



**Adapting Together in a Changing
Fire Ecosystem**

Grant County Business and Conference Center
Silver City, New Mexico
October 14 – 16, 2026

Summit Agenda

Day 1	Wednesday, October 14, 2026	
Morning	Pre-conference Workshop	Home Hazard Assessment Learning Exchange
12:30pm – 12:45pm	Welcome	Scott Cooke, <i>BLM Las Cruces District Manager</i>
12:45pm – 1:30pm	Opening Presentation	Calvin Farris, <i>Fire Ecologist, USWFS</i>
1:30pm – 2:00pm	Field trip briefing & load vans	Megan Rangel-Lynch, <i>Forest Stewards Guild</i>
2:00pm – 5:30pm	Field Trip	Silver City High-Risk Fireshed Project <i>Gila National Forest Representatives and NM Forestry Division</i>

Day 2	Thursday, October 15, 2026		
8:00am – 9:00am	General Session	M.R. O'Connor, <i>Author of Ignition</i>	
	Fire Adapted Communities	Restore & Maintain Resilient Landscapes	Working Towards Safe & Effective Wildfire Response
9:10am – 10:40am	Guiding Principles for Community Wildfire Mitigation <i>Melissa May, COCO</i>	Geospatial Tools for Wildfire Mitigation and Preparedness <i>Patti Dappen, NMFWR</i> <i>Dana Heusinkveld, NMFWR</i> <i>Terrence Garcia, NMFWR</i>	Youth and Workforce Development in the Fire/Forestry Sector <i>Hank Blackwell and Kathy Whiteman, facilitated by SWDR</i>
	Block 2		
11:00am – 12:00pm	Firewise as part of a Wildfire Strategy <i>Megan Fitzgerald-McGowan, NFPA</i>	Prescribed Fire in the Interface <i>Eva Stricker, UNM</i> <i>Tim Borden, NFF</i> <i>Javier Kirker, Gila NF</i> <i>Sarah Devenport, NAU</i>	Youth and Workforce Development in the Fire/Forestry Sector continued <i>Hank Blackwell and Kathy Whiteman, facilitated by SWDR</i>
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Networking Lunch		
	Block 3		
1:00pm – 2:00pm	OSI Update on IBHS Standards <i>Melissa Robertson, OSI</i> <i>Elouisa Tyler, OSI</i>	Biochar in New Mexico: Navigating Regulation, Risk, and Opportunity <i>Eva Sticker, UNM</i> <i>Gordon West, Trollworks</i> <i>Kevin Heckinger, Cons United</i>	Attend OSI or Biochar presentation
	Block 4		
2:15pm – 3:15pm	International Code Council & Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety Panel <i>Justice Jones, ICC</i> <i>Mark Novak, IBHS</i>	Forest Treatments: Do They Work, and How Do We Know? (evidence from New Mexico) <i>Kathryn Mahan, NMFWR</i> <i>Dr. Nathan Tomczyk, NMFWR</i>	Collaborative Fuels Treatments: Managing Risk in the Pinos Altos WUI <i>Marcos Munoz, USWFS</i> <i>Ricky Rios, USWFS</i> <i>Jon Selby, USWFS</i>
	Block 5		
3:30pm – 4:30pm	Source Water Protection in Wildfire Preparedness and Postfire Recovery <i>Kristin Kinic, NMED</i> <i>Martha Graham, NMRWA</i>	Climate change and wildfire dynamics across Arizona and New Mexico's diverse ecosystems <i>Hatim Geli, NMSU</i> <i>Matt Meko, CLIMAS</i>	Fire Detection Cameras Panel <i>Thad Petzold, PNM</i> <i>Dr. Jonathan Frenzen, Scot Fuller, Grant County</i> <i>George Ducker, EMNRD</i>

Day 3	Friday, October 16, 2026	
8:00am – 8:30am	General Session	State Forestry Update, <i>Lindsey Quam, Deputy Director NM Forestry</i>
8:30am – 10:00am	Project Presentations	Various
10:30am – 12:00pm	World Café Session	Presenters, <i>Facilitated by Southwest Decision Resource</i>
12:00pm – 12:30pm	Closing	Teresa Rigby, BLM

World Café Session

A world cafe is an interactive workshop method that provides the opportunity for focused discussion on multiple priority topics. Participants select their top two topics and go to those tables over two rounds. Facilitators stay at the tables and summarize the outcomes of the previous round so that the second group can build on the work of the first.

