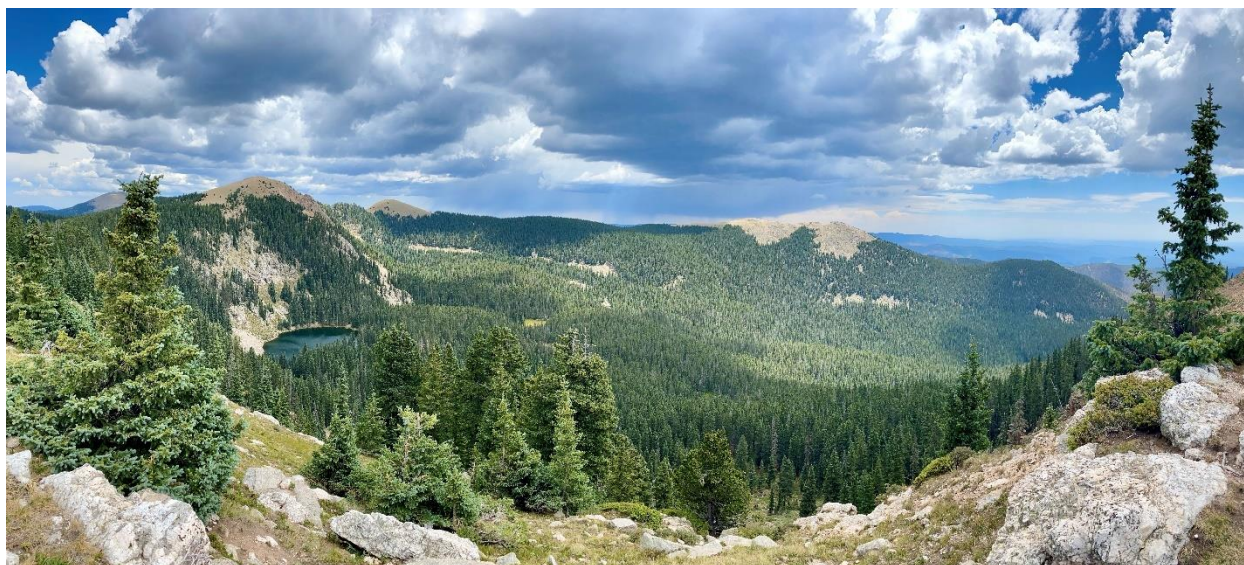


***Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed
Santa Fe County, New Mexico***

Proposal to the
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I for Fiscal Years 2023 and
2024
Funding Opportunity Announcement R23AS00362



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Project Location	3
Applicant Category	5
Eligibility of Applicant	8
Project Description	9
Evaluation Criteria	12
Evaluation Criteria A – Watershed Group Diversity and Scope	12
<u>Watershed Group Diversity</u>	12
<u>Geographic Scope</u>	15
Evaluation Criteria B – Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs ..	16
<u>Critical Watershed Needs or Issues</u>	16
<u>Project Benefits</u>	18
Evaluation Criteria C – Readiness to Proceed	20
Evaluation Criteria D – Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities	21
<u>Climate Change</u>	21
<u>Benefits to Disadvantaged, Underserved, and Tribal Communities</u>	21
<u>Tribal Benefits</u>	22
Environmental and Cultural Resource Compliance	22
Required Permits or Approvals	23
Overlap or Duplication of Efforts	23

Figures

Figure 1. Map showing location of the Santa Fe Watershed (HUC 10) within the larger US Geological Survey Hydrologic Unit Map (HUC 4)	4
Figure 2. A map of major land ownership in the Santa Fe Watershed	5
Figure 3. Examples of SFWA’s programming	8
Figure 4. Volunteers help construct a rain garden	11
Figure 5. A map of major land ownership in the Santa Fe Watershed	13
Figure 6. Location of the Santa Fe River Watershed	15
Figure 7. Santa Feans enjoying the Santa Fe River Trail near Frenchy’s Field	19

Tables

Table 1. Known Stakeholders Across Upper, Middle and Lower Watershed Segments	14
Table 2. Project Schedule and Milestones	20

Executive Summary

Date: September 2, 2024

Applicant: Santa Fe Watershed Association

Applicant Location: Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, NM

Project Timeline: 3 years, completion September 30, 2028

The Santa Fe River Watershed is a sub-basin of the Rio Grande located almost entirely within Santa Fe County, New Mexico. The Santa Fe Watershed Association (SFWA), an established watershed group with a 27-year track record of collaboration with diverse stakeholders, is proposing to build upon the watershed planning efforts achieved in its previous Phase I CWMP project “Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed” and complete a watershed restoration plan. The stakeholder groups identified in the previous Phase I project included federal, state, county, city, and tribal governments, citizen stakeholder groups, national and local non-profit organizations, grazing associations, and individual citizens. Stakeholder priorities in the previous planning project identified across interest groups were: 1) planning for climate change, 2) protecting native species, 3) protecting water quality, 4) fire management planning in the Upper Watershed, and 5) planning with a greater emphasis on ecological justice and social equality. By incorporating diverse stakeholder values and emphasizing areas of common ground in the next step of planning watershed projects, SFWA will continue to push forward collaborative solutions to complex water supply issues and reduce future conflicts over water. The first goal for the SFWA is furthering watershed group development to include targeted outreach to underserved or represented stakeholder groups identified in the previous project, preparing informative and educational materials, and hosting an annual water conference. The second goal is continued watershed restoration planning tailored to reflect Best Management Practices (BMPs) and the highest priorities of a majority of stakeholders across a very diverse watershed culminating in a watershed restoration plan. The third goal is to identify three potential projects in the Upper, Middle, and Lower Watersheds and prepare site-specific designs to move them toward future implementation.

The project will not be located on a federal facility.

Project Location

The proposed project will focus on the entire Santa Fe River watershed located in Santa Fe County New Mexico (Figure 1). The watershed lies within the Rio Grande Region (Region 13) of the USGS Hydrologic Unit Map (10-digit HUC ID:1302020101). The watershed drains approximately 285 square miles and has a total length of approximately 46 miles.

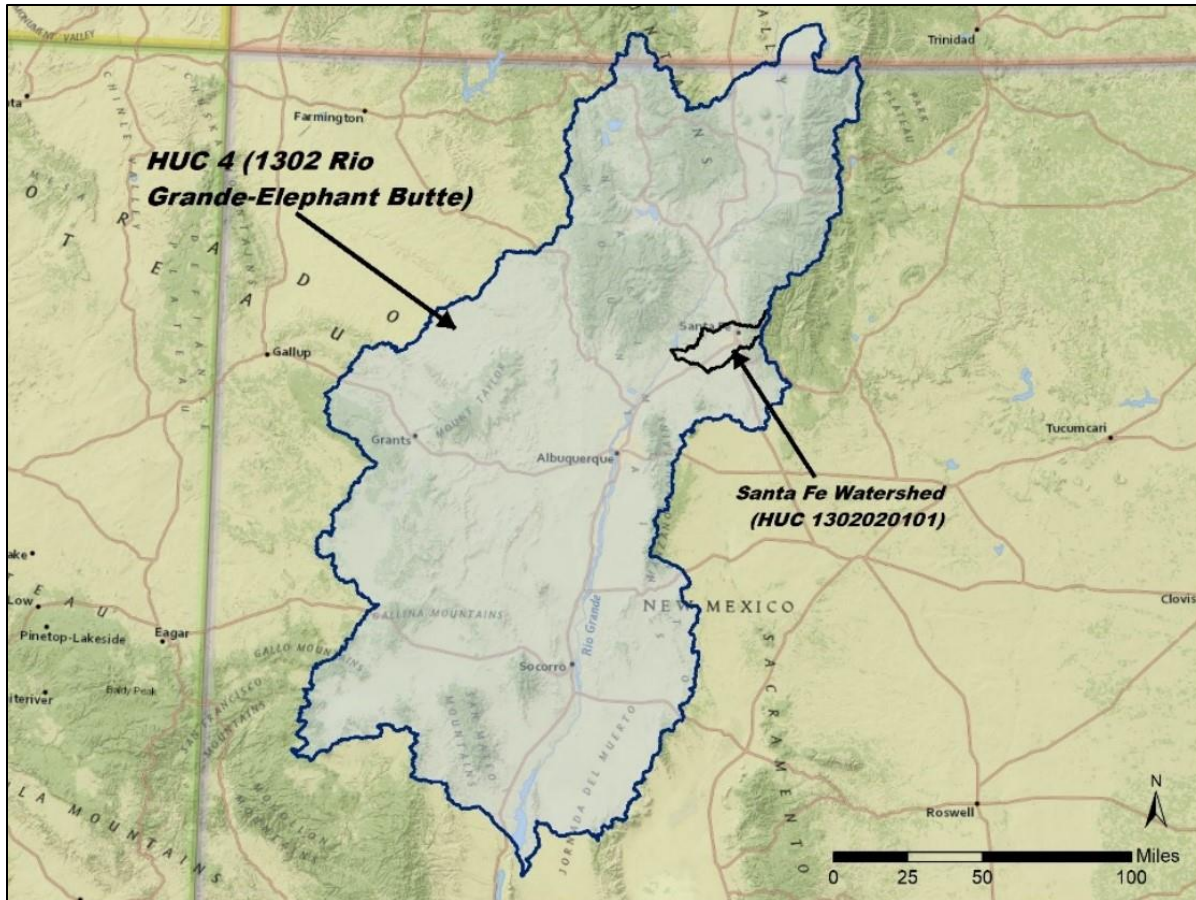


Figure 1. Map showing location of the Santa Fe Watershed (HUC 10) within the larger US Geological Survey Hydrologic Unit Map (HUC 4).

Land use in the Santa Fe watershed includes a mix of wilderness, urban-municipal, agriculture, and grazing. The watershed is often divided into three distinct geographies, the Upper, Middle and Lower Watershed (Figure 2). The SFWA represents the entire HUC 10 watershed and works with diverse groups who have a particular geographic focus. Most stakeholder engagement is observed in the Middle Watershed where most of the water is used for municipal purposes. Based on the stakeholder engagement report, an outreach emphasis to stakeholders in the Lower Watershed needs to be a priority. Outreach to private landowners which were largely absent in stakeholder participation needs to be a priority as well. The land of the Upper Watershed is almost entirely owned by the United States Forest Service (USFS) and has been closed to the public since 1932, while the water is owned and managed by the City of Santa Fe (title page photo). SFWA regularly engages with these two partners but also with communities downstream who are invested in management outcomes.

