birds. Buffer distances should be at least 100 feet from songbird and raven nests; 0.25 miles from most raptor nests; and 0.5 miles for ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos canadensis*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), and prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) nests. Active nest sites in trees or shrubs that must be removed should be mitigated by qualified biologists or wildlife rehabilitators. Department biologists are available to consult on nest site mitigation and can facilitate contact with qualified personnel.

The list of [New Mexico SGCN](#) (see link, page 14, table 5) and the federal list of [Birds of Conservation Concern](#) should be reviewed to fully evaluate potential effects to migratory birds from your proposed project. Federal agencies are also required under Executive Order 13186 to implement standards and practices that lessen the amount of unintentional take attributable to agency actions. These conservation measures are strongly recommended to ensure persistence of migratory bird species whose populations are small and/or declining within New Mexico.

For forestry and forest restoration projects, including fire management activities, occurring in ponderosa pine forests, the Department recommends following the [Ponderosa Pine Restoration Guidelines to Benefit Wildlife](#).

Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) may occur within your project area. Burrowing owls are protected from take by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and under New Mexico state statute. Before any ground disturbing activities occur, the Department recommends that a preliminary burrowing owl survey be conducted by a qualified biologist using the Department's [Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol](#). Should burrowing owls be documented in the project area, please contact the Department or USFWS for further recommendations regarding relocation or avoidance of impacts.

Your project area intersects designated critical habitat for one or more species that are listed under the federal ESA. The Department recommends that you confirm this using the USFWS's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPAC) system (<https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/>) and then reach out to the appropriate species lead(s) with the [New Mexico Ecological Services Office of USFWS](#). The USFWS has authority to designate critical habitat for species listed under the ESA. The Department has no authority to designate critical habitat for species listed under the WCA or ESA. If there are any federally-listed plants within your project area and your project has a federal nexus, you may find these recommendations from the USFWS useful: [Recommendations for Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultations Involving Plants in New Mexico](#); [Standards for Conducting and Reporting Consultation Surveys for Federally-Listed, Proposed, and Candidate Plants in New Mexico](#).

Your proposed project occurs within an area where springs or other important natural water features occur. This may result in the presence of a high use area for wildlife relative to the surrounding landscape. To ensure continued function of these important wildlife habitats, your project should consider measures to avoid the following.

- Altering surface or groundwater flow or hydrology,
- Disturbance to soil that modifies geomorphic properties or facilitates invasion of non-native vegetation.
- Affecting local surface or groundwater quality.
- Creating disturbance to wildlife utilizing these water features. Disturbance to wildlife can be reduced through practices including clustering infrastructure and activity wherever possible, avoiding large visual obstructions around water features, and limiting nighttime project operations or activities.

Department biologists are available for site-specific consultation regarding measures to assist with management and conservation of these habitat resources.

**Disclaimers regarding recommendations:**

- The Department provides technical guidance to support the persistence of all protected species of native fish and wildlife, including game and nongame wildlife species. Species listed within this report include those that have been documented to occur within the project area, and others that may not have been documented but are projected to occur within the project vicinity.
- Recommendations are provided by the Department under the authority of § 17-1-5.1 New Mexico Statutes Annotated 1978, to provide "communication and consultation with federal and other state agencies, local governments and communities, private organizations and affected interests responsible for habitat, wilderness, recreation, water quality and environmental protection to ensure comprehensive conservation services for hunters, anglers and nonconsumptive wildlife users".
- The Department has no authority for management of plants or Important Plant Areas. The [New Mexico Endangered Plant Program](#), under the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department's Forestry Division, identifies and develops conservation measures necessary to ensure the survival of plant species within New Mexico. Plant status information is provided within this report as a courtesy to users. Recommendations provided within the ERT may not be sufficient to preclude impacts to rare or sensitive plants, unless conservation measures are identified in coordination with the Endangered Plant Program.
- Additional coordination and/or consultation may also be necessary under the federal ESA or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Further site-specific mitigation recommendations may be proposed during ESA consultation and/or NEPA analyses or through coordination with affected federal agencies.