

Empowering Small Forested Communities

A Volunteer-led, No-cost CWPP Case Study

HORSESHOE SPRINGS ASSOCIATION + NMFWR

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2026 NEW MEXICO WILDLAND URBAN FIRE SUMMIT

Why Horseshoe Springs needed its own plan

1953

SFNF offers 53 summer-home sites

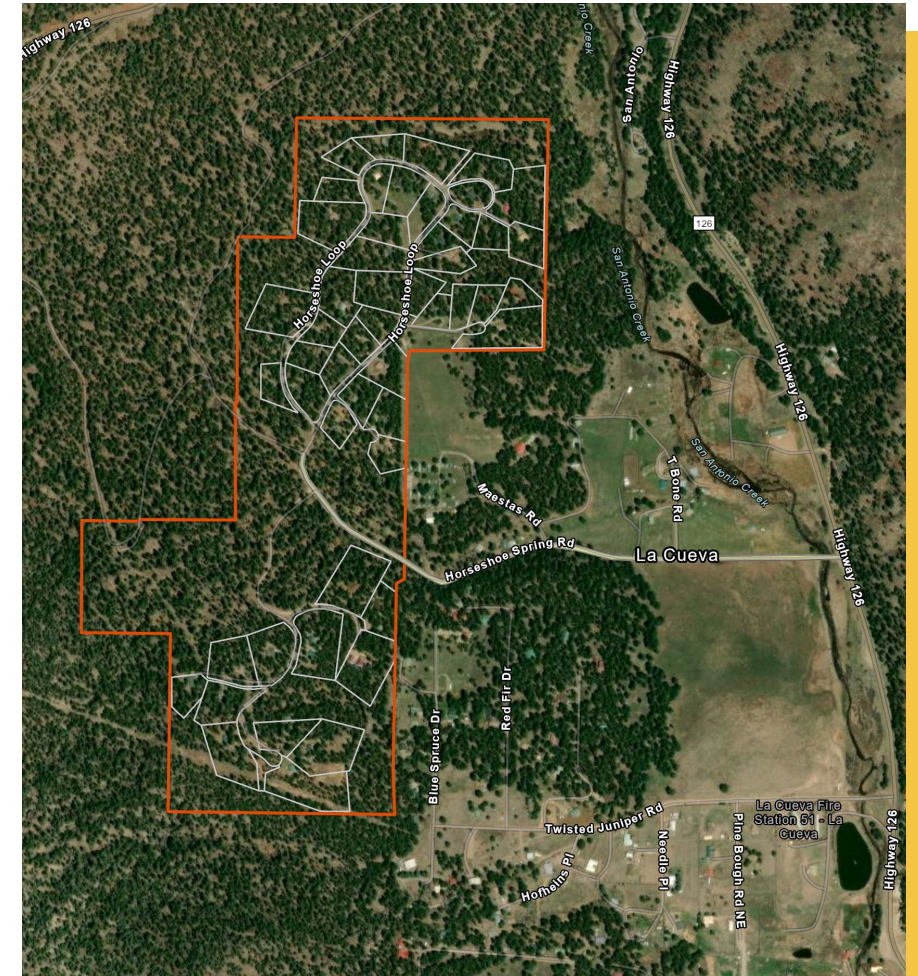
1998

Land exchange creates today's private association

TODAY

One primary route from NM 126
Narrow roads and limited turnarounds
Private parcels within a forest setting

A county-scale plan could not capture our community-scale decisions.



Horseshoe Springs in the CWPP landscape

1,056

**CWPPs analyzed across
11 western states**

No complete current U.S. count

~ 63

**named New Mexico plans
or planning areas**

Current status is not separately reported

Not Tracked

**Mapping resolution
Funding source
Development time**

HORSESHOE SPRINGS DOCUMENTED COMBINATION

~3.5 m analysis

No plan grant

22 months

Action began early

Sources: Palsa et al. (2022); Fire Adapted Communities; New Mexico Forestry public CWPP list and guidance.

