

# New Mexico Habitat Stamp Program 2021 Implementation Report



September 2021, By Daniel Lusk

## **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 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) totaled \$1,454,377.83. In project year 2021, the NMDGF's HSP made available \$1,000,000 to implement habitat restoration and conservation projects on federal lands, of which partners were able to utilize \$865,655 to help support 35 projects on publicly accessible federal lands throughout the state of New Mexico.

Through the continued financial support of anglers, hunters 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 over 2,500 habitat enhancement and wildlife management projects in New Mexico, with HSP Fund expenditures of more than \$24 million.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The HSP is a collaborative effort between anglers, hunters and 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. The State Game Commission also renewed the Rule allowing for the continuation of the HSP for another 10 years. The rule renewal included several changes to the program structure, including the elimination of regional boundaries allowing for the creation of a single Citizen Advisory Committee with statewide purview, a new requirement that 50% of program project expenditures averaged over 5 years are allocated to projects that benefit fish, and an increase in the stamp fee from \$5 to \$10.

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. An appendix of these reports and their accompanying proposal forms for 2021 projects are available on the Habitat Stamp Program website and serves 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 Habitat Stamp. On April 1 of 2021, the Stamps cost was increased from \$5 to \$10 and linked to the consumer price index. 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 and NMDGF staff 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, 38 projects were prioritized by the CACs and funded by the HSP (\$1,000,000). 35 projects were ultimately completed with the support of HSP funding (\$865,655). \$134,345 in HSP funds was allocated, but not 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 FY21 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 have increased, and a focus has been made to implement larger landscape type projects.

## **PROJECT EXPENDITURES**

In State fiscal year 2021, the total funds available for annual HSP projects were \$1,000,000. HSP expenditures for all projects completed in project year 2021 have been compiled in Table 1 below. Of the total expenditures, the HSP contributed \$865,655 as tracked by individual projects. Federal agencies, in the form of cash and planning costs, reported contributing \$654,900, agency partners also reported \$554,500 contributed by other project partners. A total of \$2,075,055 was expended to complete 38 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 2021, combined funds exceeded this goal by expending \$1.40 on each HSP dollar this reporting period. (Table 1)

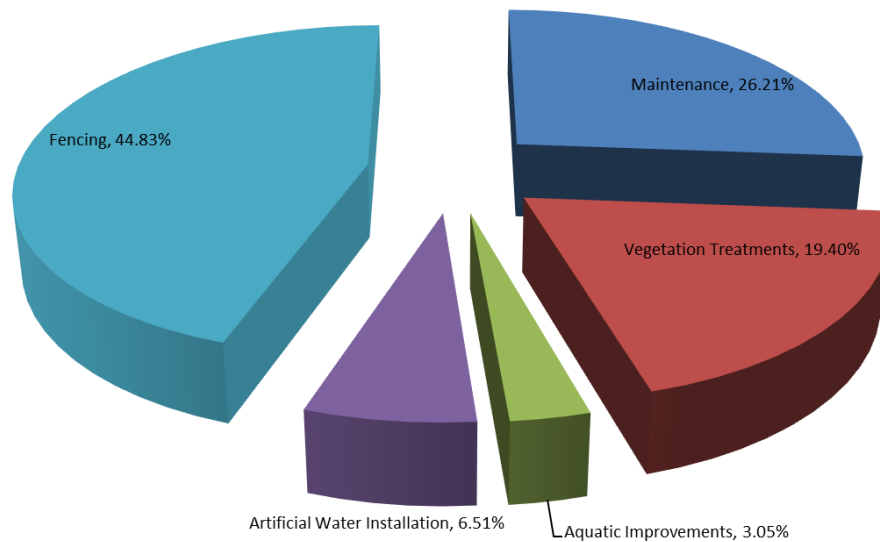
The highest use of HSP funds in 2021 was the construction, modification or repair of livestock exclusion fencing, and accounted for 44.8% of program expenditures. (Figure 1)

The second highest use of HSP funds in 2021 was the maintenance of existing HSP infrastructure, accounting for 26.2% of HSP expenditures. In HSP's first decade maintenance had required only 10% of HSP funds. However, the construction of new HSP infrastructure coupled with the aging of existing HSP infrastructure will result in more effort required to maintain these structural projects. (Figure 1)

The third highest use of HSP funds in 2021 was to improve upland vegetative habitat, which accounted for 19.4% 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)

Artificial water installation and aquatic improvements accounted for 6.5% and 3.1 of HSP expenditures for 2021. (Figure 1)