Session Topics

Fire prevention and
community outreach

Fire Smart
Development
(Home hardening,
Fire codes, etc.)

Fire/Forestry
treatments best
practices

Prescribed fire

Funding for
forest/fire risk
reduction work

Emerging Tech in
the fire space &
GIS

Pre & Post-fire
water management

Fire Adapted Communities Speaker Bios

Melissa May joined Coalitions and Collaboratives (COCO) as their Program Operations Manager in January 2026. She has lived and worked on the border of Colorado and New Mexico for the past 15 years, working to build capacity for collaborative conservation informed by both science and communities. She holds a master's degree from Penn State's interdisciplinary watershed stewardship program where she learned, "Conservation isn't rocket science - there are people involved, so it's much harder than that."

Megan McGowan-Fitzgerald is a part of NFPA's Wildfire Division and serves as the Firewise USA Program Manager and has been working in wildfire for over 20 years. While her focus at NFPA is on the community engagement side of wildfire mitigation and preparedness, she firmly supports a balanced approach that aligns with the national cohesive strategy.

Melissa Robetson is the Property and Casualty Bureau Chief at the Office of Superintendent of Insurance. Melissa has been with the OSI for 5 years and worked within the insurance industry for 19 years.

Justice Jones is the Senior Fire and Disaster Mitigation Program Manager for the International Code Council (ICC), where he leads initiatives focused on wildfire resilience, building codes, and community risk reduction. Prior to joining ICC, he served with the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) and the Village of Ruidoso Forestry and Fire Department, working on wildfire mitigation, forestry, emergency management, and community preparedness in some of New Mexico's most wildfire-prone landscapes. Drawing on experience at the local, state, and national levels, Justice helps communities develop practical Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) solutions that reduce risk and strengthen long-term resilience.

Mark Novak is a Senior Wildfire Fellow with the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety. Mark recently retired from the fire service after a 40-year career, where he spent the last 11 years as the Fire Chief in Vail, Colorado. Mark is currently the Chair of the International Association of Fire Chiefs Wildland Fire Policy Committee and also serves as a facilitator with the IAFC's Fire Department Exchange Program.

Before moving to Las Vegas New Mexico in 2017, **Kristin Kinic** earned an MS and Masters' Certificate in Environmental Science and Management and Geospatial Information Systems respectively from New Mexico Highlands University. After starting with the New Mexico Environment Department Drinking water Bureau as the Source Water Protection Coordinator, her first unofficial mentor is/was Martha Graham (NMRWA).

Martha Graham is NMRWA's Source Water Protection Specialist, a position she has held for 12 years. Source water protection plans proactively identify threats to drinking water sources and implement best practices and other actions to address these threats. As part of this work Graham raises awareness of rural public water systems with state and federal agencies in New Mexico. She uses the source water protection plans to build formal and informal coalitions of rural public water systems and groups that share an interest in the water, community, and landscape. She is particularly interested in protecting rural communities' drinking water in the context of wildfires, watershed health, and resiliency in the face of climate change. Graham is a native New Mexican, a weaver and mediator with a PhD in anthropology.

Restore & Maintain Resilient Landscapes Speaker Bios

Patti Dappen is the GIS Program Manager for the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute. Patti helps lead the development of a nationwide Treatment and Wildfire Interagency Geodatabase and Viewer. She is based in Santa Fe, NM where she enjoys gardening and long walks with her dogs.

Dana Heusinkveld has Intelligence Agency from 2009 -2014. She is currently pursuing an MA from NM highland. MA and holds a MSc from Western Michigan and a BSc from Hope College. She has been with NMFWR since 2022. Previously she worked at ERM 2017 - 2019 and the National Geospatial.

Terence Garcia is a media professional specializing in videography, photography, editing, and web design. He works for the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute, focusing on digital content and outreach.

