



**The Greater Santa Fe  
Fireshed Coalition**

## **Community Meeting Village of Tesuque**

**Tesuque Elementary School Library  
1555 Bishops Lodge Road**



**January 23, 2018**



## **GSFFC Community Meeting in Tesuque Village, NM: Lessons Learned and Applications for Future Meetings**

### **Overview**

On January 23, 2018, the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition (“GSFFC”) held a community meeting in Tesuque Village, NM. This was the first public meeting the GSFFC has organized within the Fireshed, although the GSFFC had convened two public meetings and open houses in Santa Fe in 2016 and 2017. The meeting was organized in collaboration with the Tesuque Valley Community Association (“TVCA”). A TVCA representative has been a participant in the GSFFC. The purpose of the meeting was to inform local residents about the GSFFC and projects within the Fireshed, and to provide residents with an opportunity to ask questions and express concerns about the work of the GSFFC and its partners.

The meeting was held in the library of the Tesuque Elementary School, in the evening. There were about 48 people in attendance, including 10 GSFFC partners. A number of issues were raised by those in attendance, and GSFFC partners raised additional issues following the meeting. These are summarized in this report.

### **Community Participation and the GSFFC**

Public relations and education are important functions of the GSFFC. The Communications Strategy identifies organizational goals, which include “enhancing communications between partners and the public to increase public knowledge about wildfire, forest and watershed management, and practices that reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, increase home security, and protect firefighter safety. In addition, public relations and education includes community organizing, training, notifying the public about forest management activities, and maintaining positive relationships with the local press and public officials.”

The GSFFC has held two public meetings and open houses at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center. The first meeting was held on May 12, 2016 and the second meeting was held on September 22, 2017. The purpose of these meetings was to introduce the GSFFC to the public, to educate the public about forest and watershed management in the Fireshed, and to engage in two-way conversations between GSFFC partners and the public. Each meeting included talks by GSFFC partners on issues related to forest management, as well as an open house, which featured tables staffed by partners, who engaged directly with visitors. These meetings were scheduled in the evening, and lasted about 3 hours, including the open house. During the open house, the public had an opportunity to visit the booths and talk to partners. Refreshments were available, and the meetings included an opportunity for feedback from the public. Both meetings were publicized in advance. A poster with information on the meeting was



*The GSFFC held its first community meeting in the Fireshed at the Tesuque Elementary School in the Village of Tesuque*

posted around Santa Fe, articles were prepared and sent to the local newspapers, and partners were interviewed on the radio and television to promote the meetings. Partners also used e-mail and word-of-mouth to publicize the meeting through their member lists and contacts. The meetings were well attended and generated good conversations and exchange of information between partners and the public.

### Tesuque Community Meeting

The vision for the Tesuque Community Meeting was different than the open houses. The community meeting was more informal, with short talks by partners to introduce the GSFFC and its purpose, as well as the work of some partners. The talks were brief—approximately 6 minutes each—with no slides and minimal visual aids. There was some audience interaction during the talks. An extended period for questions and answers followed the talks, giving community members in attendance the opportunity to express their concerns about the Santa Fe Fireshed and suggestions to the GSFFC. Ten GSFFC partners were present, representing the U.S. Forest Service (“USFS”), the City of Santa Fe, the Pueblo of Tesuque, the Forest Stewards Guild, the Nature Conservancy, the Santa Fe Watershed Alliance, the Red Elm Consulting, and the New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute (“NMFWR”), in addition to the TVCA. Partners responded to questions, and were able to better understand community concerns. Some





*Española District Ranger Sandy Hurlocker addresses the Tesuque Community Meeting, held in the school library*

partners brought poster boards, which allowed for one-on-one discussions with residents in attendance following the meeting.

The meeting was held in the library at the Tesuque Elementary School. The school was suggested by a community member who participates in the GSFFC, as a common place for meetings of this type. The library would be a good location for a small meeting, but was not ideal for a large meeting due to the layout; however, the GSFFC scheduled the meeting at the school and the school determined the library was the best location. Finding a location that is suitable for the meeting and that is comfortable for local residents is a factor that should be considered for future meetings.

Preparation for the meeting included planning the format and inviting speakers, publicity, and securing a date and location for the meeting. We worked through local partners as much as possible, which facilitated these aspects. Partners with the Pueblo of Tesuque were instrumental in arranging the location and organizing publicity prior to the meeting. Securing use of the school library was relatively easy; we submitted an application form which the school approved. The school was supportive, and posted a notice of the meeting on their electronic sign in front of the school, which assisted with publicity.

Publicity included preparing a poster, which was modeled on the posters used for the Santa Fe Open Houses. The Forest Stewards Guild coordinated the preparation of the posters. Local partners sent the poster and information on the meeting out to a large list-serv of local residents, and posted the poster at locations around Tesuque and Pojoaque, as well as the Pueblo

of Tesuque. This was sufficient to make most people in this small community aware of the meeting. Publicity for the community meeting was less intensive than for the Santa Fe Open Houses, and less time consuming, but still represented a significant effort by partners.

## **Partners Perspectives**

The meeting began at 5:30 pm. Alan Barton of the NMFWRI served as moderator and opened the meeting with introductions. He first gave an overview of the Fireshed project. The group has existed for a couple of years, and includes federal, state, local and tribal land managers, non-profit organizations, recreation groups, and other interests. All of the participants have an interest in the area that we call the Fireshed, which encompasses the southern Sangre de Cristo Mountains, stretching from the I-25 corridor to the south to the area around the Village of Tesuque to the north. The GSFFC is not a government agency, it is not a non-profit—it is just a group of organizations that meet regularly to discuss, coordinate and collaborate on management of the Fireshed area. The GSFFC's perspective on managing the area follows an adaptive management approach, which means monitoring the progress of management and changing management prescriptions based on monitoring results. The primary concern is wildfire, and particularly reducing the risk of large, catastrophic wildfires

The moderator then had everyone introduce themselves. Partners in the GSFFC were introduced first, then others in the room introduced themselves and spoke about their interests in the Fireshed landscape.

