



Fire, Forests, Water, and Jobs

Providing Service in Support of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act (CFLRA), the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP), and Landscape-scale Conservation

The New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute (NFMWRI)
The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI)
The Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI)



The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) were authorized by Congress in 2004 to develop a program of applied research and service at three university-based restoration institutes. The primary purpose of the Institutes is to develop, translate, and provide the best available science to land managers, practitioners, and stakeholders when designing and implementing forest restoration and hazardous fuel reduction treatments.

According to a recent evaluation of five years of performance by the Institutes, *“No other existing entity has the capacity or mandate to carry out landscape scale forest restoration.”*

In Colorado, the CFRI at Colorado State University assists the Uncompahgre Plateau Mesas Forest Restoration Project (“UP Mesas”) on the Uncompahgre National Forest.

CFRI past and current services include:

- Led a series of field studies involving the collaborative group to collect data on current forest conditions
- Analyzed the data collected during the field studies, published a report, and presented the results to the group that clearly showed the difference between historic and current conditions
- Assisted the group in developing proposed actions necessary to restore the landscape to a more sustainable, resilient trajectory
- Assisting in the development of a multi-party monitoring framework as one of the requirements under the CFLRP

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CFRI involvement helped:

- Reduce conflict
- Reduce planning, environmental analysis and implementation costs
- Build the foundation for a successful CFLRA proposal
- Retain and create local jobs
- Improve trust, accountability, and adaptive management
- Reduce unwanted fires and fire management costs

In Arizona, the ERI at Northern Arizona University has operated for 25 years to advance landscape-scale restoration. Currently, the ERI provides support to the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) on the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, Kaibab, and Tonto national forests. The ERI also supported initial treatment design on the Southwest Jemez Mountains CFLRP Project.

ERI services include:

- Leadership in the design and implementation of ecologically-based forest restoration treatments throughout the Four Forests of northern Arizona and the Southwest region
- Development of the monitoring and adaptive management strategy for the 4FRI and initial design and publication of workbooks for multi-party monitoring required under the CFRP program
- Collaboration and field trip support to develop the Desired Conditions that inform the Proposed Action, Purpose, and Need
- Collaboration support to complete the economics and utilization strategy establishing the economic foundation for restoration and utilization
- Collaboration support to complete a Charter that guides operations of the 4FRI stakeholder collaborative
- Technical and administrative support to manage information flow at the BASECAMP on-line workplace and to identify and manage meeting locations
- Geographic Information Systems support
- Rapid assessments that determine historic reference conditions (e.g., fire return interval, forest pattern, composition, and structure) and provide an underpinning to inform restoration treatments
- Public affairs and media communication support

ERI involvement helped:

- Foster the development of effective, science-based restoration treatments that simultaneously achieve fire risk reduction, community protection, and ecological restoration
- Enable stakeholders to contribute meaningful, science-based input to the NEPA process
- Provide scientific support to Forest Service ID teams and line officers
- Facilitate collaboration

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In New Mexico, the NMFWRI at New Mexico Highlands University provides technical assistance to the New Mexico Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) and the Southwest Jemez Mountains CFLRP project.

NMFWRI services to CFRP recipients include:

- Technical assistance to land managers and tribal entities about restoration prescriptions and monitoring to inform adaptive management
- Geographic Information Systems support and mapping
- An “All Lands” approach that extends beyond individual land ownerships and jurisdictions
- Conducting applied research to develop socio-economic indicators for restoration projects – including those at the landscape level – as well as partnering with communities to develop restoration-based economies upon which stand-, watershed-, and landscape-level restoration efforts depend

NMFWRI services include:

- Facilitation and coordination of activities of the Estancia Basin Watershed and Forest Health, Restoration, and Monitoring Project, a partnership between area soil and water conservation districts, land grants, local governments, and federal and state agencies that is designed to reduce the threat to life and property from catastrophic wildfires, and to improve watershed health on private and public lands in the East Manzano Mountains
- Partnering across jurisdictions to develop the Isleta Multi-Jurisdictional Landscape Analysis CFRP, a collaborative landscape restoration project involving the USFS, Department of Defense, Isleta Pueblo, and Chilili Land Grant
- Convening the joint meetings of organizations interested in integrated management of the Jemez River watershed beginning in 2008 and continuing through 2010, which eventually led to the awarding of the CFLRP funding
- Helping to convene and assist the technical specialists on the CFLRP landscape assessment, facilitate partnerships, and provide technical assistance.

NMFRI involvement helped:

- Build the foundation for a successful CFLRP proposal
- Facilitate partnerships and cooperation among land management entities across landscapes
- Provide crucial GIS support to under-resourced public entities
- Improve treatment design and the robustness of monitoring protocols
- Develop restoration-based economies



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