



**The Greater Santa Fe
Fireshed Coalition**

Community Meeting Eldorado / Cañada de los Álamos

Hondo Fire Station 2
645 Old Las Vegas Highway



April 26, 2018

Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition Community Meeting Eldorado/Cañada de los Álamos

On April 26, 2018, the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition (“GSFFC”) hosted a community meeting in the Eldorado and Cañada de los Álamos area, to the east of Santa Fe. The meeting was held at Hondo Fire Station 2, located on Old Las Vegas Highway at the intersection with U.S. Highway 285, just off Interstate 25. About 70 people attended the meeting, a capacity crowd in the fire station’s nice community room. The attendance exceeded expectations, and the numbers as well as the quality of the discussions demonstrate the interest and concern community members have about caring for the forests, watersheds and ecosystem in the Santa Fe Fireshed. In attendance were two Santa Fe County Commissioners; representatives from three fire departments; residents from the neighborhoods around the fire station and from Santa Fe, Lamy, Galisteo and Glorieta; and members of several GSFFC partner organizations.

The meeting was organized by Teresa Seamster, who lives in the neighborhood, along with the GSFFC Communications Team. Andy Otto of the Santa Fe Watershed Association, a GSFFC partner, served as moderator. The first half of the meeting featured short presentations by several GSFFC partners, and the second half was a question-and-answer session open to all in attendance. The theme was wildfire preparation, and especially how communities and homeowners can be better prepared for a wildfire. An audio recording of the meeting was made and notes were taken, which form the basis of this report.

Introductions

Andy Otto opened the meeting by introducing the speakers and giving a brief orientation to the venue and the purpose of the meeting. He asked everyone in attendance to sign in. He noted that we wouldn’t discuss fuel treatments, per se, at this meeting. The agenda for the meeting was an overview of the GSFFC and what the goals of the Coalition are. We also would have a question and answer towards the end, and would be happy to respond to all questions.

Andy introduced Gary Kowalski of the Hondo Volunteer Fire Department, who welcomed people and announced that Fire Department personnel were prepared to assist homeowners with fire safety preparations. Anyone who lived within the Hondo Fire District could request a home evaluation, which included tips on how to make the home safer and more resistant to a wildfire. The emergency personnel who work with the Hondo Fire Department are all volunteers, and the County Fire Station is staffed with at least two volunteer fire fighters or emergency medical personnel at all times.



*Andy Otto of the Santa Fe Watershed Association
kicked off the community meeting at Hondo Fire Station 2*

Andy then introduced Anna Hamilton, a Santa Fe County Commissioner who was in attendance, and she thanked everyone involved in the program and stressed the importance of the topic of fire safety. Ms. Hamilton is a volunteer fire fighter and knows the importance of good preparation. Andy also introduced Kathy Holian, another Santa Fe County Commissioner in attendance.

Next, Andy introduced the speakers for the evening. He spoke a little about the Santa Fe Watershed Association, then introduced Eytan Krasilovsky of the Forest Stewards Guild, Porfirio Chavarria of the City of Santa Fe Fire Department, Alan Hook of the City of Santa Fe Water Department, and Sandy Hurlocker and Steve Romero of the U.S. Forest Service (“USFS”).

Forest Stewards Guild

Eytan Krasilovsky of the Forest Stewards Guild, a GSFFC partner, started by giving a brief overview of his organization. He then showed maps of the Fireshed and passed around a sheet with two maps on it. One map showed the variable fire risk across the landscape, and the second map showed the risk of post-fire flooding and debris flows. Eytan introduced and discussed several topics, stressing the values on the



Eytan Krasilovsky of the Forest Stewards Guild addresses the community meeting at the Hondo Fire Station

landscape. He noted that people travel around the Fireshed landscape a lot, and the roads are an important value, but with so many people using the land, the risk of a human-caused wildfire increases.

Eytan noted that this is an exceptionally dry year and northern New Mexico is in extreme drought conditions right now, as classified by weather agencies and the Natural Resource Conservation Service ("NRCS"). The snowpack this year is very low compared to past years, and as a result our water supply is vulnerable this year. The drought conditions in 2018 are analogous to 1880, which is when the railroad first came to Santa Fe and also the year of the large wildfire that created Aspen Vista, the large aspen grove near Ski Santa Fe. It was the stand-replacement fire that created the aspen grove. The drought in 1880 contributed to conditions that led to that fire, and we see similar conditions this year.

The ecosystems around Santa Fe are fire dependent, meaning the vegetation burns periodically to maintain healthy conditions on the landscape. People who live in or near the fire-dependent forests must be prepared for a wildfire. What can people do to prepare? There are a number of resources available that can help residents prepare. The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network ("FAC Net"), for example, is working to help people live and adapt to wildfire in their area. The FAC Net New Mexico website is at <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/member/fire-adapted-new-mexico/>. There are a



Seventy people attended the community meeting at the Hondo Fire Station.

number of resources available for home assessment and preparation. City and County fire fighters can visit homeowners in the Fireshed and help them prepare for a wildfire, including thinking about how to protect their water source, domestic animals, etc. There are documents available as well, such as the Ready-Set-Go-Santa-Fe booklet, available on the table at this meeting or at <https://www.wildlandfirersg.org/Portals/18/Resources/States/NM/Santa%20Fe%20Action%20Guide.pdf>, and the Home Hazard Assessment Guide produced by the Forest Stewards Guild and the Wildfire Network, available on the GSFFC website at <http://www.santafefireshed.org/blog/homeassessmentguide>.

