



Colfax County, NM Comprehensive Plan



Final
July 14, 2015



Architectural Research Consultants, Incorporated

Acknowledgements

Colfax County County Board of Commissioners

William E. Sauble, Chairman
James L. Newton, Vice-Chair
Roy P. Fernandez, Member

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Commissioner Fernandez	Tim Hagaman
Commissioner Newton	Kathy Harris
Commissioner Sauble	Gus Holm
Patricia Gonzales, County Manager and Project Manager	Paul Jenkins
Justin Johnson (no longer with Colfax County)	E.J. Johnson
Mark Anderson	Dave Kenneke
Wayne Armacost	Boe Lopez
Don Borgeson	Tim O'Neill
Steve and Mary Alice Tracy Boyce	Penny Peryatle
John Clark	Troy Sauble
Paula Devlin	Chris Sawyer
Sheldon Dorman	Julia Stafford
Tim Farmer	Larry Stolarzyck
	Don Welker

Other Participants in Focus Group and Topics Meetings

Andrew Bertges	Geneva Langworthy
Rory Butler	Jean Martinez
Mindy Cahill	Brad McCaslin
Brian Colenda	Jim Morgan
Dusty Davis	Steve Nelson
Michelle Duregger	Jon Rivera
Ray Gothard	Burl Smith
Barbara Graham	Sharon Smith
Dave Gutierrez	Richard Tafoya
Chuck Howe	Richard Tatey
Louise Johnson	Vallerie Vickers
Jason Kenny	Thomas Vigil
Gary Krueger	Andrew Ward

Interviews Included:

Patricia Gonzales
Robin Blair
Linda Gallegos
Craig Mulford
Larry Osborn
Chris Sandlin
Thomas Vigil

Thank you very much to participants in focus groups, public meetings and interviews.

Prepared by:
Architectural Research Consultants, Incorporated
Steve Burstein, AICP, Project Manager and Liza Miller, Planner



Colfax County Board of Commissioners

P.O. Box 1498 • Raton, New Mexico 87740
Phone: (575) 445-9661 • Fax: (575) 445-2902
www.co.colfax.nm.us

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COMMISSIONERS

WILLIAM E. SAUBLE

Chairman

1261 Circle Dot Ranch Road
Maxwell, NM 87728
(575) 375-2686

JAMES L. NEWTON

Vice-Chairman

P.O. Box 156
Springer, NM 87747
(505) 228-2485

ROY P. FERNANDEZ

Member

455 A NM SR 72
Raton, NM 87740
(575) 445-2846

PATRICIA M. GONZALES

Colfax County Manager
(575) 445-9661

FREDA L. BACA

Colfax County Clerk
(575) 445-5551

RESOLUTION #2015-22

Colfax County Comprehensive Plan

WHEREAS, the comprehensive plan is a long-range policy guide to decisions about the physical and economic development of the county, addressing: land use, community character, economic development, housing, transportation, facilities, utilities and water, hazards mitigation and implementation; and

WHEREAS, the comprehensive plan gives long-range and comprehensive context and support for the infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) infrastructure development grant, as other state and federal grants and loans for which the county can apply; and

WHEREAS, Colfax County has an adopted comprehensive plan from the year 2004 and needs to update this plan based on changes in the county, a county and more detailed assessment of conditions and ways to meet the needs of the county, and clarifications and changes in policy direction; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 3, Article 19 of the New Mexico State Statutes (NMSA 1978) enables Colfax County to adopt a comprehensive plan which makes recommendations on a variety of subjects; and

WHEREAS, the County developed the 2015 comprehensive plan update through review of the 2004 comprehensive plan, research and analysis of current demographic and socioeconomic information, and various analyses of the subjects addressed in the plan; and

WHEREAS, the County conducted two visioning meetings in November and December 2014, four topics committee meetings between November 2014 and June 2015, and two focus group meetings in Springer and Angel Fire in December 2014; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners conducted a public workshop on the draft plan on June 23, 2015 and a public hearing on the draft plan on July 14, 2015.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners of Colfax County adopts the Colfax County Comprehensive Plan Update as identified in Exhibit "A" of this resolution. This resolution supersedes Resolution #2004-43, and the 2015 comprehensive plan update replaces the 2004 comprehensive plan.

APPROVED IN OPEN MEETING THIS 14TH DAY OF JULY, 2015

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A comprehensive plan is an official public document adopted by a local government as a policy guide to decisions about the physical development of the county.

I. Introduction

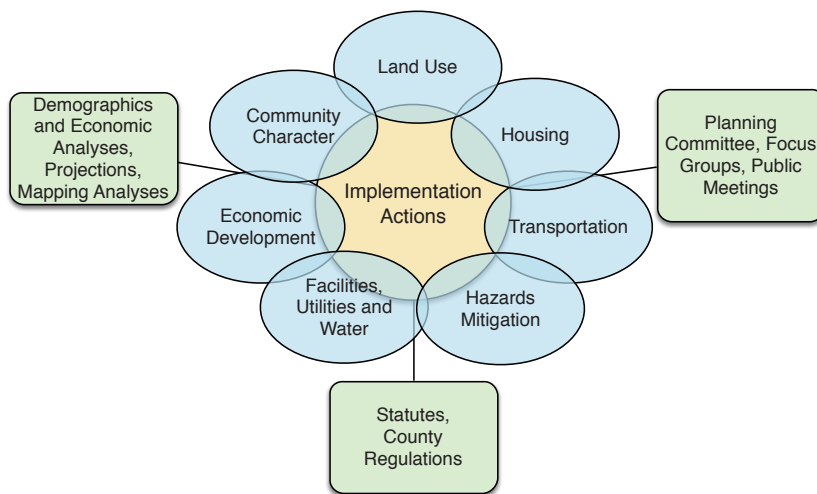
A. Purpose of the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan Update is a full revision of the original Colfax County Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2004. The County chose to review and revise its long-range plan approximately 12 years after the latest plan went into effect. The County still considers some of the policies in the 2004 plan, based on extensive public involvement at that time, valid and important. Most of the background information and analyses in this update are new material. The elements of the plan are entirely new material, following the subject organization of the 2004 plan.

The Colfax County Comprehensive Plan, as updated, is an official public document adopted by the Colfax County Board of County Commissioners as a policy guide to decisions about the physical development of the county. It presents, in a general sense, the way the leaders of government want the county to develop in the ensuing 20 to 30 years. The purpose of the plan is to assist the County in preparing for the future by anticipating change, maximizing strengths and minimizing weaknesses. The plan sets policies to address critical issues that face the county, achieve goals according to priority, and coordinate both public and private efforts.

The Colfax County Comprehensive Plan encompasses all functional elements that bear on physical development in an internally consistent manner, including: land use economic development, land use, community character, economic development, transportation, housing, facilities, utilities and water, and hazards mitigation. The data, goals and policies of these elements support each other.

Exhibit I-1
Elements of the Comprehensive Master Plan



B. Planning Process

During plan development, the County sought substantial public involvement to assure that the plan would be properly considered and have broad support. The County appointed a steering committee to conduct two visioning meetings and invited additional members of the public to attend committee meetings on the various topics of the plan.

Participants in eight committee and focus group meetings contributed to development of the plan:

- Steering Committee Visioning Meeting #1 (Raton), November 18, 2014
- Steering Committee Visioning Meeting #2 (Raton), December 8, 2014
- Focus Group Meeting in Springer, December 8, 2014
- Focus Group Meeting in Angel Fire, December 9, 2014
- Committee Topics Meeting #1 (Cimarron), February 5, 2015
- Committee Topics Meeting #2 (Raton), March 17, 2015
- Committee Topics Meeting #3 (Springer), April 30, 2015
- Committee Draft Plan Review Meeting (Raton), June 11, 2015

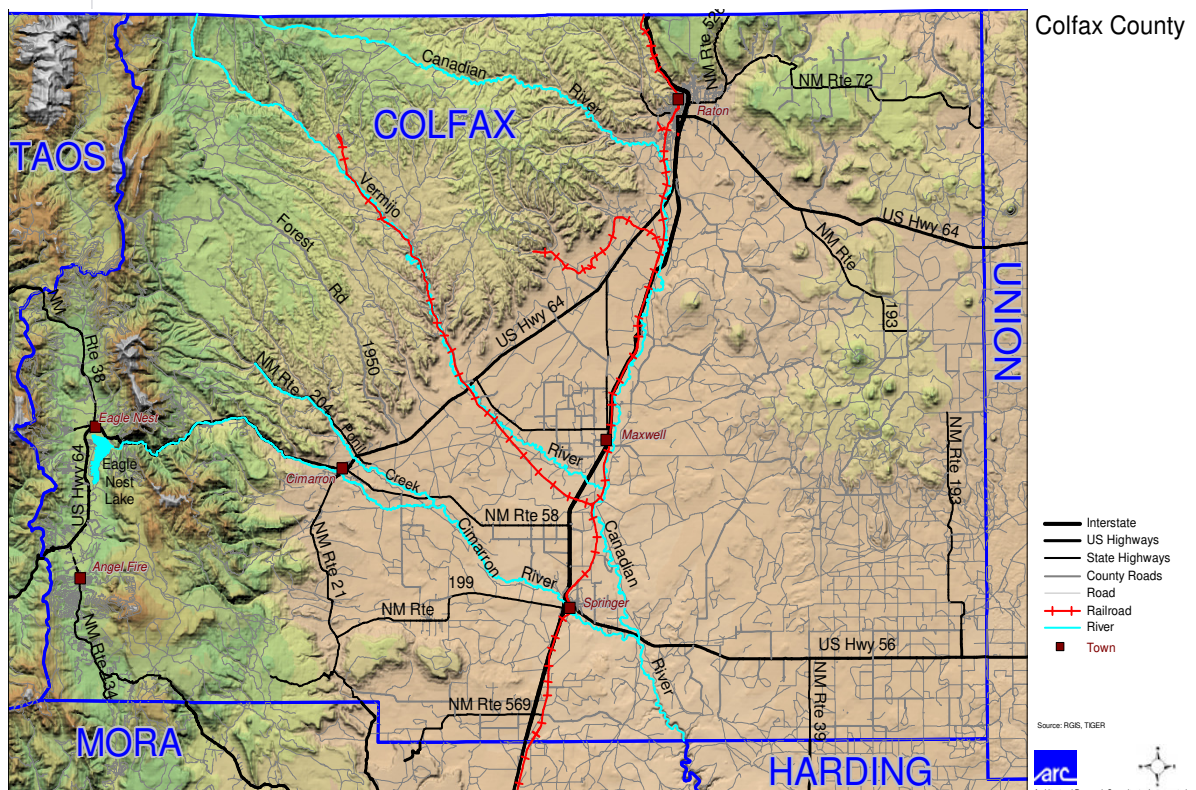
The process included various interviews with County staff, County Commissioners, and economic development specialists working in the county.

During the approval stage, the Board of County Commissioners conducted a workshop on June 23, 2015 and a public hearing on July 14, 2015 to consider adoption of the plan. The Commission adopted the plan during the regular meeting of July 14.

C. Colfax County Regional Setting and Historic Snapshot

Colfax County is located in northern New Mexico just south of the Colorado state line. The County is currently home to about 13,500 residents. Municipalities in the county are the city of Raton, town of Springer, and villages of Angel Fire, Maxwell, Cimarron and Eagle Nest. The county also encompasses numerous small unincorporated communities. County geography includes high desert prairie to the east and the forested peaks of the Rocky Mountains to the west.

Exhibit I-2
Map of Colfax
County



Colfax County is home to ranching, agriculture, recreation, high quality rural living and the world-class ski resort at Angel Fire. Some of the state's greatest natural places and wild lands are there. The county has many spectacular publicly protected lands: Valle Vidal Wilderness Area in the Carson National Forest, Maxwell National Wildlife Refuge, Cimarron Canyon State Park, Sugarite Canyon State Park, Eagle Nest Lake State Park, and a small section of Kiowa National Grasslands to the east. Vermejo Park Ranch, Philmont Scout Ranch and other large ranches are important private land stewards. Angle Fire is home to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park. The county has several important archaeological sites, including the Folsom Man Archaeological Site, the location of the first confirmed humans who occupied the Americas at least 10,000 years ago.

From pre-historic times, the early puebloans, the Anasazi, arrived in the area beginning in about 1,000 CE. Francisco Vazquez de Coronado's 1540-42 expedition passed through current-day northeast New Mexico following the Canadian River south of Colfax County. With his arrival, the area began to see Spanish influence. Other Europeans came into the area beginning in the 1700s. Plains Indians Apaches, Comanches, Utes and Puebloans remained in control of the area until the late 1800s. Meanwhile the Santa Fe Trail became an important trade route between the Midwest and the Southwest, especially for fur trappers and traders, one of whom, Charles Beaubien along with Guadalupe Miranda, first claimed what would become the Maxwell Land Grant. When Beaubien died in 1864, his son-in-law, Lucien Bonaparte Maxwell, became the largest individual landowner in the history of the nation, owning 1.7 million acres. Just six years later, he sold almost all of his land.

When mining, ranching and farming developed, Colfax County was officially established in 1869. The County seat moved several times and in 1897, settled in Raton, where it remains today.

D. Visioning

ARC facilitated visioning meetings in Colfax County in November and December of 2014. At those discussions, community members articulated the community's vision for the future of Colfax County. Outlining challenges and opportunities, participants began to construct a road map to the realization of that future. The following Vision Statement synthesizes those discussions.

Colfax County is a beautiful county with great scenery, air and water quality, night skies, archeology and geology. The mountains and prairies of the county provide a wonderful setting for the county's dispersed communities. The county's forests, grasslands and recreation opportunities are among the natural resources that residents and businesses protect, but also utilize for economic development. Residents treasure and maintain their rural life styles.

Additional Envisioned Traits of the County

The following traits help define residents' sense of place and are the foundation of a stable economy within the next 20 years.

- Thriving communities along I-25, along the Cimarron River and in the Moreno Valley
- All age groups enjoy healthy activities including outdoor recreation, entertainment, and cultural venues
- Clean communities take pride in their appearance, architecture, parks and open spaces
- New and growing existing businesses offer an increasing range of goods and services to local residents and visitors
- The economy reaches new peaks in employment
 - » One or two new manufacturing or warehouse businesses locate in the county
 - » Energy development expands, including wind farms, natural gas and oil development, and possibly biomass, minimizing disturbance of sensitive lands
 - » Medical services expand, providing for needs of residents, serving a larger geographic area with specialties, and increasing local employment
- Tourism draws a larger pool of participants in skiing, festivals, fall color tours, and expanded and new sports events such as mountain and road bicycling, running, rifle-shooting, and four-wheeling
- Philmont Scott Ranch and Camp Elliott Barker Girl Scout Ranch continue to attract boy and girl scouts for unforgettable experiences, and innovate with different activities
- The County and municipalities work well together to advance economic development, provide services, maintain facilities, advertise and market the county experience, and advocate for the county's interests
 - » Government entities and residents across the county have great communication linkages through the Internet and regular working relations
- Colfax County is home and the place where our daughters and sons are proud to return to and raise their children
- Residents and business people have a new mindset, embracing growth and activities that are new to the area or bigger than in the past, while enjoying the high quality of life in the county

E. Legal and Administrative Framework

State Statutes Overview

The ability of a county to prepare a comprehensive plan is established in New Mexico statutes. The following discussion presents an overview of the legal framework for “comprehensive” or “master” planning (these terms seem to be used synonymously in the statutes). It quotes and discusses selected relevant statutory provisions and state regulations. For research of specific questions, consult the full statutes and state regulations.

General powers of counties and municipalities: The statutes of New Mexico enable local governments, including both municipalities and counties, to prepare a comprehensive plan. Most of the statutory provisions regarding comprehensive plans are specifically for municipalities. The following statute grants counties the

New Mexico statutes enable the preparation of a comprehensive plan. Many of the provisions are specific to municipalities; however, counties have the same powers as municipalities through a general statutory provisions.

same authority that municipalities have in many areas, including planning. Section 4-37-1 NMSA 1978 states:

All counties are granted the same powers that are granted municipalities except for those powers that are inconsistent with statutory or constitutional limitations placed on counties. Included in this grant of powers to the counties are those powers necessary and proper to provide for the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity and improve the morals, order, comfort and convenience of any county or its inhabitants. The board of county commissioners may make and publish any ordinance to discharge these powers not inconsistent with statutory or constitutional limitations placed on counties.

Purpose of a plan: Section 3-19-9 NMSA 1978 addresses the general purpose of a master plan. Subsection (A) states:

... a municipal planning commission shall prepare and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality and the area within the planning and platting jurisdiction of the municipality which in the planning commission's judgment bears a relationship to the planning of the municipality.

Subjects the plan may recommend on: Section 3-19-9(B) allows that, in addition to recommendations for the physical development of the municipality and its planning jurisdiction, the master plan may also address:

... streets, bridges, viaducts and parkways; parks and playgrounds; floodways, waterways and waterfront development, airports and other ways, grounds, places and space; public schools, public buildings, and other public property; public utilities and terminals, whether publicly owned or privately owned; community centers and neighborhood units and the replanning of blighted districts and slum areas; and public ways, grounds, places, spaces, building properties, utilities or terminals.

Zoning conformance to plan: The most specific statutory provision relating to counties is Section 3-21-5 NMSA 1978, entitled "Zoning Conformance to Comprehensive Plan." Subsection (A) states: "The regulations and restrictions of the county or municipal zoning authority are to be in accordance with a comprehensive plan..."

