

TRUCHAS–COSTILLA ACTIVE MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The Carson National Forest's proposed Truchas-Costilla project would reduce fuel loading and restore forest structure, composition, and spatial distribution to maintain watersheds that are resilient to fire and to protect adjacent communities. The proposal covers approximately 492,000 acres of National Forest System lands in the Sangre de Cristo mountains on the Questa and Camino Real Ranger Districts.

The bulk of community exposure to wildfire originates from a relatively small number of "firesheds" - large forested landscapes - with a high likelihood that an ignition could expose homes, communities, and infrastructure to wildfire. The proposed Truchas-Costilla project includes some of the areas that the 2020 NM State Forest Action Plan rated as the highest priority in the state for forest restoration and fire risk reduction. The project also supports numerous other fire management planning efforts including the 2022 State of NM Forestry Division Communities at Risk Assessment Plan, the 2022 Taos County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the 2022 Colfax County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and the 2024 Rio Arriba Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Re-establish fire-adapted forests, including restoration of natural fire regimes and forest structure, and maintain a healthy forest condition through active management.
- Reduce fuel loadings and severe wildfire threat to infrastructure and adjacent communities including Questa, Red River, Taos Ski Valley, Vadito, Llano, Chamisal, Trampas, Ojo Sarco, El Valle, Truchas, and Tres Ritos.
- Improve wildlife habitat and sustain both common and uncommon native species.
- Protect cultural resources that include ancestral Tribal lands and acequia diversions.
- Support rural economies by providing firewood and wood products to local communities and industry.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

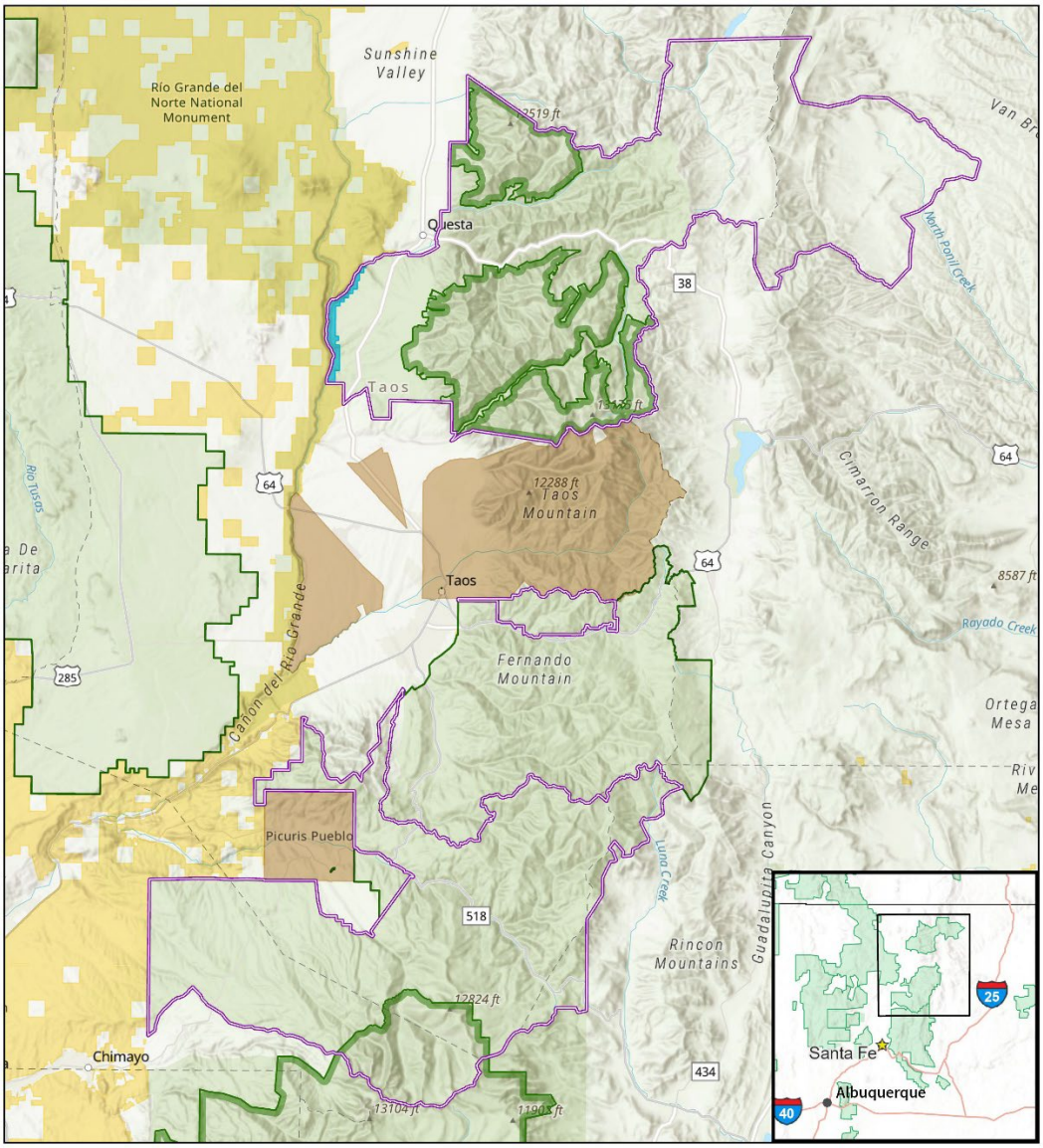
- Mechanical and manual vegetation treatment to reduce fire hazard, improve forest health, and habitat.
- Prescribed burning to address natural and project-created fuel loads.
- Particular emphasis on addressing fire hazard in the wildland-urban interface.
- Road construction and reconstruction to provide access to treatments.

