

New Mexico Habitat Stamp Program 2020 Implementation Report



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New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

in conjunction with cooperators in the

United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Total revenues into the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) Sikes Fund for State fiscal year 2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020) totaled \$1,125,827.50. In project year 2020, the NMDGF's HSP made available \$750,000 to Federal Cooperators, of which they were only able to utilize \$677,088 to help support 34 projects on publicly accessible federal lands throughout the state of New Mexico.

Through the continued financial support of hunters, anglers, and trappers recreating on federally managed public lands in New Mexico, the State's wildlife resources continue to benefit through a user supported fund dedicated to proactive wildlife management and conservation. Since its inception in 1986, the HSP has helped provide funding for 2,500 habitat enhancement and wildlife management projects in New Mexico, with Sikes Fund project expenditures of more than \$23 million.

INTRODUCTION

The HSP is a collaborative effort between hunters, anglers, trappers, NMDGF, U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) implemented under authority of the Sikes Act (16USC670) and the New Mexico State Game Commission.

HSP requires the maintenance of accurate records and the filing of annual reports setting forth the amount and disposition of the fees collected from habitat stamps. The purpose of this document is to provide that report to the program partners, and to provide an annual record of accomplishments to all HSP stakeholders.

The cooperating agencies have fulfilled their obligations to an interagency agreement with submission of reports that track every proposed project to its completion or deletion. A summary of these reports for 2020 projects are found at the end of this report and serve as the source documents for the compilations contained herein.

FUNDING

The Sikes Fund is an account in New Mexico State government that holds the money generated from the sale of the \$5 Habitat Stamp. Due to complexities between differing state and federal fiscal years, project funding is no longer based on annual stamp sales, but on a planned budget. The budget is approved by the State Game Commission and appropriated by the Legislature. Federal partners then implement projects within the State's fiscal year of July 1 to June 30 each year. This requirement prevents overbilling by federal partners to the State of New Mexico.

UNITS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

For this reporting period, 34 projects were prioritized by the CACs and funded by the HSP (\$750,000). 32 projects were ultimately funded with the support of HSP funding (\$677,088). \$72,912 in HSP funds was unable to be expended by cooperators. HSP strives to minimize unexpended funds through close communication and coordination with agency cooperators to identify potential project implementation shortcomings and reallocate funds within the state fiscal year. Table 1 depicts projects completed in FY19 and total HSP and cooperator expenditures.

A goal within the HSP is to ensure that funds are directed toward habitat improvement, protection, or restoration. As the HSP has evolved over the years, maintenance needs on existing infrastructure has increased, and a focus has been made to implement larger landscape type projects.

PROJECT EXPENDITURES

In State fiscal year 2020, the total funds available for annual HSP projects were \$750,000. HSP expenditures for all projects completed in project year 2020 have been compiled in Table 1 below. Of the total expenditures, the HSP contributed \$677,088 as tracked by individual projects. Federal agencies, in the form of cash and planning costs, reported contributing \$2,074,000, agency partners also reported \$1,562,000 contributed by other project partners. A total of \$4,290,000 was expended to complete 32 projects. (Table 1)

The program goal is to match agency funds dollar for dollar, and leverage other non-HSP funds at the rate of \$0.25 on the HSP dollar. In 2020, combined funds exceeded this goal by expending \$5.37 on each HSP dollar this reporting period. (Table 1)