## **Forest Stewards Guild**

Eytan Krasilovsky of the Forest Stewards Guild then gave an overview of the GSFFC, and how the public can engage with the work of the Coalition. He showed the map of the Fireshed and cautioned that we should think of the outline around the Fireshed landscape as a dashed line, since fires and other natural processes do not stop at the boundary lines.

A fireshed is a concept similar to a watershed. A fireshed is a landscape where an ecosystem process like a fire may be caused by humans or lightning strikes, and then fire moves across the landscape driven by terrain, wind, and vegetation that burns. These conditions affect how a fire burns. The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed is a high-value landscape, and the idea of a fireshed is that we must think about wildfire at a landscape scale. New Mexico has seen several large wildfires in the past 20 years, and the whole west, including California, has had a number of large wildfires recently. Modern wildfires are big and we need to think big. So, there are multiple watersheds represented on the map of the Fireshed, and fires move in and out of watersheds.

We also need to think about connecting the upper watershed and the lower watershed. The fire risk may be different at different parts of the landscape, and post-fire flooding risk varies at different spots as well. The tops of the mountains and the bottoms of the mountains are connected with these processes.

The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed landscape covers a total of 107,000 acres. Despite what you may have heard, no one in the GSFFC is talking about burning all 107,000 acres, and no one is talking about cutting trees across all 107,000 acres. That is a misconception. We are just talking about a focus area, which the line on the map gives us, and this helps us think about the ecosystem processes within this area.

Eytan passed around some sheets showing the history of the GSFFC. Prior to the formation of the Coalition, dating back to about 2000, a lot of treatments were carried out in the Santa Fe Municipal Watershed area. Investments were made in this landscape because it is so important to the community. Around 2010, people started broadening their thoughts about the area and started discussing concepts like Fire Adapted Communities and working at a landscape scale. The Coalition formed in late 2015, and that is when we created the boundaries and started collaborating as partners.

The GSFFC has created four main project areas. There is a Communications Team, which organizes seminars, open houses, field trips and community meetings to raise awareness; an Implementation Team, which tracks projects such as thinning forests, creating defensible space around houses, home hardening, and the like; a Planning and Strategy Team, which focuses on developing a resilience strategy by assessing and modeling wildfire risk and mapping the results; and a Monitoring Team, which checks on what we're doing and its effectiveness.

On the GSFFC website, SantaFeFireshed.org, there is an opportunity to connect with the GSFFC. Community members can sign up as contacts, to receive information and updates on the GSFFC's work, or organizations can join as advisors or partners. The Tesuque Valley Community Association participates as partners. There also is a Home Hazard Assessment Guide on the website to assist homeowners in the Fireshed to prepare their homes to reduce risk associated with a wildfire.

Esmé Cadiente of the Forest Stewards Guild then announced that there will be a seminar series coming up this Spring, each with a different topic, and there will be Home Assessment Guides available at the seminars as well. Topics will include smoke from prescribed burns and wildfires, EISs and NEPA analyses, and post-fire flooding and hazards.

### Pueblo of Tesuque

Mike Martinez of the Pueblo of Tesuque Environment and Natural Resources Department discussed projects on the Pueblo's land within the Fireshed. Mike is the Reserved

Treaty Rights Lands (“RTRL”) Coordinator with the Pueblo. The RTRL is a grant from the Department of the Interior that goes to the Pueblo through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (“BIA”). The Pueblo can use the RTRL grant to collaborate with outside agencies on ancestral aboriginal lands, working with the USFS’s Española Ranger District, private landowners, or anyone else. Currently, the Pueblo is working with the Española District on a 2,400-acre project in Pacheco Canyon, adjacent to Aspen Ranch and the Vigil Grant, two Pueblo of Tesuque trust lands.

The Pueblo and the national forest are teaming up on an analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), with the Pueblo doing cultural resources analyses and the USFS handling the biological analyses. The main goal of the project is to remove hazardous materials from the land. They are not trying to remove all the trees; they want to get the dead, down and diseased trees out, as these pose a particular fire hazard. Anyone with properties near the Village can contact the Pueblo, and potentially team up to do work on your land. Other pueblos can work with adjacent landowners as well, so if you have land near Santa Clara or Picuris, they also have RTRL funds they can draw upon to do forest restoration work on private lands.

The Pueblo has been treating the two trust land areas, in addition to the planned work on adjacent lands. They have almost completed treatments on the Aspen Ranch, although they are leaving a small area of 33 acres without treatments for now, and they will be removing some material from 150 acres on the Vigil Grant this year.

An audience member asked how to contact Mike to coordinate work on private land. Mike said to contact the Pueblo of Tesuque Environment and Natural Resources Department at 955-7741. Mike’s extension is 3095.

Another audience member said she rides in the forest a lot, and there are countless dead trees scattered around on the ground. She wanted to know if the Pueblo can help with removal of these trees in the national forest or just in the land grant? Mike responded that the Pueblo can work in the national forest as well as on their trust lands. The RTRL program provides jobs for people who are improving the national forest. The questioner noted that it is terrifying in parts of the forest, where there is dead material everywhere. Mike offered to show slides at a future meeting to see what the forest looks like when he and other workers walk through the forest. In places the forest is so thick that you can’t see someone a few yards away, even when they’re wearing bright clothes and a helmet. There are huge trees on the ground or trees leaning against others everywhere. It’s pretty bad. That’s why we want to get the forests cleared out. This improves the chances for firefighters to get into the forest to stop fires, and to get out of the area.

