

**Rio Grande Water Fund
Follow Up Action Items from Topic Tables**

May-July 2018 Report

1. Policy and Legislation (*Leads: John Kelly, Jose Varela Lopez and Laura McCarthy*)

UPDATE:

Progress was made to follow up with the Attorney General on the status of the opinion about state funds being allowed to be used for forest and watershed restoration because of the public benefit. We connected with staff in the AG office and with the legislators who requested the opinion. The issue will remain on the back burner until after the elections. In addition, TNC developed a list of key contacts in the insurance industry. We have made cold calls and sought introductions wherever possible. So far we have not had any breakthrough contacts with insurance industry executives.

The other action items – creating a RGWF 101 Handout, advocating for General Fund revenue, and advocating for increased Forest Service spending in New Mexico – are in progress and will continue from now until the Fall Signatories meeting.

Action Items from Spring 2018:

1. Create a Rio Grande Water Fund 101 Handout that is a single page, front and back [TNC]
 - a. Audience is new legislators and new RGWF signatory organizations to build the coalition for citizen lobbying
 - b. Content should demonstrate the capacity of the RGWF and tell the jobs story
2. Follow up with the Attorney General on the status of the opinion [TNC and NMFIA]
3. All who are interested in being on the Governor's transition team should send their letters of interest soon [suggestion only]
4. Reach out to the insurance industry and begin drafting a bill based on the Insurance Fraud Prevention Fund, including following up with heads of insurance agencies and recruiting NM Business Water Task Force members to assist [TNC, NMFIA, BWTF]
5. Advocate for increased state General Fund revenue to match the Forest Service funding change. [TNC, NMFIA, all]
6. Gather information about anticipated changes in the Forest Service budget including:
 - a. Request information from the Forest Service, Southwestern Regional office [TNC]
 - b. Request information through the NM Congressional delegation [TNC]
 - c. Prepare this information to share with NM legislators at WNR interim committee meeting (summer), and to build the case for increased General Fund appropriations [TNC]
 - d. Prepare a letter from the coalition of organizations to the Forest Service Chief and USDA Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment requesting increased budget for restoration, fuels reduction, watersheds, and wildlife, to leverage state funding [TNC, NMFIA, delegation]

2. Monitoring and Data (*Lead: Steve Bassett*)

UPDATE:

The RGWF monitoring plan is being revised to better meet the needs of the program and its partners. During plan revision, each metric will be evaluated for suitability for data collection by citizen scientists [Action Item 1]. Understory response to treatment is currently being monitored by the RGWF at plots in all areas treated by the RGWF [Action Item 2], less resource intensive monitoring methods are being evaluated. Fuel monitoring crews are still using paper forms for data collection [Action Item 3], next field season tablets will be utilized for this data collection. Building relationships with NM tech firms has been on the back burner, but once monitoring needs are identified, this outreach will begin [Action Item 4]. Skilled birders will likely be recruited as part of the citizen science program [Action Item 5].

Action Items from Spring 2018:

1. Evaluate appropriate RGWF metrics for monitoring by citizen scientists. [RGWF Staff]
 - a. Reach out to other states and Water Funds that have citizen science programs to establish lessons learned from other programs.
 - b. Create rules for when citizen science is an appropriate tool based on required data quality, staff capacity, and other objectives.
2. Investigate understory response to treatments. [needs volunteer]
 - a. Evaluate the suitability of using citizen scientists to monitor understory response using an app that guides users to photo points with GPS and provides instruction in the types of photos that are useful.
3. Continue development of tablet app for data collection by roving monitoring team. [RGWF Staff]
 - a. Discuss lessons learned with Philmont Scout Ranch employees that have collected forest monitoring data with tablets in the past. [Assist from Kent Reid]
 - b. Utilize network of other forest restoration projects to enable leveraged investment in app functionality.
4. Investigate the capacity of NM tech firms to produce the apps required for the RGWF monitoring program. [Carrie Freeman and Steve Bassett]
 - a. Identify application needs and required functionality.
 - b. Evaluate tech firms available for partnership in NM.
5. Evaluate opportunities for skilled birders to collect avian monitoring data. [needs volunteer]

3. Wildlife Connectivity (*Leads: Anne Bradley and Teresa Seamster*)

UPDATE:

Colleen Payne and Collin Haffey have started discussing a RGWF article for the fall or winter Mule Deer Foundation national magazine.