Home assessments and these guides provide homeowners with simple steps they can take to reduce the risk to their homes posed by a wildfire. Leaving a buffer around your home with no ignitable materials is important—having a three-foot buffer with rocks instead of wood chips, for example. Embers from a wildfire can be more dangerous than a wall of flame to a home.

The GSFFC website at <http://www.santafefireshed.org/prepare> compiles a lot of information on how to prepare for a wildfire, including phone numbers, documents, and links to sites. The e911 Alert Santa Fe program, linked from the GSFFC site, has a lot of information and allows you to sign up to receive information about wind events and fires. The e911 website is at <https://www.santafenm.gov/alertsantafe>.

Smoke can be a problem during a wildfire or prescribed burn, and especially for people who have health conditions that make them very sensitive to smoke. The GSFFC website has information on a program the Forest Stewards Guild has initiated this year to lend HEPA filters during a wildfire event. Anyone can borrow one of the filters to use in their home, which filters smoke out of the air.

Firewise USA is a national recognition program sponsored by the National Fire Protection Association (“NFPA”) which has a 5-step process that neighbors can do

together to prepare for a wildfire. The NFPA then certifies the neighborhood as a Firewise USA neighborhood. Residents must update their recognition annually. Only about 28 areas in New Mexico have completed this program. Working together, neighbors can follow the Firewise USA training online and can be certified.

In response to concerns expressed by residents in Fireshed communities, the GSFFC has started a monitoring committee, in response to community concerns. The monitoring committee can track ecological changes, treatments, and social conditions across the Fireshed landscape.

What Brought People to This Meeting?

Andy Otto then asked people how they heard about this meeting. Some said they learned about the meeting on Nextdoor.com, a neighborhood networking website. Others heard about the meeting from friends, on email, or from local newsletters and community email list-servs. Word-of-mouth seemed to be the most common way that people heard about the meeting.

Pueblo of Tesuque

Andy Otto introduced Mike Martinez and Ryan Swazo-Hinds of the Pueblo of Tesuque. Mike is the Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (“RTRL”) coordinator for the Pueblo. The RTRL program provides funds from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (“BIA”) to tribal entities, which they can dedicate to projects outside of reservation boundaries. Using RTRL funds, the Pueblo can work with non-tribal or tribal entities, so long as the work pertains to tribal needs and values. The Pueblo can help homeowners in the vicinity of the Pueblo lands with home assessment and preparation.

Mike noted that no one wants a destructive wildfire in the Sangre de Cristos. But, the Pueblo doesn’t want to remove too many trees. However, there are a lot of dead and down trees in the mountains that should be removed as they are a wildfire hazard. Mike cited Dr. Ellis Margolis of the U.S. Geological Survey (“USGS”), who estimates there is more than 100 years of biomass in the mountains. The biomass that is creating the greatest risk of wildfire should be removed, and the Pueblo of Tesuque can carry this out on tribal lands and also on non-tribal lands with RTRL funds.

Ryan is a biologist with the Pueblo of Tesuque Environment and Natural Resources Department and is the chair of the GSFFC this year. Ryan noted that the Pueblo of Tesuque has been here since time immemorial, and all of this area is their native homeland. Their plan is to protect what they have for the future.

Ryan described a project the Pueblo is working on called the Pacheco Canyon Forest Resiliency Project. The project is in the area near Aspen Ranch and Aspen Meadows. This is an area where the Tribe goes to hunt and fish, so they want to protect it. Upstream from this area, most of the land is in the national forest, so they are working with the USFS to introduce fire back into the landscape, and make things better for wildlife and the watershed.

A community member asked how far along is the Pueblo on these projects? Ryan said the Pueblo has been working on the 160-acre Aspen Ranch since about 2010. They started before the GSFFC was created. The Pacheco Fire in 2011 came close to Aspen Ranch, and demonstrated the threat of wildfire on the landscape. The Las Conchas Fire was right after that, which at the time was the largest the state had ever seen, but that record was surpassed one year later with the Whitewater-Baldy Fire.

Mike said he was hired in 2016, and he met with Española District Ranger Sandy Hurlocker and began working on NEPA for the area in Pacheco Canyon. Several community members asked what NEPA meant. Mike and others explained that NEPA is the National Environmental Policy Act, and it requires biological, cultural and wildlife surveys of an area prior to a project. The Pueblo Canyon NEPA review is now almost done. It should be completed by June or July of this year, and then implementation will start in the fall.

City of Santa Fe

The City of Santa Fe has been working to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires in the southern Sangre de Cristo mountains for many years. Two representatives from the City, Porfirio Chavarria of the City of Santa Fe Fire Department (“SFFD”) and Alan Hook of the Santa Fe Water Division (“SFWD”) spoke about the history of treatments.

