



File Code: 1950-1

Date: June 23, 2006

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

I have decided to approve the Rowe Mesa CFRP Project II. The reasons for my decision are explained in the attached Decision Memorandum. I have determined that the project will not significantly affect any extraordinary circumstances (FSH 1909.15, 30.3(2)).

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215. Appeals must be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days following the date of publication of the legal notice in the Albuquerque Journal. The publication date of the legal notice is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal (36 CFR 215.15(a)); those wishing to appeal should not rely upon dates or timeframes provided by any other source. Individuals or organizations who submitted comments during the comment period may appeal (36 CFR 215.13, *Wilderness v. Rey*).

Appeals must be submitted to: Gilbert Zepeda, Appeal Deciding Officer / Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest, 1474 Rodeo Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505; 505-438-7834 (fax); or e-mailed to: [appeals-southwestern-santafe@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-southwestern-santafe@fs.fed.us) (.doc, .rtf, .pdf, or .txt). Hand-delivered comments may be delivered to the Santa Fe National Forest at 1474 Rodeo Road in Santa Fe between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:30 pm.

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision can begin on, but not before, the 5<sup>th</sup> business day following the close of the appeal-filing period. If an appeal(s) is filed, implementation can occur on, but not before, the 15<sup>th</sup> business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH G. REDDAN  
District Ranger

Enclosure

cc: Gilbert Zepeda, Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest  
Allen Fowler, Forest NEPA Coordinator, Santa Fe National Forest  
Dolores Maese, Public Affairs Officer, Santa Fe National Forest  
Jeremy Kulisheck, Asst. Archaeologist, Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District



**DECISION MEMO**  
for the  
**Rowe Mesa Grass Bank CFRP Project II**

**USDA Forest Service**  
**Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District**  
**Santa Fe National Forest**  
**T13N, R13E, portions of Sections 6, 7, 8, 17 and 18**  
**San Miguel County, New Mexico**

**Decision & Location:** I have decided to approve the Rowe Mesa Grass Bank Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) Project II because it will restore the project area to an open ponderosa pine park land and grassland area that is adapted to and maintained by periodic low-intensity ground fires. Ponderosa pine forest restoration will be conducted on about 730 acres within a 910 acre block. Thinning will be conducted on about 530 forested acres and 200 acres of tree-encroached meadows. Downed trees will be sold as fire wood for personal use. The 530 acres of thinned forest will be treated by broadcast burning. The restoration area is located adjacent to Forest Road 324 in the Ortiz Canyon area of Rowe Mesa (see attached map). The purpose of the project is to The Conservation Fund, together with the Rowe Mesa Grass Bank, the Forest Guild, the Quivira Coalition, and the Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District of the Santa Fe National Forest plan on beginning the project during the summer or fall of 2006. The project is expected to last from three to five years.

**Categorical Exclusion Compliance:**

1. Scoping: The Forest Service mailed a scoping letter to 72 individuals and organizations either living near the area or interested in the project. In addition to several telephone calls, we received six letters during the scoping period. Of the letters received, four took no issue with the project or had minor suggestions for improvement. Two letters, more detailed in their comments, warranted individual responses, which were provided by Melissa Savage, Director of the Four Corners Institute and Project Manager. Ms. Savage wrote a letter to one of the commenters, and exchanged email and visited the site with the other.

In addition, Forest Service specialists analyzed the possible effects of this project on different resources, finding that preparation of an environmental assessment is not necessary.

2. Notice and Comment: The Draft Decision Memorandum was sent to 47 individuals and organizations for comment pursuant to *Earth Island Institute vs. Ruthenbeck* for 30 days beginning on March 19, 2006 (project record). We received two comment letters, which we considered carefully (project record).
3. The project is located outside the wilderness within Management Area "G". It is consistent with both the general Forest Plan standards and guidelines and those specific to Management Areas "G".
4. The action will not cause adverse effects to any of the following extraordinary circumstances: Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species; flood plains, wetlands or municipal watersheds; congressionally designated areas; inventoried

roadless areas; research natural areas; American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites; or archaeological sites, historic properties or areas (project record).