A questioner asked what is done with material that is removed, if it is burned or hauled away? Mike said most commonly they pile and burn the material, as the terrain is too rough to



remove everything. Also, they don't want to build too many roads to remove the material, as that could cause negative impacts to the soils.

### U.S. Forest Service

Sandy Hurlocker, District Ranger for the Española Ranger District of the Santa Fe National Forest, spoke about two fuel reduction projects on the western slopes of the Sangre de Cristo mountains within the national forest, and responded to questions about planning for wilderness and roadless areas on the national forest. He started by picking up on the previous questions for Mike Martinez, noting that the Pueblo of Tesuque has been working on their own lands for the past four or five years, but then they approached the USFS and said it doesn't really do them much good to work just on their own land, because if a fire starts on the national forest, it will go onto Pueblo lands. Unfortunately, the USFS's ability to do a lot of planning is limited by their budget. But, the Pueblo was able to provide funding to do some planning on the national forest. The good thing about the RTRL grant is that it provides special authority to combine Department of the Interior money with Department of Agriculture money, which usually is not possible without this authority.

About 70 percent of the 107,000 acres comprising the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed is national forest land. So, no matter what people do around their homes, and no matter how much work is done around trails and other areas, the treatments to reduce the wildfire hazard really have to take a landscape approach. Right now, the USFS is working on two smaller projects. One is around Pacheco and the other around Hyde Park. Hyde Park is just upstream from the Village of Tesuque, so the USFS has emphasized the Hyde Park area for a number of years because a fire up near Hyde Park would lead to post-fire flooding in the Tesuque Valley.

In the larger Fireshed area, though, the USFS is looking at how to get people who are invested in the area and communities involved in in process of planning work across the entire landscape. So the USFS is planning workshops in the coming months to have a conversation with community members about the risks, and what the hazards are of doing something versus doing nothing.

An audience member asked if Sandy had a contact number so communities could arrange meetings to talk about these issues with the USFS. Sandy responded that the USFS is working on a larger scope, but they do have contacts with the City and County of Santa Fe, who can come out and evaluate individual properties. The areas where the USFS works is uphill from most of the communities, but the USFS does want to plug people into those who work more in the areas where people live.

Another audience member noted that the USFS is stressing prevention, but she is also concerned about the roadless areas in the national forest. What happens when fire crews need to

get into roadless areas? How do they access the areas? Sandy gave the example of how the USFS responded to the Pacheco Fire in 2011, just uphill from the Village of Tesuque. Due to the conditions in the area, the USFS could not get firefighters into the area by vehicle, so they had to hike in or get in by helicopter. The firefighters worked around the edges of the fire to head it off. If there were a fire in the area we have been talking about, because it is so overgrown and continuous with no real safety zones, the firefighters would have to try to head it off at the bottom or along the sides, and it would be a pretty big area they would have to cover to be effective. A large area likely would be burned. One thing they can do to make it easier to handle fires is to create some safety zones in advance, as well as some thinned areas so a fire could not get as much steam up. These could be anchor points that would help in fighting the fire.

A questioner asked how much of the area is roadless. Sandy said about half of the area is roadless. For the USFS, this means they cannot do anything in the roadless areas that would violate the Conservation Rule that was published in 2001. So, they can't harvest timber nor build roads. To do any thinning in roadless areas, they need approval from the USFS Regional Office. The questioner asked if they have gotten approval to do fuels reduction in any roadless areas. Sandy said they just got approval for the Hyde Park area, because it is in a roadless area, and that will be part of the decision to work in the area when it comes out. The questioner asked if the document of approval is a public document. Sandy said it will be public when the decision is made to work in the area.

A questioner asked if the USFS knows what prescriptions are (densities, number of trees per acre) for different areas around communities or in the forest? Sandy said the USFS has done about 7,000 acres of thinning and burning within the Santa Fe Municipal Watershed over the past 15 years. That area is an example of the kind of forest that the USFS is trying to create. One of the goals of the GSFFC is to create some demonstration areas that are accessible so everyone can have an idea of what a treated forest might look like around homes, where you would want fewer trees, or what it might look like in spotted owl habitat, where the USFS could not thin at the same level. It will be variable across the landscape, and this is why a landscape approach is advantageous. The forest does not have to be the same everywhere. Areas with owls might have thicker forest, but then there may be more thinning around these areas.

A questioner asked how we might balance some lessons learned from recent fires in Montecito and Santa Barbara, California, which show that efforts to control fires through prescribed burns has worked against us and created more problems in the end. She has read that there might be a new approach to managing lands that lets fires burn in some areas while protecting homes and properties at the same time, because this is healthy for the land. So where is the balance between traditional approaches and the new approach? Sandy replied that balance really is what we are looking for. No one in any of the organizations working together in the

GSFFC is smart enough to figure out what the proper balance is all by themselves. There is a balance. If we take too much out, we might affect wildlife habitat or recreation, and if we open the forests up too much, more than existed in the past, we would affect the natural ecosystem. On the other side, though, we know what fire does. Just across the valley we can see what the Las Conchas Fire did in just a few days, burning over 156,000 acres. That is not what is normal in the ecosystem either. By doing some thinning and burning in the right places, we intend to be able to “keep the lid on” if we can. The questioner asked if that was what we have done in the past? That’s always been the standard approach, yet in Santa Barbara, if there had been more fire, the devastation from the recent fires would not have been as great. Then, the flooding would not have followed to the extent that it did. Sandy said that is what we want. Putting more fire on the landscape would mean we don’t end up with the flooding effects.

Eytan also responded that there is a lot to learn from recent fires in California. But we also have to recognize the different conditions in different areas. Extreme wind events drive large wildfires, and in Santa Barbara they had Santa Ana winds during the fires. Also, that is a chaparral ecosystem, which is very different than what we have here. There is a lot of nuance in making decisions about how to manage the areas.