County planning commission formation: Section 4-57-2 NMSA 1978 enables the creation of county planning commissions and describes the power and duties of the commission. The statute does not specify what the recommendations must address; consequently, recommendations may address the subjects of a comprehensive plan. Subsection 4-57-2(B) allows that a county planning commission may:

- (1) make reports and recommendations for the planning and development of the county to any other individual, partnership, firm, public or private corporation, trust estate, political subdivision or agency of the state or any other legal entity of their legal representatives, agents or assigns;

- (2) recommend to the administrative and governing officials of the county, programs for public improvements and their financing.

Approval of changes to public property and rights-of-way: Section 3-19-11 NMSA 1978 addresses the legal status of a municipality's master plan, including:

- (A) After a master plan... has been approved and within the area of the master plan... the approval of the planning commission is necessary to construct, widen, narrow, remove, extend, relocate, vacate, abandon, acquire or change the use of any
 - (1) park, street or their public way, ground, place or space;
 - (2) public building or structure; or
 - (3) utility, whether publicly or privately owned.
- (B) The failure of the planning commission to act within sixty-five days after submission of a proposal to it constitutes approval of the proposal unless the proponent agrees to an extension of time. If the planning commission disapproves a proposal, it must state its reasons to the governing body. The governing body may overrule the planning commission and approve the proposal by a two-thirds vote of all its members.

Subdivision regulations' conformance with the plan: The New Mexico Subdivision Act, Section 47-6 NMSA, adopted in 1996, requires counties to regulate subdivisions according to requirements and procedures in the act. An amendment was approved in 2003 requiring counties with subdivision regulations that are stricter than the act to have a comprehensive plan that supports the more stringent requirements. Section 47-6.9 (C) states:

Nothing in the New Mexico Subdivision Act shall be construed to limit the authority of counties to adopt subdivision regulations with requirements that are more stringent than the requirements set forth in the New Mexico Subdivision Act, provided that:

- (1) the county has adopted a comprehensive plan in accordance with Section 3-21-5 NMSA 1978;
- (2) the comprehensive plan contains goals, objectives and policies that identify and explain the need for requirements that are more stringent; and
- (3) the more stringent regulations are specifically identified in the comprehensive plan.

Extraterritorial zoning, planning and subdivision regulations: The statutes allow for a one-mile extraterritorial area for zoning and a three-mile extraterritorial area for planning and platting (subdivision). Section 3-21-2(B)(NMSA 1978 states:

A municipal zoning authority may adopt a zoning ordinance applicable to the territory within the municipal boundaries and, if not within a class A county with a population of more than three hundred thousand persons according to the last federal decennial census, shall have concurrent authority with the county to zone all or any portion of the territory within its extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction that is within...

- (2) one mile of the boundary of any municipality having a

population of one thousand five hundred or more but less than twenty thousand persons, provided such territory is not within the boundaries of another municipality...

Section 3-19-5(A) states:

Each municipality shall have planning and platting jurisdiction within its municipal boundary. Except as provided in Subsection B of this section, the planning and platting jurisdiction of a municipality...

- (2) having a population of less than twenty-five thousand persons includes all territory within three miles of its boundary and not within the boundary of another municipality.

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This section provides background information on Colfax County including a description of demographic trends, population projections and a description of the county's natural resources.

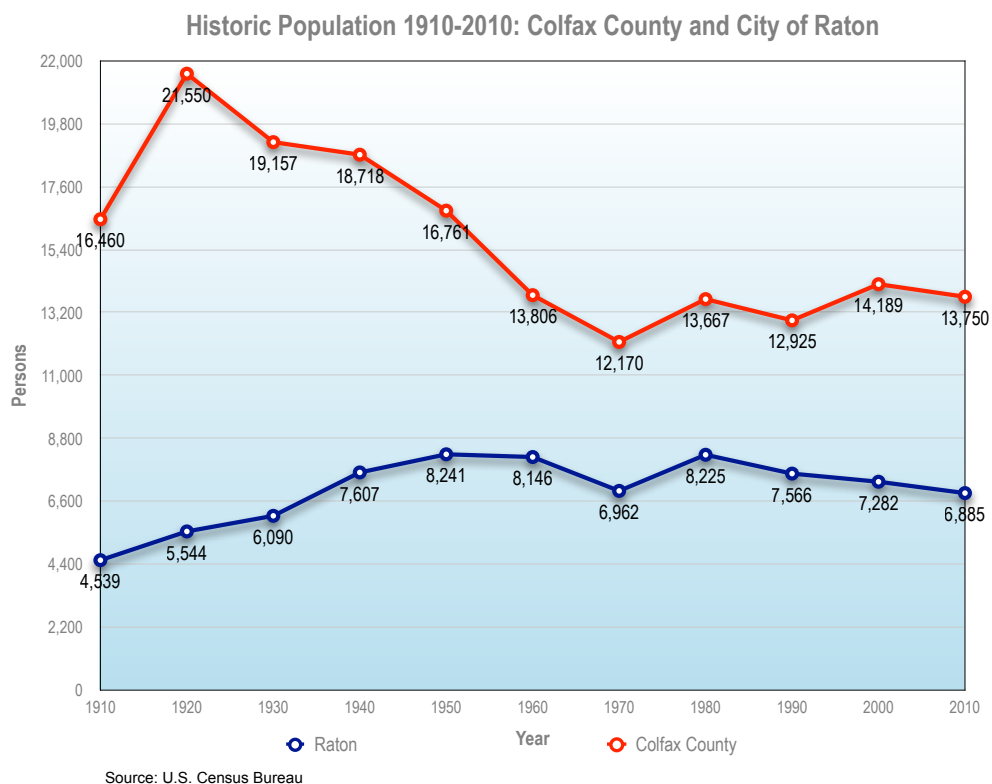
Exhibit II-1
Colfax County and Raton Historic Population

II. Existing Conditions/County Profile

A. Demographic Profile

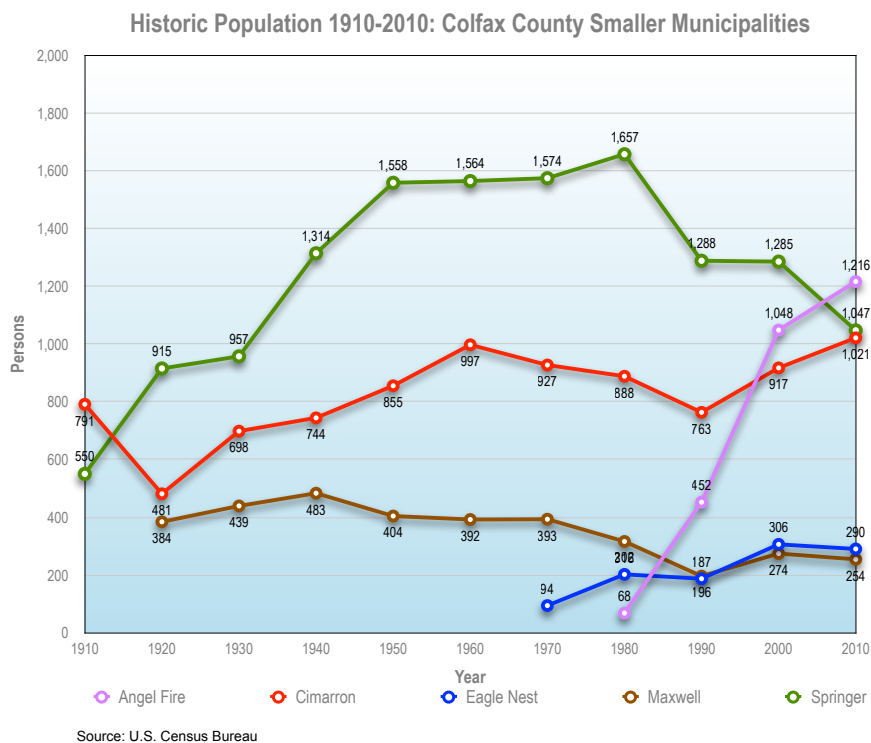
Population

The population of Colfax County peaked in the 1920s at 21,550 and declined steadily until 1970 when it began to increase. The population began to fall again in 1990 when it dropped from 14,198 to 13,750 in 2010 and then to an estimated 13,485 in 2013. While the total county population fell between 1920 and 1960, the Raton population grew from 5,544 to 8,146, but has trended down since 1980 from 8,225 to 6,885 in 2010 and to an estimated 6,741 in 2013.



Each community has its own unique growth pattern. All communities except Angel Fire experienced a decrease in population from 1980 to 1990, followed by a general increase in the 1990s. From 2000 to 2010, Eagle Nest, Springer and Maxwell saw losses, while Angel Fire and Cimarron grew. Angel Fire grew rapidly from 1980 to 2010 and is estimated to have continued mild growth from 2010 to 2013 (from 1,216 to 1,226).

Exhibit II-2
Smaller
Municipalities
Historic
Population



The resident population living in the unincorporated county declined between 1990 and 2000. The population in the unincorporated area of the Cimarron School District constituted the largest group in 1990 and 2000, but it fell behind those living in the Raton School District in 2010.

Exhibit II-3
*Population and
Housing by Colfax
County School
District Areas*

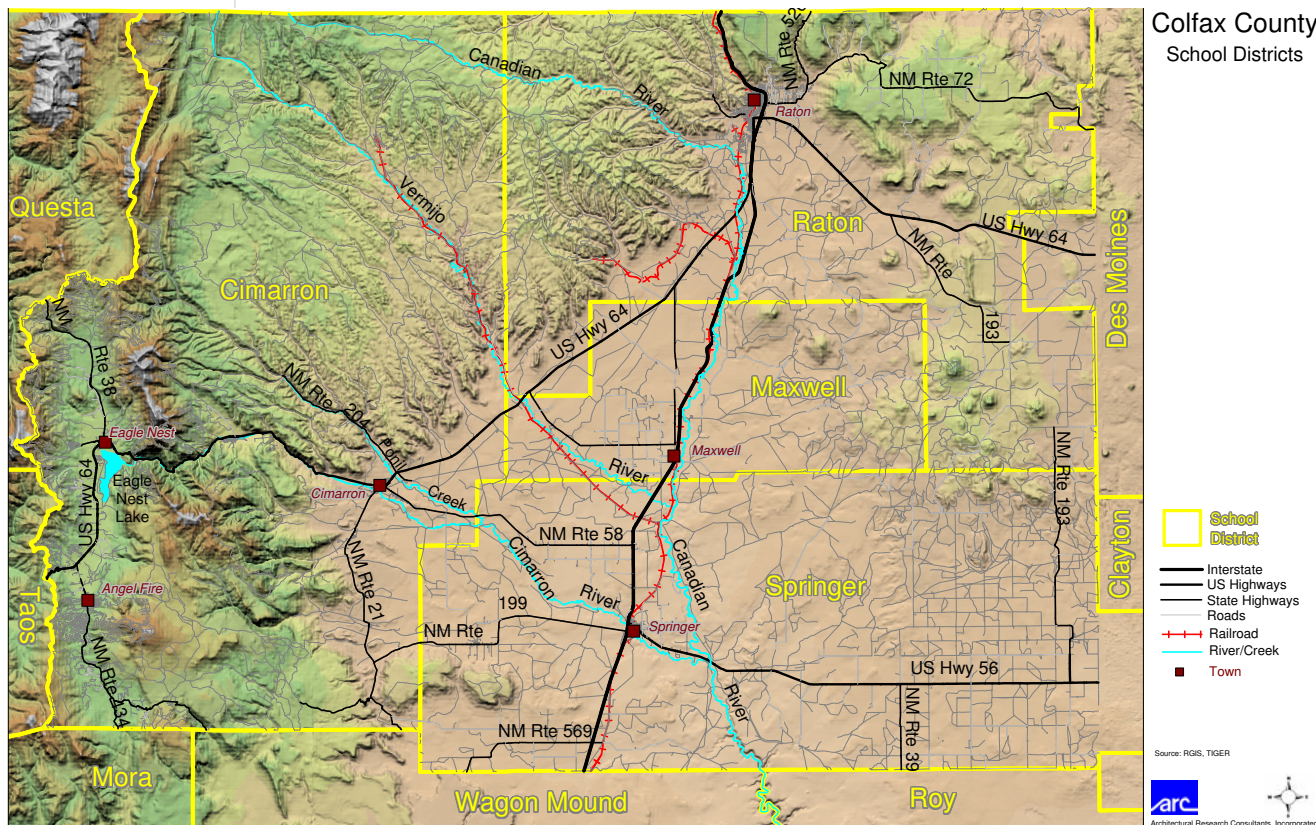
Population and Housing by Colfax County School District Areas

Geographic Area		1990	2000	2010	1990-2000 Average Annual Rate of Change		2000-2010 Average Annual Rate of Change	
Springer Municipal School District	Population	2,003	2,105	1,820	102	0.5%	-285	-1.4%
	Households	764	780	741	16	0.2%	-39	-0.5%
	Housing Units	864	930	952	66	0.7%	22	0.2%
Town of Springer	Population	1,262	1,285	1,047	23	0.2%	-238	-2.0%
	Households	486	520	475	34	0.7%	-45	-0.9%
	Housing Units	589	605	592	16	0.3%	-13	-0.2%
Portion In District Living Outside Town	Population	741	820	773	79	1.0%	-47	-0.6%
	Households	277	260	266	-17	-0.6%	6	0.2%
	Housing Units	272	325	360	53	1.8%	35	1.0%
Maxwell Municipal School District	Population	432	455	442	23	0.5%	-13	-0.3%
	Households	174	180	196	6	0.3%	16	0.9%
	Housing Units	249	225	259	-24	-1.0%	34	1.4%
Village of Maxwell	Population	196	274	254	78	3.4%	-20	-0.8%
	Households	105	117	119	12	1.1%	2	0.2%
	Housing Units	144	148	159	4	0.3%	11	0.7%
Portion In District Living Outside Village	Population	236	191	188	-45	-2.1%	-3	-0.2%
	Households	69	63	77	-6	-0.9%	14	2.0%
	Housing Units	105	77	100	-28	-3.1%	23	2.6%
Cimarron Municipal School District	Population	2,129	3,280	3,531	1,151	4.4%	251	0.7%
	Households	819	1,395	1,636	576	5.5%	241	1.6%
	Housing Units	3,188	3,820	4,744	632	1.8%	924	2.2%
Villages of Cimarron, Eagle Nest and Angel Fire Combined*	Population	1,065	2,271	2,527	1,206	7.9%	256	1.1%
	Households	302	985	1,191	683	12.5%	206	1.9%
	Housing Units	1,173	2,388	3,308	1,215	7.4%	920	3.3%
Portion In District Living Outside Villages	Population	1,064	1,009	1,004	-55	-0.5%	-5	0.0%
	Households	517	410	445	-107	-2.3%	35	0.8%
	Housing Units	2,015	1,432	1,436	-583	-3.4%	4	0.0%
Raton Public School District	Population	8,373	8,350	7,977	-23	0.0%	-373	-0.5%
	Households	3,209	3,470	3,449	261	0.8%	-21	-0.1%
	Housing Units	3,976	3,990	4,087	14	0.0%	97	0.2%
City of Raton	Population	7,372	7,282	6,885	-90	-0.1%	-397	-0.6%
	Households	2,881	3,035	2,963	154	0.5%	-72	-0.2%
	Housing Units	3,502	3,472	3,516	-30	-0.1%	44	0.1%
Portion In District Living Outside City	Population	1,001	1,068	1,092	67	0.6%	24	0.2%
	Households	328	435	486	107	2.9%	51	1.1%
	Housing Units	474	518	571	44	0.9%	53	1.0%

*Angel Fire annexed a large number of developed parcels between 1990 and 2000, thus the municipalities/unincorporated changes for Cimarron are skewed

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000 and 2010

Exhibit II-4
Map of Colfax
County School
Districts



Unincorporated communities in the county include the following. (The Census Bureau only counts and estimates population and housing in some of the following communities as “census designated places.”)

- Black Lake
- Carisbrook
- Colmar
- Dawson
- Dillon
- Elizabethtown
- Farley
- Idlewild
- Miami
- Pittsburg
- Rayado
- Sunny Side
- Sweetwater
- Tinaja
- Philmont Scout Ranch
- Ute Park
- Van Houten

Exhibit II-5
2012 Population
Estimates

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the county lost over 500 residents between 2010 and 2012, led by a net loss in Raton residents.

Colfax County 2012 Population Estimates

	2010	2012	Change	Average Annual Rate of Change
Colfax County	13,750	13,233	-517	-1.9%
Raton	6,885	6,607	-278	-2.0%
Cimarron	1,021	978	-43	-2.1%
Angel Fire	1,216	1,181	-35	-1.4%
Eagle Nest	290	278	-12	-2.1%
Springer	1,047	1,006	-41	-2.0%
Maxwell	254	244	-10	-2.0%
Ute Park	71			
Unincorporated County	3,037	2,939	-98	-1.6%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census and 2012 Population Estimates.

Age

The median age in Colfax County was 46.7 years in 2010 and is estimated to have risen to 47.1 years in 2013. Angle Fire had the highest median age in the county at 54.8 years, and significantly higher than the state average of 35.2. Estimated median ages are:

- Colfax County: 47.1 years
- Angle Fire: 54.8
- Cimarron: 48.0
- Eagle Nest: 44.3
- Maxwell: 32.9
- Raton: 43.5
- Springer: 40.4

Source: U.S. Census American Communities Survey (ACS) 2009-2013 Estimates

The county has seen a large increase in population 65 years and over since 2000. It had a smaller population under the age of 5 in 2010 and a smaller school-age population in 2010 than in 2000, but larger than in 1990. The school age population fell by 202 persons (35%) between 2000 and 2010 and from a 19% share to 13% of the total population. Overall, the population in main childbearing years has remained steady and the main labor force population has been steady since 2000.

