

# County Wildfire Playbook:

A County Leadership Guide to Help  
Communities become more Fire Adapted

New Mexico Counties  
83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference – Curry County  
– “The Sequel”  
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# Overview

- What Wildfire? Natural and Human Ignitions
- Getting Ahead – Being Adapted
- Learning Networks? Networks for Change
- The County Wildfire Playbook
- Curated Resources
- Time to Act



# !FLASH WORKSHOP! – 5 minutes

1. **A message from our State Forester, Laura McCarthy**
2. Say hello to your neighbor!
3. Share two wildfire experiences with your neighbor.
4. Share how it affected you.
5. Share two actions you are doing in your County to prepare for, respond to, or recover from wildfire?

Before



After







# What Wildfire? Natural and Human Ignitions



**Forest Stewards Guild**  
putting the forest first  
March 2018

## Increasing Wildfire Awareness and Reducing Human-Caused Ignitions in Northern New Mexico



**REPORT**

**Forest Stewards Guild**  
putting the forest first  
March 2018

## Increasing wildfire awareness and reducing human-caused ignitions in Northern New Mexico

**SUMMARY**

Large, high severity wildfires are now a common occurrence in the forests of northern New Mexico. These wildfires burn through forests that are not adapted to high-severity fire and can devastate ecosystems and human communities. For example, the Las Conchas Fire of 2011 burned across 156,593 acres, caused severe flooding, and converted ponderosa pine forests to shrub fields, perhaps forever. Although lightning causes many wildfires in the Southwest, human ignitions are a significant risk. Since human ignitions are preventable, raising education and awareness could be the key to reducing the number of large wildfires.

People start wildfires with their vehicles, cigarette butts, campfires, fireworks, debris burning, powerlines, arson, and other activities. This study was designed help support wildfire prevention by better understanding how people start wildfires, common locations of human-caused wildfires, existing public awareness campaigns, and current investments in public awareness of wildfire.

**Key findings from the report**

- Abandoned campfires account for 44% of the human-caused wildfires since 2001.
  - Campfire bans have limited effectiveness because campfires are particularly important to people recreating in the forest.
- Electrical power lines are a significant cause of wildfires. In New Mexico, three major wildfires in the last decade were all caused by electrical lines, including the Las Conchas fire, which cost more than one billion dollars.
- More knowledge about the spatial patterns of human ignitions presents the opportunity for targeted outreach and education, which is a cost-effective way to reduce wildfire impacts.
  - In New Mexico 80 percent of wildfires started by campfires are within a quarter mile of a road.
  - Hotspot modeling to identify areas of high arson potential can help law enforcement reduce wildfire threats.
- Currently, federal agency budgets for prevention programs do not reflect their importance.
  - The National Wildfire Prevention Program only has an annual budget of \$95,000 and one full-time staff person to help coordinate national awareness efforts.
  - Research has shown that the savings from the reduction in wildfire damages can be as much as 35 times greater than the cost of prevention education.
- Public awareness campaigns, such as Smokey Bear and the more recent One Less Spark, seek to change behaviors, but there is little information about their effectiveness.
  - The most recent investigation into the effectiveness of wildfire prevention signs was more than 40 years ago.

To view the full report please visit [www.foreststewardsguild.org/publications](http://www.foreststewardsguild.org/publications)

**REPORT**





# CAMPFIRE SAFETY TO PREVENT WILDFIRE

Campfires are the leading human cause of wildfires.

Large numbers of abandoned campfires have forced the Santa Fe National Forest to close public access during high fire danger.

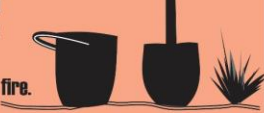
Before you burn

Follow campfire restrictions and bans. Check [firerestrictions.us/nm/](http://firerestrictions.us/nm/)

## Burn it

### WATER & SHOVEL

Be Prepared. Bring a shovel and extra water (3-5 gals) to extinguish your fire.



## Put it out

### DROWN



Pour ample water onto the fire until the embers and wood are very wet. A soupy appearance is a good thing.

### CLEAR



Clear a 3 foot area around your fire down to mineral soil and make sure the area is clear of flammable material.

### STIR



Add fresh dirt to the wet ashes and stir the water and dirt together and use the shovel to dig down to mix in the coals.

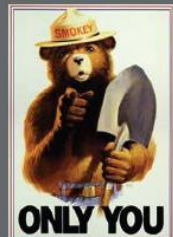
### WATCH

Keep an eye on your fire at all times, and be prepared to extinguish any embers that land outside your ring.



### FEEL

Hover the back of your hand over the ash mixture. If you still feel heat stir and add more water and dirt until it is cool to the touch.



2011, Ruidoso Downs, <http://www.firehouse.com>

FOREST TRUST

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April 2019



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# What Wildfire? Natural and Human Ignitions

# Getting Ahead – Being Adapted



A fire adapted community acknowledges and takes responsibility for its wildfire risk, and implements appropriate actions at all levels. Actions address resident safety, homes, neighborhoods, businesses, and infrastructure, forests, parks, open spaces and other community assets. Every community has a unique set of circumstances and capacities, so the kinds of actions they take will vary.