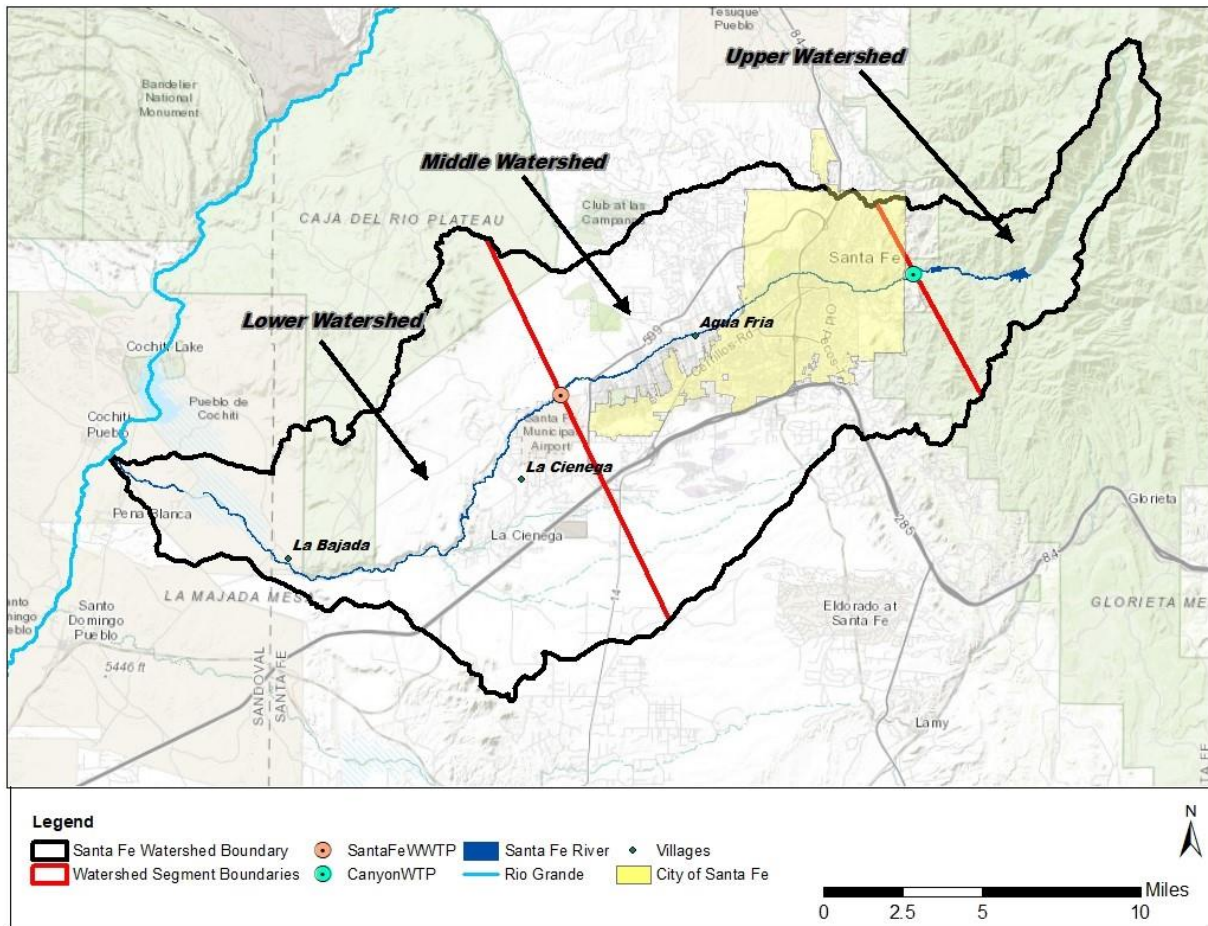


Figure 2. A map of the general Upper, Middle, and Lower Watershed sections.

Applicant Category

The Santa Fe Watershed Association is submitting this application as an Existing Watershed Group because we are an established, legally incorporated 501c3 entity that has done previous watershed planning and has previously been awarded a Phase 1 CWMP grant.

The mission of SFWA is to build a thriving, resilient Santa Fe River Watershed through collaboration, stewardship, and education that inspires us all to care for our land, water, and each other. From its inception in 1997, SFWA has championed collaboration and centering the Santa Fe River as the literal common ground beneath diverse communities and interests. We have maintained and expanded that reputation for over 27 years as the only entity that works across the entire Santa Fe Watershed to connect issues and communities.

Several of the earliest projects that laid the foundation for ongoing work were:

- The Santa Fe River Greenway and San Isidro Park, started in 1997 and completed in 2007, was made possible through SFWA's work with Santa Fe County and the Village of Agua Fria to close the gravel mine operating in the river bed, stop a US Army Corps proposal to dredge and pave the river for stormwater conveyance, and instead purchase the land and restore the channel through induced meandering and riparian plantings. The Greenway Project now connects to the City of Santa Fe's River Corridor Master Plan, continues to be expanded, and in 2024 received the Santa Fe Reporter's "Best Trail of Santa Fe" award.
- The 2002 Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) for the municipal watershed played an essential role in convening the City of Santa Fe and the US Forest Service to begin strategic forest treatments. The WRAS later informed the 2010 Municipal Watershed Plan, which continues to guide treatments and public outreach, with which SFWA has been tasked. SFWA remains the unofficial chair of the municipal stakeholder group which meets quarterly to share updates and has expanded the group to include not just the plan's signatories but also Forest Stewards Guild and the Pueblo of Tesuque.
- The Adopt-the-River program, officially started in 2002 in collaboration with the City of Santa Fe, formed teams of volunteers to lead semi-regular cleanups along the Santa Fe River. Now in its 22nd year, the program has evolved into the Adopt Your Watershed program that works with hundreds of volunteers and numerous partners who annually collect thousands of pounds of trash out of the river and its tributary arroyos. Adopt Your Watershed has just recently expanded to offering monthly stewardship workshops and caring for rain gardens around the city as well. The program remains supported by the City of Santa Fe but receives supplemental support from Santa Fe County and numerous local individuals and businesses.

Other accomplishments and ongoing projects include:

- Led and organized stakeholder efforts to pass the *Target Flow for a Living River Ordinance* on February 29th, 2012. SFWA remains a strong advocate for a Living River through the Santa Fe River Commission and other collaborative spaces.
- Founding partner and 2024 chair of the Greater Santa Fe Watershed Coalition
- Regular partner of the City Water Conservation Committee and co-sponsor of the 2020 City Water Conservation Plan
- Administrative support for the Santa Fe River Traditional Communities Collaborative
- Member of the City of Santa Fe's Citizen Advisory Working Group for the Land Development Code update, where we advocate for waterwise, place-based, green infrastructure to be incorporated into code wherever possible
- SFWA works with over 800 Santa Fe 5th graders per year (over 11,000 since 2011) in the *My Water, My Watershed* program, a three-day watershed education experience that includes a full day field trip to the municipal watershed (Figure 3).

- Founding member of the Santa Fe Outdoor Education Collaborative with Audubon Southwest and Santa Fe Botanical Garden that provides standards-aligned life science curricula to 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students throughout Northern New Mexico
- Piloting a middle school life science extension, *Mi Arroyo, Mi Tierra*, which focuses on stormwater and nature “in our backyard”
- We offer numerous teacher trainings, workshops, and curricula support aligned with NM STEM Ready standards and ProjectWET guidelines, and serve as the New Mexico and US-regional representative for ProjectWET.
- Member of the City of Santa Fe’s TreeSmart initiative, focusing on green stormwater infrastructure and riparian plantings
- Regularly advocate for and construct rain gardens throughout the City of Santa Fe, which currently capture over 1 million gallons of stormwater annually (Figure 3)
- Completed previous Phase I CWMP grant: Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed in 2023
- Have a growing list of approximately 2,500 active e-newsletter subscribers, 1,900 followers on Instagram, and 2,100 followers on Facebook

The Santa Fe River Watershed has a distinctive challenge in that there exist numerous passionate stakeholders with diverse interests, but these interests often exist in isolation leading to more potential for conflict in pursuit of watershed restoration solutions. It is imperative that all stakeholder groups are informed and encouraged to seek collaborative solutions. The SFWA is uniquely positioned to serve as an bridging organization, providing reliable information, strengthening connections, and ensuring diverse stakeholders are equally represented in planning and implementation efforts.



Figure 3. Examples of SFWA's programming. Left: Fifth graders explore benthic macroinvertebrates in the Upper Watershed. Right: Workshop attendees learn about rain garden design and maintenance in the Middle Watershed.

Eligibility of Applicant

The Santa Fe Watershed Association qualifies as an Existing Watershed Group because we are an established, legally incorporated 501c3 entity in Santa Fe, New Mexico that has done previous watershed planning and has previously been awarded a Phase 1 CWMP grant. We are committed to expanding our role as a convener of diverse stakeholders, interests, and geographies through this watershed planning process and establishing more formal gathering opportunities. This work can also be described as “sponsoring the development of a watershed group,” as outlined in the Eligibility Criteria. Furthermore, as a community-based organization focused entirely on the Santa Fe River Watershed, we are significantly affected by the quality and quantity of water. Finally, we are capable of promoting sustainable use of water resources, as we have demonstrated through our numerous initiatives and partnerships over the last 27 years.

SFWA works with numerous collaborative forums, both formal and informal, throughout the watershed (e.g., City River Commission, County Water Policy Advisory Council, Santa Fe River Traditional Communities Collaborative, Greater Santa Fe Watershed Coalition) that have specific interests or geographic constraints. What SFWA offers is the unique ability to connect these

different forums and lean on our trusting relationships with individuals and entities formed over many years.