Exhibit II-6
County Age
Groups, 2000 to
2010

Age Groups in Colfax County: 2000 and 2010

Age Groups	2000		2010	
	Number	Portion	Number	Portion
Under 5 years	767	5.4%	723	5.3%
5 to 9 years	993	7.0%	783	5.7%
10 to 14 years	1,041	7.3%	789	5.7%
15 to 19 years	1,170	8.2%	860	6.3%
20 to 24 years	576	4.1%	626	4.6%
25 to 29 years	687	4.8%	731	5.3%
30 to 34 years	704	5.0%	653	4.7%
35 to 39 years	979	6.9%	715	5.2%
40 to 44 years	1,107	7.8%	712	5.2%
45 to 49 years	1,080	7.6%	1,003	7.3%
50 to 54 years	1,005	7.1%	1,148	8.3%
55 to 59 years	892	6.3%	1,158	8.4%
60 to 64 years	787	5.5%	1,091	7.9%
65 to 69 years	674	4.8%	894	6.5%
70 to 74 years	591	4.2%	676	4.9%
75 to 79 years	437	3.1%	499	3.6%
80 to 84 years	362	2.6%	365	2.7%
85 years and over	337	2.4%	324	2.4%
Total population	14,189	100.0%	13,750	100.0%
Median age	~40.9		46.7	

School age (5-19)	3,204	22.6%	2,432	17.7%
Main child-bearing years (20-34)	1,967	13.9%	2,010	14.6%
Main labor force (35-64)	5,850	41.2%	5,827	42.4%
Retirees (65 and over)	2,401	16.9%	2,758	20.1%

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

The following table shows estimated age groups for approximately 2013 for the County and municipalities. Angel Fire had the highest percentage of residents over the age of 60 (40%) and the lowest percentage of children under 19 (11.4%). Springer has a large percentage of residents over 60 but also has one of the highest percentage of children under 19 (almost 30%), second to Maxwell (just over 30%). Eagle Nest and Raton have large portions of residents in prime workforce age, from 25 to 55 and over 80% of the Eagle Nest is under the age of 60.

Exhibit II-7
Table of County
Age Groups

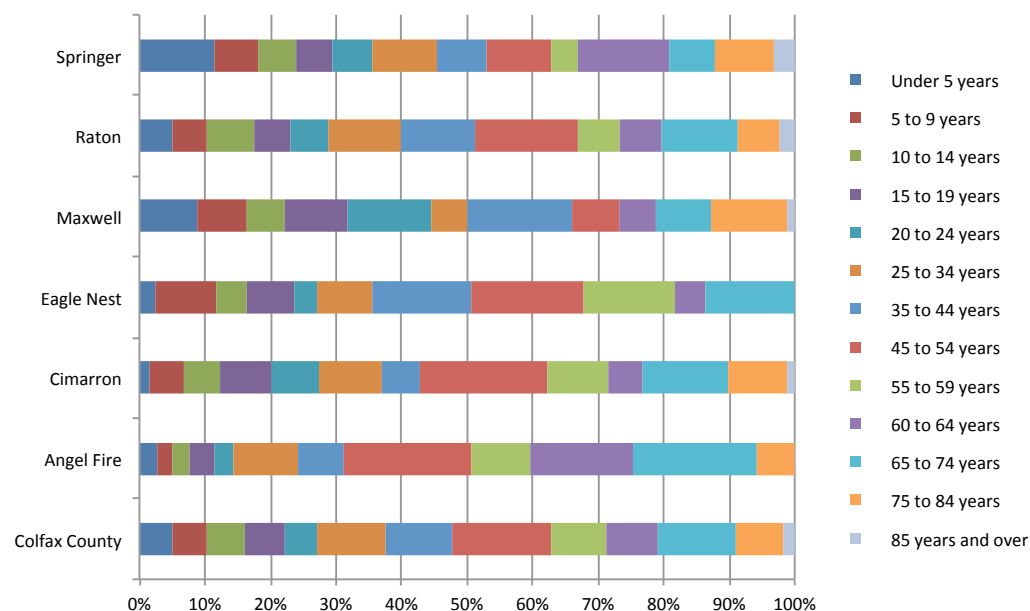
Age Groups in Colfax County: 2009-2013

	Colfax County		Angel Fire		Cimarron		Eagle Nest		Maxwell		Raton		Springer	
	Number	Portion	Number	Portion	Number	Portion	Number	Portion	Number	Portion	Number	Portion	Number	Portion
Under 5 years	686	5.1%	33	2.70%	14	1.6%	7	2.3%	17	8.7%	345	5.1%	123	11.4%
5 to 9 years	682	5.1%	29	2.40%	47	5.3%	29	9.3%	15	7.7%	353	5.2%	72	6.7%
10 to 14 years	801	5.9%	31	2.50%	47	5.3%	15	4.8%	11	5.6%	477	7.1%	64	5.9%
15 to 19 years	830	6.2%	47	3.80%	72	8.1%	22	7.1%	19	9.7%	387	5.7%	59	5.5%
20 to 24 years	666	4.9%	36	2.90%	65	7.3%	11	3.5%	25	12.8%	380	5.6%	65	6.0%
25 to 34 years	1,399	10.4%	121	9.90%	84	9.4%	26	8.4%	11	5.6%	757	11.2%	106	9.8%
35 to 44 years	1,383	10.3%	85	7.00%	53	5.9%	47	15.1%	31	15.9%	757	11.2%	83	7.7%
45 to 54 years	2,026	15.0%	236	19.30%	173	19.4%	54	17.4%	14	7.2%	1,056	15.7%	105	9.7%
55 to 59 years	1,120	8.3%	112	9.20%	85	9.5%	43	13.8%	0	0.0%	438	6.5%	45	4.2%
60 to 64 years	1,088	8.1%	189	15.50%	46	5.2%	15	4.8%	11	5.6%	416	6.2%	148	13.7%
65 to 74 years	1,593	11.8%	232	19.00%	115	12.9%	42	13.5%	16	8.2%	785	11.6%	74	6.9%
75 to 84 years	985	7.3%	70	5.70%	82	9.2%	0	0.0%	23	11.8%	445	6.6%	97	9.0%
85 years and over	226	1.7%	0	0.00%	10	1.1%	0	0.0%	2	1.0%	145	2.2%	36	3.3%
Total population	13,485	100.0%	1,221	100.0%	893	100.0%	311	100.0%	195	100.0%	6,741	100.0%	1,077	100.0%
Median age (years)	47.1		54.8		48		44.3		32.9		43.5		40.4	
School age (5-19)	10,796	80.1%	1,081	88.50%	761	85.2%	247	79.4%	141	72.3%	5,310	78.8%	769	71.4%
Main child-bearing age (20-34)	10,392	77.1%	1,081	88.50%	706	79.1%	238	76.5%	129	66.2%	5,103	75.7%	759	70.5%
Main labor force (35-64)	3,428	25.4%	423	34.60%	220	24.6%	53	17.0%	43	22.1%	1,610	23.9%	317	29.4%
Retirees (65 and over)	2,804	20.8%	302	24.70%	207	23.2%	42	13.5%	41	21.0%	1,375	20.4%	207	19.2%

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 Estimates

Exhibit II-8
Chart of County
Age Groups

Distribution of Age Groups in Colfax County and Municipalities

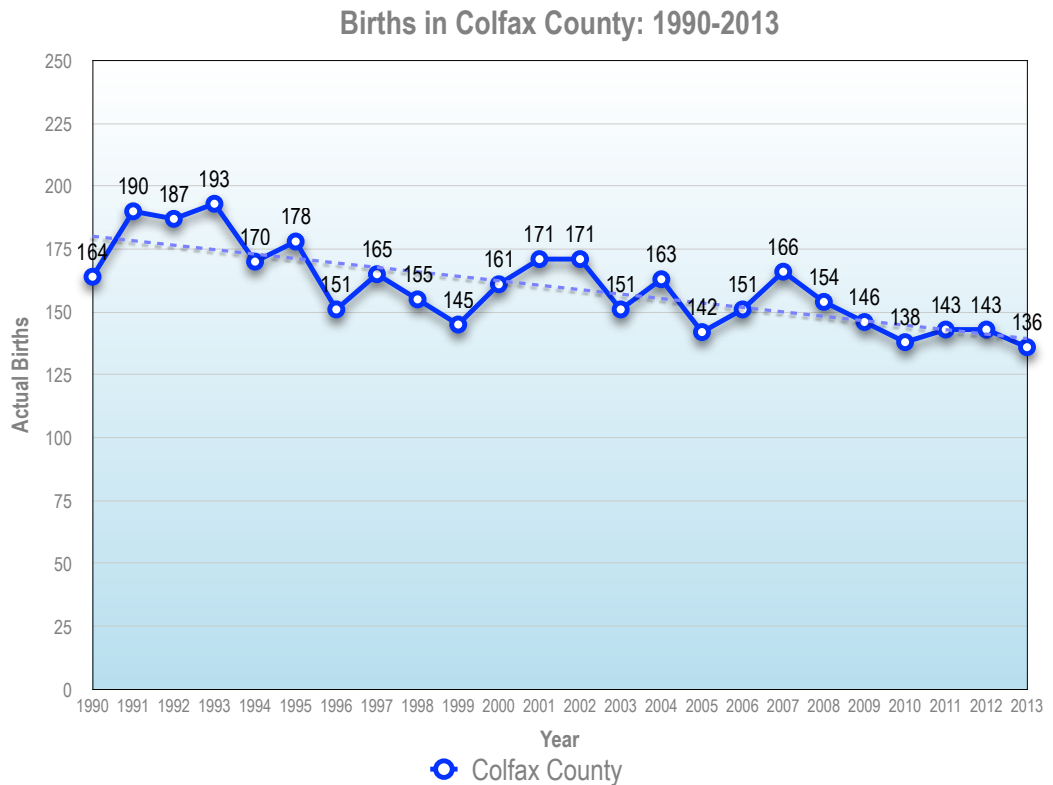


Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 Estimates

Births

Births in Colfax County have generally declined since 1990. They have declined at the greatest rate since the economic downturn began in 2007.

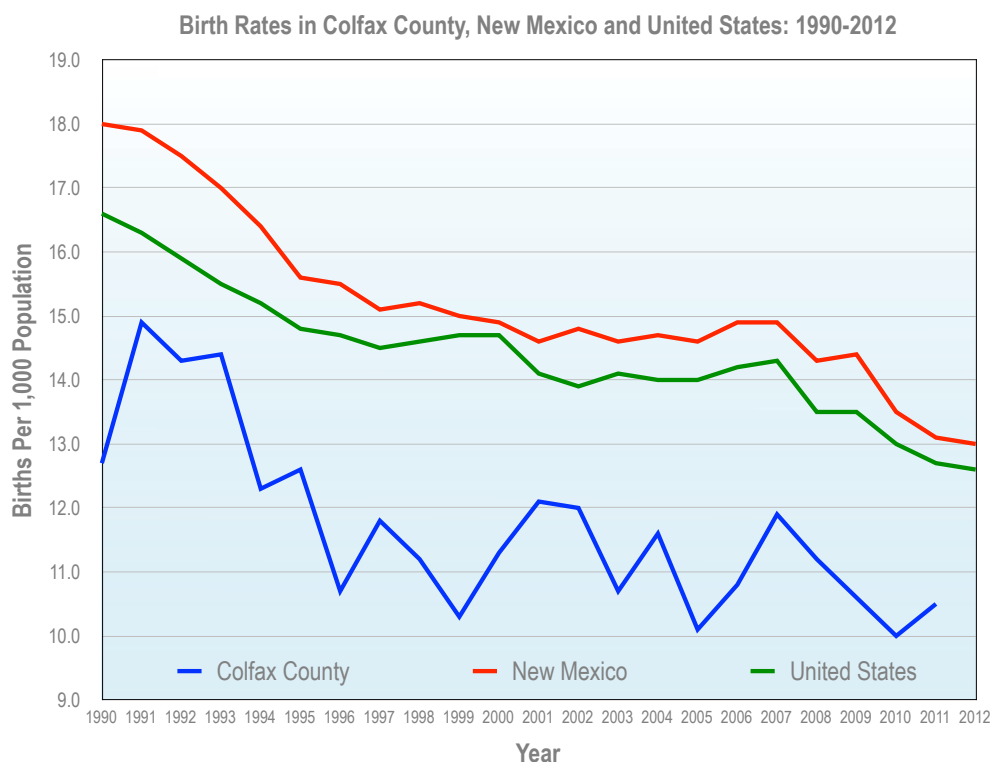
Exhibit II-9
County Births
1990-2013



Source: New Mexico Department of Health

The birth rate in Colfax County has been lower than state or national birth rates. Birth rates have been trending down in the United States over the last two decades and Colfax County follows the trend, declining from 12.7 births per 1,000 residents in 1990 to 10.0 in 2010.

Exhibit II-10
Comparative Birth
Rates



Natural Increase - Births and Deaths

County births have alternately outnumbered deaths annually from 1990 to 2012, but the margin has generally closed. Deaths outnumbered births in 2002 and again in 2006. Deaths in the Raton area outpaced births in 2012 and 2013 after two decades of declining births and increasing deaths. Deaths in the Springer area outpaced births in all but three years from 1996 to 2013. Trends have been less steady for the smaller community areas of Maxwell, Cimarron and Eagle Nest, but births outnumbered deaths during most of the last 23 years. Deaths only outpaced births in ten of those years in Maxwell, six years in Cimarron and just one year in Eagle Nest. Angel Fire births and deaths are available for 2008 to 2013, during which time births outpaced deaths in all but one year.

Exhibit II-11
Colfax County
Births and Deaths

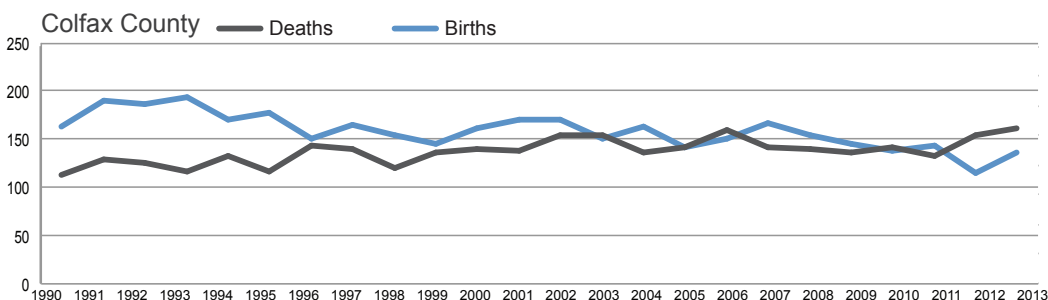


Exhibit II-11
Colfax County
Area Births
and Deaths
Continued

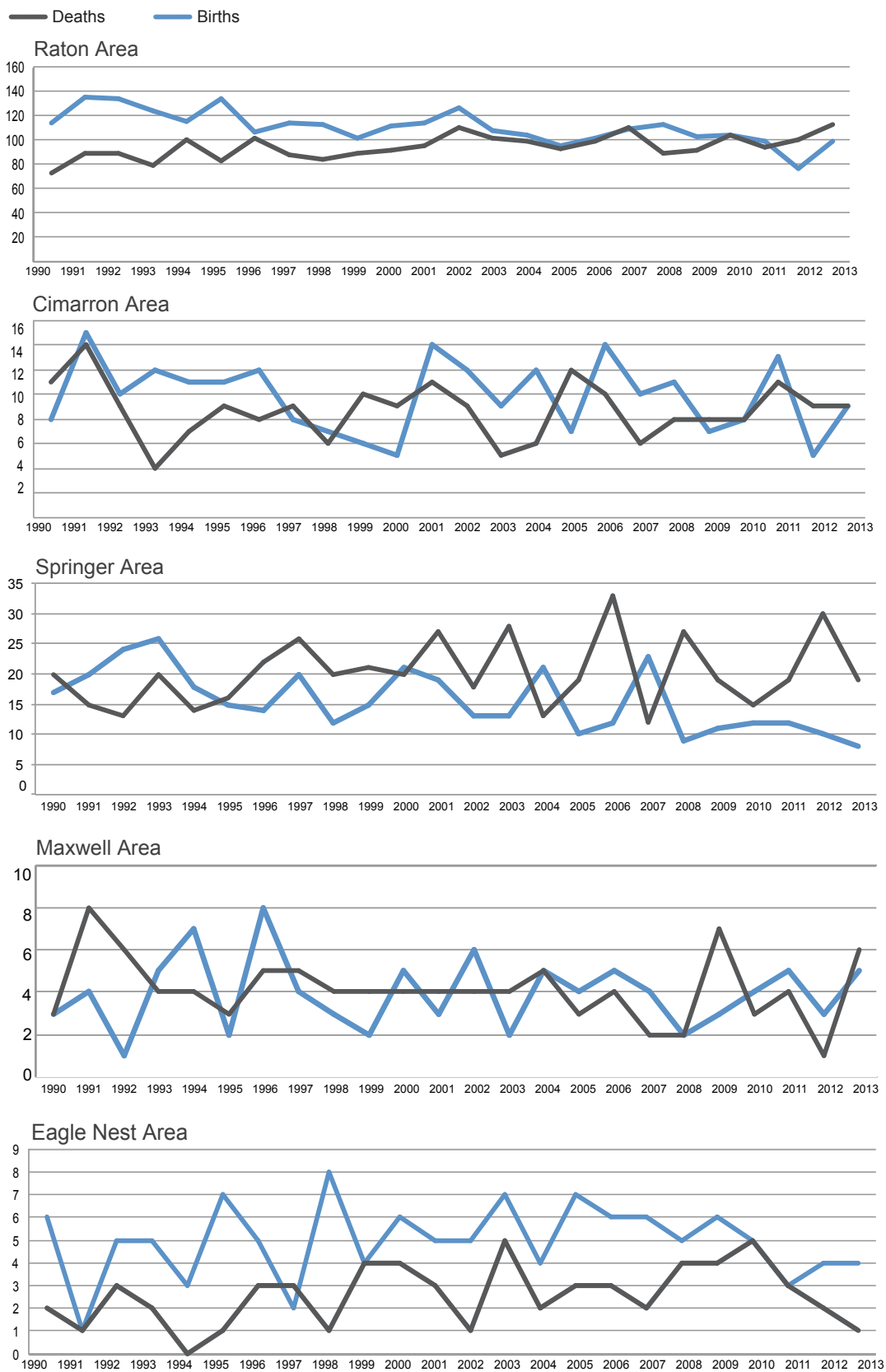
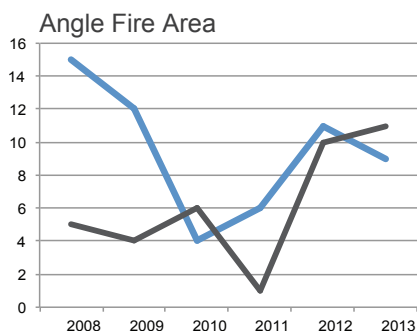


Exhibit II-11
Colfax County
Area Births
and Deaths
Continued



Migration Into Colfax County

Colfax County gained in the share of residents moving in from other states from 1980 to 2000, but has had a smaller share than New Mexico or the U.S.