Porfirio is the Wildland Urban Interface (“WUI”) coordinator for the SFFD. The Fire Department works with several other entities, including the SFWD and the USFS on wildfire preparation. A few years back the SFFD decided they needed to reduce the wildfire risk on the lands surrounding Santa Fe. They collaborated with the USFS to create capacity to fight wildfires. Since the City manages a large forested area around the City’s watershed in the Sangre de Cristos, having a capacity to prevent and combat wildfires was important. The USFS helped the City train firefighters in wildfire response, and the SFFD built a hand crew, purchased smaller brush engines, and developed resources for response to open space fires in the city.

Once the crew and equipment were in place, they began thinking beyond just responding to wildfires, and beginning in 2005 the SFFD started a program to talk to



Alan Hook of the City of Santa Fe Water Division told residents about forest treatments to protect the City's watershed

homeowners about fire safety and protecting their homes. The Fire Department wanted to understand where risks were and what homeowners could do.

In 2015, the City joined other groups to start the GSFFC. The Fireshed is a large landscape, but the City is the hub that residents of the Fireshed rely on. And, residents of Santa Fe rely on the Fireshed for recreation and other uses. Porfirio is one guy in the City Fire Department, and the County Fire Department has one guy assigned to wildland fire as well. To extend their efforts, they are putting together a Fireshed Ambassadors program. Ambassadors are residents of Fireshed communities who go through training to become local experts in their communities, and then serve as liaisons to the fire departments and representatives who can work with neighbors on strategies to prepare for a wildfire.

Alan Hook is a water resources analyst with the City of Santa Fe Water Division. Among its other duties, the Water Division manages the Municipal Watershed, a 7,000 acre area along the Santa Fe River that is managed to provide water to residents and businesses in the city. The watershed is part of the Santa Fe National Forest, but it is closed to the public to protect the water sources. The lower watershed has two reservoirs, which supply 40% of Santa Fe's water. For the City, the watershed represents the cheapest and highest quality source of water.

Alan has collaborated since 2009 with the SFFD, the USFS, The Nature Conservancy, the Santa Fe Watershed Association and other community organizations to protect the city's water sources. The USFS has done fuel reduction treatments around the reservoirs. The City of Santa Fe and the USFS have created a cost share agreement in order to extend these treatments. The USFS gets its money on October 1, the beginning of the federal fiscal year. During the fire season, however, the USFS has to dedicate money and personnel to fire suppression activities, so by the end of summer their money is often running out. The Fall is a good time to do fuel reduction treatments, including prescribed burns. With the cost share agreement, the City can move in to provide funds for treatment projects during the Fall.

There are two reservoirs that store water within the City Watershed, the McClure and Nichols Reservoirs. A key point to remember is that these are created by earthen dams. If a large, high severity fire affected the watershed, substantial post-fire flooding and debris flows would be very likely. The two dams very likely would not hold up to severe flooding. The dams can only handle about 18,000 cubic feet per second of water, but a high severity fire followed by monsoon event that produces 3 inches or more of rainfall could exceed 20,000 cubic feet per second. If the dams are breached, the water flowing down the Santa Fe River would flood downtown and the plaza in Santa Fe. In addition, it would cost the City between \$80 million and \$240 million to dredge the reservoirs out if they had post-fire floods.

The Nature Conservancy conducted a survey that showed that Santa Fe residents would be willing to pay up to \$1 more on their monthly water bills to provide funds to conduct fuel reduction treatment in the forests that protect the watershed. The Water Division is currently doing some modeling of potential fire and flooding, and is considering their options now.

Andy Otto noted that the Santa Fe Watershed Association is also involved in the City's planning efforts. He pointed the audience to posters in the back of the room that show the Watershed Association's involvement in the plan.

U.S. Forest Service

Two representatives from the U.S. Forest Service spoke at the meeting. Sandy Hurlocker is the District Ranger for the Española Ranger District, which covers the southwestern portion of the Sangre de Cristos. Steve Romero is the District Ranger for the Pecos-Las Vegas Ranger District, which covers the southeastern part of the mountains.

Sandy been at the Española Ranger District since 2002. The Cerro Grande Fire in May, 2000 produced a lot of momentum to take measures to protect the City Watershed. There emerged a lot of emphasis on fuel reduction projects in the Watershed. The City approached the USFS seeking help in protecting the Watershed, and the Española Ranger District has been involved in the Watershed ever since. The USFS led projects to remove smaller trees, which they piled up and burned. A few years later, they returned to burn on the ground to maintain healthy forests in the area. If you see smoke coming from the Watershed in the Fall, it is these follow-up prescribed burns.

