

Executive Summary: East Jemez Landscape Futures Needs Assessment and Recommendations

May 2017

By Sasha Stortz¹, Collin Haffey², and Cari Kimball¹

¹Landscape Conservation Initiative, Northern Arizona University

²USGS New Mexico Landscapes Field Station



Executive Summary

The East Jemez Landscape Futures (EJLF) is a collaborative process that aims to develop a holistic and forward-looking approach to managing areas of the eastern Jemez Mountains that have been altered by drought, high severity fire, and post-fire flooding. In order to engage a diversity of regional stakeholders and understand perspectives about the impacted landscape, we conducted a needs assessment to launch the project. Through interviews with 50 individuals representing over 20 agencies and organizations in the eastern Jemez area, we identified common interests and concerns, opportunities for action, and developed recommendations for next steps in the EJLF project.

Interviews centered around three topics: work that is currently happening in the area, information needs, and opportunities for collaboration. Several major themes emerged from the interviews:

- Managers are increasingly able to look at the big picture and the future of this landscape after operating in emergency management mode for several years after major fire and flood events
- Management and research opportunities generally fell into three distinct landscape types: canyon bottoms, vegetation refugia, and areas that have converted from forests to shrub and grassland
- There is interest in conducting culturally relevant restoration and engaging the public and local communities in education, outreach, and action about the highly altered areas of the eastern Jemez
- Opportunities exist to experiment with assisted migration as a potential action strategy

Given what we heard from interviewees, we recommend the following major next steps:

- Build and sustain an overarching coordination group to build communication infrastructure, coordinate information sharing and decision making across agencies and organizations, and creatively engage communities and the public
- Convene watershed work groups to focus research and action on specific canyons in the eastern Jemez. Seek funding at the canyon and landscape-scale to provide the increased capacity needed to conduct work in these areas.

Overall, interviewees expressed support and willingness to participate in future collaboration in order to learn from each other, build a shared sense of possibility, and take action in the highly impacted areas of the eastern Jemez. In order to develop and maintain support across stakeholders, future steps should be transparent, interdisciplinary, and inclusive.