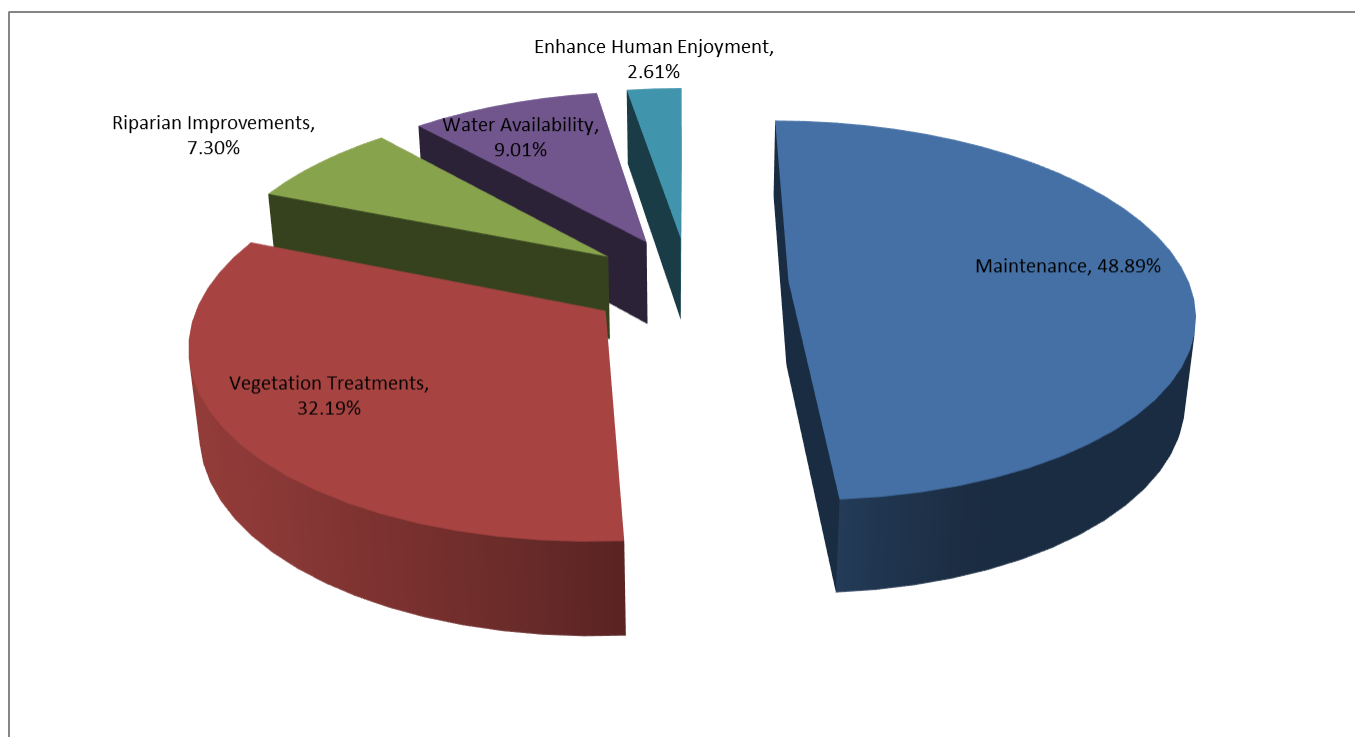
The highest use of HSP funds in 2020 was to maintain existing HSP infrastructure, and accounted for 48.89% of program expenditures. Federal partners reported 460 maintenance and/or inspection activities were performed on HSP structures throughout the State. In HSP's first decade maintenance had required only 10% of HSP funds. However, as new HSP projects are constructed, as existing HSP infrastructure ages and additional infrastructure is adopted into the HSP, more effort into maintaining these structural projects will be required. This reality, coupled with the Citizen Advisory Committees' (CAC) increasing desire to maintain prior investments, will require more dollars for maintenance in the future.

One maintenance project in 2020, SEF-2020-302 Guadalupe Maintenance stood out as excessively problematic. A final bill was received near the deadline of the fiscal year as part of a bundle with several other HSP invoices. The charges on the Guadalupe Maintenance bill included a variety of line items that were outside the scope of the agreement and project proposal. The USFS admitted the charges were inappropriately billed to HSP, and the funds were ultimately refunded from the USFS.

The second highest use of HSP funds in 2020 was to improve upland vegetative habitat, which accounted for 32.19% of program expenditures. Restoring historic fire regimes are of high habitat importance, but state/federal fiscal year variances, environmental, social, and political constraints have limited its application. The use of fire as a management tool rises and falls based on these impediments.

Figure 1 depicts each percentage of project-type expenditures in this reporting period.

FIGURE 1. HABITAT STAMP PROGRAM EXPENDITURES BY PROJECT TYPE IN 2020



CONCLUSION

The HSP is able to meet its mission to provide diverse wildlife habitats for use and enjoyment by the public because it has maintained a strong level of support. Sportsmen and women continue to supply funding for a program from which they can see positive impacts. The program's use of a collaborative decision-making process that allows a diverse level of involvement through its Citizen Advisory Committees also separates it from typical government programs. With nearly 2,000 structures built by or adopted into the HSP, maintenance of these has become an extraordinary task. Agency leaders, cooperators, and the citizens they serve understand that the costs for implementing and maintaining habitat enhancement projects have increased dramatically over the years, and that fiscal and human resources are limited to accomplish all project work that is needed in a given year.

Cooperators are achieving the HSP's mission to provide diverse wildlife habitat for the benefit of current and future generations, and continue to attract partners to leverage more funds to complete larger habitat improvements. It is hoped this effort will better meet the interests of sportsmen, all citizens, and the wildlife we seek to conserve. With continued agency coordination and support of hunters, anglers, trappers, and conservationists who purchase the Habitat Stamp, future prospects are bright for providing increased services and accomplishments funded by the Habitat Stamp Program.