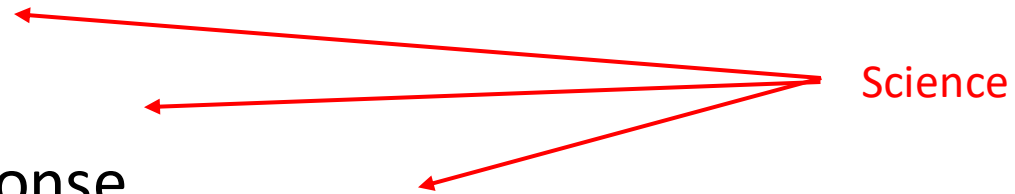
Further, there is no end-point in becoming fire adapted. Sustaining, growing and adapting strategies, partnerships, and capacity through time are key. Visit [fireadaptednetwork.org](http://fireadaptednetwork.org) for more information.



# National Cohesive Wildland Strategy

The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy is a strategic push to work collaboratively among all stakeholders and across all landscapes, using best science, to make meaningful progress towards the three goals:

- Resilient Landscapes
- Fire Adapted Communities
- Safe and Effective Wildfire Response

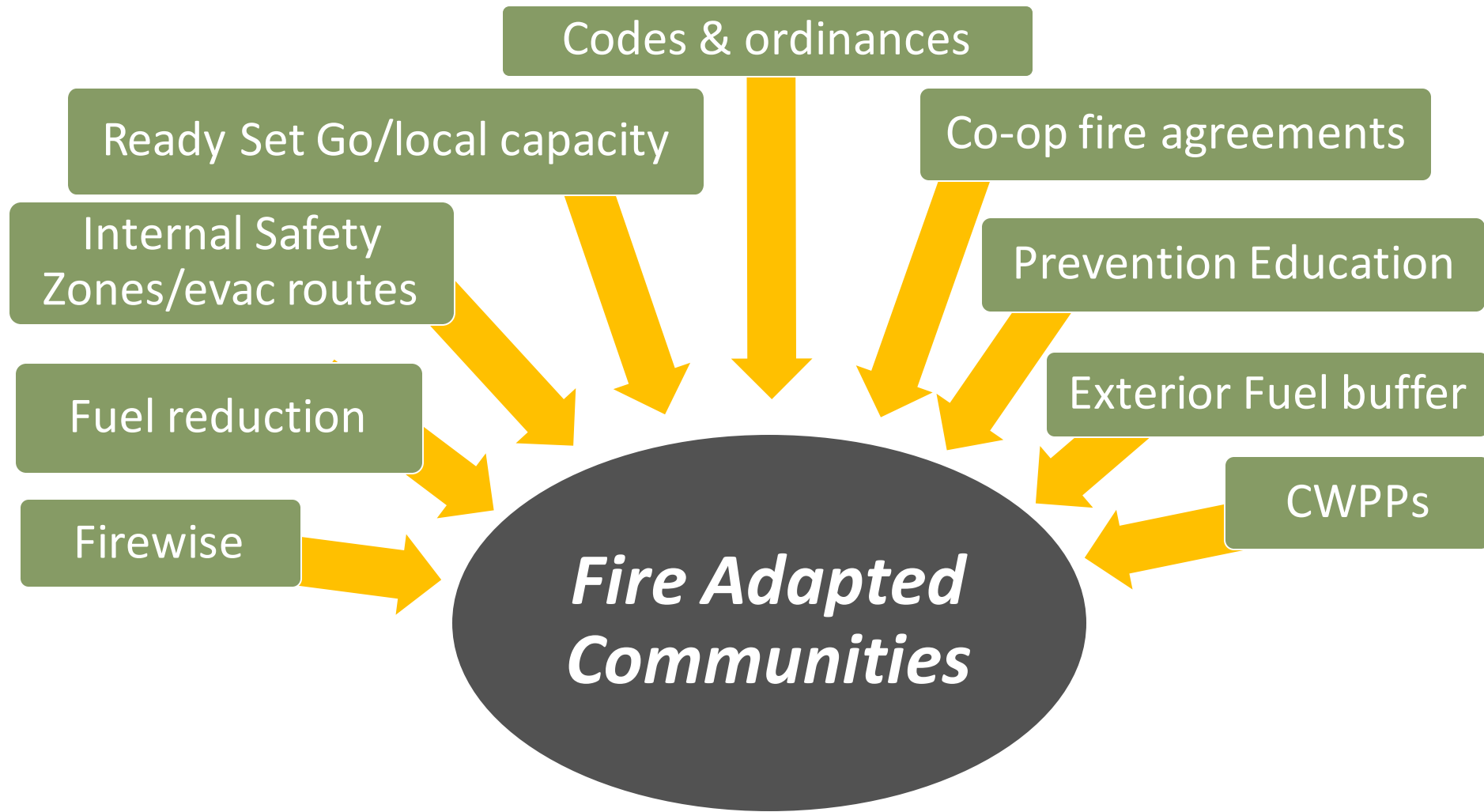


**Vision:** *To safely and effectively extinguish fire when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and as a nation, to live with wildland fire.*