### City of Santa Fe

Alan Hook, program manager for the City of Santa Fe Water Division gave an overview of forest management within the Santa Fe Municipal Watershed. He started by saying he grew up very near where the recent devastating fires in California occurred. He and his family have been evacuated from various fires on the Los Padres National Forest, which burns so frequently that they used to call it Los Fuegos. Alan noted that they had a wet year in Southern California in 2016, but then it dried out dramatically in 2017, which added to the size of the fires.

Alan showed a map of the City Watershed, and described the landscape. The watershed is closed, and has been since 1932. It covers 17,300 acres. The lower, non-wilderness portion is about 7,200 acres, and the upper 10,000 acres are within designated wilderness. The Tesuque and Little Tesuque drainages start up in the same area as the municipal watershed, so everyone from Nambé to Pojoaque to Tesuque to the City of Santa Fe shares that same water source. On the other side of the mountain, Pecos shares the same headwaters. In 2009, the City of Santa Fe Water Division, the USFS Española Ranger District, the Santa Fe Watershed Association and The Nature Conservancy joined together and produced a plan for the Municipal Watershed. They expanded the plan in 2013 to include the lower portion of the wilderness area for potential treatments. So far, however, the treatments have occurred only in the 7,200-acre lower area. They do mechanical or hand thinning, and then either piling and burning, or doing aerial ignition and broadcast burning.

The City has a cost-share agreement with the USFS, which everyone contributes to on their water bill. This allows the USFS to continue to do their work throughout the year. Alan showed a map of all the areas that were burned recently. In Fall, 2016, they did a large 2,400 acre prescribed burn, and they have another area to the south where they have a projected prescribed burn for an area that has been thinned. These projects have been possible due to the cost-share agreement that runs from 2015 to 2019. This is significant because the USFS gets their money at the beginning of October, but by the end of fire season, their funds have run out. But the best time to do the prescribed burns is during the Fall, so the City's money can match USFS funds and they can continue doing the work.

The Municipal Watershed is the cheapest source of water for the City. It provides 40 percent of the City's drinking water supply, although it might be a little less this year due to the low snow pack. The treatments near the reservoirs provide ecosystem services and a clean water source for residents.

Right now, the City Water Division is doing a risk assessment on its reservoirs and the earthen dams, which are high hazard dams. If a fire occurs in the upper watershed followed by post-fire flooding and debris flows, the reservoirs would likely fill up and the dams potentially could be breached. This would lead to flood flows into downtown Santa Fe. The City now is modeling potential scenarios for such an event, to determine how large a wildfire would produce severe flooding events. To go back to the California example, Montecito was hit with a large storm cell with 1 to 2 inches of rain per hour, which is extreme but it can happen, and in Montecito this produced damaging debris flows. In New Mexico, we saw a lot of flooding and debris flows after the Las Conchas Fire, and from the perspective of the water utility, this is the primary concern. And, again, a healthy watershed provides a clean water source.

A questioner asked if any treatments had been done in the wilderness portion of the watershed. Alan responded that to date, no treatments had been done in the wilderness. This past Fall, however, they did a broadcast burn on an area next to the wilderness that serves as a buffer to the wilderness area. They did an environmental assessment in 2014 on treatments in the lower wilderness area, and they would not treat the whole area all at once. There are 19 or 20 different sections of the area, and they would do treatments in small portions. The questioner asked if there were plans to do treatments in the near future. Alan said no, the conditions have not been perfect to carry out these treatments yet. Sandy added that in normal winter conditions, they would look at treating slopes that were clear on one side with snow on the back side, but this winter there is no snow anywhere up in the wilderness. Because this is a wilderness area, they decided not to go in and build fire lines, which would be how they ordinarily would do a prescribed burn. Instead, they would do prescribed burns without building trails, and the USFS fire folks have supported this approach. They have some leeway from the legislation that created



*Eytan Krasilovsky of the Forest Stewards Guild  
responds to a question raised by a community member*

the wilderness that authorized treatments, since this is within the municipal watershed. The USFS is committed to using a very light touch on these projects, using helicopters to burn a small area one year, and then maybe build out from that. But, it depends on the weather.

### **Issues Raised by Community Members**

Following these short presentations, partners responded to questions from those in attendance, and discussed a variety of topics pertaining both to the management of the Fireshed and to homeowner and village responsibilities within the Fireshed. Tesuque residents and others in attendance raised several issues and made suggestions, some of which the GSFFC can address, others of which partners might be able to address, and some of which partners might be able to assist with by contacting the appropriate party with a request.

**First Question:** The first questioner transmitted some information to homeowners and other community members present. The Tesuque Valley Community Association is working with the Wildfire Network and Krys Nystrom. Their website is [wildfirenetwork.org](http://wildfirenetwork.org). They are working to make Tesuque a FireWise Community. They have a grant which allows them to come out and do home assessments, and to inform homeowners about who can help them with various home treatments. They also have information on grants that are available to help homeowners make their properties safer.

**Second Question:** Some people live on narrow dirt roads, with slopes on both sides. This is a single point of access. If there is a fire at the bottom of the road, they could not get out. Many people in the community share this concern. But, there is no money for roads.

Eytan responded, drawing on experience he has had on other parts of the Fireshed. He noted that people are very invested in the idea that they need additional roads for safety, but building new roads is a really big deal. What homeowners can do is have a preparedness plan for their home, for their family, and for their animals. Kryss and others on the GSFFC can help with this plan. But, the likelihood of a fast-moving fire that could trap you is slim, but not impossible. But the best approach for homeowners is to have a plan. Experience in places like California where there are a lot of evacuations shows that people generally have time to get out and get their animals out before a wildfire, if they know what to expect and know how to respond.

**Third Question:** The same questioner asked about climate change, and its effect on vegetation. Have changes in the vegetation also changed how homeowners should look at wildfire, or should we consider the same vegetation we've always seen differently, given climate change?