Action Items from Spring 2018:

1. Form a working group (Anne Bradley, TNC; Teresa Seamster, Sierra Club; Jimmy Cain NMSU; Colleen Payne MDF; Chris Furr Carson NF; Jenny Lirignoli, Parametrix; Jordan Stone, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps) [Done]
2. Share the notes with the working group [TNC]
3. Report decisions in the newsletter [Teresa Seamster]
4. Explore developing a RGWF article in the Mule Deer Foundation national magazine [Anne Bradley, Colleen Payne]
5. Share calendar events of interest to all the working group [All]

4. Stream, Wetland, Aquatic and Restoration Projects (*Leads: Toner Mitchell and Rachel Meier*)

UPDATE:

The SWARP breakout group had one assigned Action Item, which was to “Create SWARP page on the RGWF website to host links/descriptions on BMPs related to SWARP work.” This was assigned to TNC (Rachel Meier) and anyone who wanted to volunteer to help. Thus far, a first draft of the SWARP Resources page has been created and posted on the Rio Grande Water Fund website (<http://riograndewaterfund.org/resources/swarp-resources/>). We are seeking input from SWARP table participants and others on the aesthetics of the webpage as well as the quality of the resources posted on the page. For the proceeding months leading up to the Fall Signatories meeting, the plan is to further refine the SWARP resources webpage, and to create and publish an OpEd article aimed to educate the public about beavers and their importance in wetland and aquatic ecosystems.

Action Items from Spring 2018:

1. Need to coordinate with NMED on what NMED is doing for the Programmatic NEPA [needs volunteers]
 - a. Seek guidance on developing specifications/guidelines for creating and implementing BMPs.
2. More education is needed around beavers: need for an OpEd (work with the communications team on this?) [needs volunteers]
 - a. How to educate legislators vs. the public (start by educating children in schools?)
 - b. Strategy: find out who opposes the idea of beaver dam analogs (groups etc.), and find success stories that will be relevant to them (examples from within the group or that will resonate well with that group)
 - i. One example: beavers behind Santa Clara Casino---Garrett Altmann as POC
 - ii. Sherri Tippie (Wildlife 2000) another example from CO
3. Create SWARP page on the RGWF website to host links/descriptions on BMPs related to SWARP work [TNC and needs volunteers]
 - a. Should include:
 - i. New NMDGF guidelines for beaver reintroduction (now 5 linear miles)
 - ii. New USFWS Beaver Management Guide
 - iii. BMPs from NMED, Surface Water Quality Bureau, FEMA, NRCS
 - iv. Clean Water Act

5. Jobs and Training (*Leads: Sarah Hurteau and Ben Thomas*)

UPDATE:

TNC followed up on the idea of creating better connections between job seekers and hiring organizations by reconnecting with Eytan Krasilovsky at the Forest Stewards Guild to explore the idea of using the Fire Adapted NM website as a potential forum. Eytan has offered to create a “Jobs” section on the website to serve as a forum where people can both post job opportunities and look for forest related work. The website can be found at <https://facnm.org/>.

TNC will also continue to push forward two other items including highlighting the VISTA/Pathways programs in a presentation at a future RGWF meeting. Finally, at the last meeting TNC launched the Logo Challenge to bring in additional signatories. We are paying particular attention to recruiting private sector organizations that may address the growing capacity needs for restoration work in rural communities. We also ask that all signatories help us with this aspect by considering which organization you may be able to recruit as a signatory that fits this need.

Action Items from Spring 2018:

1. Utilizing the RGWF signatories network to better advertise job openings, both public and private like a job board/calendar that could serve as a linkage between those looking for jobs with those looking for qualified workers and the timing/seasonality of the position. [Forest Stewards Guild]
2. Highlight the success of VISTA/Pathways programs during the short talks at a future RGWF meeting as a way to bring new talent into federal agencies that are facing a retiring workforce. [TNC – Future RGWF Meeting]
3. Increase private sector involvement in RGWF in order to increase overall capacity to meet the growing needs for additional restoration activities and create jobs in rural communities. [TNC and RGWF Signatories as part of the Logo Challenge]
4. Connect with the National Rural Assembly for peer to peer learning opportunities. [needs volunteer]

6. Biomass Utilization (*Leads: Amy Miller, Brent Racher, Will Donahoo*)

UPDATE:

Since the May RGWF meeting, Laura McCarthy and Amy Miller had a conference call with former Colorado legislator and consultant Ellen Roberts on her initiatives regarding a regional approach to biomass opportunities, with a special focus on electric cooperatives. She is organizing some meetings in southern CO, along with the USFS, focusing on conservation on finance and surfacing biomass ideas.