For more information about the Habitat Stamp Program please contact:

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TABLE 1. UNITS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT COMPLETED IN THE 2019 PROJECT YEAR

Project Type	# of HSP Projects	HSP Spent *	USFS/BLM Spent	Volunteer/ Other	Total Spent
Maintenance	15	\$331,000	\$257,000	\$5,000	\$547,000
Vegetative Treatments	8	\$217,980	\$621,000	\$945,000	\$1,785,000
Riparian Improvements	3	\$49,450	\$104,000	\$522,000	\$657,000
Water Availability	4	\$61,000	\$112,000	\$20,000	\$193,000
Enhance Human Enjoyment	1	\$17,658	\$960,000	\$70,000	\$1,048,000
Totals	32	\$677,088	\$2,054,000	\$1,562,000	\$4,290,000
Match Ratio		\$1.00	\$3.03	\$2.31	

*The Enhance Human Enjoyment category refers to the project at Rio Bonito , SEBR-2020-008

Figure 2. 2019 Habitat Stamp Program Project Locations

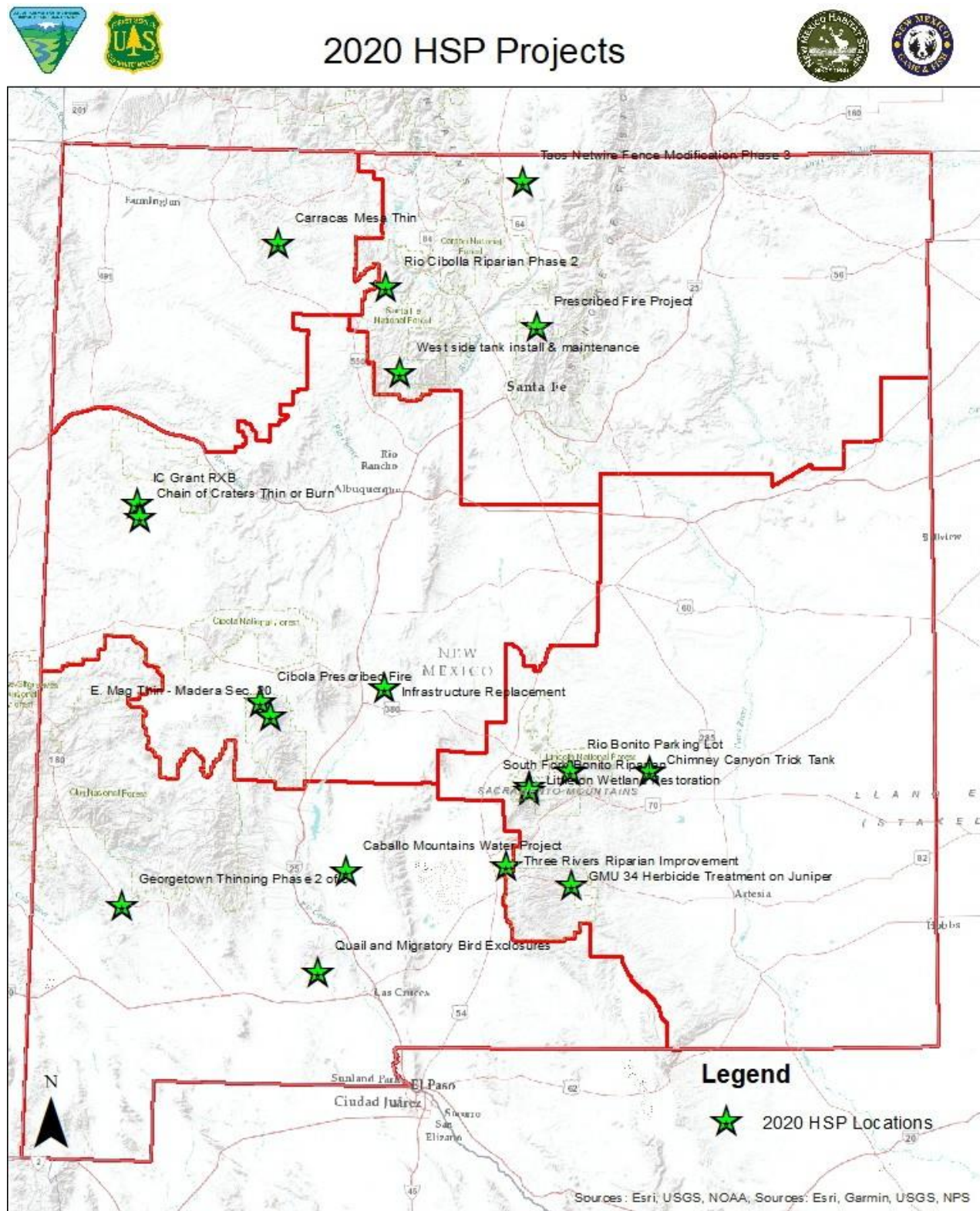


Table 3. 2019 Habitat Stamp Program Tracking Report

Project No.	Project Name	Agency Cost Share	Other Partner	Total Project Budget	Funding Award	HSP Funds that were not spent
CB-2020-001	Rio Puerco Maintenance	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$10,000	\$762
CF-2020-001	Cibola Maintenance	\$ 20,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 25,000	\$20,000	
CB-2020-002	IC Grant RXB	\$ 80,000	\$ 450,000	\$ 530,000	\$20,000	\$6,426
CB-2020-003	Chain of Craters Thin or Burn	\$ 40,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 65,000	\$20,000	\$6,426
CF-2020-002	Cibola Prescribed Fire	\$ 200,000	\$ -	\$ 200,000	\$35,000	
CBS-2020-003	E. Mag Thin - Madera Sec. 20	\$ 20,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 60,000	\$17,852	
CBS-2020-001	Infrastructure Replacement	\$ 40,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 60,000	\$20,000	
NEB-2020-001	Taos Maintenance	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$12,000	
NECF-2020-001	Carson Maintenance	\$ 7,500	\$ -	\$ 7,500	\$25,000	\$2,500
NESF-2020-002	West side tank install & maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$5,000	\$340
NESF-2020-004	Rio Cibolla Riparian Phase 2	\$ 9,280	\$ 11,851	\$ 39,631	\$18,500	
NEB-2020-003	Taos Netwire Fence Modification Phase 3	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$20,000	
NESF-2020-001	Prescribed Fire Project	\$ 60,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 90,000	\$45,000	
NWB-2020-001	Farmington Maintenance	\$ 40,000	\$ -	\$ 40,000	\$32,000	
NWF-2020-001	Jicarilla Maintenance	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$30,000	\$56
NWB-2020-002	Carracas Mesa Thin	\$ 10,500	\$ -	\$ 10,500	\$34,534	
SEBC-2020-001	Carlsbad Maintenance	\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ 12,000	\$12,000	\$1,518