Exhibit II-12
Distribution
of Residents'
Previous Places of
Residence

Distribution of Colfax County Residents' Place of Residence 5 Years Prior to Census in Comparison to U.S. and New Mexico

Place of Residence	Colfax County			U.S.	NM
	1980	1990	2000	2000	2000
Lived in Colfax County ¹	77.9%	80.9%	77.4%	79.1%	78.1%
Lived in different county in NM ²	8.8%	7.6%	8.1%	9.7%	7.5%
Lived in different state	13.3%	11.5%	14.5%	8.4%	12.1%
Outside U.S.				2.8%	2.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Estimates 1980, 1990, 2000 as reported by BBER for Colfax County; NM and U.S. from 2000 Census SF3

¹Lived in same county - U.S.















²Lived in different county in same state-U.S.

Recently, the county has experienced out-migration. The Census Bureau estimated that the county had net out-migration of 495 persons between 2010 and 2012. This number is in addition to the net change of 28 fewer persons due to deaths greater than births during that two-year period.

Population Projections

Following are demographic and economic factors that drive employment in the future, with assessments of the impacts of those factors.

	County population declined from 1920 to 1980, but was relatively stable from 1980 to 2010
	Population decline in the I-25 corridor communities since 1980 has generally been countered by growth in Cimarron and Moreno Valley
	County median age was seven years older in 2010 compared to 2000
	County median age was ten years older than state's median age in 2010
	Births declined and deaths increased

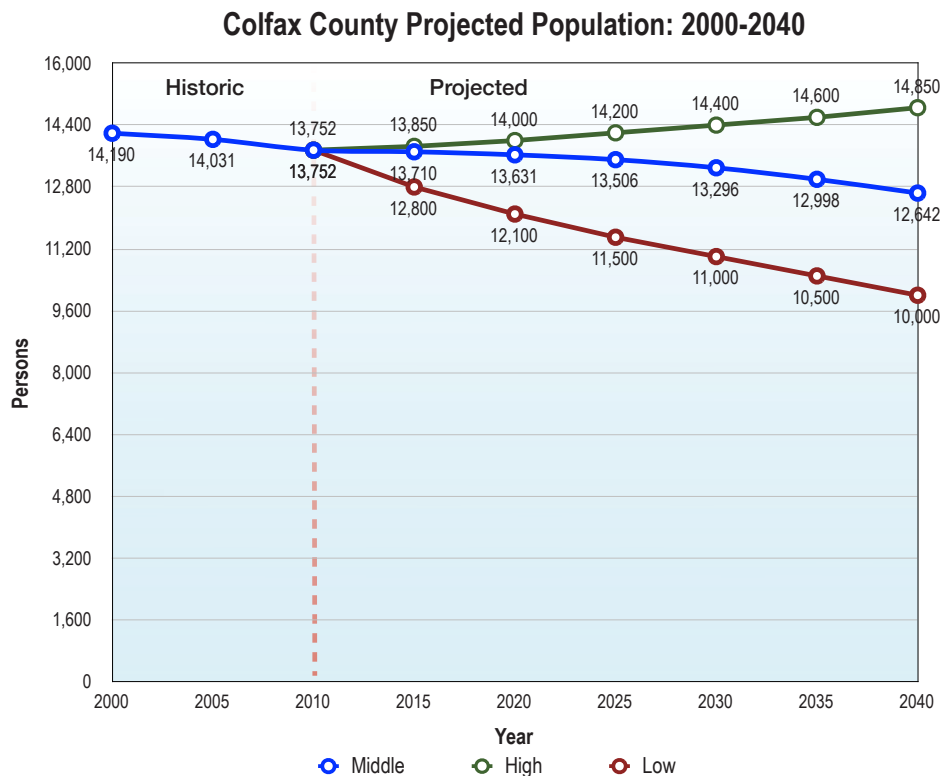
	U.S. Census Bureau estimated that population declined by 517 persons between 2010 and 2012, with deaths exceeding births by 28 persons, and a net migration of -495 persons
	University of New Mexico Geospatial Population Studies projected the county population will decline very gradually between 2010 and 2040, losing 1,100 persons
	County employment peaked in 2003, and then declined by 900 jobs or by 11%, showing little sign of recovery from the national economic downturn
	Accommodation and food services is the only significant and growing sector, exceeding 1,000 jobs (about 20% of total covered employment)
	The Colfax County unemployment rate is about the same as for New Mexico and has dropped since 2010
	Colfax County wages are in the middle tier of New Mexico counties, typical of rural counties, while lower than the state average
	Raton lost its last coal mine in the early 2000s and lost rail freight in the mid-2000s
	Many Philmont and ski area employees live outside the county
	Miner's Colfax Medical Center plans to expand with a new behavioral health clinic, hoping to upgrade from level IV to level III trauma center
	Locations of several communities on I-25 give substantial access for growth in travel, tourism, possibly manufacturing and warehousing
	Raton MainStreet continues to work on improving the business climate and cultural draw of downtown
	Angel Fire Resort has been highly supportive of growth and increasing employment, spending \$35 million in the last five years
	Recreational tourism/visitorship with Philmont, Ski Area, Cimarron Canyon, and great ranches have potential for expanding year-round activities
	Natural resource growth possibilities, including timbering, sawmills, and biomass and natural gas

ARC prepared three population projection series:

- The low-range projection assumes an average annual rate of decline similar to the 2012 Census estimate, but flattening over time: -1.1%
- The mid-range projection assumes an average annual growth rate similar to that UNM-GPS projections for 2000 to 2010: -0.3%
- The high-range projection assumes an average annual growth rate similar to 1990 to 2010: +0.3% average annual rate

ARC believes that the stable and downward drivers will likely result in declining population in the future (mid-range projection). The upward drivers are mostly positive prospects rather than trends. The high population projection requires several of these prospects to materialize. The mid-range projection series is the most likely.

Exhibit II-13
Low-, Mid- and
High-Range
Population
Projections

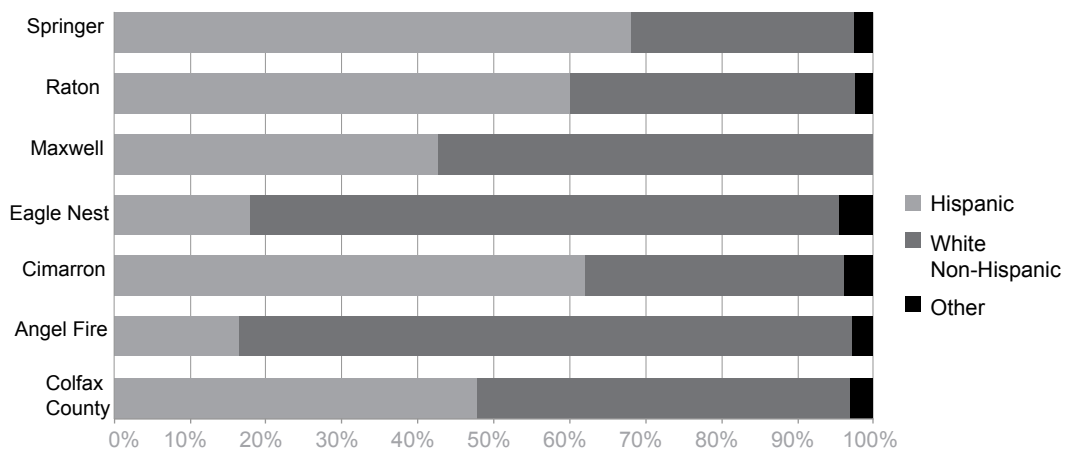


Sources: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010 counts and 2005 estimate; University of New Mexico Geospatial Population Studies projections, 2012; and ARC projections for low and high ranges.

Exhibit II-14
County
Population
Ethnicity

Ethnicity and Race

Colfax County: Ethnicity



Source: US Census, ACS 2009-2013 Estimates

The American Communities Survey (ACS) from the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the ethnic and racial make-up of the population in 2013.

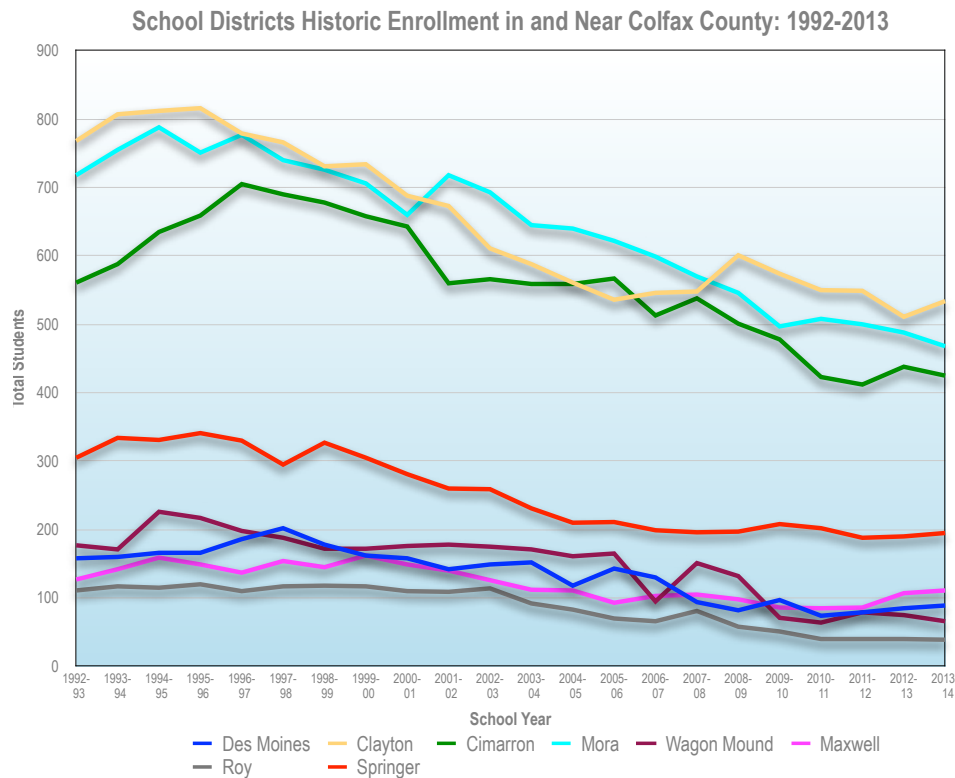
Colfax County was an almost evenly split of Hispanic* and non-Hispanic White, with some very small percentages of Black, American Indian and Asian residents. Eagle Nest and Angel Fire have the highest percentages of non-Hispanic White residents and Springer has the highest percentage of Hispanic residents.

*“Hispanic” is a self-described ethnicity and can be of any race.

Historic School Enrollment In and Near Colfax County

All school districts in Colfax County and the immediate area lost enrollment between 1992 and 2013. Raton Public Schools enrollment declined by 35% from 1992 to 2013. The largest rate of enrollment losses in the area were at Roy (-64%) followed by Wagon Mound (-58%).

Exhibit II-15
Historic
School District
Enrollments



B. Environmental Conditions

Colfax County consists of 3,771 square miles (2.4 million acres) in northeast New Mexico. It has a mix of Southern Rocky Mountains Steppe/ Open Woodland/ Coniferous Forest/ Alpine Meadow and Great Planes Palouse Dry Steppe. Just under 1 million acres of Colfax County is forest land. Elevation of municipalities ranges from 5,922 ft. in Springer to 8,500 ft. in Angel Fire. The climate is dry, with an average rainfall of 17 in. per year, and generally mild with cool, light summers. Natural resources in the county include timber, coal, natural gas, and some mineral deposits.

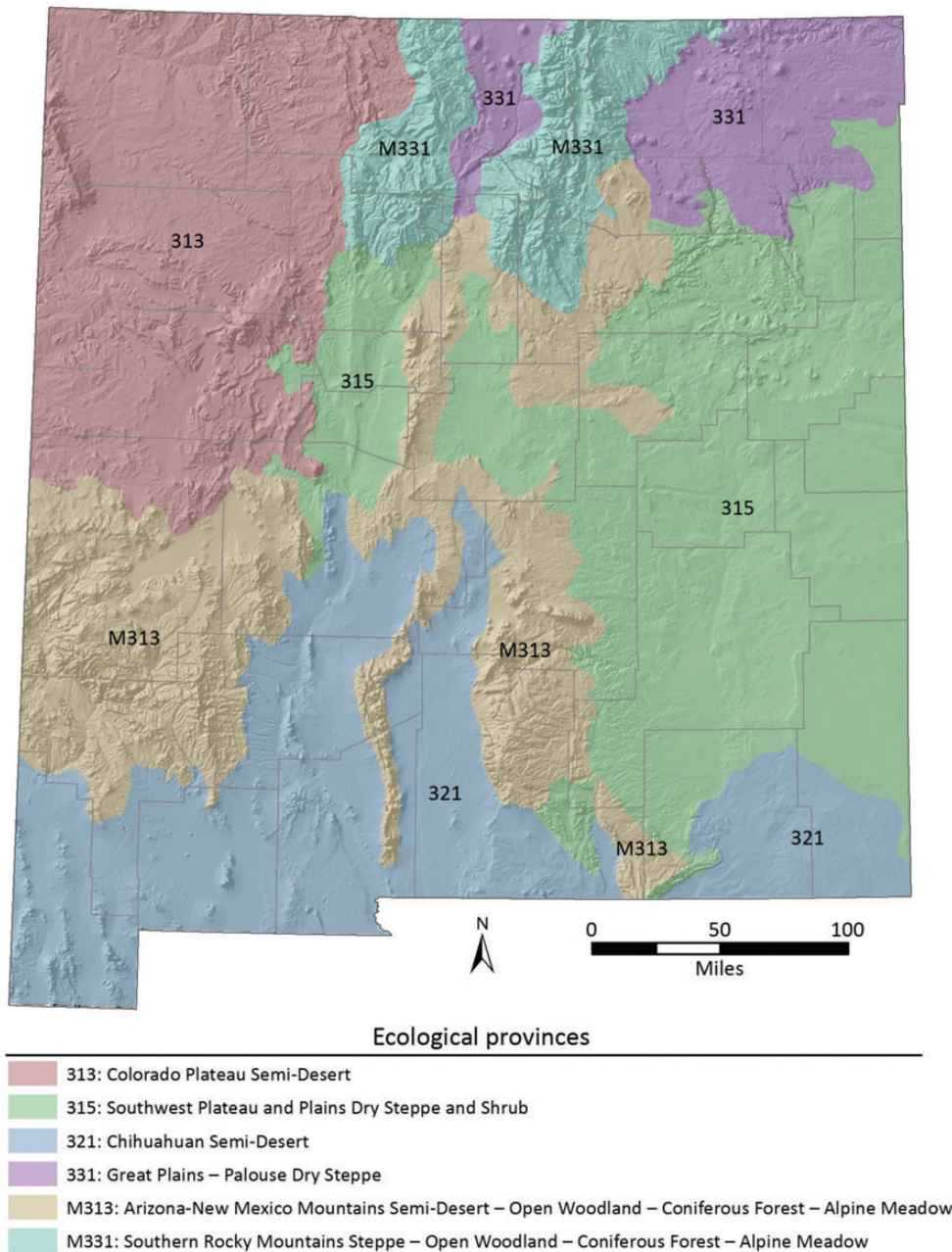
Vegetation ranges from spruce, pine, fir and aspen forests in the mountains on the west side of the county through piñon-juniper scrubland to open prairie in the eastern part of the county. The Moreno Valley has mountain grassland.