Outside of the City Watershed, however, the USFS has not done much in the way of fuel reduction. The Santa Fe National Forest decided it was important to extend fuel reduction work to areas of the Española District beyond the City Watershed. The Tesuque Pueblo, which has reservation land north of the City Watershed, has approached the USFS asking for help. The USFS sought ways to advance fuel reduction on the rest of their land in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

In 2015, the State Forester and the County of Santa Fe got together and formed the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition. The USFS saw this as an opportunity to change the conditions on the landscape in order to avoid a destructive wildfire, so the Santa Fe National Forest became a partner in the Coalition. However, the GSFFC includes many partners, it is not a USFS coalition. The USFS is one partner among many.

Steve Romero showed a map with an outline of the Fireshed, and the different landownerships within the Fireshed boundaries. About 60 percent of the land in the Fireshed is federal land managed by the USFS. The City Watershed is right in the middle of this area. On the remaining 40 percent of the Fireshed area, the New Mexico State Forestry Division and NGOs like the Forest Stewards Guild are working to help private landowners understand how to manage their land. The GSFFC brings these entities together to coordinate what each authority can do to make conditions better across the landscape.

Sandy described the Pacheco Project, which is a collaboration between the USFS and the Pueblo of Tesuque. They have conducted a NEPA analysis under a categorical exclusion on this area, and they expect a decision in the next month. The Pueblo would then begin work in the fall on USFS land near their reservation lands, in order to protect their lands from a wildfire.

Sandy also described the Hyde Park Project, which is on USFS land near the Hyde Memorial State Park. The USFS used a categorical exclusion on this project as well, which allows for a quicker planning process. The decision has been made, and fuel reduction work should begin on this area in the Fall.

These two projects cover a relatively small area, and there is a lot of national forest land that the agency has not looked at yet. So, the Santa Fe National Forest is initiating an analysis of a much larger landscape, to see what the USFS can do to restore those forest lands.

Steve reiterated that the USFS needs help and input from the public to conduct their work. He talked about some projects on the Pecos-Las Vegas District. In 2005, the District initiated a 1,000 acre project in the La Cueva area. They were also concerned about a potential wildfire upslope from the La Cueva area, which might affect the City Watershed. The good news is the La Cueva project is about 90 percent complete, after more than ten years of fuel reduction work in the project area.

Sandy spoke about the changing culture in the USFS. The agency now looks across boundaries and takes an all-lands approach. A fire does not stop at any property boundary, or between ranger districts, or between USFS and City land, or private land. Through their collaborative work with the GSFFC, the USFS is aiming to do things differently than they have in the past.

The proposal to restore the large area of USFS land won't happen behind a closed curtain. Forest rangers will be out in the communities talking with residents about their desires, and what they and their neighbors want to see in the forest. You will be seeing these things coming soon.

Upcoming Events

Eytan noted that there is a seminar series going on at REI, and on Wednesday, May 2, the topic would be post-fire flooding. Hydrologists and modelers will present information on what might happen following a high-intensity wildfire. Also, on Saturday, May 5, there is a wildfire preparedness event at St. Johns College, sponsored by the SFFD.

Porfirio with the SFFD is organizing an Ambassadors program, to train residents to serve as leaders in their neighborhoods on practices related to wildfires. There is a meeting coming up for anyone interested in the Fireshed Ambassador Program. The meeting is Wednesday, May 16 at 5:30 pm, at the City Fire Department's Fire Station 3 on Cerillos Road in Ashbaugh Park, near the Santa Fe Indian School.

Andy announced that the documentary film "Shadow of a Drought" would be screened on Sunday night, April 29, at the Center for Contemporary Arts (CCA) Theater at 1050 Old Pecos Trail in Santa Fe. The film depicts how the worst drought in California history has affected the water supply in Southern California.

Question & Answer

Andy Otto then opened the floor for any questions.

First question: A resident asked a question directed at the USFS. He noted that all of the planning activities create a lot of benefits, but also a lot of time lag. He heard about provisions in recent legislation related to the budget that would remove some environmental requirements. He wanted an explanation as to what this would mean. He had a second question, asking if there were studies that show that doing mitigation has resulted in less impact on the environment.

Sandy Hurlocker responded to the second question first. He noted that a fire ecologist did a review of the Cajete Fire that burned in the Jemez Mountains last summer. That fire burned at a high severity in untreated areas, but when it got to treated areas, it stayed on the ground and turned into a lower severity fire.

Responding to the first question, Sandy noted that a categorical exclusion is one option that is allowed for under NEPA. Recent legislation has created some opportunities to use a categorical exclusion under specific circumstances, but the agency still has to do analyses on endangered species, cultural resources, erosion potential, and other factors. Decision-makers on the ground have the discretion to use a categorical exclusion if the circumstances warrant it, but may also elect to do a more in-depth analysis under an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement.

Second question: A resident noted that at this meeting there are representatives from the federal government, from the County of Santa Fe, from NGOs, etc. Is there one place where people can go to find all this information?

Eytan Krasilovsky responded, pointing to the GSFFC website, Santafefireshed.org. The GSFFC is working to compile everything in one place. This website is locally focused and relevant. Additionally, there is a contact button at the bottom, and you can use the contact button to ask questions if you are not seeing things on the website. Eytan noted that in response to questions at a previous community meeting, the GSFFC is currently adding information on the website on what homeowners can do with their pets and animals during an incident.