A defined volunteer project



NO PLAN-DEVELOPMENT GRANT

The community began immediately, retained ownership, and accepted the real cost of volunteer time.



Four task forces moved planning toward action

- 1 COMMUNICATIONS:** Emergency information and resident coordination
- 2 SAFE PASSAGES / EGRESS:** Roads, clearance, signage, turnarounds, evacuation
- 3 TRAINING + EDUCATION:** Workshops, demonstrations, continuing education
- 4 PLAN DEVELOPMENT + WRITING:** Research, drafting, integration, review

A scheduled model with clear assignments helped volunteers turn analysis into action.



A focused technical partnership

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Local knowledge and priorities

Partnerships, roads,
structures, field conditions,
previous treatments,
community review

NMFWRI

Geospatial capacity

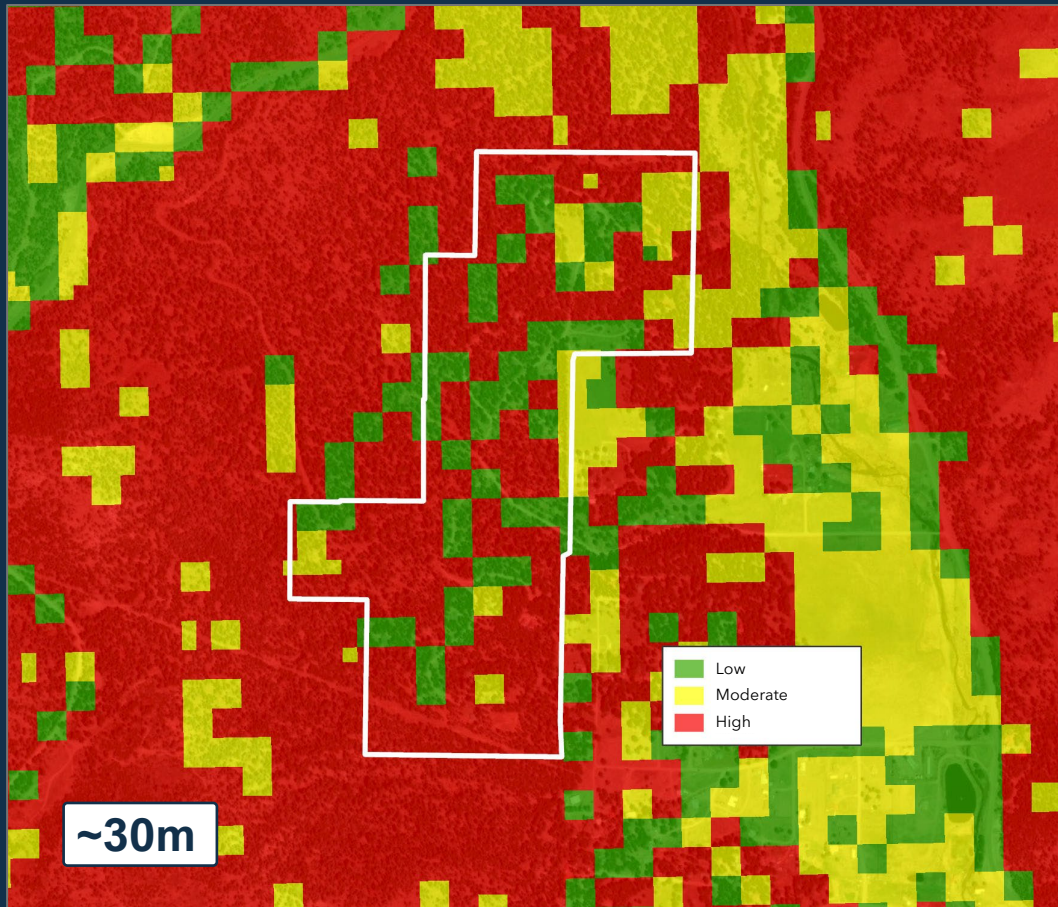
Data processing, risk
modeling, maps for
planning and
communication