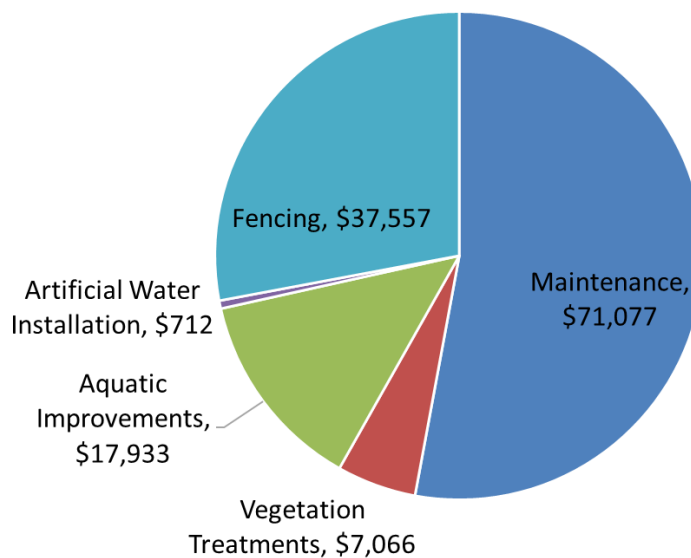
**FIGURE 1. HABITAT STAMP PROGRAM EXPENDITURES BY PROJECT TYPE IN 2021**



For each project type, some HSP funds were not utilized and were left unspent. Figure 2 depicts the funding (\$134,345) that was allocated, but not spent for each type of project activity. These funds reverted back to the Sikes Fund account. Maintenance projects were the single greatest source of left over, unspent HSP funds in FY 2021 (\$71,077 or 7.1% of the 2021 HSP Budget). The next greatest source of unspent HSP funds came from Fencing projects, NWB-2021-002 (\$30,000 - Table 2) was cancelled late in the fiscal year and there was not sufficient time to find a suitable project to move the funds to.