Eytan responded, and first offered context to the question. We have excluded fire from the ecosystems in this area for over 100 years. We have 128 fire history plots around the ecosystem that document the effects of fire exclusion. One significant effect is that smaller trees that previously did not have a chance to grow now do, and dominate the ecosystem in many places. On top of that, we now have stresses produced by climate change, including warm winters, and warmer summers that stress trees. There are a lot of different factors that have changed the environment.

Sandy noted that drawing a straight line from any of these factors to climate change is difficult.

The questioner said she wasn't asking about the effects of climate change, but wanted to know if we are approaching our conditions differently today than we might have ten years ago. Her house was built twenty years ago, and she wants to know if there are things she needs to do to update her home to better withstand some of the changes that have come about as a result of climate change.

Sandy said the USFS has been trying to get resilience back into the ecosystem for some time now. If we can create more resilient ecosystems, we will be better off no matter what, including in conditions that might change due to climate change.

**Fourth Question:** The questioner noted that they do a lot of mowing along the sides of roads here. But, they sometimes don't mow until the end of August. These areas are very flammable, and if someone throws a cigarette out of their car, or if their muffler sparks, it could start a fire. This could happen unknowingly. Also, there is commonly a risk of wildfire during the Fourth of July when fireworks are used. There is a lot of concern about the types of fireworks—some are legal and some are illegal. Can anyone tell us what fireworks are illegal due to the risk of wildfire, and who we can call if someone is using illegal fireworks?

Sandy responded, noting that in the national forest there is a ban on fireworks at all times. One of the goals of the GSFFC is not just thinning trees, but also prevention. There should be an approach that applies everywhere. If the City has a ban, and the County wants to put in a ban,



they should be able to coordinate those so people know the rules everywhere. This takes collaboration, which is what the GSFFC is about. All lands, whether on the national forest or other lands, should have a common approach.

The questioner said that education is a big part of this and people need to understand the conditions.

Alan Hook added that the fire departments could bring a resolution forward to both the City Council and the County Commissioners about fire restrictions. These often correspond to when the jurisdictions are going into water restrictions as well. From the perspective of the City, they do try to coordinate their restrictions with the other jurisdictions.

Eytan addressed the issue about mowing along roads. He pointed to two resolutions that were on a board in the front of the room, which were passed by the City and the County a couple of years ago, which support treating areas to reduce the wildfire risk. These show the coordination between the entities. Eytan has taken note and will contact some people from the County on this issue, and citizens can also contact their county commissioners about this issue.

The questioner pointed out that some of the roads are county roads, but some are also state roads. State roads sometimes are neglected and do not get the same treatment as the county roads, but the same conditions exist. This shows there is a lack of coordination in some respects. The communities look to the GSFFC as a coalition of organizations to see if this coordination can be addressed and worked out.

Eytan said we don't have anyone from the Department of Transportation as part of our Coalition or in our network right now. This is a good suggestion and we can see if we can address this by inviting someone from the DOT to join the Coalition.

**Fifth Question:** Is there a plan to do an environmental impact statement ("EIS") for activities in the Fireshed?

Sandy said there are the two smaller projects, Hyde Park and Pacheco Canyon, which are being analyzed under a categorical exclusion ("CE"), a minimal-level required environmental review. The USFS must look at threatened and endangered species, archeological resources, and tribal concerns, but there is an assumption in a CE that the projects will not have a significant environmental impact. That is the lowest level of NEPA compliance. A level of analysis that the USFS would do to consider alternatives and additional factors would be an environmental assessment ("EA"), a higher standard of review under NEPA. This is what the USFS is looking at completing for areas outside the two smaller projects. However, to date, the USFS still has not identified which areas will be part of the EA. Until they determine which areas are most in need of treatments, they will not make a decision about how to analyze the project. They are pretty sure it won't be a CE for the larger area, but they have not determined if their analysis will be an EA or an EIS.

The questioner asked if the USFS tried to do a minimal level of analysis at Hyde Park a few years ago, but that decision was appealed and eventually the USFS was prevented from using a CE on the Hyde Park Project. Sandy responded yes. The questioner asked what has

changed so that the USFS would try to do the same thing again. Sandy said that the appeal was based on a couple of points. One was that the USFS did not take smoke into account, and the smoke would be moving into a wilderness area and this would affect the wilderness character. Also, the USFS did not talk about the roadless areas in their analysis. This time, the USFS intends to fix those flaws in the previous analysis and reissue it.

The questioner then asked if it was true that in the meantime there have been spotted owls documented in the area under review. Sandy said they know there are spotted owls along the Winsor Trail, and there is a pair in the Municipal Watershed near the wilderness boundary. Those are the only owls that have been identified. The USFS conducted spotted owl surveys last year, and will do more this Spring. So far, they have not seen any spotted owls in either the Pacheco Canyon or the Hyde Park project areas. They are continuing to look for the owls. But, it is important to remember that if spotted owls are identified within the project areas, it does not mean that the USFS cannot conduct treatments, it just means they have to follow restrictive habitat requirements. This would mean a lighter level of thinning. The USFS is doing the necessary surveys and trying to learn from the past, to make sure the project meets all environmental requirements.

**Sixth Question:** The questioner asked if the USFS is planning on doing clearcuts of aspen near Black Canyon campground. Sandy responded that those are off the table at this point. These were a riparian improvement, and they might look at them in the future. The only way to regenerate old aspen is to open up the stands. But, this is a lower priority at this point; the USFS is going to concentrate on the other work that needs to be done in the area.

**Seventh Question:** The questioner asked about arroyos that funnel floodwaters after big fires. Some arroyos have a lot of debris in them. Farmers clear their acequias of debris, can arroyos be treated the same way? They are typically on shared areas, not on private properties. Are there any groups that bring people together to clear arroyos in their areas as community projects?