**The community owned the priorities.
The partner filled a defined technical gap.**

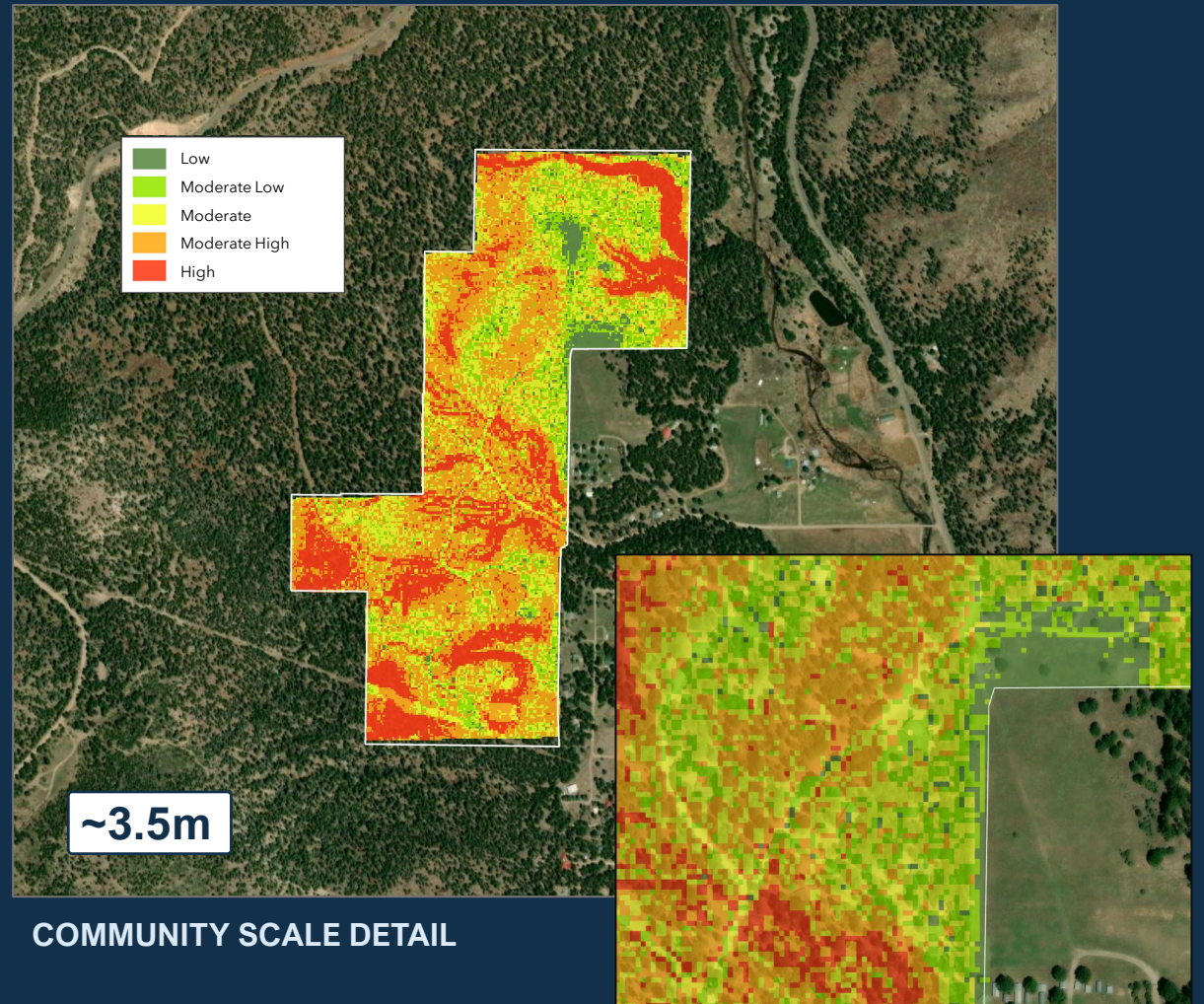


SAME PLACE, DIFFERENT ANALYTICAL DETAIL

Resolution matters in a 130-acre community

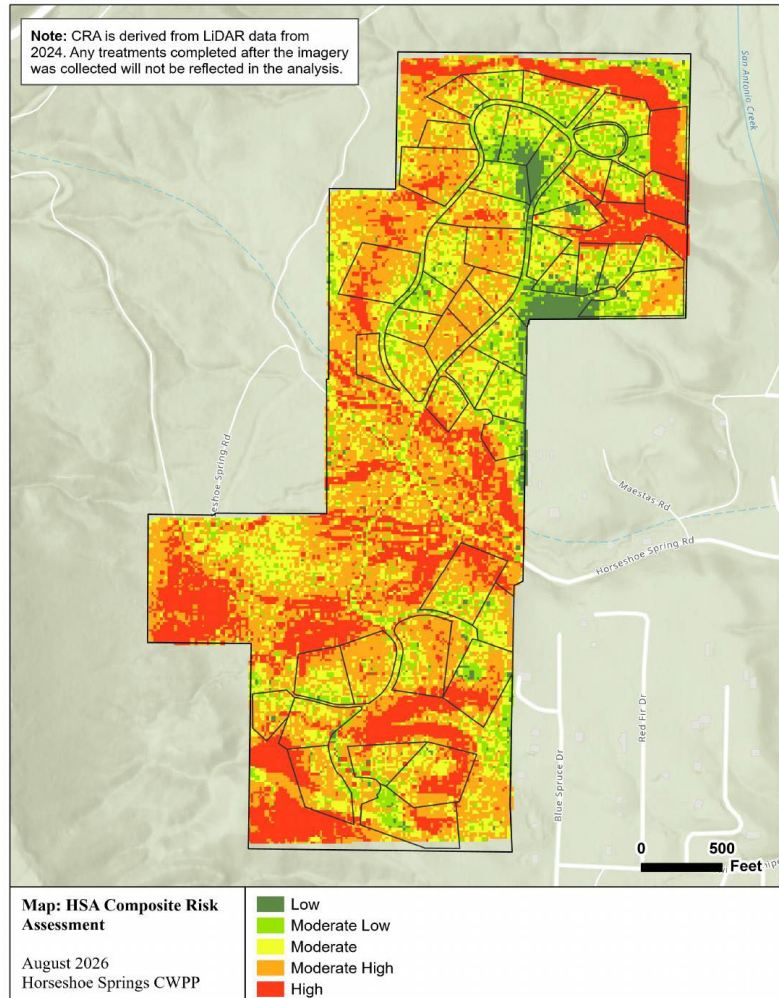


REGIONAL/LANDSCAPE CONTEXT



COMMUNITY SCALE DETAIL

Mapping informed decisions through local interpretation



ACCESS

Constrained corridor – one way access

FUELS

Concentrated vegetation – heavy canopy cover/old growth

VALUES

Critical water infrastructure and limited meadow vistas

TREATMENTS

Ongoing forest thinning - on private lots, common acres and adjacent public lands

The model added evidence. Residents added context.

What higher resolution mapping added

High resolution supported better questions and clearer priorities.