Codes & ordinances

Ready Set Go

local capacity

Co-op fire agreements

# Planning for During

Internal Safety  
Zones/evac routes

# and Post-Fire

Prevention Education

Fuel reduction

Exterior Fuel buffer

Firewise

CWPPs

*Fire Adapted  
Communities*





RJ Sangosti / Denver Post



Forest Stewards  
**Guild**

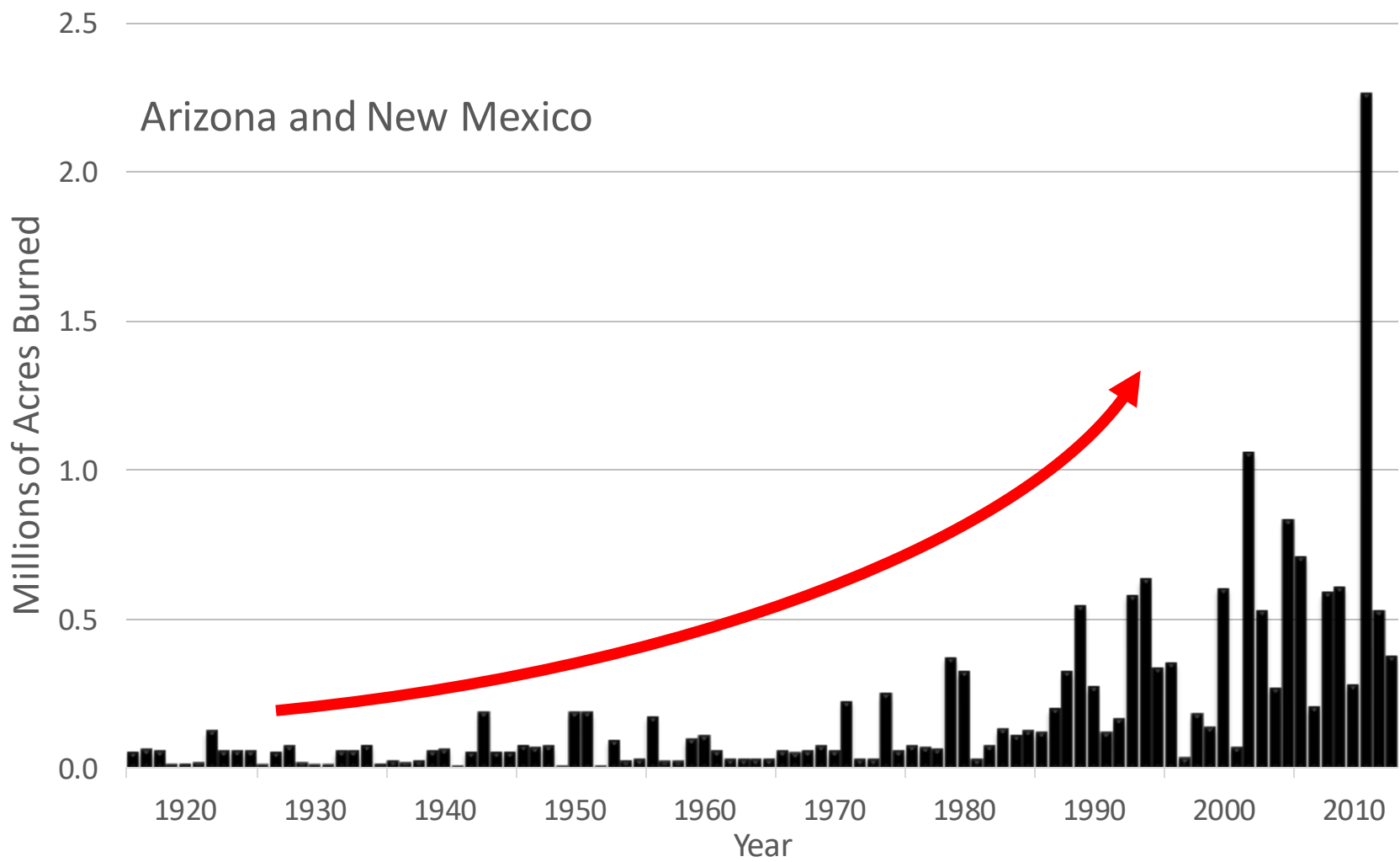
October 2015

## Evaluating the Effectiveness of Wildfire Mitigation Activities in the Wildland-Urban Interface



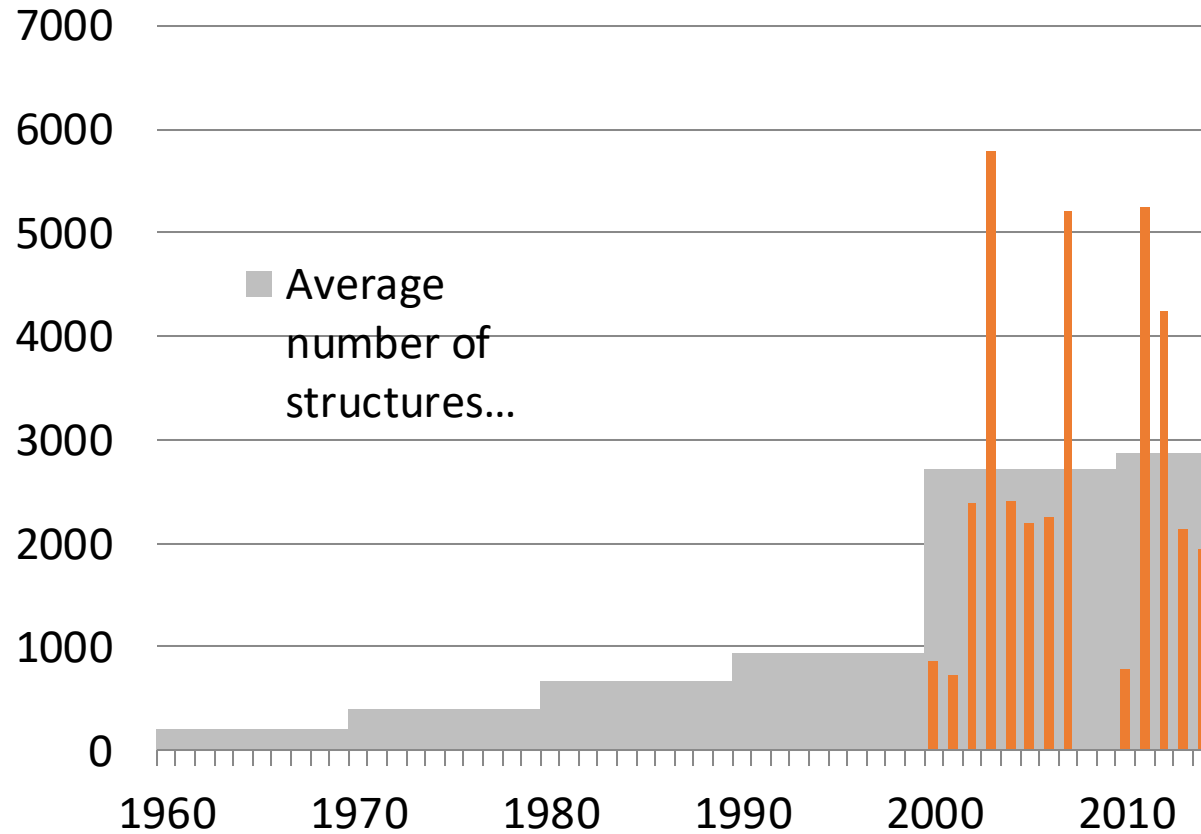
Alexander Evans,  
Sarah Auerbach,  
Lara Wood Miller,  
Rachel Wood,  
Krys Nystrom,  
Jonathan Loevner,  
Amanda Aragon,  
Matthew Piccarello,  
and Eytan Krasilovsky