THE PROJECT AREA

- Includes 63,038 acres of ponderosa pine and 53,617 acres of dry mixed conifer forests that are denser than they were historically, with less age and species diversity, less vigorous trees, and more shade-tolerant trees.
- Includes many watersheds that supply water to downstream acequias and other users.
- Includes habitat for wildlife species, including Mexican spotted owl, northern goshawk, North American beaver, and winter range for deer and elk.
- Encompasses 21 developed campgrounds, many popular dispersed camping areas, four developed ski areas, 3 wilderness areas, and many motorized and non-motorized trails, including two National Recreation Trails.
- Updates several existing decisions to make them consistent with the 2022 Carson land management plan.

More information about the project is available here:
https://www.fs.usda.gov/r03/carson/projects/377818

Link to project webpage which includes maps, the proposed action, draft environmental assessment and a link to submit comments.



Project Boundary
Administrative Forest Boundary
Designated Wilderness

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USDA

0 5 10 Miles

Southwestern Region 6/22/2026

COMMENT PERIOD

A public comment period will run for 30 days from September 8th to October 8th, 2026. Comments may address either the adequacy of a statement or the merits of an alternative or both. When possible, comments should reference the corresponding section or page number of the draft environmental assessment, propose specific changes, and describe any data, sources, or methodologies that support the proposed changes.

Comments will be accepted online here:
https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?project=377818
or by mail to: James D. Duran, Carson Forest Supervisor, 208 Cruz Alta Road, Taos, NM 87571
or by hand: Carson National Forest Supervisor's Office at 208 Cruz Alta Road, Taos, NM 87571 (T, W 9-11:30, 12-3) Camino Real Ranger District Office at 15160 State Route 75, Peñasco, NM (Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9-12 a.m., 1-3 p.m.) or Questa Ranger District Office at 184 State Highway 38, Questa, NM 87556 (Wed 9-11:30 a.m., 12-3 p.m.)

Please reference "Truchas-Costilla Project" in a mailed or hand delivered letter.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including name and address of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not receive subsequent project information.
If you have questions about the project please contact,
Peter Rich, forest planner, Carson National Forest, peter.rich@usda.gov, (575) 758-6277

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