The current proposal builds upon and does not duplicate the watershed planning efforts achieved in “Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed”. It furthers SFWA’s commitment to participants and other stakeholders and the previous investment of the WaterSMART program. After completion of the stakeholder process from the previous grant, SFWA is uniquely positioned to integrate stakeholder priorities into a watershed restoration plan. SFWA can become a clearinghouse or “faucet” for the well of information that exists across multiple stakeholder groups. We are committed to pursuing planning tasks that recognize a greater emphasis on ecological justice and social equality while addressing climate change adaptation strategies.

Project Description

A watershed restoration plan will be completed through continued stakeholder engagement to further watershed planning efforts. The goals of the project are:

Goal 1: Further Watershed Group Development (CWMP Task A)

- a. Gather, organize, synthesize, and share planning documents and existing projects from different stakeholder organizations to provide a clearinghouse for stakeholders watershed-wide. Links and documents will be available on the SFWA website.
- b. SFWA will create and make available summary table showing the synergy between plans that address priorities identified by stakeholders. The same will be created for educational programs in the watershed and available Best Management Practices (BMPs). Summary tables and BMPs will be updated and shared on the SFWA website.
- c. SFWA will create at least three BMP documents that are specific to Santa Fe Watershed stakeholder needs.
- d. SFWA will continue to collaborate with watershed stakeholders through planning activities.
- e. SFWA will conduct targeted outreach to reach stakeholders who have felt left-out of the information loop. By investing in sustained relationships with stakeholder communities that typically receive less attention, the SFWA will ensure that all stakeholders have a place at the table.
- f. As part of this goal, the SFWA will convene two watershed conferences in order for stakeholders to participate in the planning process.

Goal 2: Watershed Restoration Planning (CWMP Task B)

- a. The SFWA will consolidate information from the previous goal into a watershed restoration plan.
- b. The plan will be informed by information gathering, stakeholder outreach and feedback, and on-the-ground assessments. Apply information obtained from activities in Goals 1

and 2, along with feedback from stakeholders to identify potential projects in the Upper, Middle and Lower Watersheds.

Goal 3: Watershed Management Project (CWMP Task C)

- a. Prepare site-specific project designs for three projects (one in each watershed designation) to move them closer to potential implementation (such as in Figure 4).

All goals are created based on the following recommendations for managers and community members in the *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed* report. The report provides detailed analysis of data from the stakeholder survey and extensive interviews.

1. Emphasize the synergy across interests in watershed priorities such as water security and flow, climate change, stormwater management, and groundwater recharge (Goal 1).
2. Take time to understand the nuances in perspectives and priorities related to wildfire and forest management, water rights, water quality, and water infrastructure (Goals 1, 2 and 3).
3. Beware of assumptions of opposition across traditional interest groups (Goal 2).
4. Facilitate engagement across stakeholders early and throughout deliberation processes for input and collaboration (Goal 2).
5. Ensure proactive government-to-government dialogue and negotiations over water issues with Pueblos (Goals 1 and 2).
6. Provide and seek out cultural literacy training and information to support deepening interactional capacity (Goals 1 and 2).
7. Build interactional capacity for watershed resilience by catalyzing collaboration, taking time to build trusting relationships around shared goals, and integrating diverse ways of knowing (Goals 1, 2 and 3).



Figure 4. Volunteers help construct a rain garden along the Santa Fe River in the Middle Watershed.

To further watershed group development, SFWA will spend the first year of the grant gathering, organizing, synthesizing, and sharing planning documents, research, and existing projects from different stakeholder organizations to provide a clearinghouse for stakeholders watershed-wide. We envision creating a matrix that links planning documents to identified stakeholder goals. From this exercise it should be apparent where overlap and gaps occur. Documents will be available on the SFWA website. The same will be created for educational programs in the watershed and available Best Management Practices (BMPs). Using the matrix, SFWA will produce at least three BMPs for practices specific to the Santa Fe River Watershed and make these available to stakeholders and policymakers.

Ongoing efforts to engage established SFWA partners will continue, and concentrated efforts will be made by SFWA staff to meet with stakeholders identified in the previous project who often felt underrepresented such as Tribes, traditional communities, and individual private landowners. These meetings will occur face-to-face, at the stakeholders' choice of time and location. Finally, SFWA proposes to convene two watershed conferences in years 2 and 3 of the project to share draft watershed restoration plans informed by previous stakeholder meetings. The first conference will have a speaker from each watershed region (Upper, Middle, Lower) in

the morning, and breakout groups in the afternoon. The second conference will follow a similar format but focus groups will specifically solicit ideas for site-specific restoration designs.

Watershed restoration planning will occur in three phases. The first phase will consolidate information from Goal 1 and present a draft to stakeholders at the first conference. The second phase will be informed by stakeholder feedback and on-the-ground assessments and will result in a draft presented at the second conference. The third phase will be completed with a final watershed restoration plan incorporating stakeholder priorities coupled with information gained from on-the-ground assessments. The Upper and Middle watershed regions will be assessed in year 1 and the Middle and Lower regions will be assessed in year 2. The Middle Watershed includes the City of Santa Fe and has a complicated stakeholder and regulatory landscape. Therefore, SFWA has estimated more time will be spent on assessments in the Middle Watershed.

Based on stakeholder-identified potential projects from the water conferences, SFWA will work to prepare one site-specific restoration design for each watershed region. The goal will be to have project plans with sufficient design specificity, financial details, and community support to be ready to propose for funding and implementation.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria A – Watershed Group Diversity and Scope

Watershed Group Diversity:

Since 1997 the SFWA has been engaging with a wide array of stakeholder groups including, but not limited to Santa Fe Public Schools, various private and charter schools, various neighborhood associations, village councils, acequias, pueblos, non-profit organizations, and many federal, state and local government agencies and departments. There is no formal membership for the Santa Fe Watershed Association. The SFWA has a staff of 7 led by an Executive Director (ED). The ED and staff are overseen by a board of directors (BOD) who are chosen by the ED, board president, and a unanimous BOD vote. The SFWA receives funding from a mix of individual donations, foundation grants, government grants, and contracts. While the government agencies are focused on water quantity, quality, and delivery, many community members have a more nuanced interest in water issues that include ecological resilience and adaptation in the face of climate change. Ecological justice and social equality in water management are also important to many stakeholders in the Santa Fe Watershed. Letters of support from 24 partners accompany this proposal.

A list of Santa Fe Watershed stakeholders within different geographic segments of the watershed is provided in Table 1, and a map showing land ownership across the HUC 10 watershed is provided in Figure 5. This list in Table 1 represents stakeholders with whom SFWA has collaborated or interacted with to varying degrees. It also contains stakeholders who require concerted outreach efforts as described in Goal 1.

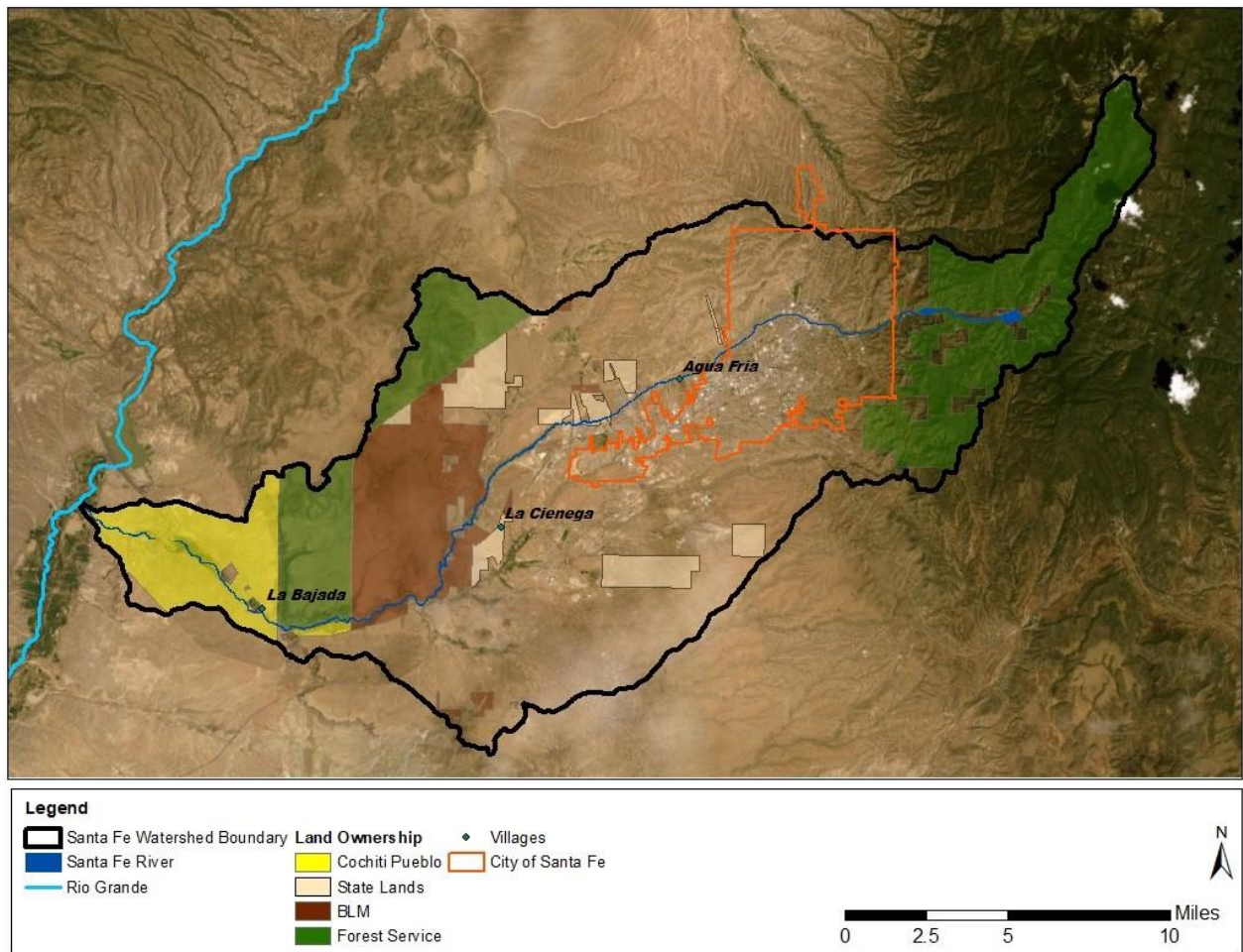


Figure 5. A map of major land ownership in the Santa Fe Watershed.