Eva Stricker is a Research Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico Department of Biology and a part-time Evaluator for the Santa Fe-based regenerative agriculture non-profit the Quivira Coalition. Her research focuses on how organic waste can be transformed to build soil health in drylands, and fire is a powerful tool for transformation. .

Restore & Maintain Resilient Landscapes Speaker Bios

Sarah Devenport is a Research Associate in Policy and Communications at the Ecological Restoration Institute. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees in forestry from Northern Arizona University. Her thesis work explored the intersection of public land users and wildfire, with a focus on human-caused ignitions and place-based approaches to prevention. Her background blends natural resource management and social science, which she is enthusiastic about using to find solutions to socio-ecological challenges.

Gordon West is president of Gila WoodNet, the Santa Clara nonprofit incorporated in 1998 to build a local circular economy out of forest ecosystem restoration, and founder of The Trollworks LLC, which designs pyrolysis systems that turn forest residue into heat and biochar. He has 51 years in building design and construction, logging, sawmilling, and product development, and co-authored the Village of Cimarron's woody biomass production facility feasibility study.

Kevin Heckinger has been with Conservation United since February of 2015. Conservation United is a leading conservation insurance services firm in the areas of risk, strategy, and people.

Kathryn Mahan is a monitoring program manager in the field of environmental science with experience in forest, rangeland and riparian monitoring, basic geohydrology, ground and surface water quality monitoring, data collection and presentation.

Nathan Tomczyk, has developed a broad set of skills as a scientist over the last ten years in his roles as a research assistant and research professional. He has led projects which focus on freshwater systems and cover a diverse range of methods including simulation modeling, statistical modeling with large datasets, microbiology experiments, ecosystem-scale field experiments, and benchtop experiments in the lab.

Matt Meko is a Climatologist with CLIMAS, the Climate Assessment for the Southwest. CLIMAS is a NOAA-funded partnership between University of Arizona, New Mexico State University, and the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, serving Arizona and New Mexico by bringing the best-available knowledge to bear on challenges relating to weather and climate in the Southwest. Matt's recent work includes investigations of Rio Grande basin surface water availability in the context of past climate variability and future trends, and efforts to better understand the complex role of climate in shaping wildfire risk across different landscapes.

Dr. Hatim Geli's research interests are in the area of hydrology and remote sensing. His research involves the use of remote sensing data and tools to improve water resources management for agricultural water use, regional water balance applications, and land use land cover change. His research also includes the use of ground-based observations from eddy covariance and scintillometers.

Safe and Efficient Wildfire Response Speaker Bios

Hank Blackwell has over 4 decades of experience in fire, wildfire and natural resources management, research, planning and administration. He has been involved in community activities and support from local to international project levels.

Kathy Whiteman is a Professor and Program Director in the Department of Natural Sciences at Western New Mexico University. Her work focuses on workforce development and strengthening career pathways in land-based careers, including natural resources, outdoor recreation, and conservation.

Southwest Decision Resources is a team of facilitation and collaboration professionals supporting informed and inclusive planning and decision making on natural resource, community, and public policy issues in the Southwest

Julia Guglielmo is a senior facilitator with Southwest Decision Resources and has supported collaborative natural resource management in the Southwest through the design, facilitation, and implementation of watershed restoration, large landscape conservation, outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, rangeland management.

Tahnee Robertson is the founder/director of Southwest Decision Resources. For the past 25 years, she has supported collaborative planning and decision making in forests and watersheds, outdoor recreation, rural groundwater, climate adaptation, community planning and visioning, and youth engagement/workforce. She has focused, in particular, on designing and supporting place-based collaboratives and peer networks.

Safe and Efficient Wildfire Response Speaker Bios

Marcos Munoz is currently a Detailed Fuels Specialist with USWFS Unit 4 in Las Cruces, New Mexico. He holds a certificate in Fire and Forest Management Professional studies from NAU. Throughout his career, he has worked as a Fuels Technician and Engine Boss and has previously worked for the USFS and USFWS. He began his fire career in 2000 and continue to work in the field today.