Additionally, the Sandoval County biomass working group continues to meet to explore opportunities in the County. The group submitted a draft biomass utilization report representing current progress in key areas, including: Identifying potential locations within the county for wood products manufacturing operations, and assessing the types and amounts of available feedstock within a 75-mile radius of each prospective location; estimating the cost of transporting feedstock from forest to facility; evaluating the regional market demand and market prices for a variety of wood products, as well as identifying existing market competition;

identifying supplemental revenue streams from each candidate manufacturing process (e.g., waste heat, carbon credits); and performing 5-, 10-, and 20-year return-on-investment (ROI) analyses on the most promising wood products manufacturing processes.

In the next 30 – 60 days, TNC's Amy Miller anticipates the following: Setting up a meeting with the director of the NM Rural Electric Cooperative Association to discuss biomass opportunities, getting a status update from EMNRD on their work related to the biomass opportunity grant they received, and continued work by the Sandoval County biomass working group.

Action Items from Spring 2018:

1. Send TNC a past report from WGA on multi-state policy related to biomass. [Kim Kostelnik]
2. There is a need to continue to refine and expand the definition of the problem as a basis for future water discussions, focusing on the tie to water. [TNC staff]
3. Explore enterprise zones as an opportunity for biomass based businesses. [Adelante]
4. Continue to explore markets for biochar, including exploration of opportunities with LANL and Sandia Labs. [Adelante]
5. Follow up with New Mexico Tech re: biochar opportunities with LANL and Sandia. [Rep. Pearce's office (Barbara)]
6. Continue to do work on exploring markets for biomass. [EMNRD]

7. Post-fire Planning (*Leads: Collin Haffey and Susan Rich*)

UPDATE:

Anne Bradley, as part of the Burned Area Learning Network and a partnership with NM State University and the Forest Stewards Guild is planning a workshop for county level emergency managers on post-fire emergency response. The goal of this workshop is to help local officials understand what happens when flooding and debris flows impact their communities, how to be better prepared for the event, and where to find resources for recovery. The Greater Santa Fe Fireshed is serving as a pilot area for an actual post fire plan that can be integrated into other emergency response planning. Porfirio Chavarria (Santa Fe Fire Department) is leading an effort to develop a pre-fire plan for post-fire response in the fireshed area.

Alongside this effort, Alan Hook, Santa Fe City Water Division, is working with TNC to convene a group of technical experts to review and update post-fire debris and flood models so the location and extend of potential impacts are better understood

Plans are underway to reorganize the afterwildfirenm.org website with even more information for people recovering from or preparing for post-fire floods. Stay tuned! In addition to this effort, Susan Rich (NM State Forestry) and others are creating a shortlist of technical experts who are working to respond to incidents such as the Ute Park Fire.

The East Jemez Landscape Futures project and the Burned Area Learning Network hosted a field trip and workshop to investigate long-term recovery of severely burned and flooded landscapes.

Santa Clara Pueblo hosted the field trip and participants were introduced to the stream restoration, erosion control, and reforestation efforts the Tribe is undertaking. The following day land managers, tribal members, researchers, and NGOs met to discuss opportunities for research and restoration on the eastern flanks of the Jemez outside of Santa Clara Canyon.