Table 1. Known Stakeholders Across Upper, Middle and Lower Watershed Regions

Upper Watershed	Middle Watershed	Lower Watershed
Canada de los Alamos Canyon Neighborhood Association Acequia del Llano Acequia Cerro Gordo Acequia de la Muralla Acequia Madre Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition St. John's College UNM – Biology NM Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute	Canada de los Alamos Canyon Neighborhood Association Homeowners Associations Acequia del Llano Acequia Cerro Gordo Acequia de la Muralla Acequia Madre Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition St. John's College Village of Agua Fria S3 Housing Initiative Santa Fe Fat Tire Society Santa Fe Metropolitan Planning Organization Santa Fe Public Schools Santa Fe River Commission Santa Fe Water Conservation Committee Private landowners	El Valle de La Cieneguilla Land Grant Village of La Cienega Village of La Bajada La Cienega Valley Association Acequia de la Cienega Acequia El Guicu Caja del Rio Livestock Association Caja del Rio Coalition El Rancho de las Golondrinas Ojo Santa Fe Santa Fe Girls School Santa Fe River Traditional Communities Collaborative Private landowners
Nonprofits (Forest Stewards Guild, National Forest Foundation, Audubon Southwest and Randall Davey Audubon Center, The Nature Conservancy, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, WildEarth Guardians, Defenders of Wildlife, Xerces Society, Sierra Club, American Rivers, Santa Fe Conservation Trust, New Mexico Land Conservancy, New Mexico Acequia Association, Amigos Bravos, Rio Grande Return, Keep Santa Fe Beautiful, Santa Fe Watershed Association)		
Federal (US Forest Service, US Geological Survey, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Bureau of Land Management, US Environmental Protection Agency, US National Guard)		
State of New Mexico (State Land Office, NM Environment Department, NM Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department)		
Tribal (Pueblo de Cochiti, Pueblo of Tesuque, Jemez Pueblo, Pojoaque Pueblo, Nambe Pueblo, Kewa Pueblo)		
Local Government (City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe County, Sandoval County, Pojoaque Soil and Water Conservation District)		

SFWA continues to connect with additional stakeholders across the HUC 10 watershed that would more fully round out the complement of perspectives represented within different watershed segments. Based on the previous stakeholder project (Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed), there is more work

to be done to interact with under-represented groups particularly in the Lower Watershed. Engaging with stakeholders in the Lower Watershed, including Tribal stakeholders, will take a concerted effort. In-person meetings and direct communications will be the best approach to build trust with under-represented groups.

Geographic Scope:

The Santa Fe River watershed is a sub-basin of the Rio Grande located almost entirely within Santa Fe County, New Mexico, with the westernmost end in Sandoval County and Pueblo de Cochiti (Figure 6).

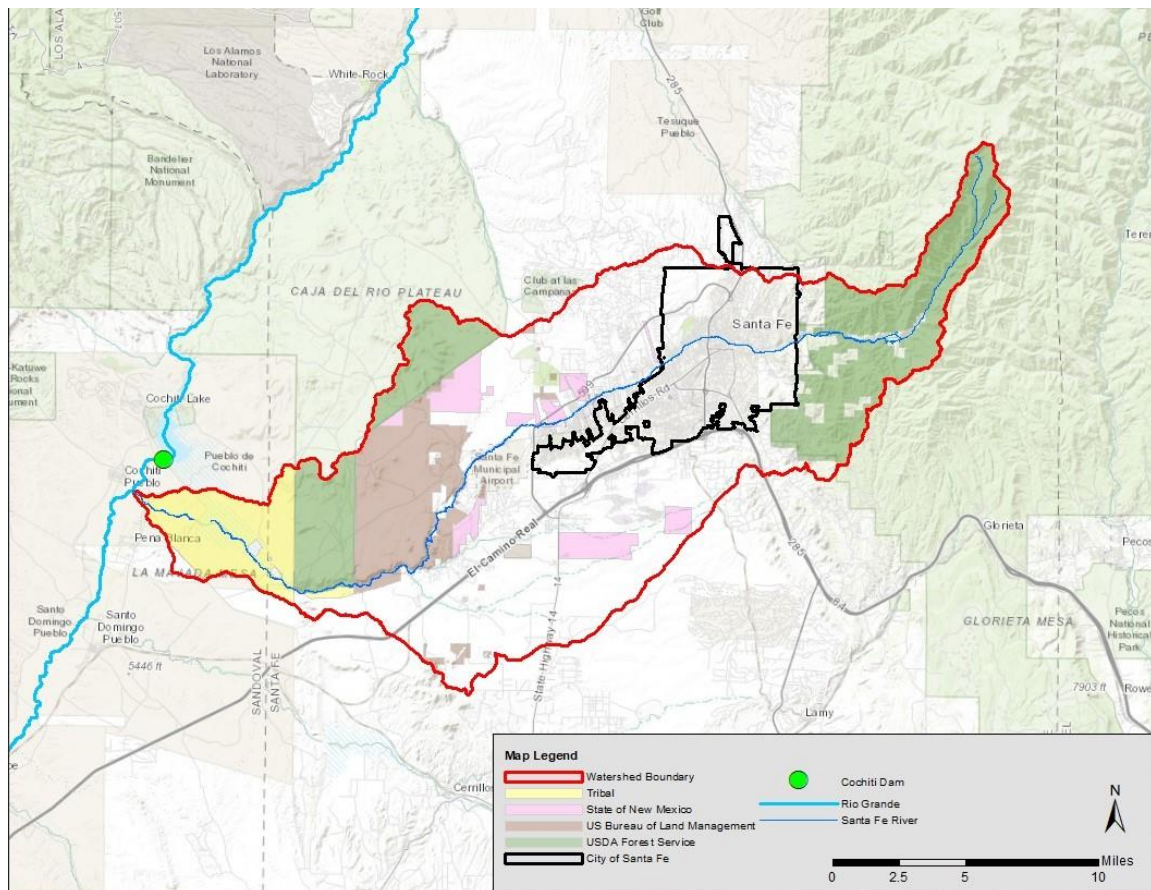


Figure 6. Location of the Santa Fe River Watershed.

Its headwaters are located on the eastern slope of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains near Lake Peak (elevation 12,409 ft) within the Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF). Below the mountains the Santa Fe River courses west/southwest through the City of Santa Fe (City), several small villages in Santa Fe County and eventually through the Pueblo of Cochiti before joining the Rio Grande below Cochiti Dam (elevation 5,227 ft). The watershed drains approximately 285 square miles. The total length of the Santa Fe River is approximately 46 miles. In many ways the Santa Fe

Watershed is an ideal model watershed because it encompasses so much diversity in a relatively small and contained area.

While a great deal of water planning has been focused within the boundaries of the City of Santa Fe, the SFWA strives to work with stakeholders from the high peaks in the Upper Watershed to the Rio Grande. As an established watershed group having relationships with many different communities and interest groups throughout the watershed, the Santa Fe Watershed Association is uniquely positioned to steward watershed planning discussions and provide support for the benefit of all affected parties. In this project, the SFWA would like to identify at least three site-specific project designs for improving ecosystem services to improve resilience in the face of climate change. Based on stakeholder input on the location of potential projects, the SFWA would like to have a shovel-ready design in each of the three watershed designations that could be implemented when funding becomes available.

Evaluation Criteria B – Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs

Critical Watershed Needs or Issues:

The SFWA documented critical issues affecting the watershed in our previous Phase I CWMP grant, “Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed,” completed in 2023. The unifying issues mentioned across stakeholders and interest groups were planning for climate change, protecting native species, ensuring pollution standards compliance (improving water quality), greater emphasis on ecological justice and social equity, and fire management and planning in the Upper Watershed. Because the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition (GSFFC) focuses specifically on fire management and planning, that priority will not be addressed specifically in the watershed restoration plan. Even as we recognize its importance, the GSFFC is well positioned to lead this endeavor.

Perhaps the most significant critical issue identified by the previous Phase I CWMP project was that the watershed community as a whole demonstrated “low interactional capacity,” meaning that even when there are points of agreement among diverse stakeholders, they are not interacting, not collaborating, and are often assuming strong opposition from other interest groups. This low interactional capacity means that the watershed community is less resilient and there is an unproductive duplication of efforts due to lack of communication and trusting relationships. This is the primary critical issue SFWA is trying to address with this proposal because we believe no other issue can be genuinely addressed without more genuine interaction and collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

Improving interactional capacity in the watershed is more urgent than ever, because there are numerous, interconnected issues that will require diverse community partners to address.

- In the Upper Watershed, issues include:
 - Fire and post-fire risks
 - Community concerns about forest management and prescribed fire

- Incorporating slope and riparian wetland health into forest treatments
- Questions of access and recreation opportunities
- Habitat connectivity
- Community priorities of (sometimes opposing) ecosystem services
- In the Middle Watershed, issues include:
 - Stormwater, water conservation, and outdoor irrigation
 - Urban heat island
 - Invasive species (vegetation)
 - Erosion and soil degradation
 - Adaptation and management of the Living River Ordinance
 - Habitat and recreational connectivity
 - Housing, population, and urbanization
- In the Lower Watershed, issues include:
 - Water quality (Forever chemicals, effluent, septic systems, stormwater, erosion and sedimentation)
 - Water scarcity
 - Wetland degradation
 - Stakeholders being left out of larger planning efforts

There are numerous plans in place or being developed to address some of the issues listed above, but they are not necessarily consistent or connected and may be duplicative or even contradictory. Examples of such plans include: the City of Santa Fe General Plan Update (underway, starting with Land Development Code), City of Santa Fe Stormwater Plan, City of Santa Fe Water2100 (underway), 2010 Municipal Watershed Plan, 1995 Santa Fe River Corridor Master Plan, Santa Fe County Sustainable Land Use Code, and Santa Fe County's community development plans (underway). These planning processes all will likely impact the watershed and the issues it faces, so this is a critical time to support consistency and strategic management through a comprehensive watershed restoration plan. Similarly, studies underway in academic spaces that could help inform planning and management are not effectively reaching stakeholders and policymakers.