Alan Barton of the New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute, a GSFFC partner, noted that anyone can sign up to be on the GSFFC contact list on the website as well, to receive regular updates and information. Those who included their email addresses on the sign-in sheet at this meeting will be added to the contact list.

Third question: A resident wanted to add some context to the discussion, so that it would reach a broader audience that might be unfamiliar with some of the details of budgeting, mapping, etc. He asked about rehabilitating the City's reservoirs.

Alan Hook responded by explaining that the City's reservoirs are in need of rehabilitation, as they rely on earthen dams and a strong post-wildfire flood and debris flow could take out the dams and flood the City of Santa Fe. However, the City cannot afford to pay for reservoir rehabilitation. It is way too expensive. There are state and federal funds available for projects like this, however, and the City Water Division is working on finding ways to finance a rehabilitation project. The watershed provides about 40 percent of the City's water, but there are other sources of water that the City relies on as well, including several wells and water from the Rio Grande. Also, many homes have private wells.

Fourth question: The questioner asked if it is possible to get a written summary that shows everything the GSFFC is doing. The questioner also asked about the level of confidence that GSFFC partners have in the organization's plans.

Andy Otto said that we are recording these meetings so that we could get the information out to more people. Porfirio Chavarria noted that the GSFFC is working on a strategy document, and the strategy will include a communications component. Eytan again noted that the GSFFC website has a lot of information and is the best place to find the most comprehensive information. The risk assessment that the GSFFC is completing will be posted on the website as soon as it is available. There also are topical briefing papers on the GSFFC website, including papers on fire history in the Fireshed and on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). More briefing papers will be posted in the future. Alan Barton also made the point that all GSFFC partners work with the organization on a volunteer basis; no one is paid to work with the GSFFC.

Fifth question: A questioner asked if there a plan to do an EIS for the entire Fireshed area, as was done in the SW Jemez area?

Sandy Hurlocker responded, saying at this point there is no plan to conduct a full EIS. The USFS is considering options for the area, but the initial plan is to have a very light touch on the landscape. There is no plan to haul material out at this point, although there may be some fuelwood available on the margins of the Fireshed. The GSFFC is working with community members to assess the values in the area, and what partners need to do to protect these values. Then, the USFS can create a proposed action based on community input, and determine what needs to be done with planning.

The questioner asked if the USFS has considered a programmatic EIS, as this would be a more efficient approach.

Sandy said that programmatic EISs are pretty rare in the USFS. The agency did do a region-wide spotted owl programmatic EIS, but they do not do programmatic EISs very often. Sandy said he would bring this option up with the USFS NEPA specialists. But generally, he expects that the environmental review will be site specific, and will focus on a specific proposed action and how they will mitigate any potential environmental effects. Steve Romero noted that the USFS still does not have a proposed action for the Fireshed area, and the agency cannot make a determination as to what is the best approach until they get to the point where they know exactly what they want to do. Once they have a proposed action, they can decide what the best approach is to analyze environmental effects.

Sixth question: A questioner asked what the risk is to homes in Hyde Park area.

Porfirio Chavarria responded, saying those homes are in Santa Fe County but not the City, and the structures are built differently, using more wood in the sidings and roofs for the structures. Because of their structures, they are at extreme risk if a wildfire runs through the area. There have been treatments in the State Park area to mitigate the danger of a wildfire, but the structures are at risk due to their construction.

Mike Feulner of the Santa Fe County Fire Department said the County FD is looking at all of the County's open space, and is working with the USFS on mitigating the risks. There is a broad collaborative effort across the county that extends beyond the GSFFC's boundaries.

Seventh question: A resident commended all of the agencies and departments that are partners in the GSFFC. She noted that building partnerships will have a greater impact. However, she said she is living in fear right now, as she lives right up the road and there are a lot of dead branches on her property. She has spent thousands of dollars clearing her land and it's still not all cleared out. Everyone who drives around the neighborhood knows the risks.

She asked what responsibility private landowners have to keep their properties fire safe? She noted that some of her neighbors have lots of fuel on their land, and not just dead trees, but also trash, old sheds, etc. In some cases this is due to laziness, but in other cases it is elderly people who can't do the work. What can the neighborhood do about that?

Eytan Krasilovsky pointed to a handout available at the meeting from the New Mexico State Forestry Division that has information about cost-share programs that offer landowners financial assistance in keep their properties fire adapted. The brochure has information on who to contact to take advantage of these programs.

The questioner responded that people who do not reduce the fire risk on their property make bad neighbors. She has thought about knocking on doors to see what others can do. She noted that she has worked with a lot of Pueblo communities, and they are great examples on how to handle environmental issues.

Mike Feulner pushed for soil and water conservation districts (“SWCDs”) to work together with each other and with landowners on the fire risk. In this area, homeowners can contact the Santa Fe-Pojoaque SWCD and the Edgewood SWCD. The County Fire Department has been working on creating a partnership with these organizations to start a home treatment program. The SWCDs have cost-share funds available. Homeowners should consider applying for these funds.