> Vegetation and terrain

Better representation of local conditions

> Roads and structures

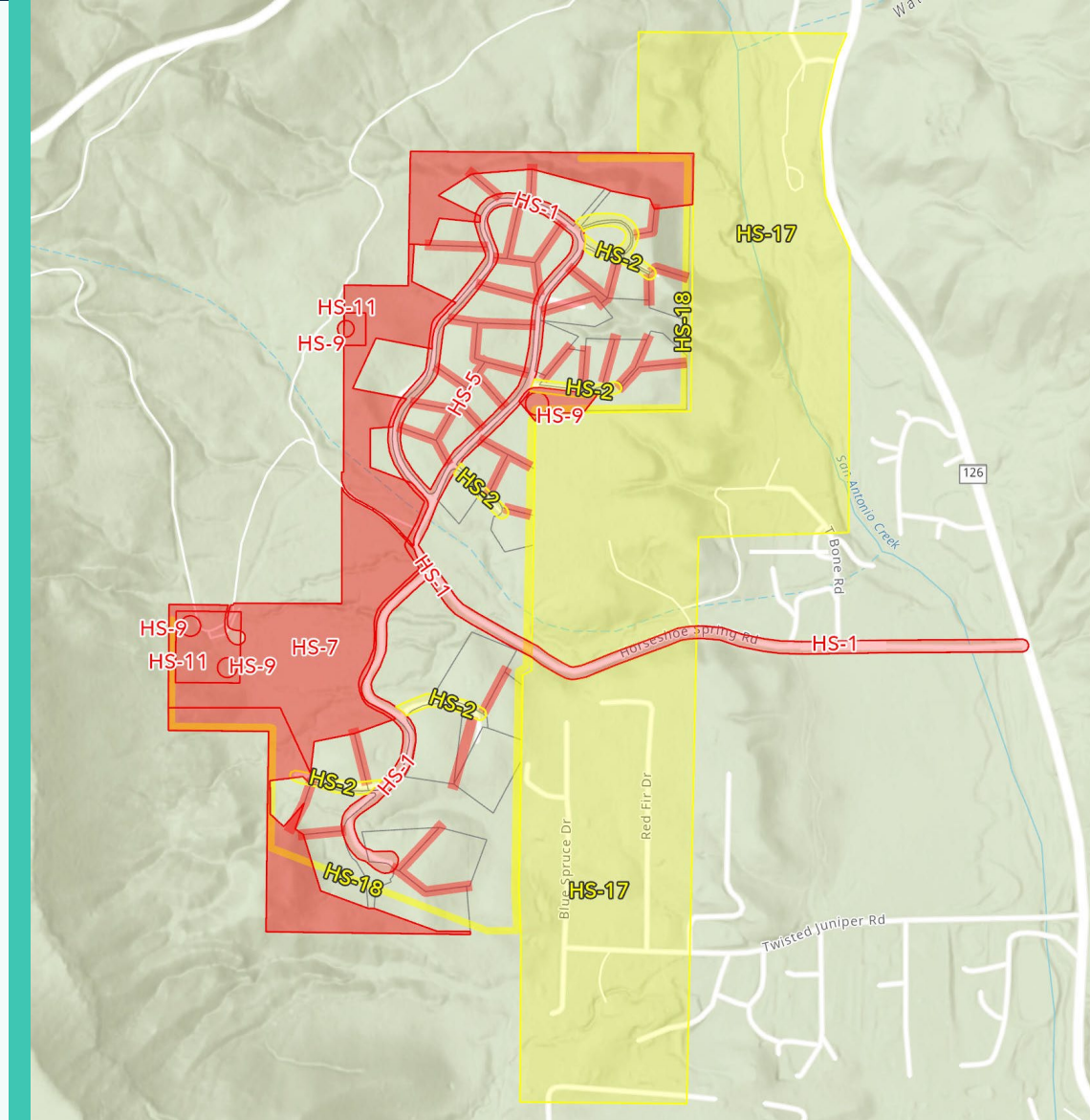
Detail at the scale residents experience

> Recent mitigation

Work that broader datasets may miss

> Usable priorities

Maps interpreted with field knowledge



WHAT THIS EXPERIENCE POINTS TO

A state-enabled pathway for rural communities

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Lead priorities, volunteer systems,
and implementation

EMNRD

Target communities, guide the
pathway, connect resources

NMFWRI + TECHNICAL PARTNERS

Provide shared mapping and
analysis capacity

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF INSURANCE

Connect mitigation and home
hardening with insurance resilience

PILOT OPPORTUNITY

A small cohort of high-risk rural communities could test and refine this model.