The guiding document for City and County water supply planning remains the 2015 Santa Fe Basin Study, funded by the US Bureau of Reclamation. The Study culminated in a series of adaptation strategies and management recommendations including: direct/indirect reclaimed water reuse; water conservation; direct injection for aquifer storage and recovery, infiltration for aquifer storage and recovery in the Santa Fe River, and additional surface water rights. Embedded within each of these are a variety of individual issues and challenges that need to be explored with genuine from impacted stakeholders who often hold conflicting values and concerns. Genuine and productive stakeholder engagement remains a challenge for the City and County. Having the support of community partners, clear BMPs, and a cohesive watershed plan to build from could prove vital. Creating a community framework that builds toward shared goals will help reduce the potential for future conflicts over water quality, quantity, and

equity. Unsurprisingly, no new sources of water are expected to materialize, making it all the more important to build upon existing efforts that ensure resilience is at the forefront.

Project Benefits

To improve the interactional capacity and collaboration of stakeholders in the Santa Fe River Watershed, the SFWA would like to prepare a watershed restoration plan that incorporates strategies for management for the most commonly mentioned water issues and concerns expressed across all stakeholder interest groups. Infrastructure and water delivery issues will be left to the purview of government agencies. Fire management and planning will be left to the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition. The SFWA plan will address stakeholder concerns about water quality and ecosystem health. Beyond the common issues of water flowing in the river and having healthy habitat and ecosystems, recognizing stakeholders from the Lower Watershed and ensuring that their voices are heard is essential for creating a plan for future watershed resilience.

To support interaction, understanding, and collaboration across the watershed, SFWA strives to be a reliable source of information for all watershed dwellers from the mountain peaks in the Upper Watershed, through the urban Middle Watershed, to the confluence with the Rio Grande in the Lower Watershed. An online system where any stakeholder can understand how the different plans of stakeholder groups address their specific concerns will be established, as well as a clearing house of educational activities for the community and Best Management Practices (BMPs). A water conference will be held in the second and third years of the project to engage stakeholders and solicit their thoughts about watershed planning efforts and potential projects. Finally, to demonstrate that the watershed planning efforts are for the purpose of moving onward to on-the-ground improvement projects, SFWA will design a project in each of the watershed areas that could be implemented with future funding from the BOR Implementation grant program.

Three potential projects would be designed by SFWA technical staff in collaboration with stakeholders, as outlined in Goal 3 (CWMP Task C). The most likely project in the Upper Watershed will be focused on slope wetland health as a means to improve ecosystem services in the mountains above Santa Fe. Location of the potential project would be based on input from stakeholders and a baseline assessment of potential project sites. The project in the Middle Watershed would likely focus on recreational activities in the urban watershed with an emphasis on protecting water quality (Figure 7). The third project in the Lower Watershed will, by necessity, be informed by engaging stakeholders in that areas and listening to their ideas. Potential projects could be anything from modifying existing livestock use to working to restore or enhance endangered cienega wetland habitat.

Stakeholders will benefit from the engagement, education, collaboration, and identification of potential implementable projects in their portion of the watershed. The watershed plan and associated educational components will act as a catalyst for stakeholder activities that

positively impact watershed health and resilience. An abundance of small projects initiated by stakeholders following BMPs can have a significant collective positive impact.



Figure 7. Santa Feans enjoying the Santa Fe River Trail near Frenchy's Field in the Middle Watershed.

Evaluation Criteria C – Readiness to Proceed

Table 2. Project Schedule and Milestones

	2025	2026				2027				2028		
Project Components	Q4	Q 1	Q2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3
1. Project Administration												
a. Quarterly Financial Reports (MH)												
b. Quarterly Progress Reports (MW)												
c. Performance Reports (MW)												
d. Final Report (MW/MH)												
2. Further Watershed Group Development												
a. Outreach (MH)												
b. Field Meetings (MW/MH)												
c. Annual Gathering (All SFWA Staff)												
d. Assemble Existing Plans and Materials (MW/MH)												
e. Prepare Existing Plan Matrix (MW/MH)												
f. Prepare Education Material Matrix (JH)												
g. Prepare BMP Matrix (MW/MH)												
h. Produce 3 Needed BMPs (MW/MH)												
i. Produce Watershed Plan (MW/MH)												
3. Watershed Restoration Planning												
Identify Stakeholder Projects (MW/MH)												
a. Upper Watershed												
b. Middle Watershed												
c. Lower Watershed												
4. Watershed Management Project												
Design 3 Implementation Projects (MW/MH/ Contract Hydrologist)												

Blue = Work ongoing

Green = Milestone achieved

MW = Mollie Walton; MH = Mori Hensley; JH = Julie Hasty

New policies and/or administrative actions may be required to implement the plan based on project locations. Land ownership will dictate necessary administrative actions that must be considered prior to any implementation on the ground. For example, depending on the project goals, these could be archaeological surveys, wetland delineations, and United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permits.

Evaluation Criteria D – Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities

Climate Change

Stakeholders expressed a desire to engage in watershed planning to address climate change. There are many avenues of addressing climate change in the watershed that include education, such as making available to stakeholders implementable Best Management Practices for land and water management. These BMPs are scalable for different ownership parcels including private land. A baseline assessment of potential wetland and stream restoration projects will address resiliency of these ecosystems in the face of climate change. Holding water in the landscape longer through restored wetland function can reduce wildfire risks and provide climate refugia for wildlife species. In urban areas, more greenspace and heat island mitigation is possible through implementation of green infrastructure. Improving recreation and connectivity in the urban watershed, especially around natural corridors such as the river and arroyos, improves awareness of water and water quality. Reduction of wildfire risk directly impacts the climate by keeping forest carbon sequestered and out of the atmosphere. Improved stakeholder interaction and collaboration across the watershed will improve community resilience and shared response to challenges that become more likely as the climate continues to change.

Benefits to Disadvantaged, Underserved, and Tribal Communities

Land ownership in the Upper Watershed is USFS and does not qualify as an underserved community; however, long before the Upper Watershed was part of the Santa Fe National Forest it was stewarded and occupied by Tewa, Keres, and Towa Pueblos. These tribal partners remain invested to this day, and SFWA sees their involvement as an essential component of present and future management of the Upper Watershed. Furthermore, land conditions in the Upper Watershed impact communities lower in the watershed. In particular, any actions that reduce wildfire risk in the forested watershed and improve water-holding capacity in the face of reduced snowpack will positively impact the surrounding communities.

In the Middle Watershed, significant tracts are considered disadvantaged, low-income communities at high risk for wildfire (>90th percentile). Other environmental justice issues communities in the Middle Watershed face are worsening air quality, stormwater impacts, urban heat island, and access to greenspace. Community engagement and an emphasis of green stormwater infrastructure and recreational projects will benefit these communities through improved connectivity and climate-resilient greenspace.

In the Lower Watershed, there are communities that are low-income, subject to very high wildfire risk, and which are additionally at high risk for agricultural losses (97th percentile). Furthermore, Lower Watershed communities including a traditional Land Grant community, Acequias, and the Pueblo de Cochiti, face water quality impacts from the City of Santa Fe's wastewater treatment plant, stormwater conveyance, septic leaching, and a forever chemical plume at the National Guard facility. Prioritizing greater interaction and inclusion of Lower Watershed stakeholders will benefit a more holistic approach to watershed management that does not just send problems further downstream. Focusing on wetland restoration, for example, can provide tangible benefits to water quality and ecological resilience.

Best Management Practices that can be implemented on a small scale and replicated across the watershed can have a significant impact on water quality and quantity and also mitigate the risk of wildfire. There could also be some job creation as people are trained to implement these practices (such as erosion control and water harvesting structures).

Tribal Benefits

Engaging with Tribal stakeholders is a focus of project outreach. Trust building is imperative, as is listening to Tribal priorities for watershed planning and project implementation. Until SFWA is successful in initiating a sustained dialogue with the Pueblo stakeholders, it is not possible to know if proposed projects will support Reclamation's Tribal trust responsibilities or a Reclamation activity.

Environmental and Cultural Resource Compliance

This proposal is for planning and assessment and is therefore not applicable to the impacts listed below.

- The proposed project will not directly impact the surrounding environment through earth disturbance.
- No endangered species will be directly affected by the proposed project.
- It is unclear whether the wetlands in the Santa Fe River Watershed are still considered Waters of the US after the Sackett decision, but they will not be directly affected by the proposed project regardless.
- The Santa Fe River Watershed has numerous water delivery systems constructed at various time between 1610 and 2024, but none will be directly affected by the proposed project.
- The proposed project will not result in any modification or effects to any irrigation system.
- There are numerous structures and sites in the project area that are on the National Register of Historic Places, but none will be directly affected by the proposed project.
- There are numerous known archaeological sites in the project area that are on the National Register of Historic Places, but none will be directly affected by the proposed project.

- The proposed project will not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income and minority populations. Rather, the hope is this planning effort will prioritize centering and benefiting low income and minority populations through improved community outreach practices and resulting projects that will support better water quality and quantity among other watershed benefits.
- The proposed project will not limit access to, and ceremonial use of, sacred sites or result in other impacts on Tribal lands. Rather, the hope is that this planning effort will encourage more respectful engagement and collaboration with Tribes and sacred sites.
- The proposed project will not contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area. Rather, the hope is this planning effort will support future efforts to restore native ecosystems and remove invasive species wherever possible.

Required Permits or Approvals

The Santa Fe Watershed Association will seek permission from landowners to be on site. Because this is a planning project, no permits or approvals should be required.

Overlap or Duplication of Efforts

An overarching goal of this project is to identify efforts of different stakeholder groups in the watershed and to reduce overlap of efforts and to eliminate duplication of efforts across the Santa Fe River Watershed's many stakeholder groups.



Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505



August 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

On behalf of the Santa Fe Watershed Association Board of Directors, I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

The Board of Directors has worked closely with you and other SFWA staff for many years to explore opportunities for developing a plan for the entire Santa Fe River Watershed. This goal was first identified in the 2010 SFWA strategic plan. When we updated our strategic plan just this month, there was still a heavy emphasis on this need as the necessary next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*.