Sandy Hurlocker said that everyone is trying to figure out how to fund fuel reduction programs. When the Santa Fe National Forest goes to ask for money, they have the GSFFC behind them. When you go with a partnership like this, it speaks loudly. Leveraging funds is important. If you have leveraged funds, you are first in line to get money. So when working with NRCS money or others, it helps to have the GSFFC behind them.

Eighth question: A resident stated that when we hear the word “fire” we become reductionist, and talk about fire mitigation only in terms of thinning trees. Yet, our lives depend on a unified ecosystem. We need trees and all other parts of the forest—water, fungi, insects, etc. We’re in a time of climate change. Roots create soil. Can we balance other possibilities besides just thinning?

Andy Otto responded by noting that the goal of the GSFFC and its partners is to create a healthy forest. We should keep in mind that all parts of the equation are crucial, and not just for their inherent value, but because they provide ecosystem services that people depend on for their lives and their livelihoods. Restoration is more than just thinning trees.

Ninth question: A resident said that her head is swimming at this meeting. She has not heard of any USFS meetings, and this isn’t even USFS meeting. She spends a lot of time camping, and sees problems in the campgrounds that have not been addressed here. All she’s heard about is cutting. How about migratory birds and other values? Why are these elements not valued for what is planned for this fall?



Community members who attended the Eldorado/Cañada de los Álamos community meeting engaged in a lively discussion of issues with members of the GSFFC

Sandy Hurlocker said that the USFS held meetings to plan for the two projects that the USFS is working on now, at Aspen Ranch and Hyde Park. They took comments from the public and incorporated these into their planning.

Andy Otto said that the questioner's message is valid and we hear it. Everyone needs to do more outreach. Apparently the notices of the public meetings did not get out to everyone.

The questioner followed up by noting that if the USFS destroys habitat this fall, it will not come back for a long time.

Sandy said that the USFS seeks public input when projects are being planned, because that is when the comments can have an effect.

The questioner continued to express concerns about the USFS's decision-making process, and the lack of public transparency. She said no one has any basis for evaluating the claims the USFS is making, and asked why the information is not publically available.

Hannah Bergemann of the USFS told the questioner that she can go to USFS webpage and see all of the analyses of environmental impact that were done during the NEPA process for the categorical exclusions for these two projects.

Tenth question: A resident noted that things are in bad shape this year. The area has had virtually no snow and no rain. How should a resident respond if they know there is a wildfire nearby? How do local people get ahold of organizations, what should they do?

Mike Feulner said that if you see a wildfire nearby, call 911 and you will be connected to the closest fire department.

The questioner clarified that what he wanted to know was how someone should respond to get to safety if there is a fire nearby? The talks emphasized how to prepare your home and property for a wildfire. But when you spot a wildfire, what should you do? Are there websites or information one could find to know how to respond to an active wildfire in the area?

Porfirio Chavarria said to go to [Santafefireshed.org/prepare](https://www.santafefireshed.org/prepare). This site has many links with a lot of information on how to prepare and respond to a wildfire. There also is the Reverse 911 system through Alert Santa Fe. At their website, <https://www.santafenm.gov/alertsantafe>, you can register and it offers various options as to how homeowners can receive notifications. These will tell you when to evacuate, and what the routes are. Mike Feulner noted that this system is new so everyone needs to go onto the site and reregister.

Eleventh question: A resident of Eldorado said there are 8-foot-high piles of slash in the greenbelt, and there is very dry pinyon-juniper forest around the slash piles. Yesterday, she had a guy hauling things off her property, and he said there are slash piles like that all over Eldorado. This poses a threat to the community. She asked if there is an evacuation plan for this neighborhood?

Mike Feulner said there is not one definite evacuation plan for a wildfire, because the evacuation routes depend on what a fire does. He assured those present that the County Fire Department will call for an evacuation early if there is a threat.

The resident asked how the Fire Department manages an evacuation?

Mike replied that law enforcement and the fire department will go door-to-door to notify residents and emergency crews will follow up with information on where to go.

Porfirio Chavarria noted that there are copies of the Ready-Set-Go available in the room and also online. The book has good information on how to prepare for a wildfire. However, there may be times when residents will not get a notification, and these are the times when residents must take personal responsibility for their own

safety; you should not wait for someone else to make a decision for you. Residents need to be prepared and know what to do. We live in a fire-adapted ecosystem, the forests around Santa Fe require fire. We need to think about how we can coexist with wildfires. This means both personal responsibility and cooperation with fire and law enforcement authorities during an emergency.

Eytan Krasilovsky said that if people have slash piles on their property, they can call him at the Forest Stewards Guild. He has been working on pile burns, and can discuss possibilities to get rid of the slash with landowners.

Twelfth question: As a follow-up to the previous discussion, the questioner noted that Santa Fe County just passed a 90-day no burn ordinance, so does that mean that slash piles won't be burned this year?

Eytan Krasilovsky said that burning generally happens in the winter, because that is when conditions are best suited for burning and it poses the least risk.

The questioner said the County Fire Department came out 6 months ago and said they could burn it, but she said they couldn't do it.