Action Items from Spring 2018:

1. Create template with checklist to do pre-fire planning for post-fire long-term recovery actions [NMSF, Jeremy Sweat, Dee Tarr, Krys Graham Chavez]
 - a. Build on AWG focusing on more specifics for local geographies (scale)
 - b. Take census of what's been/being done elsewhere and adopt best practices (avoid reinventing the wheel)
 - c. ID who should be at the table from the start; anticipate potential impacts/involve them during/before
2. "Second Responders" - find (or create) a template for a leadership plan for continued, long-term post-fire recovery (community-led) [Alan Hook]
 - a. Extend Emergency Management Planning to post-fire planning/people/communities
3. Identify vulnerable infrastructure that BOR could then put in funding [Dagmar Llewellyn]
 - a. Example of non-conventional funding source
4. ID other geographies and funding sources, including non-traditional, at actionable scales [needs volunteer]

8. Communications (*Leads: Jackie Hall and David Norden*)

UPDATE:

A key action item created at the April signatories meeting was to develop a Facebook page for the Rio Grande Water Fund. This is an easily achievable goal and TNC worked to create the following guidelines around the development and use of the Facebook page:

- A minimum of 20 partners and/or signatories should participate to make the page viable; each should agree to post at least once a month on the page.
- All posts must be related to the RGWF.
- Those posting will have access to the page as "Administrators."
- Partners/signatories agree not to advertise or solicit on the page.
- TNC will monitor the site once a month to make sure content is appropriate.
- Measure of success: 10,000 page likes by 12/31/2020. If the site is not gaining traction, the group can decide to take the site down.
- **Please email Collin Haffey** at Collin.haffey@tnc.org if you are interested in and can commit to regular contributions to this page.

A second outcome of the Communications Topic Table centered around use of Rio Grande Water Fund materials at festivals/meetings where partners/signatories are participating by staffing booths/exhibits. TNC is happy to provide RGWF Fact Sheets and RGWF stickers for

this purpose. Again, please reach out to Collin Haffey at Collin.haffey@tnc.org to indicate whether you would like these materials for future use.

Regarding a coordinated media week, TNC is currently seeking funding/investments for this project and should have news on progress related to this initiative by the end of August 2018.

Action Items from Spring 2018:

1. Create RGWF Facebook Page [needs volunteer]
 - a. Needs minimum number of signatories to participate
 - b. Everyone needs to agree to posting at least once a month, not using the Facebook page for advertising or soliciting
2. RGWF coordinated “media” week with the aim of getting national attention to this project as a model for other communities [needs volunteers]
 - a. All signatories/partners/investors push out stories/media awareness for RGWF
 - b. Special hashtag: Ex. #RIO600k
 - c. Coordinate around fire season
 - d. Coordinated messages/posts/releases/ etc.
 - e. Culminate in a “forest festival” at TSV; incorporate hikes through places like Wild West; for media and general public
 - i. Ex: TSV restoring forests but residents in the valley don’t take those sorts of proactive steps
3. Festival participation [all working group members]
 - a. Signatories/Partners/Investors--In general, when we are participating in staffing booths at various events, provide information on RGWF

9. Rural Communities – Protecting Rural Water Sources and Exploring Funding Possibilities for Fire-Impacted Water Systems (*Lead: Martha Graham*)

UPDATE:

Source Water Protection will partner with the Burned Area Learning Network to find ways to overlap and share information. As an effort to integrate issues of wildfire and source water, the Chama Land Alliance hosted a Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TRES) that introduced trainees to considerations of how wildfire affects drinking water systems.

Action Items from Spring 2018:

1. We need to be proactive (to identify communities and their vulnerabilities) [needs volunteer]
2. Involve communities / Establish relationships early [needs volunteer]
3. Continue these conversations [all group members]
4. Visit/Join/Contribute to FACNM.org [needs volunteer]
5. Hold meetings on residences/communities/water systems becoming fire adapted [needs volunteer]
6. Research funding possibilities (to help drinking water/acequia systems affected by fire; these should be investigated for increasing system resiliency too) [needs volunteer]
 - a. County
 - b. FEMA

- c. NM Homeland Security
 - d. Private sources
 - e. RGWF
 - f. NRCS
 - g. Soil & Water Conservation Districts
7. Check After Wildfire website for funding information again (mg/Vallecitos didn't find anything that applied in that particular case) [needs volunteer]
 8. Provide WFDSS with locations of acequia/drinking water infrastructure [needs volunteer]
 9. Revise CWPPs / modify information in them and how it is collected [needs volunteer]
 10. Bring multitude of people together and address the issue systematically [needs volunteer]
 11. Develop collaboratives [needs volunteer]