[http://forestguild.org/publications/research/2015/WUI\\_effectiveness.pdf](http://forestguild.org/publications/research/2015/WUI_effectiveness.pdf)





# Structures Lost to Wildfire



From *The Blue Ribbon Panel Report on Wildland Urban Interface Fire*

# How homes ignite: danger signs





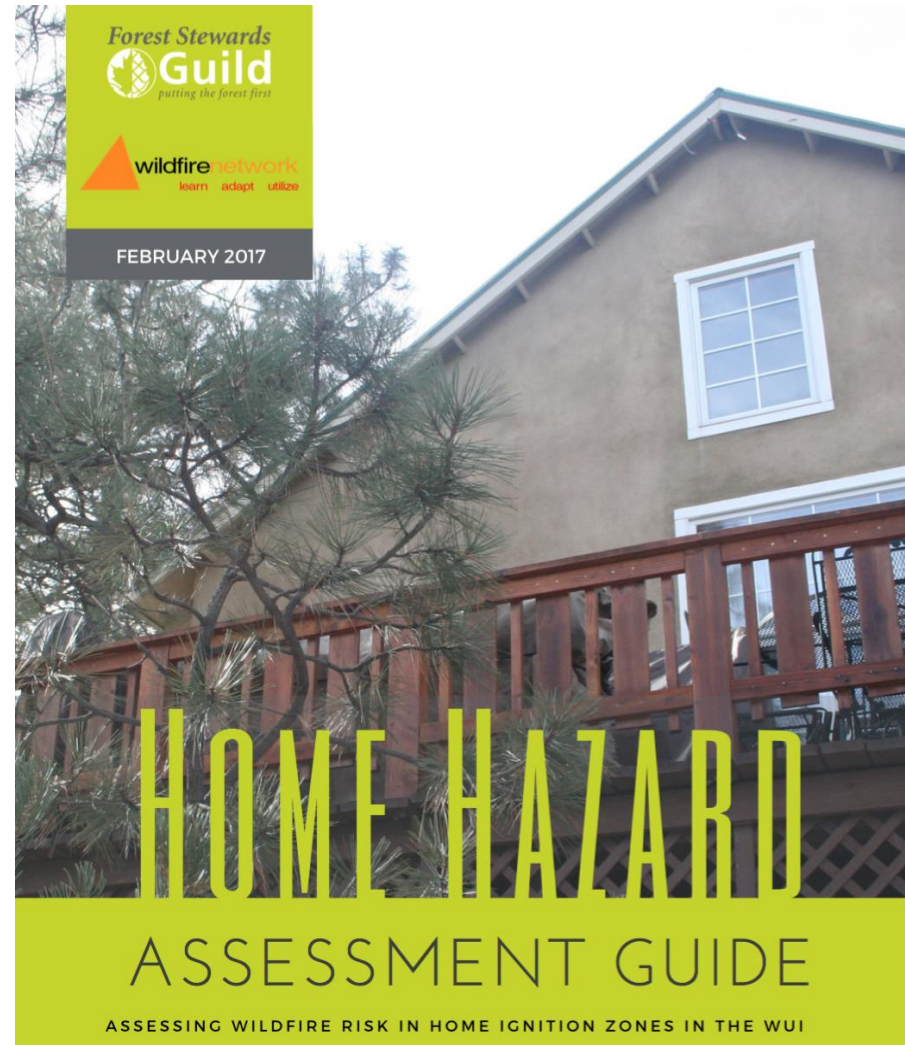


# Learn from FAC Fred





- Defensible space
  - Assess risk
  - Zones 1 and 2, evacuation route
- Home hardening
  - Eaves, roofing, cracks and gaps, firewood, decking
- Ready, Set, Go! (Santa Fe County)
  - Go-bag,
  - Evacuation prep
  - Gates, locks,
  - knowing your neighbors











Dense clump of Piñon pine

Ladder fuels removed from clump





High fuel loading on slope below house

Small trees removed from slope, prior to slash removal.