Anna Hamilton, the Santa Fe County Commissioner and fire fighter said that people may not express it, but they know when it is safe to burn and what the risks are.

The questioner asked if there is any thought of mulching the slash and then distributing it on the landscape?

Anna said the County has a chipper and is exploring possibilities for using it to create mulch from slash.

The questioner noted that if you mulch it, you're improving the soil. If you burn it, you're removing it from the landscape and releasing carbon.

Anna responded that mulching is a really good idea. There is talk about expanding the program.

Eytan Krasilovsky said that both burning and mulching have a place, and the circumstances dictate which approach is preferable. Mulching works in gardens, but it hasn't been done on large landscapes so no one really knows what the results would be. Burning, however, does release a lot of organic matter into the ecosystem so it has benefits. Both approaches have a place.

A fire fighter from the Hondo Fire Department said that Santa Fe County has a mulching operation and people can take it the mulch for free.

Brent Bonwell from the Santa Fe Fat Tire Society, a GSFFC partner, noted another site where people could find mulch is at the transfer station on 285, which chips the wood and people can take it away as mulch.

Thirteenth question: A resident had a question for the USFS. Earlier, the rangers mentioned small-scale thinning projects using NEPA categorical exclusions. But there is a larger project in the works as well. Is this a fire management plan? What is it for? And what is the scale of the project, the whole forest? Or a ranger district?

Sandy Hurlocker of the USFS responded. He said there are 107,000 acres in the Fireshed project that the GSFFC is working on. Sixty percent of this belongs to the USFS. That is the area that the larger project is targeting. The USFS is looking at the changing conditions on the landscape, and is considering various steps to reduce the fire risk in the areas with Ponderosa Pine forests. One possibility is removing ladder fuels, for example, which means removing branches near the ground and small trees, which can carry a fire from the ground up into the crowns of trees, increasing the potential for a large, catastrophic fire. In the higher altitude spruce-fir forests, the USFS probably doesn't want to use prescribed fires as a tool. A lot of the spruce-fir is in designated wilderness, and fire doesn't act the same in spruce-fir forests. Sandy estimates that on the USFS land in the Fireshed, the total area that would be treated with various types of treatments would be about 50,000 acres at the most.

Steve Romero of the USFS stated that the important values on the landscape are another part of the decision how to treat the forest. The USFS wants to consider what the values are, that is, what it is that people value on the landscape, which may include homes, businesses, cultural resources, or special places. This can influence where and how the USFS manages the forest in specific areas. If there are special values, this may be a consideration in deciding to do treatments.

Sandy added that the scale of projects is an important consideration. If you plan a project that is too big, you spend too much time on the analysis. So the resources available to the USFS is another consideration. Managers have to determine what they can do given the resources they have to work with. All partners in the GSFFC agree that work needs to be done, so that supports the USFS's activities.

Fourteenth question: A resident about pinyon-juniper habitat, which is the most common forest type in this area. The resident wanted to know how locals can prepare for wildfires in pinyon-juniper habitat?

Eytan Krasilovsky responded that it depends, as there is a lot of variation in pinyon-juniper forests. Eytan offered to talk to the questioner individually about his

specific circumstance. Porfirio Chavarria also noted that the County Fire Department will walk through someone's property with them to make recommendations about how to mitigate the wildfire risk.

Conclusion

Andy Otto then wrapped up the meeting, and thanked everyone for attending. Overall, the meeting was successful. Many people from the community attended and showed a strong interest in learning more about the landscape, forest restoration and wildfire preparation. Community members asked good and challenging questions, leading to productive discussions that exchanged a lot of information on the GSFFC, the Fireshed, wildfire preparedness, and how to improve ecological conditions in the forests around the communities of Eldorado and Cañada de los Álamos.

Through this meeting, the GSFFC was able to establish an important connection with the communities in this part of the Fireshed. The dialog at the meeting was excellent, as community members asked good, thoughtful questions and were engaged in the discussion throughout. Community members should keep in mind that they can contact the GSFFC at any time with follow-up questions to the discussions at the meeting, through the Contact page on the GSFFC website. The GSFFC Communications Team will also organize future community events in the neighborhoods around Cañada de los Alamos and Eldorado to continue the dialogue.

The GSFFC thanks the Hondo Volunteer Fire District and District Chief Terry Protheroe for collaborating to provide the space for the meeting, and acknowledges the work that Teresa Seamster and the GSFFC Communications Team, as well as all of the presenters, put into organizing the meeting.



Think Ahead of the Wildfire...

ARE YOU PREPARED?

THURSDAY, APR. 26TH COMMUNITY MEETING
HONDO FIRE AND RESCUE STATION #2
645 OLD LAS VEGAS HWY

APRIL 26
5:30-7PM

The Greater Santa Fe
Fireshed Coalition
(GSFFC) is a
partnership of
agencies, private
organizations, and
concerned citizens
who are working to
build resilient
ecosystems, protect
watersheds, and
reduce fire risk in
the forests
surrounding
Santa Fe.