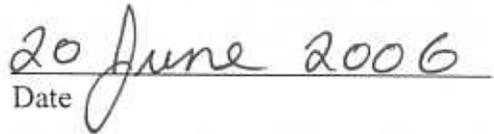
4. A biological assessment/evaluation and heritage resource clearance report are in the project record.
5. This action is within FSH 1909.15, 31.2, category 6 (timber stand improvement), and is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

**Appeals and Implementation:**

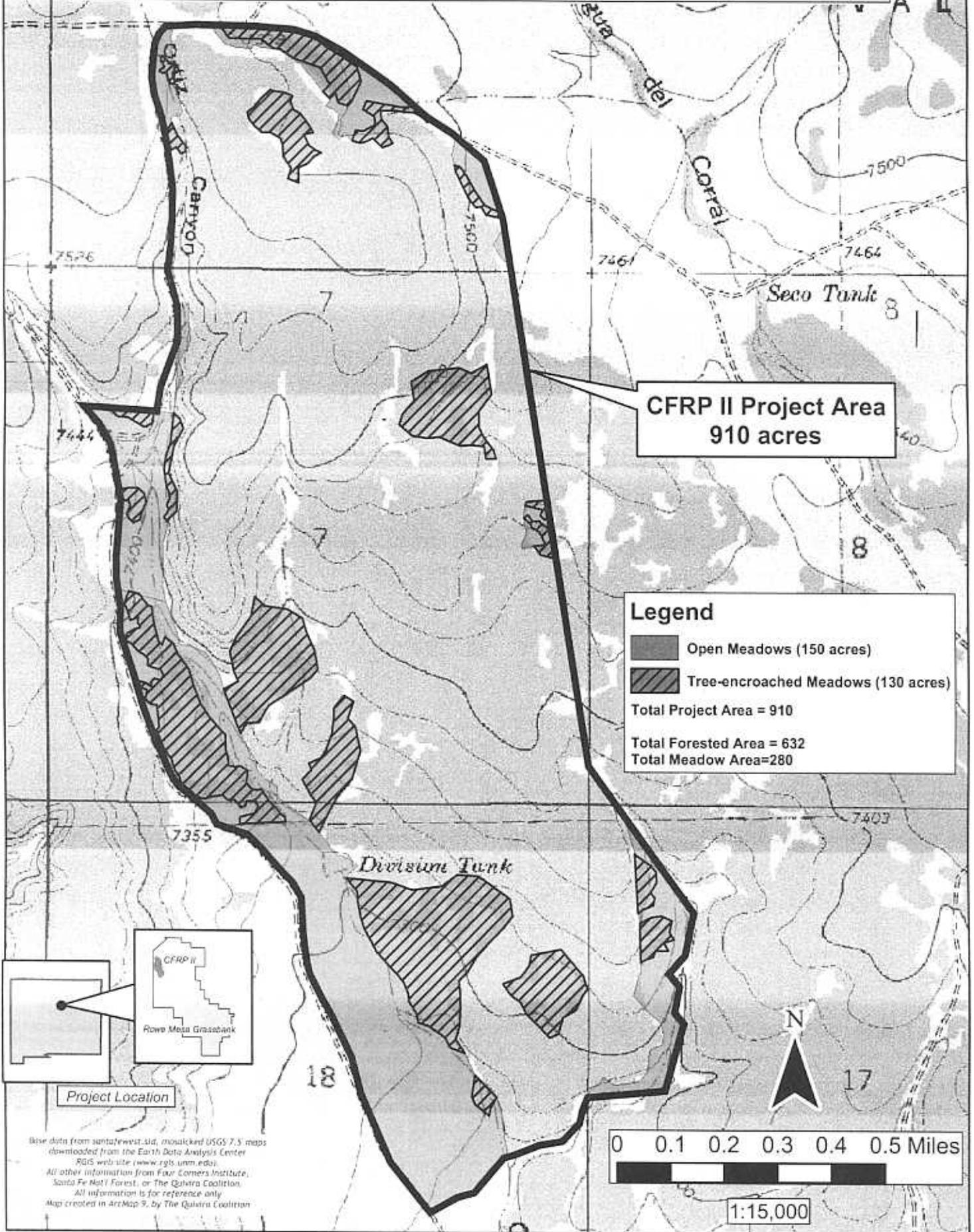
This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to the July 2, 2005 order issued by the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of California in *Earth Island Institute vs. Ruthenbeck*. Refer to 36 CFR Part 215 for appeal procedures.

**Contact:** For further information on the technical aspects of this project, please contact Melissa Savage of the Four Corners Institute, 1477½ Canyon Road, Santa Fe, NM 87501, (505) 983-8515, forests@ucla.edu..

  
JOSEPH G. REDDAN  
District Ranger  
Enclosure

  
Date

# Rowe Mesa Grassbank CFRP II Project Area



Base data from santafewest.tid, mosaicked USGS 7.5 maps downloaded from the Earth Data Analysis Center (EDAC) web site ([www.edac.unm.edu](http://www.edac.unm.edu)). All other information from Fox Corners Institute, Santa Fe National Forest, or The Quivira Coalition. All information is for reference only. Map created in ArcMap 9, by The Quivira Coalition.