I applaud your efforts over the last several years laying the groundwork for this application, researching grant opportunities and avenues, and building and deepening support among a broad range of stakeholders. It is clear to me that under your leadership, SFWA is the entity best equipped to lead a comprehensive planning initiative at this critical time in our watershed's history.

You have the full backing of the SFWA Board of Directors. We appreciate your determination and are eager to support you through the grant process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fred Schott".

Fred Schott, SFWA Board President



City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

200 Lincoln Avenue, P.O. Box 909, Santa Fe, N.M. 87504-0909

www.santafenm.gov

Alan Webber, Mayor

Councilors:

Signe I. Lindell, Mayor Pro Tem, District 1

Alma G. Castro, District 1

Michael J. Garcia, District 2

Carol Romero-Wirth, District 2

Lee Garcia, District 3

Pilar F.H. Faulkner, District 3

Jamie Cassutt, District 4

Amanda Chavez, District 4

August 30, 2024

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

The City of Santa Fe has worked with the SFWA for many years on a variety of collaborative projects, including the 2002 Watershed Restoration Action Strategy, the 2010 Municipal Watershed Management Plan, the Living River Ordinance, the Adopt-the-River and now Adopt Your Watershed Program, and ongoing educational programming for youth and adults from around Santa Fe. We were also a key partner in the SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*. We are eager to see that successful stakeholder engagement process culminate in a watershed plan, as you are proposing.

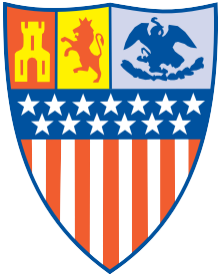
As water becomes more scarce and watershed issues become more interconnected, we need to focus on a holistic approach to management. A comprehensive watershed plan that synthesizes previous research, planning, and implementation projects, connects issues affecting different geographies, and recommends implementation priorities is essential for responsible stewardship and community resilience.

This plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. It is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and a helpful complement to the City's own long range water planning efforts. I am confident SFWA is the right community partner to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing to work together in this important work.

Sincerely,

Alan Webber
Mayor



City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

200 Lincoln Avenue, P.O. Box 909, Santa Fe, N.M. 87504-0909

www.santafenm.gov

Alan Webber, Mayor

Councilors:

Signe I. Lindell, Mayor Pro Tem, District 1

Alma G. Castro, District 1

Michael J. Garcia, District 2

Carol Romero-Wirth, District 2

Lee Garcia, District 3

Pilar F.H. Faulkner, District 3

Jamie Cassutt, District 4

Amanda Chavez, District 4

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

The City of Santa Fe's Public Utilities Department is responsible for water and wastewater services for the City of Santa Fe and partners actively with Santa Fe County throughout the watershed. We have worked with the SFWA for many years on numerous collaborative projects, including the 2002 Watershed Restoration Action Strategy, the 2010 Municipal Watershed Management Plan, and ongoing educational programming for youth and adults from around Santa Fe. We were also a key partner in the SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*.

As water becomes scarcer and watershed issues become more interconnected, it is important to focus on a holistic approach to management. A comprehensive watershed plan that synthesizes previous research, planning, and implementation projects, connects issues affecting different geographies, and recommends implementation priorities is essential for responsible stewardship and community resilience.

This plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. It is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and a helpful complement to the City's own long range water planning efforts. I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing to work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

John Dupuis (Aug 26, 2024 12:32 MDT)

John Dupuis
Public Utilities Director
City of Santa Fe



Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 29, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed.

As the City of Santa Fe's River and Watershed Manager, I focus on ecological restoration, stormwater quality, climate-resilient strategies, hazard mitigation and infrastructure maintenance. I've worked with SFWA on projects to enhance watershed health and have consistently admired their commitment and expertise.

A comprehensive watershed plan would significantly benefit both our ongoing efforts and the broader watershed community. It would provide essential guidance on equity and inclusion, environmental justice, and climate resiliency, aligning with our goals and amplifying our impact. Furthermore, it would offer valuable policy direction to support and enhance our initiatives.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I am confident that the collaborative efforts fostered by this program will advance our shared vision for a resilient and thriving Santa Fe River Watershed.

Sincerely,
Zoë Isaacson

Zoë Isaacson, River and Watershed Manager
City of Santa Fe
zrisaacson@santafenm.gov

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

The Santa Fe River has its headwaters within the Santa Fe National Forest and Pecos Wilderness; as a hydrologist for the US Forest Service, I know how critical the Agency's community watershed partners are. Without groups like the Santa Fe Watershed Association (SFWA), I have seen the US Forest Service struggle to effectively reach the public who might serve as restoration volunteers, educators and public lands advocates. Across the board, land management agencies need groups like the SFWA to continue to be able to support watershed stewardship and good policy on public lands.

And as the chair of the Santa Fe River Commission, I have seen the dedication the Santa Fe Watershed Association brings to the cause. The SFWA is consistently tracking and engaging in current watershed issues. The SFWA has built an enormous volunteer workforce who keep our watershed clean as well as educate Santa Fe's youth and greater community in watershed science and policy. It is no stretch to state that without the SFWA, the River Commission itself would be significantly diminished.

If the SFWA were awarded this grant, the entire Santa Fe River watershed community (humans, plants and animals) would benefit. A comprehensive watershed plan would help guide the US Forest Service, city and private stakeholders to work together in critical future stewardship decisions; as climate change decreases our water supply threatens wildfire within the Santa Fe River watershed, we absolutely need all the players to act from the same well thought-out plan. Many ecosystem services are dependent on such a comprehensive watershed plan, including: the quality and quantity of Santa Fe's drinking water, flood mitigation, urban heat refuges, development of future stewards, as well as the conservation of wildlife habitat.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

Heidi Klingel

Heidi Klingel

Santa Fe River Commission, Chair

Heidi.klingel@hotmail.com

Justin S. Greene
Commissioner, District 1

Anna Hansen
Commissioner, District 2

Camilla Bustamante
Commissioner, District 3



Anna T. Hamilton
Commissioner, District 4

Hank Hughes
Commissioner, District 5

Gregory S. Shaffer
County Manager

August 22, 2024

Morika Vorenberg Hensley, Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3, Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

Santa Fe County strongly supports the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, *Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed*.

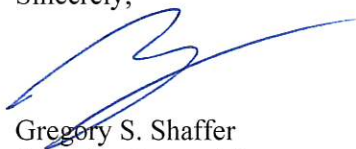
Santa Fe County has been working with SFWA for its entire 25-year history and strongly supports its mission to protect and restore the health and vibrancy of the Santa Fe River watershed for the benefit of people and the environment. The County has partnered with SFWA on numerous projects and applauds SFWA's innovation and leadership in engaging County residents to be stewards of the Santa Fe River watershed.

Santa Fe County is also deeply involved in the stewardship of this watershed. The County is an MS4 permittee for unincorporated urbanized areas within the Santa Fe River watershed, and works collaboratively across departments and agencies to manage stormwater. In addition, Santa Fe County is managing portions of the Santa Fe River Greenway, a project to construct approximately 15 miles of continuous greenway comprised of parks and trails along the Santa Fe River. This is a 50-year project that is expected to be complete in the 2030s. To date, the County has invested more than \$25 million in the restoration of the river and construction of the multi-use trail for non-motorized recreational and alternative transportation use. SFWA plays a critical role in the ongoing environmental stewardship of the greenway project.

A comprehensive watershed plan is important for the long term sustainability of these County initiatives. Such a plan is also essential for the stewardship of areas that lie outside of the County's jurisdiction, as this directly impacts the reaches of the watershed that are within the County.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed is the logical next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*. SFWA is the most well-positioned community partner to lead this project, as SFWA continually demonstrates its ability to successfully work with diverse stakeholders to enhance local watershed stewardship and implement tangible restoration efforts that improve water quality, recreational value and habitat corridors. Santa Fe County looks forward to continuing to work with SFWA and other partners in this important way.

Sincerely,



Gregory S. Shaffer
Santa Fe County Manager

Justin S. Greene
Commissioner, District 1

Anna Hansen
Commissioner, District 2

Camilla Bustamante
Commissioner, District 3



Anna T. Hamilton
Commissioner, District 4

Hank Hughes
Commissioner, District 5

Gregory S. Shaffer
County Manager

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 23, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to offer Santa Fe County's Public Works Department / Utilities Division's support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

The team at SFWA has worked very closely with Santa Fe County on several initiatives to improve the ecosystem and overall environmental performance of this area, and has consistently found a most capable, willing and supportive partner whenever we have had the opportunity to collaborate.

With the numerous challenges faced by our community and in particular climate-related issues, the work product from this effort will serve as a valuable resource from day one and well into the future.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Respectfully,

Paul Choman

Paul Choman
Director - Utilities Division

Santa Fe County Public Works Department
424 NM Highway 599 Frontage Road
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507
Office: 505-992-9872
Cell: 505-470-3441





File Code: 2300
Date: August 30, 2024

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director, Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

The Santa Fe National Forest is the Land Management Agency responsible for the Santa Fe Municipal Watershed. Over the last 20 years, the Espanola Ranger District, Santa Fe National Forest has been working to protect the municipal watershed from potential effects of catastrophic wildfires. The district has accomplished this through forest thinning and prescribed fire management, working with the City of Santa Fe as a strong partner. We have also worked with and participated in watershed education activities with the Santa Fe Watershed Association. Including participating in watershed tours, community hikes, and providing access to allow local youth to have a classroom in the woods

A comprehensive watershed plan would be a great tool to help the Forest Service with continued and future management of the watershed.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

SANDRA IMLER-JACQUEZ
District Ranger





Stephanie Garcia Richard
COMMISSIONER

State of New Mexico
Commissioner of Public Lands

310 OLD SANTA FE TRAIL
P.O. BOX 1148
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87504-1148

COMMISSIONER'S
OFFICE

Phone (505) 827-5760
Fax (505) 827-5766
www.nmstatelands.org

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

At the New Mexico State Land Office we have been working to incorporate long term watershed health into our leasing decisions and support any efforts to improve resiliency of the Santa Fe Watershed. Because of the checkerboard nature of land status in New Mexico, this work may not impact state land directly. However, there are a myriad of indirect benefits to the lands we manage by having healthy, robust watersheds. For this reason, we support this proposal.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephanie".