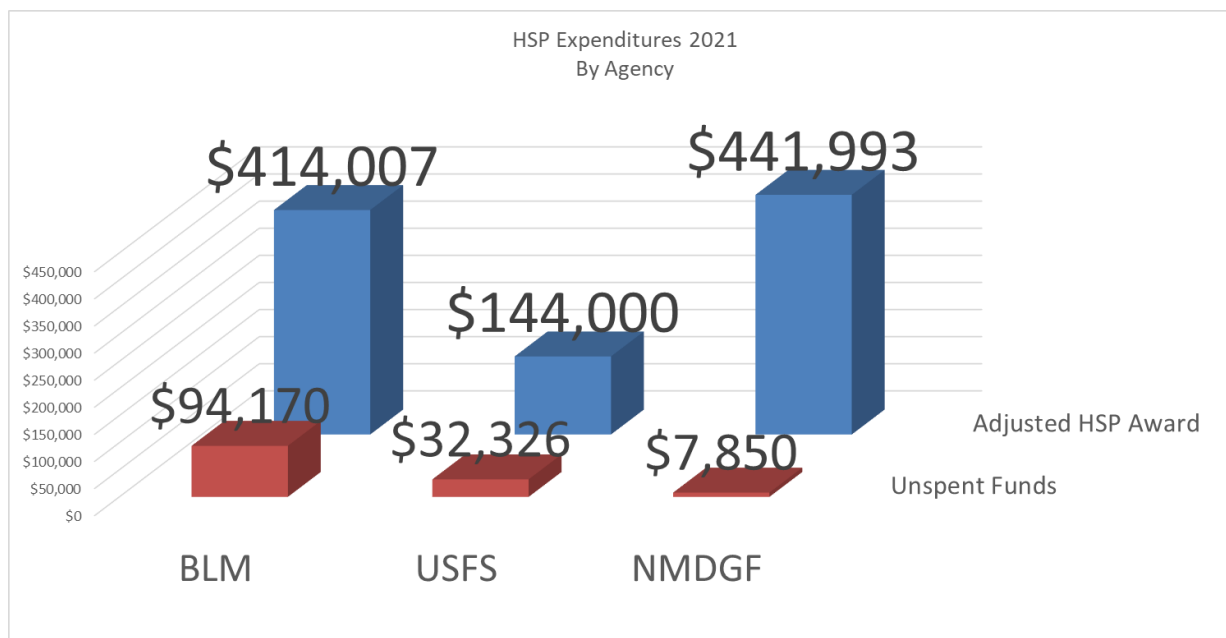
**FIGURE 2. UNSPENT HABITAT STAMP PROGRAM FUNDS BY PROJECT TYPE IN 2021**

### Unspent HSP Funds By Project Type



In 2021, the HSP allocated \$1,000,000 to agency partners and collaborators for habitat conservation projects. Table 3 explains the budget adjustments that occurred after the initial allocation. Budget adjustments are only carried out when an agency partner or collaborator informs the HSP manager that a project has a budget surplus or otherwise cannot be completed. Upon such notice, every effort is made to re-allocate the remaining balance to an eligible, prioritized project. Despite these efforts, some funds are still left unspent, typically due to a lack of notice of the budget surplus due to a project becoming unachievable. In 2021, \$134,345 in HSP funds were left unspent, accounting for 13.4% of the overall budget. Figure 3 depicts the adjusted allocations that each agency was responsible for spending, along with the funds that each agency was unable to spend.

**FIGURE 3. HABITAT STAMP PROGRAM EXPENDITURES BY AGENCY IN 2021**



## CONCLUSION

Anglers and hunters 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 has become an extraordinary task. Agency leaders, cooperators and the citizens they serve understand that the costs for implementing and maintaining HSP projects have increased dramatically over the years and that resources are limited to accomplish all project work.

Cooperators are achieving the HSP's mission to provide diverse wildlife habitat for the benefit of current and future generations. It is hoped this effort will meet the interests of all citizens and the wildlife we seek to conserve. With continued agency coordination and support from the purchasers of the Habitat Stamp, future prospects are bright for providing continued accomplishments funded by the Habitat Stamp Program.

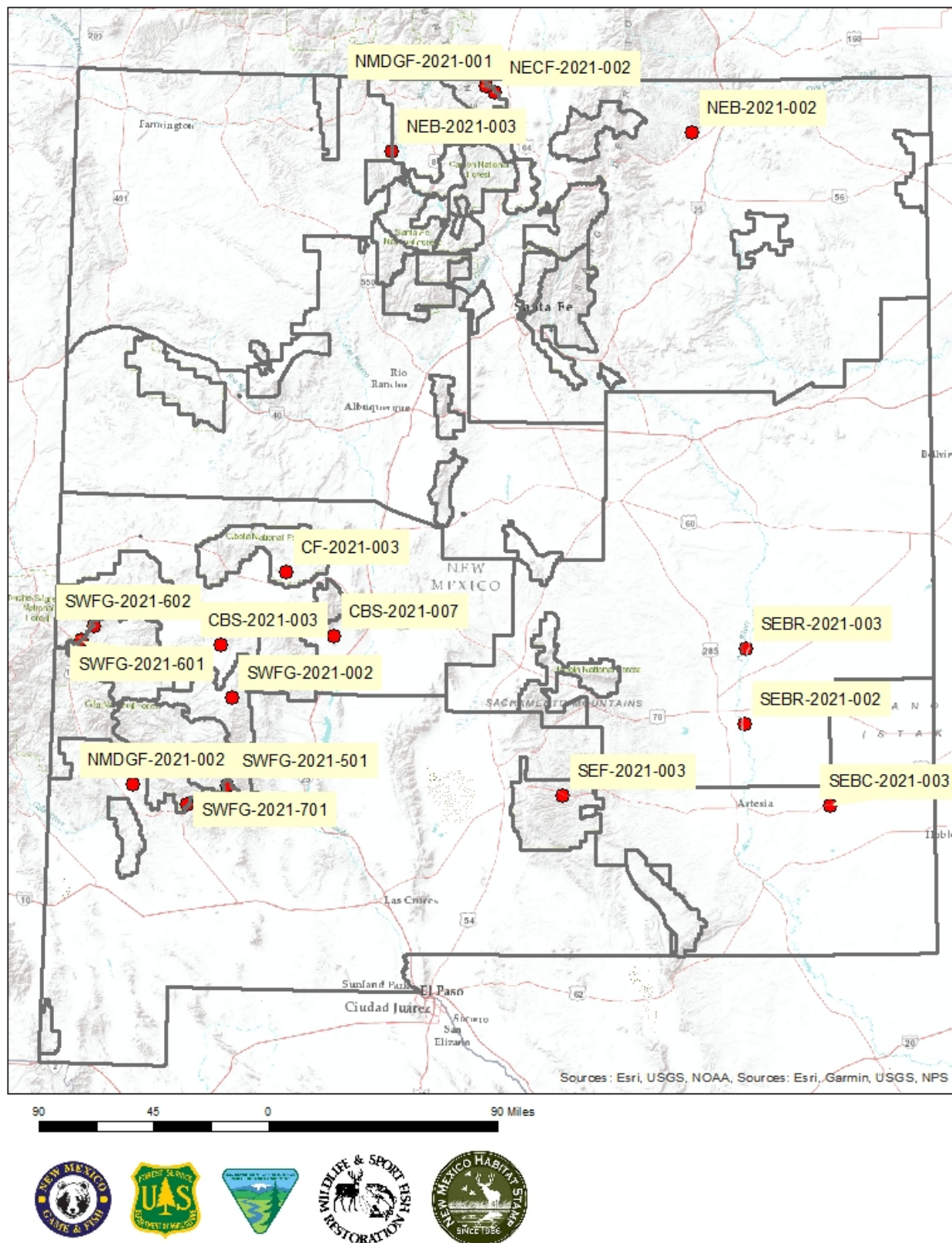
**For more information about the Habitat Stamp Program please contact:**