Ecoregions

Ecoregions in Colfax County consist of:

- Southern Rocky Mountains Steppe / Open Woodland / Coniferous Forest / Alpine Meadow
- Great Plains Palouse Dry Steppe

Exhibit II-16
New Mexico
Ecological
Provinces



Source: U.S. Forest Service Resource Bulletin RMRS-RB-18. August 2014.

Vegetation

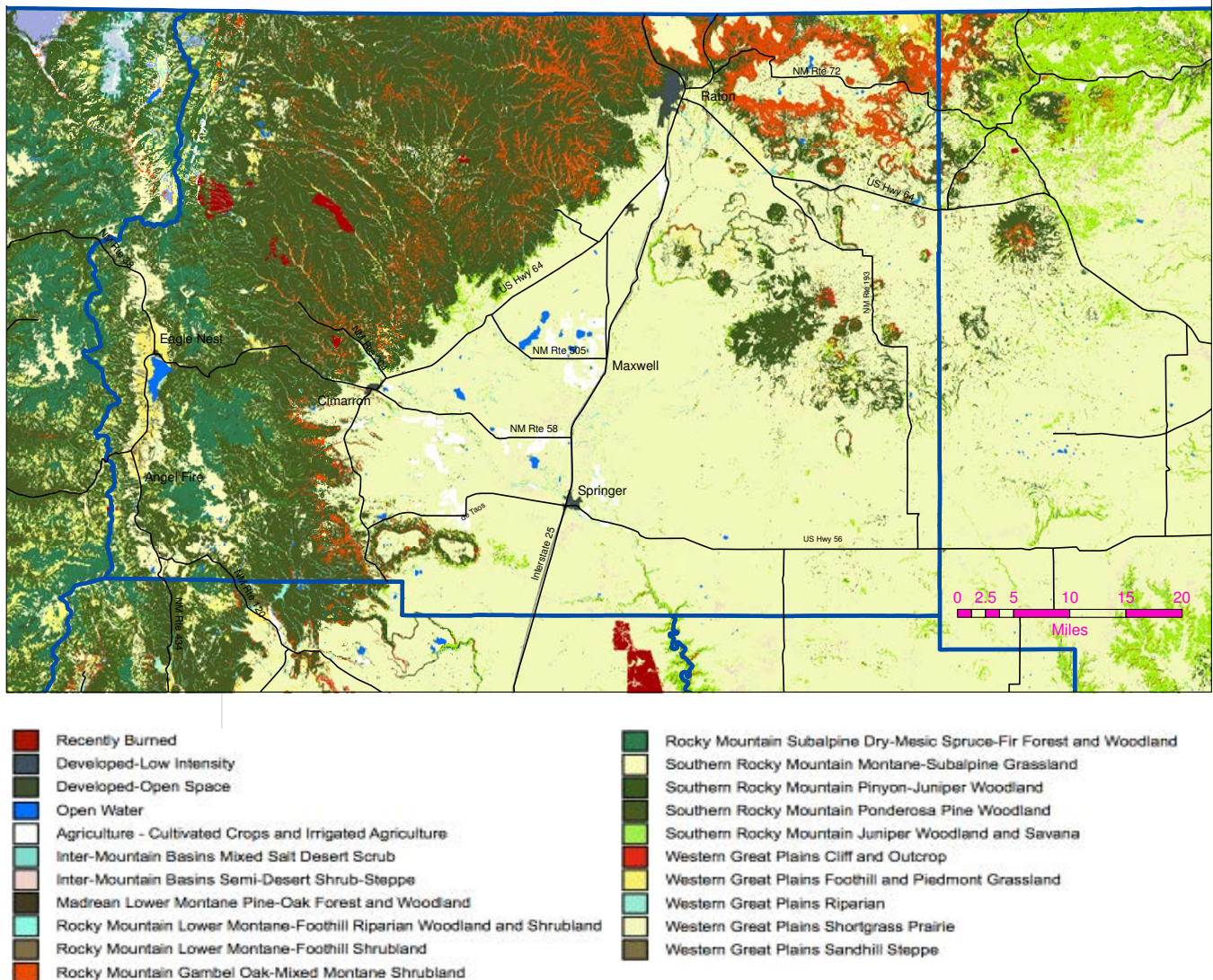
Approximately 44% of the total county land area is forested, while the remaining approximately 56% is grassland. Most of the forested land is on the west side of the county and grasslands on the east side. The Moreno Valley is classified as grasslands extending north-south and including Eagle Nest and the valley towards Angel Fire and Black Lake. Raton Pass, Sugarite, escarpments along Johnson Mesa and extinct volcanos scattered to the south are forested in the eastern side of the county.

The largest vegetation types in land area are:

- Rocky Mountain gamble oak-mixed montane shrubland
- Rocky Mountain subalpine dry-mesic spruce-fir forest woodland
- Southern Rocky Mountain montane-subalpine grassland
- Southern Rocky Mountain piñon-juniper woodland
- Western Great Plains shortgrass prairie

Exhibit II-17
Colfax County
Vegetation Map

Colfax County Vegetation Map



Source: New Mexico RGIS, UNM-Earth Data Analysis Center, 2009

C. Surface Water Resources

Colfax County fills more than 95% of its water supply needs with surface water, mostly from the Canadian River and its tributaries. These waters generally collect in the mountains and flow east and south to the Canadian River. The top two water uses in the county are irrigated agriculture (80% between 1995 and 2000) followed by evaporation from the reservoir (12%). The major tributaries to the Canadian River in the county are the Vermejo and Cimarron Rivers.

The county has a number of reservoirs, streams and lakes, the most significant and influential of which is Eagle Nest Lake at just under 80,000 ac/ft. It serves as a public water supply, an irrigation source and a recreational resource.

According to the Canadian River Compact between New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma, use of Canadian River water in Colfax County is “free and unrestricted.” This means that water use in Colfax County is not limited by the compact. However, stream water rights have been fully appropriated since 1950 for the Canadian River system and no new appropriations will be permitted. In most years, adjudicated water rights exceed available surface water supply, so availability is a functional rather than a legal constraint.

Because stream and ground waters are interconnected, the New Mexico Office of State Engineer (OSE) strictly controls groundwater appropriations, however, domestic well applications are automatically approved and entitled to 3ac/ft/year. The cumulative impact of such wells could potentially threaten senior water rights holders and no recourse mechanism currently exists.

Water Quality

For comprehensive planning, water quality in Colfax County is an issue, especially due to the loss of riparian vegetation. Delineating a buffer zone around waterways, discouraging grazing along banks and avoiding road crossings of waterways are generally sound initial steps in restoring riparian and waterway health.

A potential issue for groundwater quality is methane gas development which transfers usually low quality water from coal vein depths (about 2,000 ft. below surface) to between 6,000 ft. or 7,000 ft. below surface, where water quality is already usually quite poor. The potential hazard arises if the reinjection of large amounts of groundwater below gas deposit elevations causes methane gas to migrate up and into the groundwater supplies above gas deposit elevations. The recommendation in the Colfax County Regional Water Plan is continued monitoring by water managers. Colfax County had approximately 350 methane gas wells in 2002.

Watersheds

Two watersheds are entirely or almost entirely within the county:

- Canadian Headwaters
- Cimarron Headwaters (which includes the Moreno Valley subwatershed, including Eagle Nest Lake)

Exhibit II-18
Canadian
Headwaters
Watershed

Canadian River Watershed Within Colfax County

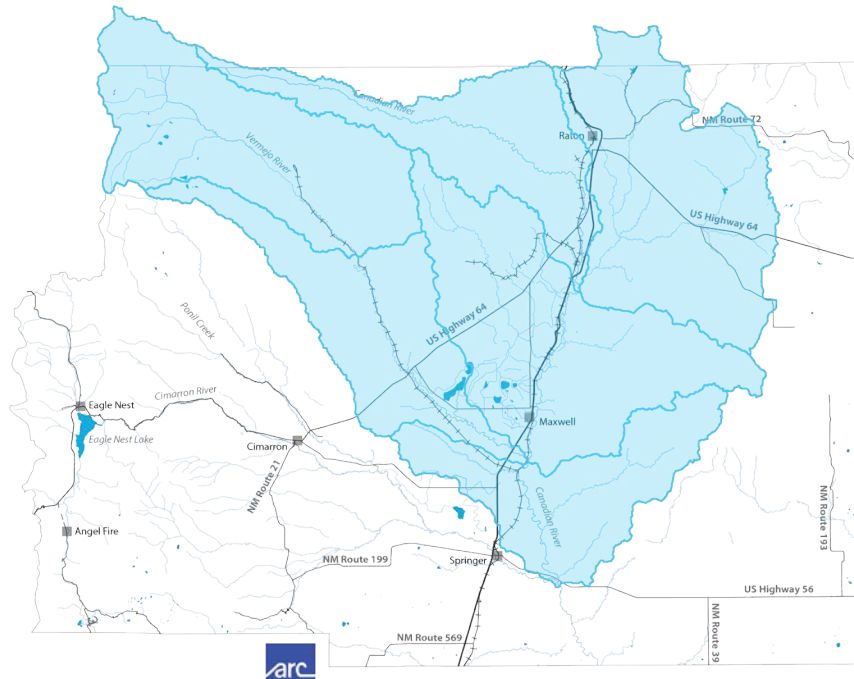
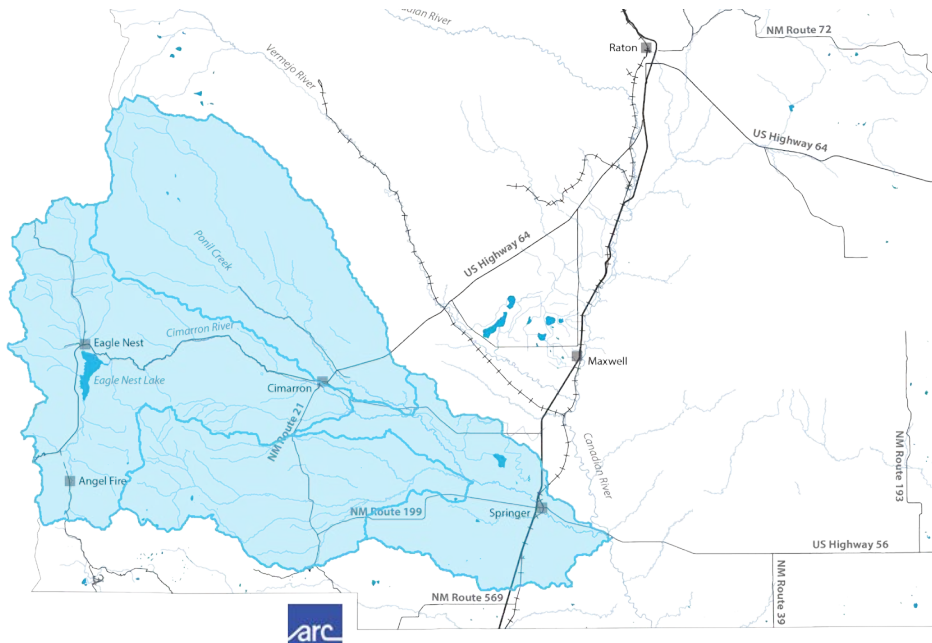


Exhibit II-19
Cimarron River
Headwaters
Watershed

Cimarron River Watershed



Both watersheds face water quality issues such as e. coli, temperature, turbidity, eutrophication, and the presence of nitrogen, phosphorus, and mercury. Causes of pollution include grazing, loss of riparian ecology, low road crossings, flow alteration and point source pollution.

The Cimarron Watershed Alliance highlighted the implementation of a mitigation plan for Taos Pines Road as “crucial for the future water quality in the Moreno Valley.”

Geography and Geology

The western side of the county encompasses a portion of the Sangre de Cristo mountains, part of the Southern Rocky Mountain Province. They are high mountain areas (7,000' to 12,000' elevation) and include the Cimarron-Baldy and part of the Taos ranges.

The County contains the southern two-thirds of the Raton Basin, which is known for its well-preserved exposures of the Cretaceous-Paleocene boundary.

Coal, Oil and Natural Gas Resources

Beyond those geologic attractions, the Raton Basin holds the county's coal and natural gas deposits. York Canyon particularly has thick coal deposits. However, demand for coal is diminishing nationwide and the development of coal relies on rail. Currently, efforts are coming together to improve the tracks for the continuation of Amtrak and enable freight, while its long-range condition may again deteriorate.

Natural gas is present in Colfax County, while its expanded development is uncertain. Production from existing natural gas wells in Colfax County has dropped from an all-time high of just over 27M Mcf (million cubic feet) in 2012 to 19.7M Mcf in 2014. In 2012, initial testing and research indicated the possibility of a natural gas resource under northeastern New Mexico and oil companies expressed interest in developing fields. (Source: *The Raton Range*, 2/07/2012) According to oil companies at the time, development would depend on "consistent and clear" regional regulation and high gas prices. Since then, San Miguel County has adopted strict energy development regulations and gas prices have plummeted to historic lows. Colfax County has developed a draft Colfax County Oil & Gas Ordinance based on the Rio Arriba Oil and Gas Ordinance, further discussed in the Land Use Element. Designation of environmentally sensitive areas and cultural preservation targets should accompany the adoption of such legislation.

The Cimarron-Baldy and Taos mountain ranges have historically been mined for a variety of materials beyond coal, including gold and copper, but only two mines remained in operation in the county as of 2014. Both were aggregate mines.

Forest Resources

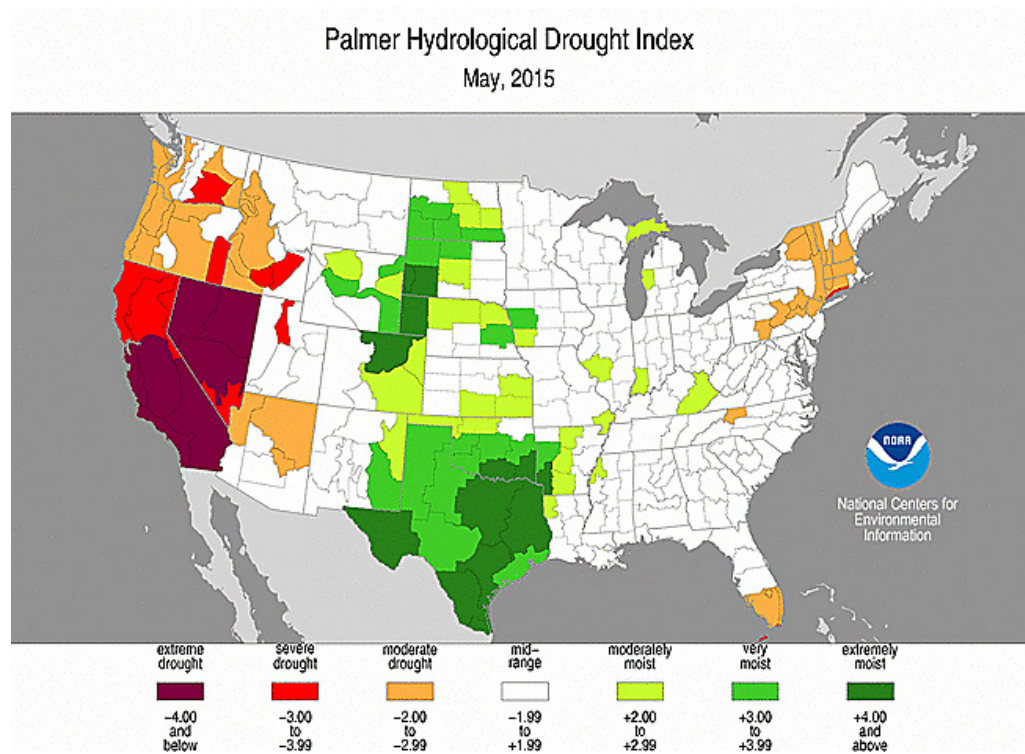
Colfax County has timber resources and potential for timber production, especially on private lands. Of timber-producing land in Colfax, 83% is privately owned. A representative from the timber industry has indicated that there is market demand for the tight-grained pine that grows in the county and has expressed interest in developing the resource, especially on private lands. The U.S. Geological Service reports an estimated net volume of 1,456 million board feet of sawtimber (at least 9" diameter at breast height) pine in Colfax County in 2013, with an average annual net growth of 19.8 million board feet per year.

In 2007, Colfax County accounted for almost 24% of New Mexico's commercial timber harvest volume, or 39.8 million board feet. However, this harvest was after a five-year period over which New Mexico's timber harvest volume fell by half.

Forest Health

In recent years, the drought has taken a significant toll on the region's forests. As of May 2015, Colfax County is not in a drought; however, this respite may be only temporary.

Exhibit II-20
Index of Short-Term Drought Conditions, May 2015



Source: National Climate Data Center

The forests have a significant need for removal of a substantial amount of material, especially from public lands, where decades of fire suppression coupled with widespread die-offs as a result of drought-related infestations have created overcrowded forests with high numbers of dead and dying trees. This condition poses a serious fire risk and severely inhibits healthy forest ecosystem functioning, as addressed in the Hazards Mitigation Element of this plan.

The U.S. Forest Service has indicated that it does not have the resources to thin the deep forests, and it focuses its efforts on thinning near urban interfaces to mitigate the potential for fire damage to structures. The area with the highest potential for wildfire is in the Moreno Valley. The Village of Angel Fire is considering adopting mandatory thinning requirements for its residents.