Jon Selby is the Deputy Unit Fire Chief for the United States Wildland Fire Service in Las Cruces, NM. He has been in Las Cruces since 2010, working his way from Engine Captain to Fuels Specialist then to FMO and Deputy Unit Chief in 2026. 2027 will be his 26th year in Wildland Fire.

Ricky Rios is a Fire Prevention Specialist with the US-Wildland Fire Service in Las Cruces, New Mexico. He brings 24 years of operational firefighting experience, including aviation, fuels, fire prevention, and education.

Thad Petzold is the Associate Director of Wildfire Risk and Vegetation Management at PNM, where he leads strategic initiatives that proactively reduce wildfire risks, protect vital infrastructure, and promote sustainable landscape practices across New Mexico. With over three decades of experience in utility vegetation management, Thad has consistently focused on aligning utility practices with community values and regulatory frameworks, particularly in High Fire-Risk Areas.

Scot Fuller is the Emergency Manager for Grant County Office of Emergency Management (OEM). Grant County OEM is a one-person operation and is responsible for grant administration, radio communications and the public warning system. He has been the Emergency Manager for 3 years and previously was Operations Deputy Chief for Newport News Fire Department (retired) and Critical Care Transport Supervisor for Sentara (retired).

George Ducker is the Wildfire Prevention and Communications Manager for the New Mexico Forestry Division. For four years he has worked to provide the public with timely messaging regarding emerging wildfire incidents across the state, as well as designing and implementing prevention messaging across multiple mediums and platforms. He also supervises the one-of-a-kind Smokey Bear Historical Park in Capitan, and he'd recommend you stop by for a visit!

Dr. Jonathan Frenzen is a volunteer project manager and fiscal agent for the Forest Stewards Guild where he helps locate, fundraise, install, and operate AI-enabled fire cameras in Santa Fe. He also serve as the Communications Co-chair and part of the Steering Committee for the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition. And in a former life Jonathan was a member of the faculty at the University of Chicago B-School from the invention of the internet to the invention of AI.

General Session Speaker

Lindsey Quam is a native New Mexican and member of the Zuni Pueblo. He holds a bachelor's degree in forestry from Northern Arizona University and completed Master's work through NM Highlands University. Lindsey has occupied numerous positions throughout his 25-year career. First as a Project Forester at Los Alamos National Laboratory, then moving to state government as a Forester with the NM Forestry Division, later serving as the Assistant State Fire Management Officer, before establishing and managing the veteran oriented Returning Heroes Program. He then moved on to tribal government as the Santa Clara Pueblo Forestry Director and recently, back to state government as the Deputy State Forester/Deputy Director and Tribal Liaison for the NM Forestry Division. His career goals are to integrate traditional ecological knowledge with western science to influence future forest resilience through a changing climate.

Resources

- www.wildfireprepared.org
- www.reshapewildfire.org – TWIG
- www.nmrwa.org - New Mexico Rural Water Association
- www.env.nm.gov/data/ - New Mexico Maps and Data
- storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/2f2671d2864d4a2
- ob9ee57a07628a3f7 - Story Maps Emergency Response Information
- nmenv.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=5ffa3eff8f8e4007943996035f05d24b#overview - Source Water Protection– Overview
- www.kristinkinic.com - Master Thesis Acequias as Treatment Analysis of Acequias as Service Ecologies

WUFS Planning Committee Partners



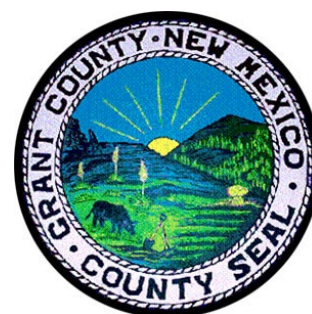
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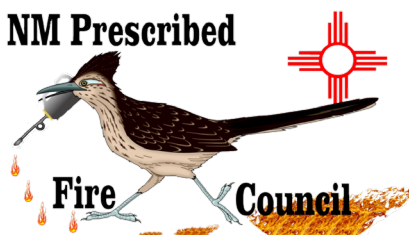
Forest Stewards
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