Andy Otto of the Santa Fe Watershed Association (“SFWA”) responded. The SFWA has a program called “Adopt an Arroyo” which started up in the past couple of years with the goal of doing some assessments and planning around the arroyos, followed by some implementation. Right now, this program exists only in the Santa Fe River watershed. Programs like this should be spreading out around the state, however. Sandy asked Andy if the program includes removing debris. Andy said that it could.

Another community member pointed out that arroyos are places where people dump debris, and not just trash. When people are clearing their property, they throw what they have cleared over the edge and the debris eventually ends up in an arroyo. General education on this topic would help. The speaker said he walks arroyos frequently, and he has pulled many dead pinyon trees out of them. It is especially important to remove the debris near culverts, as they can clog the culverts quickly.

Eytan addressed issues related to arroyos. He worked on a project that developed a plan to slow water down as it entered the arroyo. This helped reduce the flooding potential even with debris in the arroyo. There are some local people working on this; he has information on this issue and can share it outside the meeting with people.

Alan Hook added that one of the watershed associations has a watershed coordinator who hires local youth crews that work in arroyos, planting native plants and cleaning up the areas. But it is complicated as people dump all kinds of things into arroyos, and it takes a lot of time and effort by public works departments to deal with these. But, also, in our ecosystem the storms deliver soils from the arroyos that may be needed downstream. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to slow down the hydrologic flow so it isn't eroding the channel. It's a balancing act.

Sandy added that if there is a fire upstream, whatever you do in the arroyo is unlikely to make much of a difference. The change in flows increases exponentially after a fire. Experience after fires around Los Alamos and Nambé Reservoir, as well as Cochiti Reservoir after the Las Conchas Fire, shows the effects are very significant. From a land management perspective, it is better to avoid the large fires and the problems won't arise.

**Eighth Question:** Following the Cerro Grande Fire in 2000, the communities of Rio Medio and Chupadero got together and with some strong leadership, the community worked together to clear out all the slash and debris from the forest. This lasted for about four years, working with the USFS. They brought in chippers and were able to chip lots of the slash. In coordination with the County, they also hauled out several hundred appliances from the arroyos. But, the project ended and things are returning to the way they were before, with lots of slash accumulation and many appliances showing up in the arroyos. People are talking about restarting the program, but the questioner wanted to know if that was something that is available from the USFS?

Sandy said the GSFFC has different resources available and could work with communities to clean these areas up. The USFS doesn't have a crew, but within the GSFFC we have County resources, City resources, Tribal resources, and others. The questioner said in the past he thought the crew came from the USFS, as they wore Forest Service outfits. They also walked around everyone's homes to give advice on what trees to remove and how to make their homes more fire safe. That was very helpful. Sandy said that is what Eytan has been talking about. Esmé Cadiente from the Forest Stewards Guild added that they are rolling out a program this Spring that allows communities to schedule their own field exchange or mini-seminar. If you can get a few neighbors together, the Guild can send people to discuss whatever topic the community wants to know about. This could include home hazard assessments, or if there are other topics the Guild can arrange professionals to come and talk to the community. There will be more information on this program on the GSFFC website shortly.

Eytan also noted that the Home Hazard Assessment workbook was developed by Esmé and Krys Nystrom, and this is a great starting place. The GSFFC also works with Fire Adapted Communities, which has the goal of helping people live in a community where wildfire is a

possibility. Part of this is maintenance of treatments to keep an area safe. There is a new statewide Fire Adapted Communities network forming. Information on this will be available on the website. The idea is for community leaders from around the state to meet and share information.

**Ninth Question:** A questioner asked about the Wildland-Urban Interface (“WUI”), which is the potential for development and growth into areas that are high risk for wildfires. What is going on in WUI areas? Is there more land opening up for development around Santa Fe?

Sandy responded that there is no land in the national forest available for development. The only inholdings are the state park and tribal land, and the national forest shares boundaries with county land, private land or state land. The questioner clarified that there is not much pressure to open areas up for development. Sandy said there isn’t much around here. Over by Pecos and Glorietta, there is more of a checkerboard of national forest land and private land, but around Tesuque there isn’t much open for development. Sandy explained that checkerboard land means there is one square mile of private land next to one square mile of national forest. An inholding is any private or non-USFS land within a national forest. It is difficult to do anything based on the topography in a checkerboarded area because it’s all mixed together.

The questions ended and the moderator closed the meeting, thanking everyone for attending and reminding people that the GSFFC website has a lot of information. He also said that we could possibly arrange another meeting in the future, at which Steve Bassett of The Nature Conservancy could explain the assessment process, or other topics. After the meeting, many residents stayed around to view the posters and talk individually with GSFFC partners about specific topics.

## **Responses from Partners**

Partners who attended the public meeting were asked to submit comments and reflections. Several issues emerged that pertain to the GSFFC’s role as convener of community meetings, most pertaining to capturing, archiving and sharing the information discussed at community meetings.

### Recording Community Meetings

We video-recorded the Tesuque Community Meeting, which serves as a record of the meeting and the issues discussed. However, several questions arose which merit further discussion.

The first question is should we record meetings? Video- or audio-recording meetings has costs and benefits. The major problem with recording is that it might alter the discussion between GSFFC partners and the public. Some people might be unwilling to speak and raise issues if they



*Forty-eight people filled the Tesuque Elementary School Library for the community meeting*

are being recorded. Of course, in a public meeting setting, many people will not speak as candidly as they would one-on-one, but if the meeting is being recorded, this would make many people even less willing to express their views, especially if they are controversial. Some people may not be willing to raise critical points, or may try to sugar-coat points so as not to sound offensive in front of a group, if there is a record of what they are saying. The opposite issue may also arise, some may exaggerate their points if they are going into a record. These are probably bigger issues for a video-recording than for an audio-recording, but the issues would raise a concern in both cases.