# Home Site Risk Mitigation



# Learning Networks – Networks for Change



**FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES**  
LEARNING NETWORK

ABOUT CONNECT BLOG RESOURCES JOIN/LOGIN

To change our fire culture and create a movement toward sustainably living in fire-adapted landscapes, we must see past the old methods and believe in a new way of relating to fire.

— NICK GOULETTE, WATERSHED RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER

### Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network

We work with communities across the nation to create a more wildfire-resilient future. A “fire adapted community” consists of informed and prepared residents collaboratively planning and taking action to safely co-exist with wildland fire.

[LEARN MORE](#)



**FIREADAPTEDNM**  
learning network

# FIRE ADAPTED NEW MEXICO

# LEARNING NETWORK

*BUILDING WILDFIRE RESILIENCE*



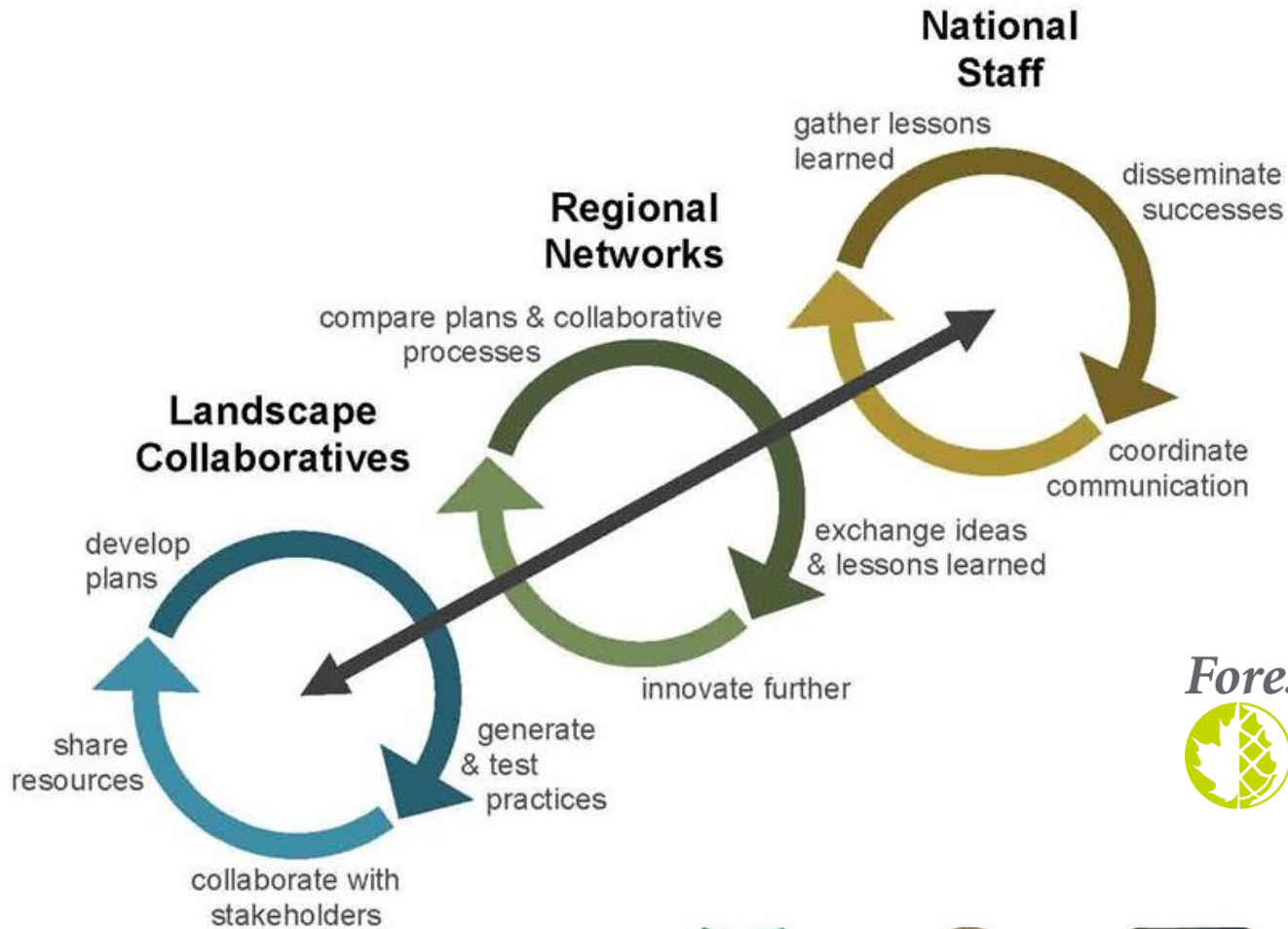
**FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES**  
LEARNING NETWORK