This past winter was a sobering
reminder of rising temperatures and
increased incidence of drought.
With the specter of longer and more
intense fire seasons, it is urgent now
more than ever to take concerted
action to protect our forests, homes
and watersheds. Join us on 4/26 to
find out what you can do for your
home and community to prepare in
the event of a wildfire..

BRING YOUR QUESTIONS

Join us!



www.santafefireshed.org/prepare

Appendix B: Meeting Agenda

Community Meeting Eldorado/Cañada de los Alamos

Date: April 26, 2018

Location: Hondo Fire Station 2, 645 Old Las Vegas Highway

Time: 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Welcome to the GSFFC Eldorado/Cañada de los Alamos Community Meeting!

The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition acts to create healthy resilient forests, secure water sources, fire adapted communities and effective firefighter response. Coalition partners collaborate with communities to design and carry out projects that meet these goals.

Purpose

Have a conversation with residents and stakeholders of the Santa Fe Fireshed about the goals of the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition, projects carried out by GSFFC partner organizations, and opportunities for Fireshed communities to protect themselves from wildfire.

Agenda

5:15–5:30 pm Public arrives, can view displays

5:30 pm Community Meeting begins
 Introductions

 Andy Otto, Santa Fe Watershed Association, moderator

5:40 pm Overview of the GSFFC; Values in the Fireshed Landscape; Ways to Engage
 and Participate in the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition; NM Association of
 Counties-funded Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network
 Eytan Krasilovsky, Forest Stewards Guild

5:48 pm Pueblo of Tesuque activities in the Fireshed
 Mike Martinez, Pueblo of Tesuque RTRL Coordinator

5:56 pm City of Santa Fe activities in the Fireshed
 Porfirio Chavarria, City of Santa Fe Fire Department
 Alan Hook, City of Santa Fe Water Division

6:08 pm US Forest Service activities in the Fireshed
 Sandy Hurlocker, US Forest Service Española District Ranger
 Steve Romero, US Forest Service Pecos-Las Vegas District Ranger

6:20 pm Question and Answer on the GSFFC and the Fireshed
 GSFFC Partners

7:00 pm Community Meeting ends

7:00–7:15 pm Public departs, can view displays

Visit us at <http://www.santafefireshed.org>,  @SFFireshed,  @SFFireshed

GSFFC Vision

We envision a landscape with healthy forests and secure water sources. Communities in and near forested landscapes are fire adapted, with residents who take responsibility to reduce risks before wildfire occurs. Prepared communities feel secure and understand the role of fire in the landscape. Residents support treatments, including thinning trees, prescribed burns and managed wildfires, and accept smoke associated with fire management. Firefighting agencies provide well-coordinated, safe, and effective response to wildfires. Resilient forests and thriving communities create economic, recreational and spiritual benefits for residents and visitors to enjoy.

GSFFC Mission

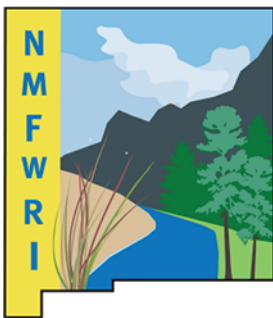
The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition uses a pro-active, collaborative approach to improve the health and long-term resilience of forested watersheds and communities by addressing wildfire. The Coalition works to build support, understanding, and shared knowledge of the role of fire in an adaptive framework to realize our goals. Our primary goal is to identify and implement high priority on-the-ground projects that make the Fireshed and its communities more resilient to wildfire while maintaining and restoring resilient landscapes. This goal will be realized when fire is used as a tool for management throughout our fire adapted forests, and the communities in and adjacent to these forests become fire adapted—they understand the role of fire and are prepared for its occurrence.

Legal Status

The GSFFC is a coalition of public and private organizations. The GSFFC is *not* a subdivision of the State of New Mexico, as defined in the state's Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978 §§ 10-15-1 to 10-15-4. Although federal agencies participate in the GSFFC, the Coalition is *not* a federal advisory board and was not created by a federal agency, as defined by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), 5 U.S.C. app. 2, §§ 1 to 16 (2016). The GSFFC operates informally to support its partners, and is *not* incorporated as a non-profit organization, 501(C)(3), partnership, or other legal entity. All partners in the GSFFC participate on a voluntary basis; no one receives remuneration for participating in the GSFFC.

Partners

Partnering organizations in the GSFFC include New Mexico State Forestry Division, Pueblo of Tesuque, Forest Stewards Guild, City of Santa Fe Fire Department, Santa Fe Watershed Association, The Nature Conservancy, Santa Fe-Pojoaque Soil & Water Conservation District, Santa Fe Fat Tire Society, U.S. Forest Service, Sierra Club, City of Santa Fe Water Division, U.S. Geological Survey, New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute, New Mexico Game & Fish Department, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, Wildfire Network, and County of Santa Fe Fire Department.



This report was prepared by Alan Barton of the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute (NMFWR), a partnering organization in the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition. This report was issued in July, 2018.

Photos ©2018 by Eytan Krasilovsky of the Forest Stewards Guild, Teresa Seamster of the Sierra Club, and Alan Barton of the NMFWR.