Stephanie Garcia Richard
New Mexico Commissioner of Public Lands

Agua Fria Village Association

2073 Camino Samuel Montoya
Santa Fe, NM 87507



August 27, 2024

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed.**

The Agua Fria Village Association (AFVA) on behalf of the Agua Fria Village Traditional Historic Community (population 3,065) has been participating in the Santa Fe River Traditional Communities Collaborative (SRTCC) for over 12 years and regularly sees and appreciates the leadership of the Santa Fe Watershed Association in driving us to our goals.

The Santa Fe Watershed Association has been a valued collaborator since its inception, representing its commitment to local and stakeholder driven processes. In this part of the world, it is inclusive, stakeholder-driven processes that are the most successful. As a community organization, the Santa Fe Watershed Association has been a strong and willing partner in our efforts to secure a flowing river through the Santa Fe River communities and in understanding the water quality of our watershed. This flowing river is the very literal lifeblood of our agricultural heritage, which dates back to 1640 in European history, and back more than 5,000 years in our Native American history. Without a flowing river, our customs, our culture, and our communities perish. We are grateful to the Santa Fe Watershed Association for sponsoring the Santa Fe River Blessing since 2001 in conjunction with our Dia de San Isidro on May 15th (he is the patron saint of farmers).

The cultural geography of the lower Santa Fe River watershed is complex. Land is owned and managed piecemeal by two federal agencies, with jurisdictional control by three other federal agencies, a municipality, a county, two state agencies, a Land Grant, ditch associations (Acequias), and by private landowners. Our continued collaboration is a testimonial to the dedication of these entities to work together for the betterment of all of the communities and the betterment of the watershed. Funding from this proposal would provide these communities specifically with much needed organizational capacity and a comprehensive watershed plan.

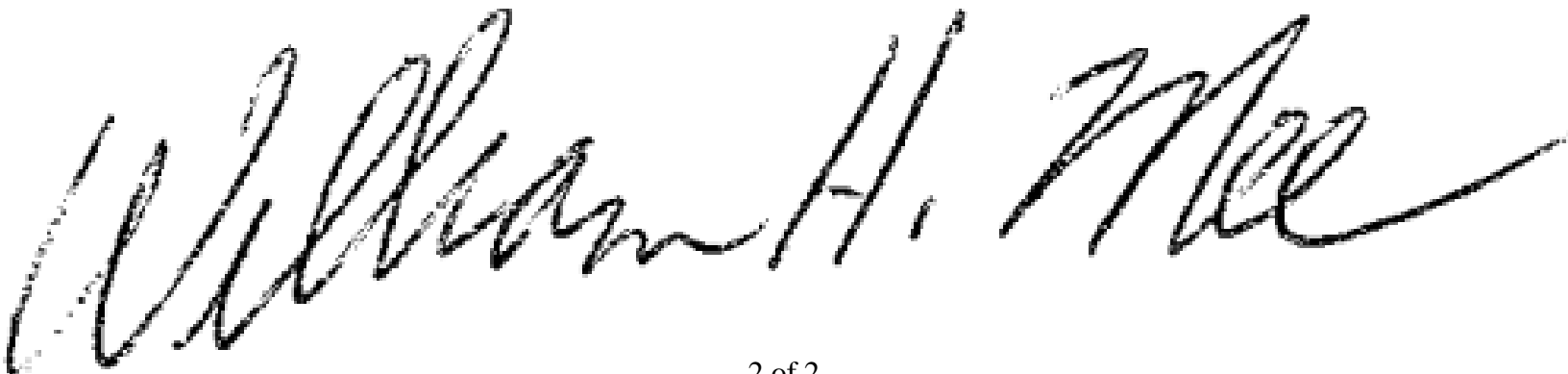
We remain confident that viable solutions are within reach. We have all been pursuing them with great vigor, and little or no resources. It would be an extraordinary support to our communities and to the people who have worked so hard and so persistently; to finally receive funding for much needed community input and project management.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

William H. Mee, President
Agua Fria Village Association

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William H. Mee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with prominent loops and flourishes.

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

Cañada de los Alamos is considered a traditional community in the Santa Fe County Sustainable Growth Management Plan (SGMP) (the County's general plan) and the central portion of our village is Traditional Community zoning. Our community is currently working with Santa Fe National Forest to monitor an increase of mountain bike trails in the riparian areas of Arroyo Hondo head waters.

As a neighbor of Santa Fe County Arroyo Hondo Watershed area in the National Forest we are interested in learning how we can protect and improve this resource. Santa Fe Watershed Association and their friends can provide collaborative insight and information while we seek to advocate for our forest.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,



Martha J. Cooke
19 Salas Lane
Santa Fe, NM 87505



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. Geological Survey
Fort Collins Science Center
New Mexico Landscapes Field Station
301 Dinosaur Trail
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508
Phone: 505-954-2156

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 29, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed.

The USGS New Mexico Field Station has conducted research on fire history, forest change, and watershed management in the upper Santa Fe Watershed over the last 20 years. During this time, we have interfaced with the SFWA on many occasions. Most recently, we worked with SFWA on their science-based outreach information that they provide to the public, including hundreds of elementary school children.

Given the increasing stressors on the watershed, including population growth, increased water use, and climate change driving a declining water supply, a watershed plan is critical to manage the varying needs from the source to the junction with the Rio Grande.

A comprehensive plan for the Santa Fe River watershed is an important next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed. I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

Ellis Margolis

Research Ecologist
USGS New Mexico Landscapes Field Station
emargolis@usgs.gov



DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

As an Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico, I have had the pleasure of working in the Santa Fe Watershed as a major component of my research program in Freshwater Ecosystem Ecology. I have been conducting research on watershed processes and water quality in the Santa Fe Watershed since 2021, including studying how the upper elevations of the watershed contribute to downstream water resource supplies and quality, and identifying strategies for ensuring water resource sustainability into the future. The Santa Fe Watershed Association has been an exceptional partner in these efforts by helping connect myself and others to relevant stakeholders and facilitating ways for us to translate our science for a broad audience.

I strongly support SFWA's efforts to develop a comprehensive watershed plan. A comprehensive watershed plan would provide a point of connection and guiding light for the diverse stakeholder community that cares about the Santa Fe Watershed. The SFWA is the perfect entity to lead these efforts due to the strong foundation they have built as a liaison between stakeholder groups and the trust they have established in this role. I would be thrilled to contribute our research findings to a watershed plan, and I would also benefit from the development of this plan through the synthesis of information and point of connection to stakeholders that it would provide.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alex Webster

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alex Webster', written over a horizontal line.

Assistant Professor
Department of Biology, University of New Mexico
Caretter Hall, 219 Yale Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131
awebster2@unm.edu



EL RANCHO DE LAS GOLONDRINAS

The Southwest's Premier Living History Museum

August 30, 2024

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

This is a new partnership for us, one we are excited about because it will translate to more programming/community education, more science-based volunteers, and of course, more support for the site itself. La Cienega is the lowest point in the Santa Fe Watershed; a vital part of the whole system.

Our wetlands, rivers and acequias are essential to support our way of life in La Cienega Valley, and we at Las Golondrinas are committed to doing whatever we can to protect and preserve our precious water resources.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

Daniel Goodman
Museum Director



Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

In 2007, American Rivers selected the Santa Fe River as the Number One Most Endangered River, helping to urge the City of Santa Fe to allocate an "Environmental Flow" ordinance in 2012. The Santa Fe River begins in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and flows only 42 miles before reaching the Rio Grande, but this relatively small river is steeped in history. It has been a source of life for communities of humans, wildlife, and ecosystems for time immemorial, in more recent history serving a complex network of acequias supporting more than 1,000 acres of irrigated cropland up to the mid-20th century, at which point the City's water management began to deprive environmental flows from the river's middle-reach, depriving the community of a living river. After more than a decade, including years of intense advocacy by SFWA, a "watershed moment" occurred when the City of Santa Fe unanimously voted to by-pass 1,000 acre-feet of water into the Santa Fe River on wet or normal years in 2012. This has been a significant step in reviving the Santa Fe River from a dewatered reach to a flowing, vibrant perennial stream that brings life to the community.

The Santa Fe River provides Santa Fe with drinking water, open space, and community health and cohesion. A complex watershed with varying needs from the headwaters to lower reaches, the Santa Fe River carries huge cultural, ecological, social, and economic significance to stakeholders and communities throughout the watershed. As such, an inclusive, representative, and deliberate watershed management planning strategy is essential to ensuring the health of the watershed, its riparian environment, and the rich cultural traditions of its agricultural history.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,
Emily Wolf
Rio Grande Coordinator
American Rivers
ewolf@americanrivers.org



Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 22, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

We are pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, *Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed*.

The Forest Stewards Guild has collaborated closely with SFWA for the past decade as founding partners of the Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition. Together, we have focused on protecting vital water sources in the Santa Fe municipal watershed by reducing wildfire risk, improving forest health, and enhancing community resilience. Our joint efforts have played a crucial role in safeguarding critical drinking water infrastructure, riparian areas, and an important forested watershed and river corridor. Our collaboration with SFWA has been integral to this work, and together we have advanced shared goals of forest resilience, community engagement and watershed risk reduction.

A comprehensive watershed plan would be beneficial not only to the Forest Stewards Guild but also to the broader Santa Fe Watershed. Such a plan would provide a cohesive framework for coordinating efforts across various stakeholders, ensuring that our activities are aligned and that we maximize the impact of our collective work. This plan would also help us identify and address emerging challenges related to climate change, water scarcity, and wildfire risk, allowing us to continue our mission of fostering healthy and resilient forests.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

Esme Cadiente
Southwest Region Director
Forest Stewards Guild

2019 Galisteo St., Suite
N7 Santa Fe, NM
87505

phone 505-983-8992

fax 505-986-0798

ForestStewardsGuild.org



P.O. Box 9314
Santa Fe, NM 87504

505.983.4609
sw.audubon.org

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed.