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**TABLE 1. UNITS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT COMPLETED IN THE 2021 PROJECT YEAR**

<b>Project Type</b>	<b># of HSP Projects</b>	<b>HSP Spent *</b>	<b>USFS/BLM Spent</b>	<b>Volunteer/ Other</b>	<b>Total Spent</b>
<b>Maintenance</b>	12	\$226,921	\$198,400	\$5,000	\$430,321
<b>Vegetative Treatments</b>	10	\$167,972	\$321,000	\$30,000	\$506,034
<b>Riparian Improvements</b>	3	\$26,367	\$20,000		\$46,367
<b>Water Availability</b>	2	\$56,323	\$33,500	\$25,000	\$114,823
<b>Fencing</b>	8	\$388,072	\$82,000	\$494,500	\$964,572
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>\$865,655</b>	<b>\$654,900</b>	<b>\$554,500</b>	<b>\$2,075,055</b>
<b>Match Ratio</b>		\$1.00	\$.76	\$.64	\$1.40 match for every \$1.00 HSP

**Figure 4. 2021 Habitat Stamp Program Project Locations**





**Table 2. 2021 Habitat Stamp Program Tracking Report**

Project No.	Lead Agency	Project Name	Agency Cost Share	Other Partner	Total Project Budget	HSP Allocated Funding	HSP Funds that were not spent
SEF-2021-007*	USFS	Sitting Bull Falls	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$0	
SEF-2021-002*	USFS	Enclosure and Vehicle Barrier	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$0	
NEK-2021-001	USFS	Kiowa Maintenance	\$ 10,300	\$ -	\$ 19,800	\$9,500	\$1,932
CF-2021-001	USFS	Cibola Maintenance	\$ 20,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 45,000	\$20,000	\$7,360
NWF-2021-001	USFS	Jicarilla Maintenance	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ 60,000	\$30,000	\$2,623
SWFG-2021-001	USFS	Gila Maintenance	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 21,500	\$11,500	\$9,783
SWFG-2021-501	USFS	Gattons Park PJ Thin	\$ 7,000	\$ -	\$ 27,000	\$20,000	\$792
SWFG-2021-601	USFS	Willow Creek Restoration	\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$10,000	\$4,929
SWFG-2021-602	USFS	Willow Planting	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 6,000	\$3,000	\$501
SWFG-2021-701	USFS	Georgetown Phase 3	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 35,000	\$25,000	\$4,403
SWFG-2021-603*	USFS	Gwynn Tank Campground	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$0	
SWFG-2021-002*	USFS	Gila Rx Burns	\$ 150,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 190,000	\$10,000	
SEF-2021-003*	USFS	Silversprings and Big Bear Creek	\$ 9,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 18,000	\$5,000	\$4
SWBL-2021-360*	BLM	Boothel Water Replacement	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$0	
CB-2021-001	BLM	Rio Puerco HSP Maintenance	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 29,434	\$24,434	\$5,776
CBS-2021-001	BLM	Socorro BLM Maintenance	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$10,000	
CBS-2021-003	BLM	Socorro Replacement of Structures	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 96,035	\$46,035	
CBS-2021-007	BLM	High Chupadera Thin	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 120,000	\$40,000	
NEB-2021-001	BLM	Taos HSP Maintenance	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 22,000	\$12,000	
NEB-2021-002	BLM	Net Wire Fence Modification	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40,000	\$40,000	
NEB-2021-003	BLM	Rio Chama Enclosures	\$ 26,000	\$ -	\$ 36,000	\$10,000	\$3,707
NWB-2021-001	BLM	Farmington HSP Maintenance	\$ 40,000	\$ -	\$ 90,000	\$50,000	\$18,027
NWB-2021-002	BLM	Carracas Mesa Enclosure	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$30,000	\$30,000
SEBC-2021-001	BLM	Carlsbad HSP Maintenance	\$ 12,000	\$ -	\$ 24,000	\$12,000	
SEBC-2021-002	BLM	Fence Modification and Mesquite Treatment	\$ 56,000	\$ -	\$ 105,038	\$49,038	
SEBC-2021-003	BLM	Conoco Lake Habitat Improvement	\$ 6,000	\$ -	\$ 12,000	\$6,000	
SEBR-2021-001	BLM	Roswell HSP Maintenance	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 20,000	\$10,000	
SEBR-2021-002	BLM	Overflow Wetland Park-n-Hunt	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 15,000	\$10,000	
SEBR-2021-003	BLM	Pecos Cottonwood Planting	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$15,000	\$1,871
SEBR-2021-005	BLM	Mescalero Ridge Trick Tank	\$ 8,500	\$ -	\$ 19,500	\$11,000	\$712
SWBL-2021-001	BLM	Las Cruces HSP Maintenance	\$ 35,000	\$ -	\$ 65,000	\$30,000	\$25,577
SWBL-2021-004	BLM	Three Rivers Habitat Improvement	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$8,500	\$8,500
CF-2021-003*	NMDGF	Cibola Enclosure Rebuilds	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 148,652	\$138,652	
SWBL-2021-002*	NMDGF	DOUBLE E WMA Water Gap Fence	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 85,000	\$85,000	\$3,850
NMDGF-2021-001*	NMDGF	Upper San Antonio Creek	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 13,800	\$13,800	
SEF-2021-001*	NMDGF	Lincoln Maintenance	\$ 6,147	\$ -	\$ 84,711	\$78,564	
NECF-2021-002	NMDGF	Stewart Meadows Fence Replacement	\$ 40,000	\$484,500	\$ 646,000	\$121,977	
NEK-2021-004	NMDGF	Playa Restoration	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$4,000	\$4,000
<b>Totals</b>			\$613,947	\$598,500	\$2,169,470	\$1,000,000	\$134,346