To balance the cost of recording a meeting, the second question is what value are the recordings? What would we use them for? One use is simply to maintain an archive of the meetings. Maintaining such an archive would require some investment, in space on a disk as well as time to prepare and archive the recording. Would we use the recordings enough to make this worthwhile?

Another possible use is to post the recordings on our website or social media pages, so the public can view the event. If we do this, however, we face issues of privacy and confidentiality. This leads to a third question, how do we notify the public that a meeting is video- or audio-recorded? This question is particularly important if we plan to post a recording on social media. Should we include a notice in all advertising that goes out prior to a meeting letting people know the meeting will be recorded? This would allow the public to decide if they wanted to attend or not, if recording the meeting is an issue with them. Should we post notices at the entrance and in the room, and/or make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting? This would allow people to modify their behavior at the meeting, depending on their preferences. It would not constitute permission to broadcast people's faces on social media, however. Should we distribute a handout for everyone in attendance? A handout ensures that each person in attendance would receive a personal notice that the meeting is recorded, and what uses will be made of the recording. We could have a section asking for permission to post the recording on

social media, if that is our intention. We could do any or all of these. Some, such as announcing in advance, would be somewhat cumbersome.

A related issue is whether someone should be able to opt-out or opt-in to a recording. Can we assume that attendance and speaking at a meeting confers an acknowledgement that the speaker is being recorded? It is, after all, a public meeting. Can we let people know that participation at the meeting implies their consent to being recorded, and that the recording may be broadcast in a public forum? Then, if someone chooses to opt out of being recorded, how should we handle that? Stop recording if that person speaks? Digitally hide that person's face and voice in the final recording? And how does the effort it takes to avoid recording someone balance with the benefits of having the recording?

A fourth question pertains to live-streaming meetings, which is one possible way to record the meeting. The issues raised above pertaining to privacy and confidentiality are even more important if we live-stream a meeting. The first question is should we offer a live-stream of the meeting? This would allow many people to participate who might, for various reasons, not be able to attend the meeting in person. On the other hand, it might suppress in-person attendance if people opt to stay home and watch on the Internet rather than travel to the meeting. We probably can assume that those watching the meeting on the Internet are not as engaged as those who are present in person, in most cases. If we do live-stream meetings, it would probably be necessary to have one person (in addition to the person doing the recording) monitoring the live-stream, to handle questions from those watching on the Internet. This might be a significant burden in preparing for community meetings.

### Photos

Issues of privacy and confidentiality also arise if we take photos of participants at meetings, especially if we post these photos on the Internet or use them in other GSFFC promotional materials. Of course, any participant can take a photo at a meeting, and can post that photo on their social media sites. But, if the GSFFC convenes a meeting and a GSFFC partner is taking photos at the meeting, do we have an additional responsibility to ensure we are respecting people's privacy rights? If a photo of a participant appears on our webpage or Facebook page, that person might object that it conveys their support for our organization, when that might not be the case. If a GSFFC partner is taking photos, do we need a photo release form that everyone in a photo would sign before we could use the photo publically? And should we announce at meetings that we are taking photos and how the photos may be used?



## Written Notes

We did not have anyone taking notes at this meeting, since the recording served as a record of the meeting. Following the meeting, however, it was recommended that we have a note-taker at each meeting. Written notes would be helpful in several ways. They would serve as a record that GSFFC committees could use for future planning, based on input from the public. They could remind GSFFC partners of what was said at a meeting, and resolve confusion if different people remember things differently. As participation in the GSFFC changes, a written record of past activities can help new participants understand what the Coalition has done in the past, and a past record can assist with future planning.

There are no serious downsides to having a note-taker at each community meeting. We should recognize, however, that the notes are not a transcript, and do to some extent represent what the note-taker hears and records. This probably won't be a significant issue. It may be a good idea, however, to have notes sent around soon after the meeting to all partners in attendance, to collect diverse recollections.

## Handling Protesters

At the Tesuque Community Meeting, there were protesters who remained outside with signs. Presumably, they contacted members of the public who were arriving to present their views. One partner spoke with the protestors and invited them to come in to the meeting, but they declined. It is unclear why they did not want to join us. There was a basketball game going on at the school at the same time as our community meeting, so many who were arriving were not there for the GSFFC meeting. The protesters may have thought they were reaching a large group of people who were not going to hear the GSFFC perspective, and wanted to stay outside to take advantage of this opportunity. Or, they may simply have not thought they had much to contribute to the meeting, or would be excluded from participating.

A question we have discussed several times in the Communications Team is how we should handle protestors at meetings, especially if they are disruptive. This was not an issue at the two meetings in Santa Fe, and was not an issue at the Tesuque meeting, either. There have been participants at all three meetings who oppose the treatments in the Fireshed, but they have expressed their concerns in a productive way that has not been disruptive. We should keep up with the opposition, however, and engage them when we can, to maintain cordial relations. If they show up at future meetings, we should continue to invite them to participate in the meeting, and let them know we cannot have a productive meeting if they are not there. If opponents do become disruptive, we should rely on community members to keep them in line. At the Tesuque meeting, among those present many more supported our work than opposed it. Those who are



*Mike Martinez from the Pueblo of Tesuque Environment Department discusses projects in the Fireshed with a community member*

present do not want a meeting to break down and become unproductive, and the majority can generally assert its desire for civil discourse.

If an opponent of the GSFFC and the partners' work contacts the GSFFC and wishes to make a presentation at a community meeting, how should we handle this? First, our general policy should be to handle this on a case-by-case basis. However, we should be careful about offering an opportunity to do a formal presentation to anyone who is not an active partner in the GSFFC. If we are convening the meeting, it is our prerogative to determine who speaks to represent the GSFFC. Anyone else who wishes to speak at meetings convened by the GSFFC should be considered a member of the public, and should be given the same opportunity to speak as any other member of the public in attendance. At GSFFC public and community meetings, we have time for questions and answers, or general community discussions, and anyone can present their views and raise issues of concern during public question and answer periods. The GSFFC partners will address them in the public forum.