Drought and Climate Change

Climate modeling indicates that the next century will be one of increasingly severe droughts in the southwest. Researchers at Cornell University released a study in 2014 which found an 80% chance that the current drought will extend into a "megadrought" lasting a decade or more. Furthermore, NASA predicts a similar probability that later in the century the southwest will face a 35-year mega drought and that "unprecedented drought conditions" worse than anything seen in the

last 1,000 years are likely to hit the Southwest after 2050 and remain in place for decades.

The implications for ranching and agriculture are not favorable, especially for New Mexico forests. Due to the intensity and scale of recent fires, forests may be unable to recover and will likely transition into grass and scrubland. Large and very hot wild fires are likely to continue and worsen. New research indicates that by 2050, forests in the Southwest will suffer regularly from drought stress at levels exceeding previous megadroughts and that 35 years from now, 80% of years will exceed even those levels of drought. Scientists predict that “the majority of forests in the Southwest probably cannot survive in the temperatures that are projected” over the coming 85 years. (Source: environment 360, Megadrought in U.S. Southwest: A Bad Omen for Forests Globally, Caroline Fraser http://e360.yale.edu/feature/megadrought_in_us_southwest_a_bad_omen_for_forests_globally/2665/)

Exhibit II-21
*Tree mortality
in Los Alamos
County, 2001
(left) and 2004
(right)*



Source: USGS, 2004.

Discussion source: Williams, A. Park; Allen, Craig D.; Macalady, Alison K.; Griffin, Daniel; Woodhouse, Connie A.; Meko, David M.; Swetnam, Thomas W.; Rauscher, Sara A.; Seager, Richard; Grissino-Mayer, Henri D.; Dean, Jeffrey S.; Cook, Edward R.; Gangodagamage, Chandana; Cai, Michael; McDowell, Nate G. 2012. “Temperature as a potent driver of regional forest drought stress and tree mortality,” *Nature Climate Change* 3:292-297, 2013.

Exhibit II-22

Base Map of Colfax County Places, Transportation and Water

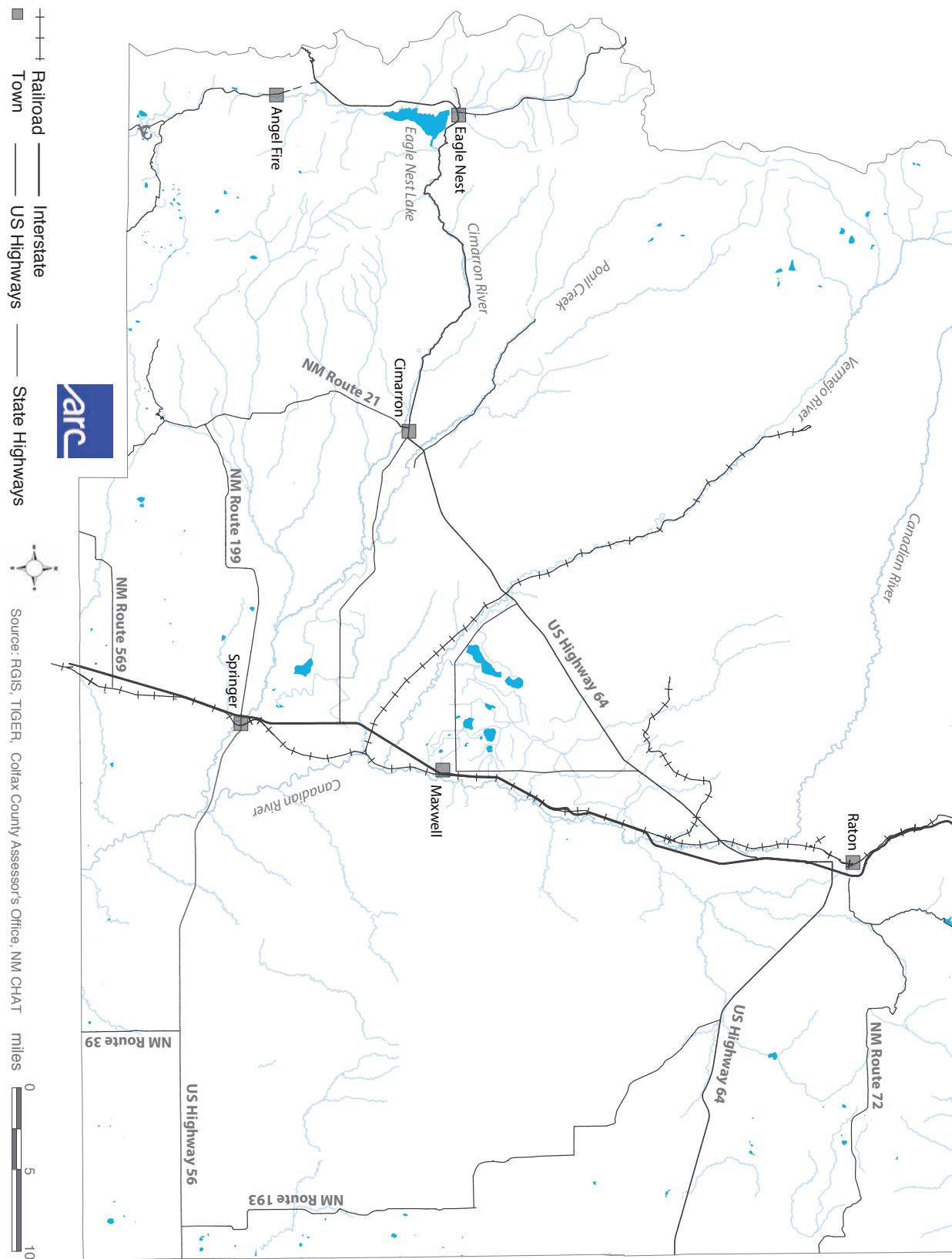
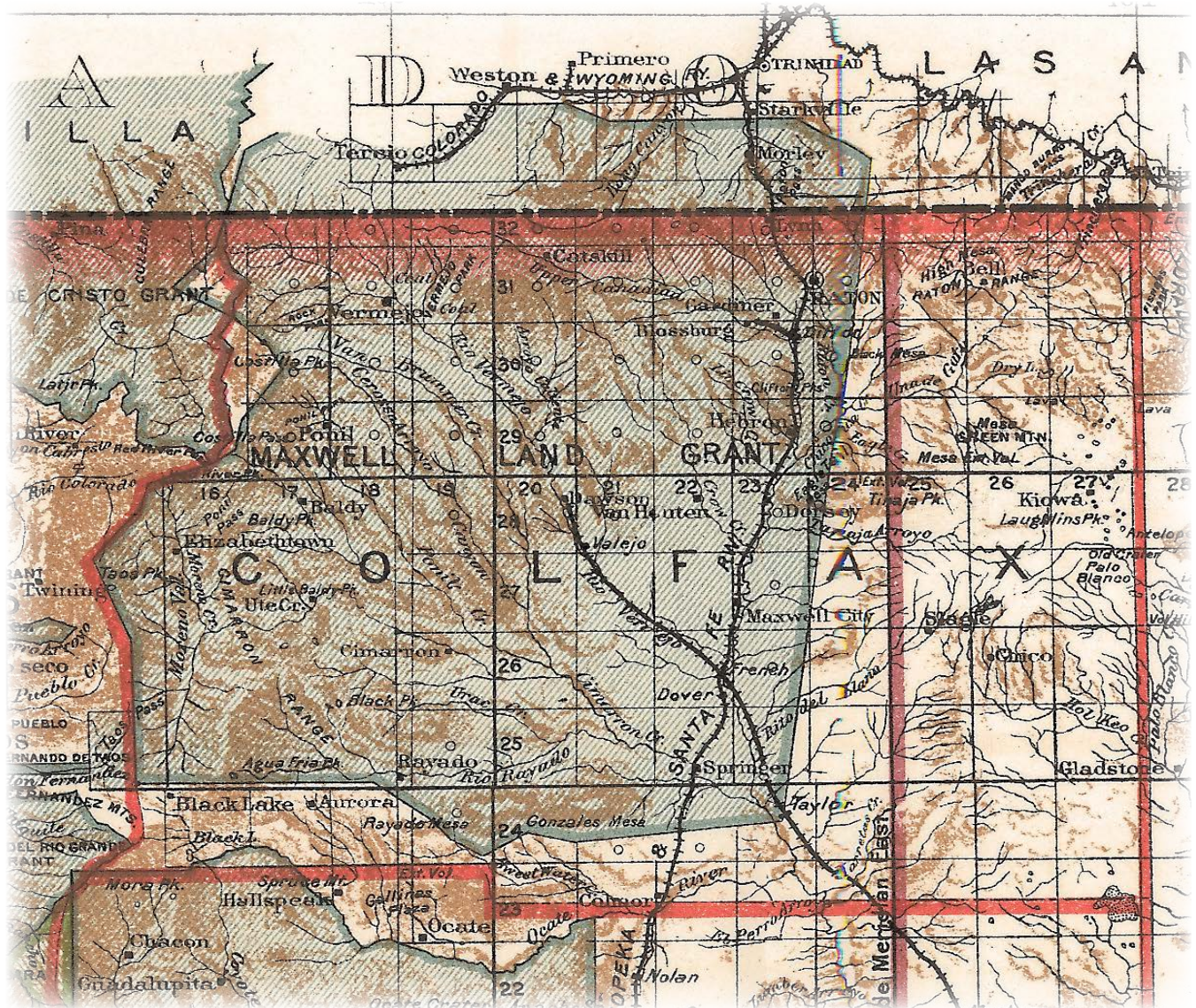


Exhibit II-23

Colfax County in the Territory of New Mexico, 1903



Source: U.S. House. 58th Congress, 2nd Session. H.doc.5/30 (Serial Set 4649. Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1903. Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 1903.

http://www.lib.msu.edu/branches/map/scanned/USJPEGS/1903_NewMexico/

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The purpose of the Implementation Plan is to summarize the main actions needed to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

III. Implementation Element

A. Introduction

The implementation plan presents specific actions that Colfax County should take to achieve its goals for the future. The table on the following pages lists the actions by subject (some actions address more than one area). Development of each plan element identified issues, goals and policies, and various activities. The plan elements present more detailed information and the policy framework for the implementation actions.

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B. Implementation Actions

Time Frame				Action	Tool	Lead Party	Potential Funding or Collaboration
Short Term (1-2 Years)	Intermediate (3-5 Years)	Long Term (>5 Years)	Ongoing				
Land Use							
				Update County subdivision regulations, add development standards and criteria for review	Regulatory	County Attorney	General Fund
				Develop extraterritorial subdivision review with Angel Fire, Cimarron, Eagle Nest, Maxwell and Springer	Regulatory	County Attorney, Municipalities	General Fund
				Periodically develop report on land use issues to consider need for additional land use regulations or incentives	Regulatory	County Manager	General Fund
				Schedule periodic review and update of Raton Extraterritorial Zoning (ETZ) action. Change “tool” to: ETC recommendation to ETA	ETC* Memo to ETA*	ETC, ETA, County Manager, County Attorney, City of Raton	CDBG*, TIF*, General Fund
				Establish agreement with municipalities regarding funding to staff ETZ enforcement	Funding/ Staffing	County Manager, Municipalities	General Fund and Application Fees
				Hire a code enforcement official or seek collaboration to share a position	Staffing	County Manager	General Fund and Application Fees
				Develop oil and gas ordinance	Regulatory	County Attorney	General Fund
				Expand GIS mapping	Administrative	County Manager, Assessor, 911 Coordinator	General Fund, Grants
				Encourage ranchers and farmers and, offer assistance with best practices for land stewardship.	Outreach and Materials	County Extension Agent, County Manager	General Fund, Environmental Grants
Community Character							
				Prepare guidelines to advise builders on best practices for rural subdivision development	Guidelines	County Manager	General Fund
				Organize periodic clean-up events for County unincorporated areas coordinated with municipalities	Community Organizing, Supplies	County Manager	General Fund
				Fund the design and implementation of a wayfinding and gateway system	County Initiative	County Manager	General Fund
				Encourage the preservation of Colfax County historic assets	County Policy	County Manager	General Fund
				Support State enabling legislation to develop land banks and coordinate with municipalities in demolition and redevelopment programs	County Policy	Colfax County, Municipalities	General Fund
				Establish a visual impact permit system to determine the suitability of proposed alternative energy development	Regulatory	Colfax County	General
				Encourage future projects to use green building techniques and strive for sustainability	County Policy	Colfax County	General Fund
Economic Development							
				Design a strategy to improve the capacity of economic development organizations in the county	Plan	County Manager, EDO*, Municipalities	General Fund
				Establish unity behind clear, concrete and measurable goals based on the County's comprehensive plan	Goals Outline	EDO, County Manager, BoCC*	General Fund, EDO Funds
				Designate an existing economic development organization with capacity to focus on all parts of the county and develop effective programs as a full-time County economic development corporation	Incorporation Papers	County Manager	General Fund
				Establish a countywide coordinative economic development effort led by the County economic development corporation	Organization	EDC*, EDO	General Fund, NMEDD*, Grants
				Use online tools to enable and expand access to the County's communication network to encourage cooperation among municipalities, economic development organizations and unincorporated areas	Online Networking Platform Communi-cation	County Manager, EDC	General Fund
				Develop online property listing, engage local realtors to maintain the site	Promotional Online Database	EDC	General Fund
				Start a program to connect youth and job seekers with internship, apprenticeship or successor training positions in the local community	County Program	EDC	General Fund, Grants, NM Workforce Solutions
				Conduct an outreach program to area ranches, resorts, institutions and hospitals to develop local workforce training programs	Outreach, County Program	EDC	General Fund, Matching Funds, Grants
				Develop a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program in partnership with local institutions	County Program	EDC	General Fund
				Establish and promote new countywide recreational event(s)	County Initiative	EDC	General Fund
				Meet with New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to identify additional areas of potential development and employment needs	Outreach	EDC, County Manager	General Fund
				Give policy support to Trinidad State Junior College for development of community education programming in the former NMHU building in Raton	County Policy	EDC	General Fund
				Research the potential for a local gunsmithing and saddle-making economy	Staffing, Outreach	EDO, EDC	General Fund
				Urge municipalities to conduct meetings with local youth to determine program and recreation needs	Community Outreach	EDC	General Fund
				Produce and distribute a comprehensive map of County assets including historic places, trails and attractions	County Initiative	EDC	General Fund
				Support event programming to celebrate the Santa Fe Trail's 200th anniversary in 2021; begin developing events	County Initiative	EDC, Municipalities	General Funds, Matching Funds, Grants
				Develop branding and campaign to market area assets to attract tourists, new businesses and new residents	County Initiative	EDC, Municipalities	General Fund, Grants
				Conduct a summit to explore ways to expand the timber economy	Summit	County Manager, Extension, EDC	General Fund, Grants, NMEDD
				Map locations and capacity of fiber optic cables as a possible draw for the IT industry	Staffing	EDC	General Fund
				Encourage municipalities to assess and develop the capacity to draw warehousing and manufacturing businesses	Support	EDC	General Fund
				Schedule review and assessment of ongoing economic development efforts and refine accordingly	Review, Update	EDC	General Fund
				Consider actions in collaboration with CO in the Raton Basin Economic Development Plan	Report	County Manager, EDOs	General Fund

* BoCC: Board of County Commissioners
* CDBG: Community Development Block Grant
* EDC: Colfax County Economic Development Corporation
* EDO: Local economic development corporations, Chambers of Commerce and business associations

* ETA: Extraterritorial Planning Authority
* ETC: Extraterritorial Planning Commission
* HUD: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
* ICIP: Infrastructure capital improvement plan
* NMMFA: New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority

* NERTPO: North East Regional Transportation Planning Organization
* NMEDD: New Mexico Economic Development Department
* TIF: Tax increment financing
* USDA: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Time Frame				Action	Tool	Lead Party	Potential Funding or Collaboration
Short Term (1-2 Years)	Intermediate (3-5 Years)	Long Term (>5 Years)	Ongoing				
Housing							
				Meet with regional and local housing authorities and the community to determine a housing strategy for the workforce and low- and moderate-income housing	Strategy	County Manager, EDC	NMMFA*, HUD*, USDA*
				Work with municipalities to develop workforce housing and identify assistance for teacher housing	Strategy	Housing Authorities, County Manager, EDC	NMMFA (HERO Program), USDA, HUD
				Hold a county energy fair with alternative energy producers and electric coops to promote and educate about efficiency and available assistance for improvements	Outreach, Use of Fairgrounds	County Manager, EDC	General Fund, NMMFA
				Request that the Northern Regional Housing Authority increase the number of Section 8 vouchers allotted to the county	Outreach	County Manager	HUD
				Encourage local housing authorities to expand capacity and services to unincorporated county areas	Meeting	County Manager	Local Housing Authorities
				Gather information on available home rehabilitation, homebuyer education and assistance, financial literacy education and assistance with energy efficiency improvement	Report	County Manager	NMMFA, USDA, Housing Trust
				Conduct outreach to connect homeowners with efficiency or rehabilitation assistance	Administrative Time	County Manager	Grants, General Fund
				Ask local schools and libraries to make information on homebuyer education and assistance and financial literacy education available	Outreach, Materials Distribution	County Manager, EDC, Local Schools and Libraries	Grants, General Fund, Private Donation
				Apply to NMMFA for funding to develop an affordable housing plan and ordinance	Plan Development and Adoption	County Manager, Municipalities	NMMFA
Transportation							
				Continue to use an annual prioritized County road maintenance schedule	County Initiative	County Roads Department	General Fund
				Designate staffing hours for trail network development	Staffing	County Manager	General Fund, Grants, YCC
				Develop an annual ICIP	Plan	County Manager	General Fund
				Adopt erosion mitigation standards and best practices for County roadways and begin mitigation effort	County Program	County Roads Department	General Fund, Environmental Grants
				Adopt low-erosion road design standards	Road Standards	County Roads Department	General Fund, Environmental Grants
				Continue to support retention of AMTRAK rail service in the county and improvements to tracks	Outreach	County Policy	General Fund
				Support the resumption of freight service on existing rail	Outreach	County Policy	General Fund, Grants
				Conduct feasibility study of and negotiate use rights and improvement of siding at French Track for tourism and freight use	Lease Agreement	EDC	General Funds, Private Investment
				Hold a community meeting to measure interest in developing a County transportation program or recruiting a private taxi or subscription shuttle	Public Engagement	County Manager	General Fund
				Participate in NERTPO meetings	Staffing	County Roads Department	General Fund
Facilities							
				Conduct detailed condition assessments of all County buildings	Assessment	County Manager, Insurance Carrier	General Fund
				Expand Vigil-Maldonado Detention Center	Construction Project	County Manager	General Fund
				Conduct review of all County building uses including tenant services to determine best use	Staffing	County Manager	General Fund
				Conduct an ADA survey and develop a plan of action to demonstrate compliance with the law	County Plan	County Manager	General Fund, Federal Grants
				Maintain a central database of all warranties, repairs and requests for repairs and improvements	Database	County Manager	General Fund
				Conduct energy audits and invest in improvements in the energy-efficiency of County buildings	Audit and Maintenance	County Manager	General Fund, Grants
				Periodically conduct a space needs assessment of buildings to determine the need for additional space	Assessment	County Manager	General Fund
				Prepare an annual ICIP with prioritized needs and approaches and secured funding from the County's general budget	Update, Funding	County Manager	General Fund
				Develop resolution of policy support for Miners' Colfax Medical Center expansion	Advisory Resolution	BoCC	General Fund
				Develop master plan for the Colfax County Airport to guide safety, capacity and user space capital improvements projects	County Plan	County Manager	General Fund
Utilities and Water							
				Develop a County solid waste plan to include improving efficiency and recycling / reuse rate	County Plan	County Manager	General Fund, Grants
				Develop a County water plan that promotes sustainability and outlines means of developing conjunctive use of water resources	County Plan	County Manager	General Fund, Grants
				Study potential sources and means of obtaining potable water, including using emerging technologies and innovative solutions	Research	County Manager, EDC	General Fund, Grants, Bureau of Land Reclamation Drought Contingency Funds
				Adopt a resolution directing the exclusive use by the County of native and drought-tolerant plants at all newly constructed or rehabilitated County facilities	Resolution	County Manager	General Fund
Hazards Mitigation							
				Evaluate the security of county water facilities to determine the need to improve the security of County's water supply	Staffing	Fire Marshal, 911 Coordinator	General Fund
				Obtain more detailed flood-risk maps and identify high risk areas to determine risk mitigation approaches	Staffing	Fire Marshal, 911 Coordinator	General Fund
				Conduct a study to determine hazards risk and emergency response management procedure for County facilities and equipment	County Study	County Manager, Fire Marshal	General Fund
				Adapt water use, fire preparedness, rangeland use, forest management, and watershed management approaches and policies to respond to changing climate projections	Plan Reviews, Update	County Manager, Fire Marshal	General Fund, Grants

“Land use” is the study and practice of guiding the development pattern of the county.

The land use element presents a broad vision of current and future land use, serves as the basis for land use regulations, and generally integrates all elements of the plan.

Exhibit IV-1
*Colfax County
Land Status Table*

IV. Land Use Element

A. Introduction

The purpose of the land use element is to guide the future pattern of land use in the county over the next 20 years. The land use element presents a broad vision of current and future distribution and character of land uses. This element is the “keystone” in a comprehensive master plan. More than any other element, it integrates all of the plan components. Consequently, it should be consistent with and supported by the other elements of the plan.

B. Existing Conditions

Land Area and Average Density

Colfax County contains over 3,780 square miles. It is the 17th largest county of the 33 counties in New Mexico. The county is characterized by large land area, relatively small population, large private ranches and distinct geographic areas. Colfax County has an average density of 3.7 persons per square mile (2010 population base), 11th lowest of all counties in the state. Several of the surrounding counties have even fewer persons per square mile: Harding has the least with 0.3, Union, fourth lowest, has 1.2, and Mora, 7th lowest, has 2.5. Taos County, in contrast, has 14.9 persons per square mile.

Land Status

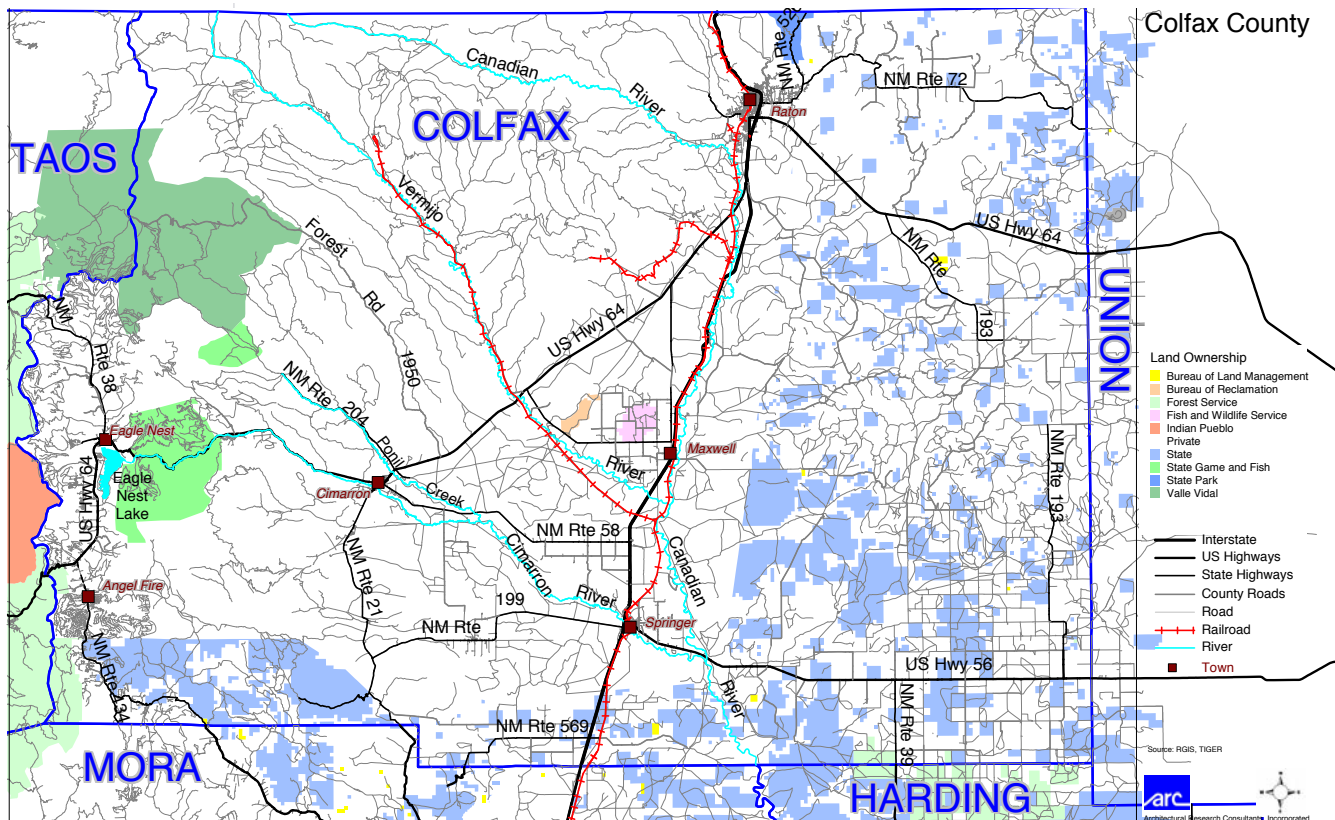
Most of the land in the county, 85%, is private. This proportion is approximately the same as Mora County, but higher than Taos County (40%), Union County (79%), San Miguel County (71%) and Harding County (69%).

Colfax County Land Status

Ownership Type	Square Miles	Acres	Portion of Total
Private	3,207.0	2,052,491	85%
State of New Mexico (State Land Office)	365.0	233,587	10%
US Forest Service	114.1	72,999	3%
New Mexico State Game and Fish	64.3	41,174	2%
US Fish and Wildlife Service	6.2	3,938	0.16%
US Bureau of Reclamation	2.8	1,771	0.07%
US Bureau of Land Management	1.6	1,050	0.04%
Indian/Tribal	0.3	169	0.01%
Total	3,761.2	2,407,179	100%

Source: Bureau of Land Management Land Ownership, 2014

Exhibit IV-2
Land Status Map



Among public land agencies, the State Land Office manages the largest share of land in Colfax County, some 365 square miles, or 10% of the total county land area. New Mexico State Land Office land is in various sized holdings east and south of the Maxwell Land Grant. Unlike the pattern in many other counties in New Mexico where the State Land Office has one section per township, Colfax County holdings are in larger, oddly shaped clusters. The US Forest Service (USFS) has the second largest public land holding, with 114 square miles, 3% of the total. This land is part of the Carson National Forest. Valle Vidal, a wilderness area which is heralded for its outstanding scenery and wildlife, offers bicycling, hiking, horse riding and camping. It occupies most of the Carson National Forest in the county.

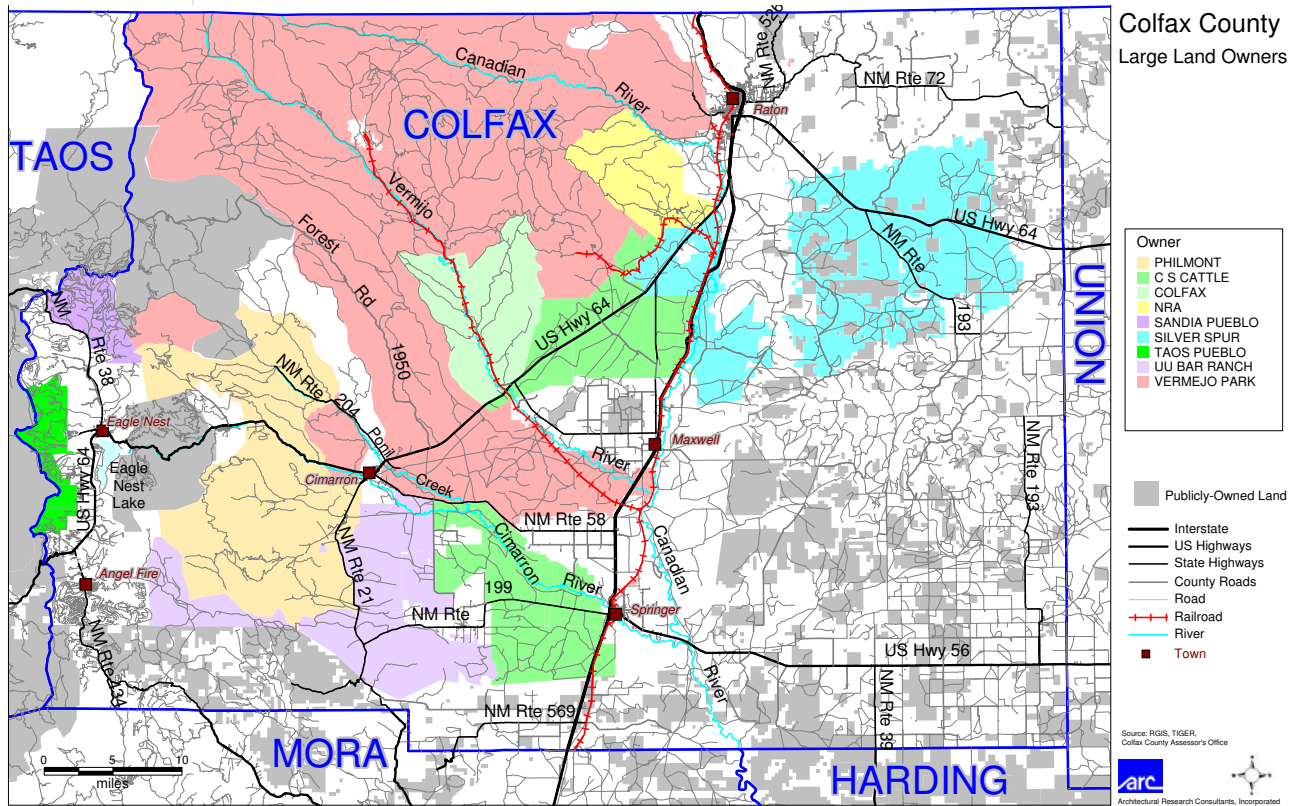
Considering the mountainous, forested nature of the western side of the county, USFS has relatively little land. The New Mexico Department of Game & Fish has 64 square miles of land in two areas, east of Eagle Nest Lake and the headwaters of Ponil Creek. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service owns Maxwell National Wildlife Refuge, with habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

Large Ranch Holdings

ARC researched the Colfax County Assessor's GIS data to identify tracts of land owned by large land owners. This method did not uncover property for which the owner was listed on Assessor's Office records differently from the major holdings, consequently, additional acreages are held by these land owners not shown on the map or in tables. According to this analysis, ten large land owners occupy

at least 46% of the county land area. John Malone owns Silver Spur Land and Cattle Company, also know as the T.O. Ranch. Mr. Malone has had the largest landholdings in the U.S. since 2011. Reportedly, his landholding is significantly larger than shown in the map below. Ted Turner owns Vermejo Park Ranch, making him the largest landowner in the county.

Exhibit IV-3
Large Land
Owner Holdings



The Maxwell Land Grant is mainly occupied by these large ranches:

Exhibit IV-4
Large Landowner
Acreage

Large Land Owners in Colfax County

Land Owner	Acres	Portion of Total County
Philmont Scout Ranch	134,339	5.6%
C S Cattle Co.	114,139	4.7%
Colfax Land and Cattle Co.	50,273	2.1%
NRA Whittington Center	33,314	1.4%
Pueblo of Sandia	16,172	0.7%
Silver Spur Land and Cattle Co.	142,989	5.9%
Taos Pueblo	15,826	0.7%
UU Bar Ranch LLC	84,066	3.5%
Vermejo Coal LLC	9,342	0.4%
Vermejo Park LLC	505,706	21.0%
Total	1,106,167	45.9%
Total County Acreage	2,410,880	

Source: Colfax County Assessor's Office GIS data.

County and large land owners have many mutual interests including watershed management, forest health, resource-based economic development, and ranching as a livelihood.

Forest Resources

Colfax County has 999,300 acres of land that has or had at least 10% live cover trees of any size, or “forest land.” Some 532,800 acres of land are capable of producing 20 cubic feet per acre per year of timber, according to the U.S. Forest Service Resource Bulletin RMRS-RB-18. 2014; 466,500 acres are evaluated as “unproductive” forest land, unable to produce 20cf/acre.

The forest in Colfax County has suffered considerable damage over the years due to disturbances including fire, clearing, and disease. One third of all timberland acres has less than 10% of the live trees that used to grow there. This condition is called “nonstocked.”

Of the remaining 2/3 of the forest, large diameter timberland makes up the largest part (77%), followed by medium diameter, then small diameter timberland.

The following table shows estimated acreages of Colfax County timberland by diameter. The “stand size class” identifies the predominant tree size in Colfax County. Most are large diameter.

Exhibit IV-5
*Timberland
Stocks*

Colfax County Timberland Stocks	
Stand-Size Class	Acres
Large Diameter	413,000
Medium Diameter	64,000
Small Diameter	29,000
Nonstocked	259,000
All Class Sizes	532,800

Source: US Forest Service Resource Bulletin RMRS-RB-18. 2014

The table below shows that the majority of acres are poorly stocked in large diameter trees. Colfax County has a lot of “timberland” but most of it does not have many harvestable trees. Only 2% of the growing-stock tree average is overstocked.

Exhibit IV-6
*Stocking Class of
Forest Land*

Stocking Class of Growing-Stock Trees	Acres
Nonstocked	27,000
Poorly Stocked	226,800
Moderately Stocked	154,200
Fully Stocked	111,500
Overstocked	13,200
All Stocking Classes	532,800

Source: US Forest Service Resource Bulletin RMRS-RB-18. 2014

Exhibit IV-7
Timber Volume
and Average
Growth
Characteristics

Forest Types by Predominant Species

Pine is the county's major timber resource. The highest percentages of timber types are ponderosa and Jeffrey pine. Fir, spruce, juniper and piñon make up the majority of other softwoods. The forests have relatively few hardwoods.