- \* Denotes a project that had its original budget adjusted, see Table 3

**Table 3 Habitat Stamp Program Budget Adjustments Post Allocation**

Project No.	Project Name	Initial Funding Award	Funding Change (+) (-)	Funding Source / Destination	Adjusted Funding Award	HSP Funds that were not spent
CF-2021-003	Cibola Enclosure Rebuilds	\$ 50,000	\$ 88,652	\$85,666 SWFG-2021-002 \$2986.32 SWFG-2021-603	\$138,652	\$0
SWBL-2021-002	DOUBLE E WMA Water Gap Fence	\$ 50,000	\$ 35,000	SWBL-2021-360	\$85,000	\$3,850
NMDGF-2021-001	Upper San Antonio Creek	\$ -	\$ 13,800	SEF-2021-007	\$13,800	
SEF-2021-001	Lincoln Maintenance	\$ 45,000	\$ 33,564	\$3,563.68 SWFG-2021-603 \$20,000 SEF-2021-002 \$10,000 SEF-2021-003	\$78,564	*****\$6147 in NMDGF funds added to make total \$84,711*****
SWFG-2021-603	Gwynn Tank Campground	\$ 6,550	\$ (6,550)	\$2,986.32 CF-2021-003 \$3,563.68 SEF-2021-001	\$0	\$0
SWFG-2021-002	Gila Rx Burns	\$ 95,666	\$ (85,666)	CF-2021-003	\$10,000	\$0
SEF-2021-003	Silversprings and Big Bear Creek	\$ 15,000	\$ (10,000)	SEF-2021-001	\$5,000	\$4
SWBL-2021-360	Boothel Water Replacement	\$ 35,000	\$ (35,000)	SWBL-2021-002	\$0	\$0
SEF-2021-007	Sitting Bull Falls	\$ 13,800	\$ (13,800)	NMDGF-2021-001	\$0	\$0
SEF-2021-002	Enclosure and Vehicle Barrier	\$ 20,000	\$ (20,000)	SEF-2021-001	\$0	\$0

The budgets for the above projects were adjusted as depicted. The “Initial Funding Award” column shows the original HSP allocation, the “Funding Change” column shows the net change in the budget (green for addition, red for subtraction), the “Funding Source / Destination” column shows the source (black) of the additional funding or the destination (red) of the budget surplus. The “Adjusted Funding Award” shows the net HSP funds that were allocated post budget adjustments.