**FIREADAPTEDNM**  
learning network

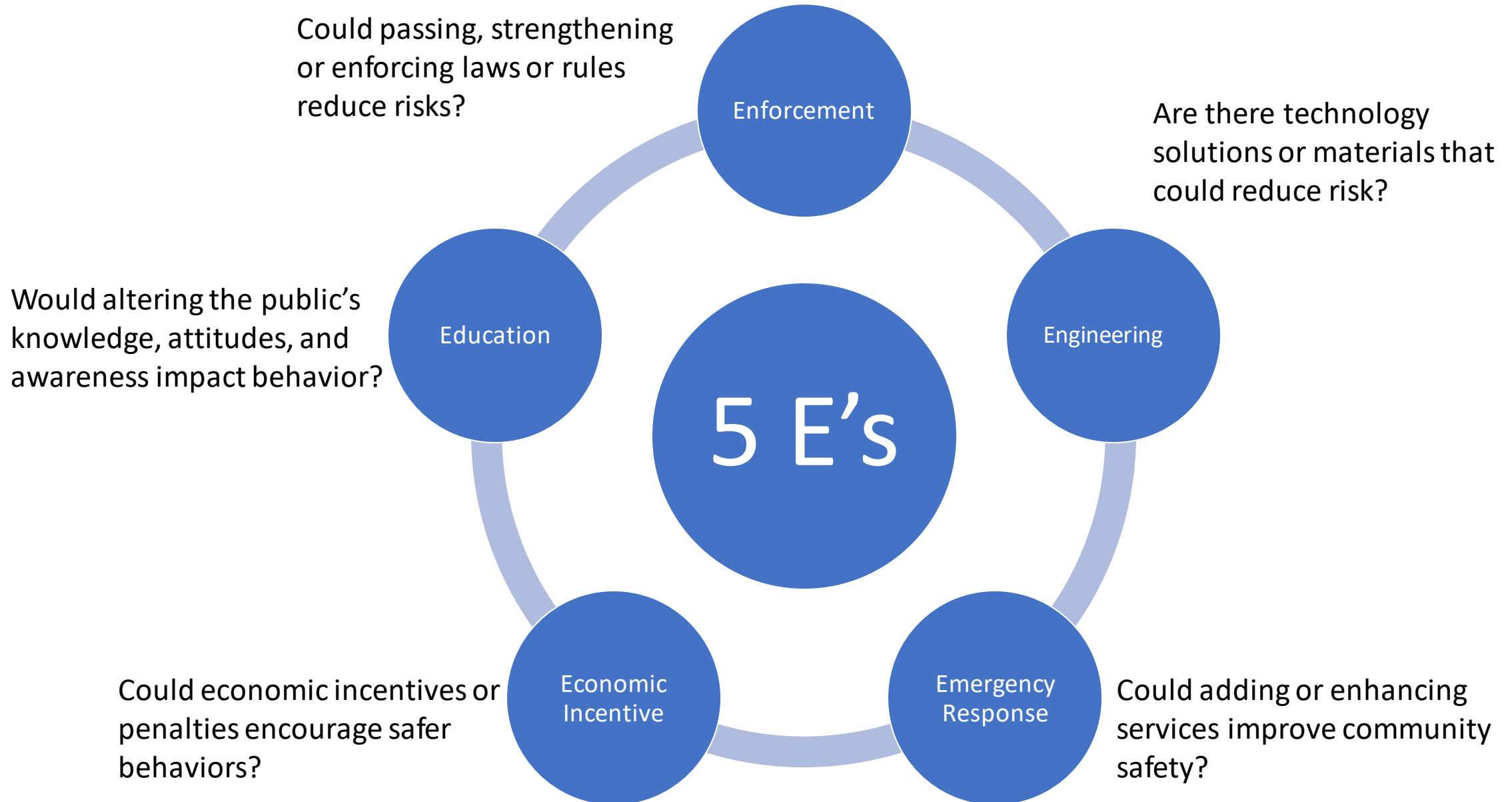


# Learning Networks – Networks for Change





# For the Fire Services - The 5 E's of Community Risk Reduction



# The County Wildfire Playbook

<https://www.naco.org/featured-resources/county-wildfire-playbook-county-leadership-guide-help-communities-become-more-fire-adapted>



Click on the County description that fits your agency and community best:

### HIGH AWARENESS / HIGH CAPACITY:

County agency and community members understand their risk of wildland fire and are taking steps to reduce risks and taking responsibility for living with wildland fire.

[LEARN MORE](#)

### MODERATE AWARENESS / MODERATE CAPACITY:

County agency and community members know they have a wildland fire risk, but are unable to become prepared, due to capacity issues or an uncertainty about what to do.

[LEARN MORE](#)

### LOWER AWARENESS / LOWER CAPACITY:

County agency and community members in an area where wildland fire is so infrequent (no significant fires for decades) that the risk is not realized and therefore address.

[LEARN MORE](#)

### WHAT ELSE?

[Click here](#) to find more resources and actions, as well as contacts available for additional support.

# The County Wildfire Playbook

## TALKING POINTS FOR COUNTY LEADERSHIP

County leaders, managers and department heads have multiple opportunities to address the public and these key messages can be interwoven to help communities understand their risk and their part in reducing risk/living with wildland fire. These can also help convey what the county has done to help its communities live safely with wildland fire.