### **Additional Reflections**

In addition to the points raised at the meeting and by partners following the meeting, a few other issues and recommendations should be considered for future community meetings.

First, if possible, have a local person or the partner who is closest to the community act as facilitator of the meeting. This would serve to create a connection between the community and the GSFFC, and would build support for the mission of the GSFFC. If the partners who will

speak at a meeting meet with the local facilitator prior to the meeting to arrange the agenda, this should work out well in most or all cases.

Second, follow-up from meetings is important. We should make sure we note “action items” at each community meeting. These are requests from those in attendance, especially those which a partner commits to investigating and responding to. We should set up a means of responding back to the group on these items, announced at the meeting. For example, we could tell people to look at our Facebook page, or website, to view follow-up information on the issues raised at the meeting. Or, we could send responses to the e-mail addresses of all in attendance. Tracking this following a meeting would probably require one partner who takes responsibility for ensuring the “action items” are investigated and a response is sent.

Third, it is worth taking five minutes at the beginning of each community meeting to introduce the GSFFC. There seem to be some misconceptions out there about what the role of the GSFFC is, what the role of partners is, and how these fit together. Clarifying the mission of the GSFFC and its partners, and responsibilities of the different entities, is a message we should repeat frequently to the public.

Some attendees requested assistance with risk reduction near their homes. This was good to hear, and hopefully we will hear similar requests at future community meetings. Some of our partners offer this service, and made arrangements to follow up with those making this request at the meeting. We should consider preparing a list of partners and others who can assist homeowners with home preparation, and making this list available on our website, Facebook page, and have printed copies to hand out at meetings. At future meetings, there may not be anyone present from partner organizations that offer this service, so we should be prepared to respond to homeowners by offering this information. We may also take down contact information for those who make this request, to pass along to partner organizations that offer this service.

## **Follow-Up Meeting**


Steve Bassett, an analyst with The Nature Conservancy, prepared the GSFFC’s Fireshed Assessment. The Assessment analyzes the risk of a wildfire across the Fireshed landscape, by modeling wildfires taking into account a number of different factors. The likelihood of a fire, the intensity of the fire, and the values on the landscape that are put at risk by the wildfire combine to assess the overall risk of fire at a particular point on the landscape relative to the other points on the landscape. After the successful Village of Tesuque Community Meeting, and considering the interest shown by community members at this meeting in the work of the GSFFC, Steve attended a meeting of the Tesuque Valley Community Association held on May 7, 2018, to present results from the Fireshed Assessment to the community. Several other GSFFC partners accompanied Steve to this meeting. The results from the Fireshed Assessment are available on the GSFFC website.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the Tesuque Community Meeting was quite successful. The number of people in attendance exceeded our expectations, and the dialogue was productive. Most of the attendees were supportive of the work that GSFFC partners are doing and of the goals of the Coalition. During the Q&A, some asked about steps they could take to protect their homes from wildfire, and that the community could take to reduce the risk of a catastrophic wildfire. Following the meeting, some made inquiries about follow-up meetings in nearby communities.

The GSFFC will continue to conduct community meetings around the Fireshed, in order to keep in touch with residents and stakeholders about our activities, and to stay abreast of concerns in the communities.

## Appendix A: Meeting Flyer



# WHAT IS OUR FIRESHED?

TUESDAY, JAN. 23  
TESUQUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
1555 BISHOPS LODGE ROAD

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**JAN. 23**  
**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.

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT  
THE FIRESHED AND THE GREATER  
SANTA FE FIRESHED COALITION

What is the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition?  
What is the mission?  
Why is this area called a fireshed?  
What does the fireshed project mean to Tesuque?

BRING YOUR QUESTIONS

## Join us!

[www.santafefireshed.org](http://www.santafefireshed.org)

**Appendix B: Meeting Agenda**  
**Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition**  
**Public Meeting**  
**Village of Tesuque**

Date: January 23, 2018

Location: Tesuque Elementary School, 1555 Bishops Lodge Road

Time: 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Agenda

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 5:00 pm  | GSFFC arrives, sets up for meeting  |
| 5:30 pm  | Public arrives, can view displays   |
| 5:40 pm  | Meeting begins, Introductions<br>Alan Barton, NM Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute   |
| 5:50 pm  | Overview of the GSFFC, Values in the Fireshed Landscape, and roles to engage,<br>Village of Tesuque participation in Fireshed Coalition, Progress on the NM<br>Association of Counties funded FAC efforts<br>Eytan Krasilovsky, Forest Stewards Guild |
| 6:00 pm  | Pueblo of Tesuque participation in Fireshed Coalition<br>Mike Martinez, Pueblo of Tesuque   |
| 6:08 pm  | US Forest Service activities in the Fireshed<br>Sandy Hurlocker, USFS   |
| 6:16 pm  | City of Santa Fe Watershed<br>Alan Hook, City of Santa Fe Water Department  |
| 6: 24 pm | Question and Answer on the GSFFC and the Fireshed<br>GSFFC Partners   |
| 7:00 pm  | Meeting ends, Public departs  |
| 7:05 pm  | GSFFC cleans up venue   |
| 7:30 pm  | End   |



*The GSFFC thanks the Tesuque Valley Community Association for organizing the community meeting, and the Tesuque Elementary School and Santa Fe Public Schools for providing the space for the meeting. The GSFFC acknowledges the work that Cam Duncan and the GSFFC Communications Team, as well as all of the presenters, put into organizing the meeting.*



**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 Alan Barton of the NMFWR.**