Randall Davey Audubon Center (RDAC), a subsidiary of Audubon Southwest, is located at the entrance to the upper Santa Fe watershed and stewards 135 acres of pinion-juniper uplands including 15 acres of riparian habitat along the Santa Fe River. RDAC staff have worked collaboratively with the Santa Fe Watershed Association for over 20 years in several capacities; co-creating educational curriculum, coordination of watershed related projects, among others.

A comprehensive watershed plan for the Santa Fe Watershed is critical at this time for stakeholders to be able to make well-informed decisions to take appropriate actions for the health of the watershed and the Santa Fe River. The impacts of climate change in the area are evident with dramatic changes in precipitation patterns, forest health and increasing threat of wildfire. A comprehensive watershed plan will enable decision-makers steward the watershed and river for a sustainable future.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

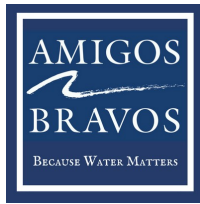
I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Beal", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Carl Beal

Center Director, Randall Davey Audubon Center
1800 Upper Canyon Road
Santa Fe, NM 87501



WATER IS LIFE.
It's Our Duty to Protect It.

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 30, 2024

Re: Letter of Support to the Santa Fe Water Shed Association for the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal: Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed in Santa Fe County, New Mexico.

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to write this letter of support on behalf of Amigos Bravos for the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal: Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed.

Amigos Bravos believes that the SFWA is worthy of attention and award as it is a socially and environmentally considerate and action oriented in supporting and aiding the County of Santa Fe's watershed that is in need of aid to:

- Incorporate nature-based solutions to protect, conserve and restore Santa Fe County's waters
- Enhance climate resilience and adaptation especially in the face of increased toxic pollutants and otherwise, as well as other waste that infiltrate New Mexico's diminishing waters

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

Amigos Bravos is a statewide non-profit (501(c)(3)), non-governmental water conservation organization guided by social justice principles and dedicated to preserving and restoring the ecological and cultural integrity of New Mexico's water and the communities that depend on it. While rooted in science and the law, our work is inspired by the values and traditional knowledge of New Mexico's diverse Hispanic and Native American land-based populations, with whom we collaborate. Amigos Bravos links those community and cultural insights with expertise from a variety of professionals working on natural resources, legislative policy, science, health, and education, as well as with representatives from regional and national conservation organizations.

Amigos Bravos | PO Box 238 | 114 Des Georges Place | Taos, NM 87571 | 575.758.3874



amigosbravos.org



facebook.com/amigosbravos



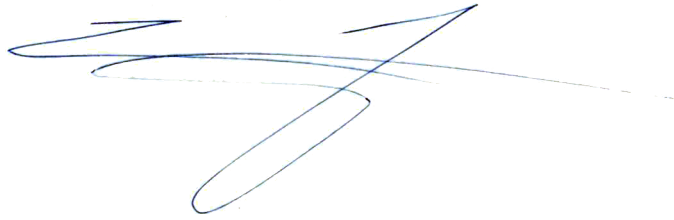
Twitter.com/amigosbravos1



instagram.com/amigosbravos

Amigos Bravos regularly collaborates with the Santa Fe Watershed Association on monitoring and mitigating pollutants that affect the quality of Santa Fe's waters, and regards the SFWA as a valuable partner as we work together with the citizens of New Mexico toward providing care, aid, and restoration of New Mexico's waters.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sincerely,

E. Fernández, MSL, MELP
| Master of Science in Leadership, Master of Environmental Law and Policy |
Projects Specialist
efernandez@amigosbravos.org



August 30, 2024

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed.**

Founded 35 years ago in Santa Fe, WildEarth Guardians has grown from a local advocacy group into a West-wide environmental conservation organization with dozens of staff and offices in eight states. But the organization has always maintained its Santa Fe roots where it continues to have its headquarters office. With that background, WildEarth Guardians has worked to protect and restore the Santa Fe River for more than 25 years. From on-the-ground river restoration and tree planting activities to organizing in support of Santa Fe's groundbreaking Living River Ordinance, WildEarth Guardians has long sought to protect clean water, healthy flows, and resilient communities in the Santa Fe watershed. Most recently, it used creative legal advocacy to secure a commitment from the City of Santa Fe to maintain a flowing lower Santa Fe River, flows potentially jeopardized by the City's return flow pipeline project.

A purposeful partnership between WildEarth Guardians and Waterkeeper Alliance, Rio Grande Waterkeeper protects and restores flows in the iconic Rio Grande to ensure life is sustained throughout the Basin for generations to come. Rio Grande Waterkeeper works to ensure that clean water is protected in headwaters and tributary streams, like the Santa Fe River, to ensure downstream water quality benefits.

WildEarth Guardians and Rio Grande Waterkeeper recognize the Santa Fe Watershed Association as a leader and key partner in the watershed, and have worked with the organization through involvement in the Traditional Communities Collaborative, as well as the Lower Santa

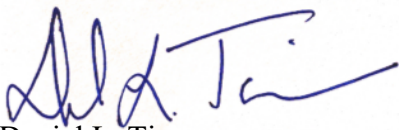
Fe River planning process. I also recently joined a Santa Fe River cleanup project organized by the Santa Fe Watershed Association and look forward to getting my hands dirty and boots wet with SFWA staff again soon.

With population growth and climate change-driven aridification straining the limited water supplies of the Santa Fe watershed, a community-driven watershed plan is essential to planning for a long-term, sustainable, climate-resilient water future for this region. Such a plan is important to recognizing the interconnected and interdependent nature of our watershed and hydrologic system. Disconnected water supply planning from various political entities cannot take the place of a comprehensive watershed plan that addresses municipal, domestic, agricultural, and industrial water supply needs in conjunction with ecosystem and overall watershed health. Further, water supply planning too often ignores the connections between water quality and quantity. But with recent PFAS aquifer contamination in the Santa Fe watershed, we must integrate our planning to secure sufficient water supplies and protect water quality to ensure a sustainable future for the Santa Fe watershed as a whole.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

WildEarth Guardians and Rio Grande Waterkeeper wholeheartedly support the Santa Fe Watershed Association in leading a watershed planning process, and I look forward to engaging in the process and continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,



Daniel L. Timmons
Rio Grande Waterkeeper &
Wild Rivers Program Director
WildEarth Guardians
301 N. Guadalupe Street, Suite 201
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 570-7014
dtimmons@wildearthguardians.org



Southwest Office
Santa Fe, NM | tel 505.395.7330
defenders.org

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed.

Defenders of Wildlife supports ecosystem planning and restoration in the Santa Fe River Watershed. Defenders has partnered with the County of Santa Fe and other NGOs in mitigating the impacts of beaver on human infrastructure. Specifically, Defenders of Wildlife installs flow devices and wraps trees where beaver are having a positive impact on watershed function and biodiversity but may also have adverse impacts on human infrastructure such as roads.

A comprehensive watershed plan for the Santa Fe River Watershed would allow for cooperation and collaboration on projects that benefit the humans and wildlife that occupy the watershed. A comprehensive plan would allow for substantive consideration of the biodiversity and help to stem the crisis our nation is facing with wildlife loss.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

Bryan Bird
Southwest Director



New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 30, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (New Mexico Wild) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) grassroots organization dedicated to the protection, restoration, and continued enjoyment of New Mexico's wildlands and wilderness areas. Founded in 1997, we achieve our mission through administrative protection, federal wilderness designation, and ongoing stewardship. We appreciate the collaborative work of the Santa Fe Watershed Association and the work we are doing together to protect the Pecos Wilderness and surrounding public lands.

The Santa Fe watershed continues to be threatened by mining proposals and effects of climate change. A comprehensive watershed plan will set a path to effectively manage the watershed for future generations.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,

Tisha Broska
Deputy Director



August 26, 2024

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

The Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT) enthusiastically supports the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA's) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal for Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed.

SFCT is a local land trust dedicated to protecting the natural, recreational, and cultural resources of our region. We hold dozens of conservation easements within the Santa Fe River watershed, maintain public trails in the watershed, and own land along the Santa Fe River. We understand that protecting our water quality and quantity is a critical but complicated task in a watershed that spans from alpine wilderness down to urban neighborhoods. A comprehensive watershed plan could help SFCT be more strategic in our protection of private lands by identifying areas that are especially important to the health of the watershed.

A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed. I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

SFCT looks forward to participating in the planning process.

Sincerely,

Sarah Noss
Executive Director



TNC New Mexico
1613 Paseo de Peralta #200
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Morika Vorenberg Hensley
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association
1413 Second St., Suite #3
Santa Fe, NM 87505

August 28, 2024

Dear Ms. Vorenberg Hensley,

I am very pleased to support the Santa Fe Watershed Association's (SFWA) WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program proposal, **Building and Sustaining Resilience in the Santa Fe River Watershed**.

TNC New Mexico has been a conservation partner in the Santa Fe Watershed since 2000 when PNM donated 190 acres of open space to TNC. The Preserve has grown to 525 acres and is located on Upper Canyon Road, just a few miles from Santa Fe's historic downtown plaza. More than 30,000 visitors and 5,000 students hike the preserve annually. TNC New Mexico works with and appreciates the work of the Santa Fe Watershed Association both in education and outreach and in coordinating the efforts of city, county, state, federal, and Non-profit environmental agencies and organizations.

The Santa Fe River watershed is facing a challenging time and an updated comprehensive watershed plan is needed now more than ever. Increased recreation and demands for the limited water supply from an increasing population and increased tourist visitation. With needed infrastructure upgrades and conflicting views of the path forward, a comprehensive water plan can help guide the community forward and help form a consensus on planning for the future. A plan for the entire Santa Fe River watershed could not come at a better time. This is the ideal next step after SFWA's 2019 CWMP grant and 2023 report, *Stakeholder Priorities, Water Management, and Adaptation Strategies in the Santa Fe River Watershed*, and I am confident SFWA is the right community partner at the right time to lead this project.

I look forward to continuing our work together in this important way.

Sincerely,



David Hernandez
Stewardship Ecologist

TNC New Mexico
David.Hernandez@tnc.org
505-501-9388