*(customize as needed)*

+ Pre Fire Season

+ During Fire Season or Wildland Fire Event

+ Post Fire Season

## CUSTOMIZABLE FACEBOOK AND TWITTER FEEDS

Feel free to copy and paste these suggestions. Be sure to grab the hashtag and the Facebook address for the local fire to include in your communications.

+ Pre Fire Season

+ During Fire Season or Wildland Fire Event

+ Post Fire Season

× During Fire Season or Wildland Fire Event

### KEY MESSAGES:

**YOUR SAFETY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY.**

**DON'T WAIT, EVACUATE!**

- Your safety is our top priority. We are working closely with law enforcement to ensure safe and timely evacuations. Please maintain a high level of situational awareness and be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice. Visit [www.wildlandfirersg.org](http://www.wildlandfirersg.org) for preparation and evacuation tips.
- We are working closely with the [Name of Fire] Incident Management Team to convey local concerns and share information about our values at risk.
- We are embedded in the Joint Information Center to ensure that accurate and timely information about the [Name of Fire] is being distributed widely throughout our communities.
- Your health is one of our top priorities. If smoke from the [Name of Fire] is causing medical issues for you, seek respite from the local smoke shelter or pick up your smoke masks from the County Health Department.

+ Post Fire Season





# Curated Resources



# Curated Resources

ASSESSMENT TOOLS  
CURRENT PROJECTS  
SMOKE & HEPA FILTER  
LOAN  
COUNTY LEADERSHIP  
GUIDE  
PREPARE

## Online Resources

**Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network** - FAC Net is a national network of people working to build wildfire resilience capacity in wildfire-prone communities.

**Firewise** - Firewise recognition program and various other helpful tips and resources.

**New Mexico Fire Information** - comprehensive website with current New Mexico wildfire information and links to other resources.

**Inciweb** - current wildfire information, InciWeb is an interagency all-risk incident information management system.

**After Wildfire NM** - an after wildfire guide for New Mexico

**National Interagency Fire Center** - current national fire information.

**Ready, Set, Go!** - tips on how to prepare you and your family for a wildfire threatening your home.

**Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety** - Resources for homeowners to mitigate hazards to their homes from a variety of natural disasters, including wildfire.

