



Source Water Protection Action List for Wildfire and Postfire
NMRWA Source Water Protection Program
January 12, 2024

1. Engage with forest and fire professionals (e.g., USFS, NM State Forestry, County Emergency Manager, Volunteer Fire Department, emergency responders/firefighters) to educate, inform, and learn.
2. Educate land managers, emergency managers, first responders, and others about the water system and its vulnerabilities.
 - Provide source water location and details to these entities. (Can also work with NMRWA's SWP Program to do this.)
 - Discuss appropriate forest treatment and fire suppression activities around drinking water sources
 - Provide information regarding any fragile infrastructure before it is used for fire suppression during forest treatments and fire/postfire activities
3. Follow Firewise guidelines for the water system's buildings and other critical infrastructure. Assess the wildfire defense zones for source water, buildings, treatment plants, and storage tanks (Immediate Zone 0-5 ft, Intermediate Zone 5-30 ft, and Extended Zone 30-100 or 200 ft. *The minimum SWP Zone around a water source is typically 200 ft.*)
4. Support and participate in a watershed health initiative or other fire prevention projects
5. Participate in the County CWPP Update through, and advocate for more targeted (community/regional) CWPPs with these partners
6. Whenever possible, ensure that these projects specifically consider the protection of the system's source water
 - Promote designing and implementing projects that specifically address protecting the water system's source water and improving water quality.
 - Projects should consider both how to protect water sources from the threat of wildfire and the effects of postfire processes such as erosion, loss of canopy, and debris flows.
 - Projects should reflect the drinking water sources' sensitivity so that fire suppression chemicals, trampling, and erosion created during firefighting efforts are avoided.
7. Consider additional studies that would inform on the vulnerabilities/resilience of water system's source water and infrastructure particularly in the context of wildfire and postfire, such as:
 - A geotechnical study of the deposits and land surfaces to evaluate their stability and possible postfire effects
 - Establish a baseline, or continue documenting, current water quality and quantity conditions at source water (applies to surface water and groundwater systems)
 - Characterize springs using standardized documentation (e.g., the Spring Inventory Assessment <https://springstewardshipinstitute.org/protocols>)

Participation in these Organizations and Plans is Recommended

NM WARN – New Mexico Water / Wastewater Agency Response Network

The main concept of the NM WARN is “utilities helping utilities.” Membership will allow any utility to request assistance or provide assistance during any kind of emergency (man-made or natural).

This agreement sets out rules which will govern the request and provision of assistance process by drinking water and wastewater WARN members during any kind of emergency. Membership is open to all drinking water and wastewater utilities in New Mexico, public or private, at no cost. Assistance is strictly voluntary; no member of the WARN is required to provide assistance under any circumstances. Utilities may decide to discontinue membership at any time.

WFDSS – Wildland Fire Defense Support System

WFDSS is a web-based tool designed to assist fire managers in making streamlined decisions during the suppression planning process. WFDSS allows data analyses and reports to be easily shared with all levels of federal fire managers. Providing data will put critical water infrastructure and defensible space around the infrastructure points in front of personnel who may use the information in suppression efforts.

It is the decision support system that assists wildlands fire managers and analysts in assessing risks and fire behavior during an event. It facilitates making strategic and tactical decisions for fire incidents by following an analytic deliberative process for risk informed decision making.

CWPP – Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Communities can take proactive steps to protect themselves from dangerous and damaging wildfire. The Forestry Division works with New Mexico Counties and federal land management agencies to assist counties and communities to plan ahead for wildfire.

CWPPs have become the primary mechanism for evaluating risk due to their emphasis on community involvement and assessment of local resources. CWPPs are also an important planning document used by emergency responders and citizens to plan for and respond to wildfire emergencies. Local leaders and governmental entities find CWPPs valuable for the purposes of identifying critical needs and prioritizing funding.

Shared Stewardship Portal

A tool to coordinate forest and watershed management on all lands in New Mexico. The New Mexico Shared Stewardship Portal aims to ensure that every natural resource and land management agency in New Mexico with an interest in reduced wildfire and post-wildfire risk and increased landscape resiliency through active fuels/vegetation management have the goals and tools to assist in coordination, collaboration, and identification of shared priorities on the landscape.

Another goal is that these agencies use their shared priorities before making investments on the landscape, to combine forces and leverage investments to achieve greater returns on investment and reduced risk.

The portal helps partners better plan and track critical forest restoration accomplishments on the ground, adds quantitative analysis to efficiently plan potential projects, and tracks project status.