SEBR-2020-001	Roswell Maintenance	\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ 12,000	\$12,000	\$2,653
SEF-2020-202	Sacramento Maintenance	\$ 11,821	\$ -	\$ 11,821	\$15,250	\$58
SEF-2020-302	Guadalupe Maintenance	\$ 13,416	\$ -	\$ 13,416	\$13,416	\$7,341
SEF-2020-101	Littleton Wetland Restoration	\$ 6,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 9,000	\$14,000	
SEF-2020-201	GMU 34 Herbicide Treatment on Juniper	\$ 10,820	\$ -	\$ 10,820	\$24,000	\$65
SEF-2020-103	South Fork Bonito Riparian	\$ 8,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 18,000	\$7,000	\$50
SEBR-2020-003	Chimney Canyon Trick Tank	\$ 8,500	\$ -	\$ 8,500	\$11,000	
SEBR-2020-008	Rio Bonito Parking Lot	\$ 960,000	\$ 70,000	\$1,030,000	\$21,677	\$4,019
SWBL-2020-001	Las Cruces Maintenance	\$ 35,000	\$ -	\$ 35,000	\$35,912	
SWBL-2020-004	Three Rivers Riparian Improvement	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$10,000	
SWFG-2020-001	Gila Maintenance	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$92,000	\$8,769
SWBL-2020-002	Quail and Migratory Bird Enclosures	\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$20,000	
SWBL-2020-003	Caballo Mountains Water Project	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$30,000	\$5
SWFG-2020-701	Georgetown Thinning Phase 2 of 5	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$24,500	\$103
SWFG_2020-002	Gila Prescribed Fires	\$ 150,000	\$ 400,000	\$ 550,000	\$10,000	

Table 4 Habitat Stamp Program Projects that received funding but were not reimbursed

Project No.	Project Name	Agency Cost Share	Other Partner	Total Project Budget	Funding Award	HSP Funds that were not spent
SEF-2020-102	Smokey Bear Maintenance	\$7,600		\$18,850	\$11,250	\$11,250
SEF-2020-304	East Rawhide Trick Tank	\$11,310		\$22,620	\$11,310	\$11,310
NEK-2020-002	Aquatic - Canadian River	\$60,000		\$68,574	\$8,574	\$8,574

These Projects were not reimbursed by the HSP for different reasons. The Smokey Bear Maintenance was completed but the invoice was submitted by the USFS to the NMDGF several months after the end of the fiscal year, which resulted in the inability of the NMDGF to reimburse for it. The East Rawhide Trick Tank was not completed by the USFS due to staff changes. The Canadian River project was also completed but not able to be reimbursed since the charges submitted for the project were for archaeological surveys to support the project but were outside of the scope of the approved project expenditures. These funds were left on the table as it was discovered that the projects were not possible to be reimbursed too late in the year to attempt to move the funds to another eligible project. We are working with partners to improve the tracking and avoid these types of issues in the future.