<https://facnm.org/resources>



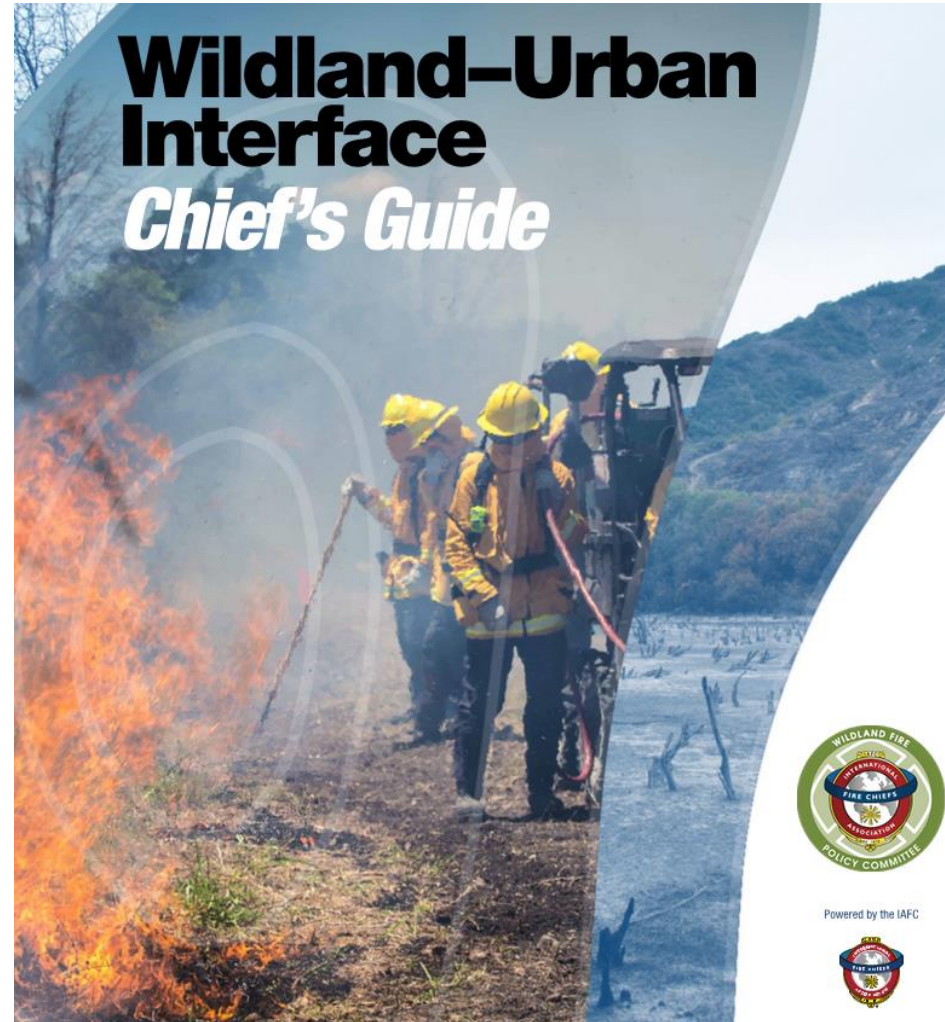


# Curated Resources – Fire Chiefs

<https://www.iafc.org/topics-and-tools/resources/resource/WuiChiefsGuide>



The screenshot shows the IAFC website header with navigation links: ABOUT IAFC, LEARN & DEVELOP, TOPICS & TOOLS, CONFERENCES & EVENTS, and MEMBERSHIP. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: HOME / PRESS RELEASES / PRESS RELEASE. The main article title is "IAFC Releases New Wildfire Guide for Fire Chiefs" with a sub-headline "Guide is a great resource for WUI planning and implementation efforts" and a date of "March 27, 2019". Social media icons for KN, Facebook, and Twitter are present. A thumbnail image of the "Wildland-Urban Interface Chief's Guide" is shown. To the right, a "Related" section features a "POSITION STATEMENT" titled "IAFC Position: Collaborative Efforts for Reducing Community Risk in the WUI". The text of the position statement reads: "The risk of wildland and wildland-urban interface fires in the U.S. continues to grow due to: • Growing density and decreasing health of our forests • Hotter and dryer climate trends • Increasing numbers and".



# !FLASH WORKSHOP! – 5 minutes

1. Say hello to your neighbor!
2. Share two ADDITIONAL actions you can do in your County to prepare for, respond to, or recover from wildfire?

Before



After





# Questions?

- [eytan@forestguild.org](mailto:eytan@forestguild.org), [FACNM.org](http://FACNM.org)
- [trigby@blm.gov](mailto:trigby@blm.gov)

## State Forestry Contact Information

### PROGRAMS:

#### Conservation Seedling Program

1220 S. St. Francis Dr.  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
(505) 476-3334  
(505) 660-0412

#### Endangered Plant Program

1220 S. St. Francis Dr.  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
(505) 476-3347

#### Forest and Watershed Health Office

4001 Edith Blvd. NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87107  
(505) 345-2200

#### Inmate Work Camp

3201 HWY 314 SW  
Los Lunas, NM 87031  
(505) 865-2775

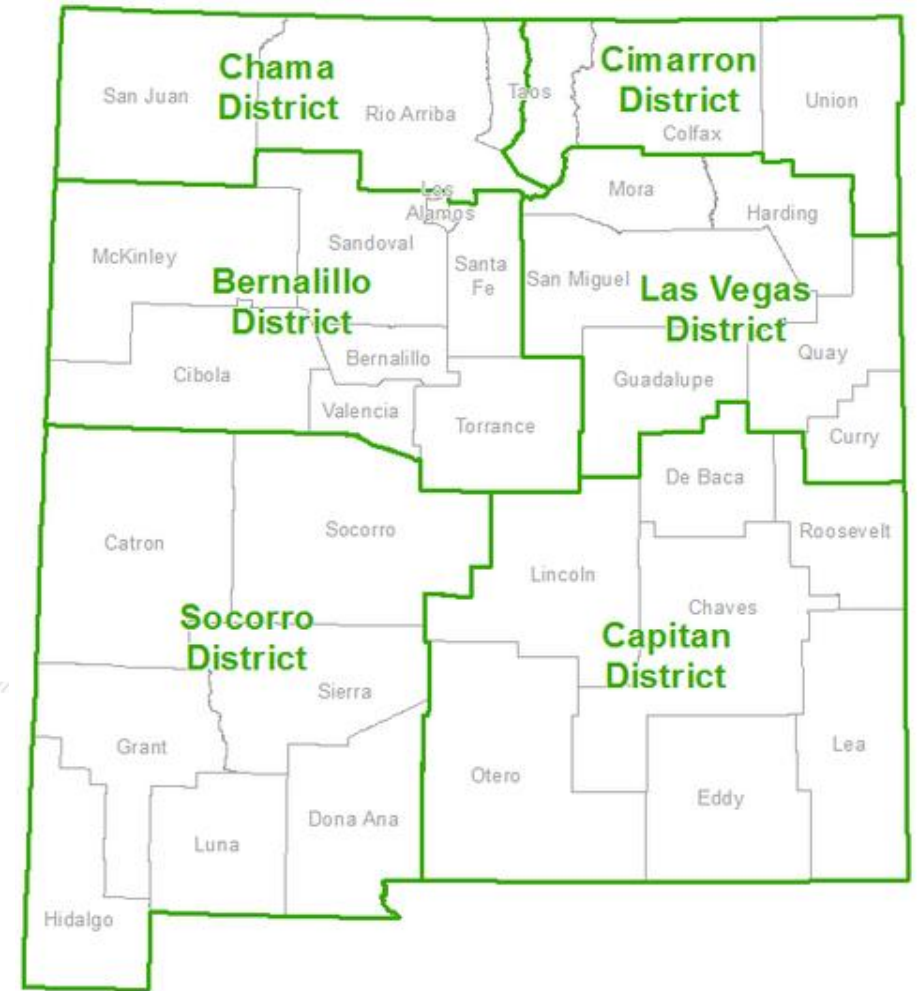
#### Returning Heroes Wildland Firefighter Program

1085 Richards Ave.  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
(505) 474-9813  
(505) 474-9814

#### Urban and Community Forestry Program

4001 Edith Blvd. NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87107  
(505) 345-2200

### DISTRICTS:



**LAURA MCCARTHY**  
State Forester

EMNRD-Forestry Division  
1220 S. St. Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
(505) 476-3325