Colfax Timber: Net Volume & Average Growth				Net Volume of Growing-Stock Trees	Average Annual Net Growth	Sampling Error
Growing Stock at least 5" d.b.h. in million cubic feet	Major Species Group		Pine	339.1	2.9	3.01%
		Other	Softwoods	320.1	0.6	7.45%
		Soft	Hardwoods	76.3	0.1	10.53%
		Hard	Hardwoods	-	-	38.42%
		All Species		735.5	3.7	-
Sawtimber at least 9" d.b.h. in million board feet	Major Species Group		Pine	1456.3	19.8	19.38%
		Other	Softwoods	1207.3	13.7	11.14%
		Soft	Hardwoods	213.4	-0.2	22.91%
		Hard	Hardwoods	-	-	-
		All Species		2876.9	33.2	22.73%

Source: US Forest Service Resource Bulletin RMRS-RB-18. 2014

Note: 1 cubic foot = 12 board feet

The forests actually have almost three times as much growing stock (smaller trees) than sawtimber (larger trees).

Ownership of Forests in Colfax County

Most of the forests in Colfax County are on private land (834,900 acres), while 164,000 acres are on public lands. Public lands have a higher portion of forests that qualify as "timberland," capable of producing or producing in excess of 20 cubic feet per acre per year. An estimated 86% to 89% of the public lands' forests are timberland, while 46% of private forests are timberland. Colfax County's 388,600 acres of private timberland is by far the largest area of any county in New Mexico; second largest area is in Mora County with 196,100 acres of private land.

Exhibit IV-8
Forest Land Area
by Land Status in
Colfax County

Colfax County: Area of Forest Land					
Status	Type	Acres	Total Acres	% of Total Land	% Timberland
Forest Service	Timberland	56,500	63,000	6%	89.7%
	Other forest	6,500			
State/ Local Government	Timberland	87,700	101,400	10%	86.5%
	Other forest	13,700			
Private	Timberland	388,600	834,900	83.50%	46.5%
	Other forest	446,300			
All Forest Land		999,300	999,300	100%	53.3%

Source: US Forest Service Resource Bulletin RMRS-RB-18. 2014

Forest Health Issues

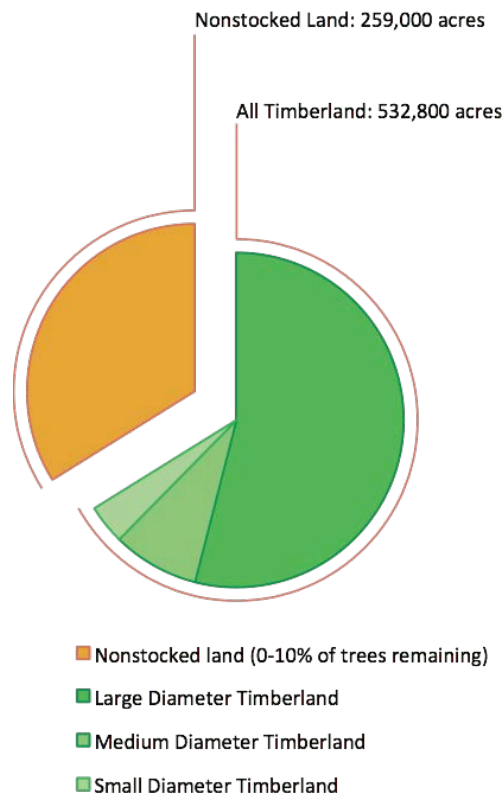
Poor forest health conditions lead to degradation of watershed and heightened fire potential.

Drought-stressed trees are unable to produce enough sap to fight pest epidemics.

- Stand densities exceed carrying capacity at current precipitation levels.

- Carson National Forest had defoliation on 162,570 acres due to western spruce budworm and 65,370 acres of aspen damage in 2012 (USFS, 2012).
- Epidemics cannot be stopped at the regional scale.
- The Forest Service predicts that future forests will look much different from current forest

Exhibit IV-9
Timberland and
Nonstocked
Land



Attaining a sustainable canopy would require decades of thinning, according to the U.S. Forest Service New Mexico fact sheet. The USFS does not currently consider salvage logging a feasible option.

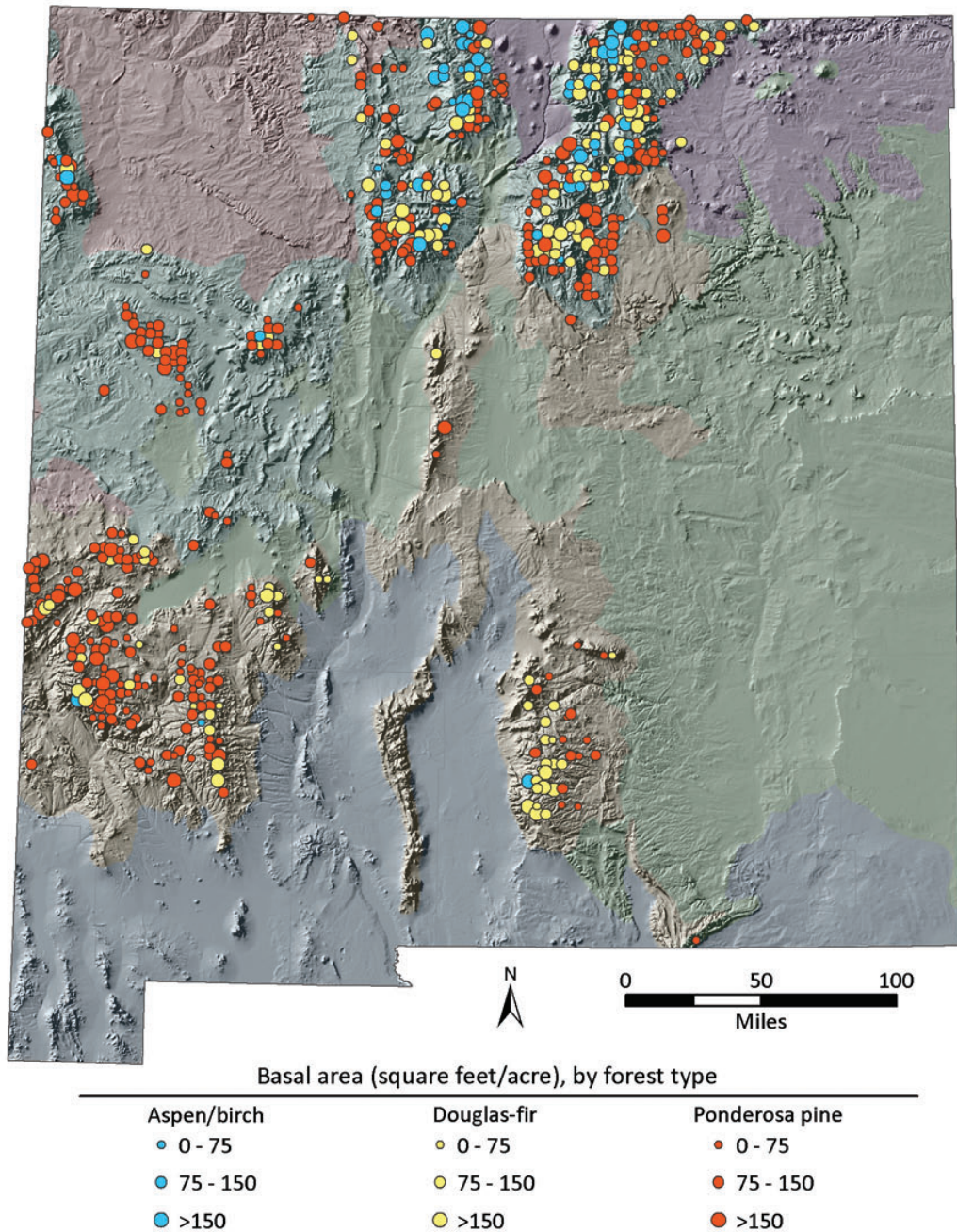
The Cooperative Forest Health Protection Program provides federal funding for land owners and forest managers for education programs, trainings and field visits.

Commercial Timber Harvest Capability
Colfax County has a long history of timber harvesting and milling operations. It has current activity and the potential for more timbering in the future. Timber industry veteran Rory Butler expressed an interest in expanding timber harvesting in Colfax County. Mr. Butler stated that the tight-grained pine that grows in Colfax County is highly marketable. The industry should target a variety of tree ages and species for harvest, including large diameter and

smaller diameter trees targeted for thinning. Ramping up lumber production, which economically drives timbering, requires expanded or new sawmills.

The following map shows the relative density of commercial grade timbers (Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and aspen) in Colfax County compared to other areas of New Mexico.

Exhibit IV-10
Basal Area by
Forest Type in
New Mexico



Source: US Forest Service Resource Bulletin RMRS-RB-18. August 2014

Timber Terminology (Appendix)

- *Forest land*: land that is at least 10% stocked by forest of any size or that has been at least 10% in the past, and not currently developed for a nonforest use
- *Growing-stock trees*: A live timber species, 5.0 inches d.b.h. or larger, with less than 2/3 (67%) of the merchantable volume cull, and containing at least one solid 8' section, now or prospectively, reasonably free of form defect, on the merchantable portion of the tree
- *Nonstocked*: contains >10% stocking on live trees because of disturbance
- *Sawtimber tree*: A live tree of commercial species at least 9.0" d.b.h for softwoods or 11" for hardwoods, containing at least one 12' sawlog or two

noncontiguous 8' sawlogs, and meeting regional specifications for freedom from defect

- *Stocking*: measure of how many trees are in a forest stand relative to how many are needed to attain the best growth (best growth at fully stocked). The relationships between the classes and the percentage of the stocking standard are: nonstocked (0 to 9%); poorly stocked (10-59%); moderately stocked (60-99%); fully stocked (100-129%); and overstocked (130-160%).
- *Timberland*: forestland that is capable of producing or is producing in excess of 20 cubic feet per acre per year and not withdrawn from timber utilization
- *Stand-size class*: A classification of forest land based on the predominant diameter size of live trees presently forming the plurality of live-tree stocking. Classes are defined as follows:
 - » *Sawtimber stand (Large-tree stand)*: A stand at least 10% stocked with live trees, in which half or more of the total stocking is from live trees 5.0" or larger in diameter, and with sawtimber (large tree) stocking equal to or greater than poletimber (medium tree) stocking.
 - » *Poletimber stand (Medium-tree stand)*: A stand at least 10% stocked with live trees, in which half or more of the total stocking is from live trees 5.0" or larger in diameter, and with poletimber (medium tree) stocking exceeding sawtimber (large tree) stocking
 - » *Sapling/seedling stand*: A stand at least 10% stocked with live trees, in which half or more of the total stocking is from live trees less than 5.0" in diameter
 - » *Nonstocked stand*: A formerly stocked stand that currently has less than 10% stocking, but has the potential to again become 10% stocked. For example, recently harvested, burned or windthrow-damaged areas.

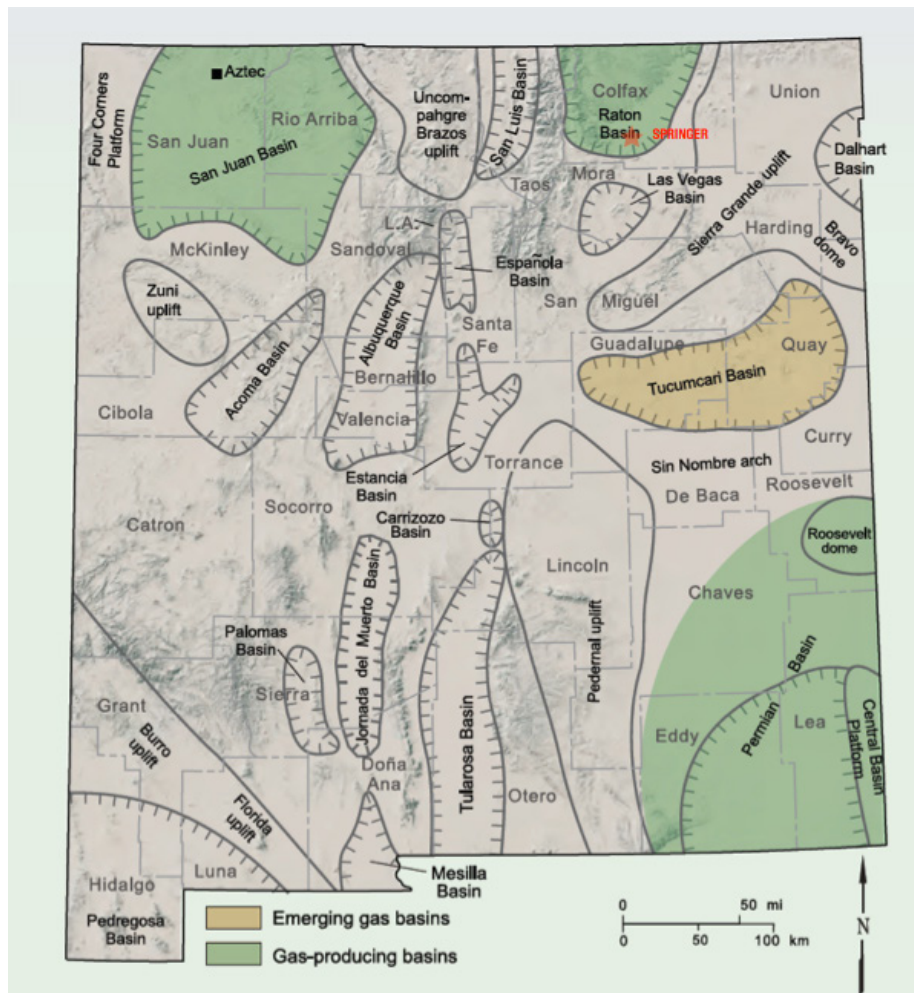
Irrigated Agriculture

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Census of Agriculture," Colfax County had 10,328 acres of irrigated land in 2012, a decline of 51% from 2007, when the county had 21,091 acres. The highest count was 27,224 acres in the 1997 Census of Agriculture. Irrigated acreage varies with drought conditions; 2012 was a very dry year. In contrast, 2015 is above normal in precipitation as of this date of writing, June 2015.

Oil and Gas

The Raton Basin, as mapped, encompasses most of Colfax County. Production at this time is in the Vermejo Ranch area. The price of natural gas is currently low, due to large new plays, and little new development activity is anticipated until the price rebounds. Colfax County is interested in gas and oil drilling, while concerned about environmental impacts of oil and gas operations.

Exhibit IV-11
*Natural Gas
Basins in New
Mexico*

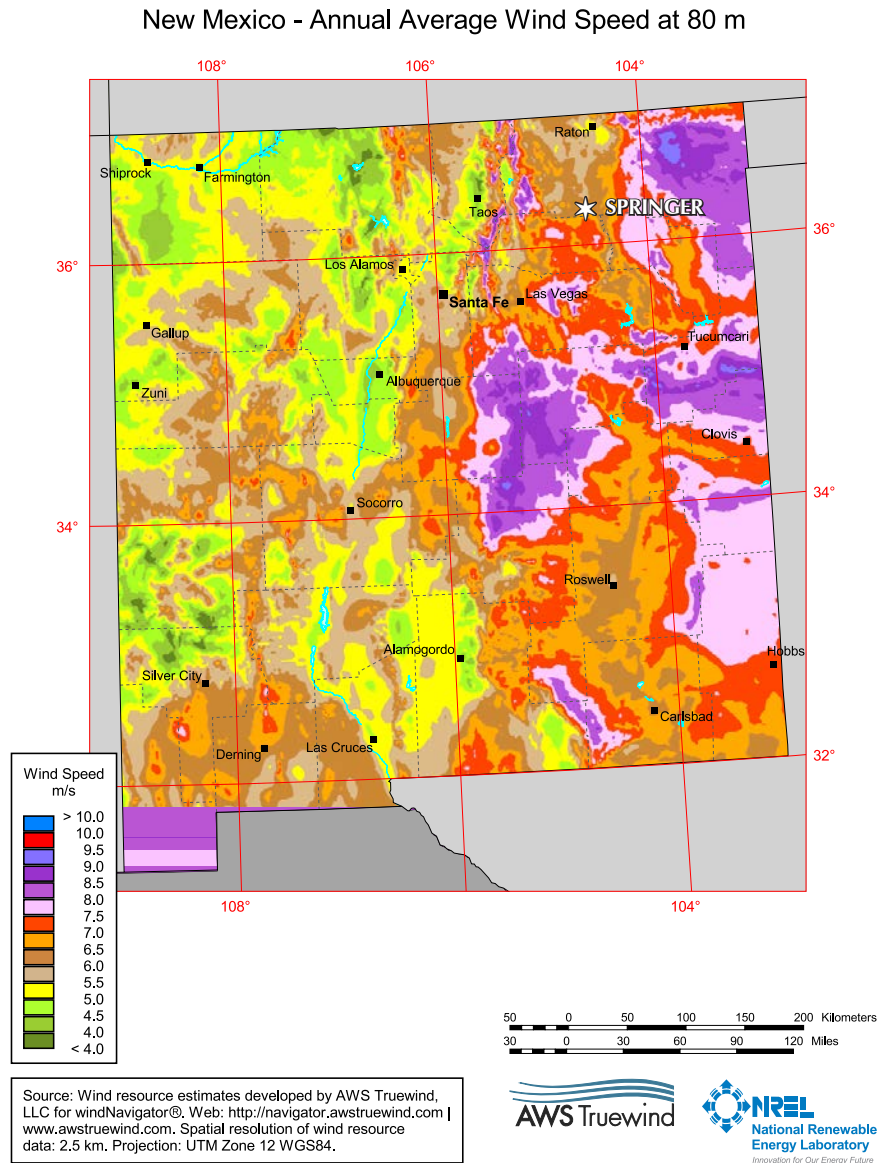


Source: New Mexico Bureau of Geology & Mineral Resources, New Mexico Earth Matters, Winter 2012

Wind and Solar Energy

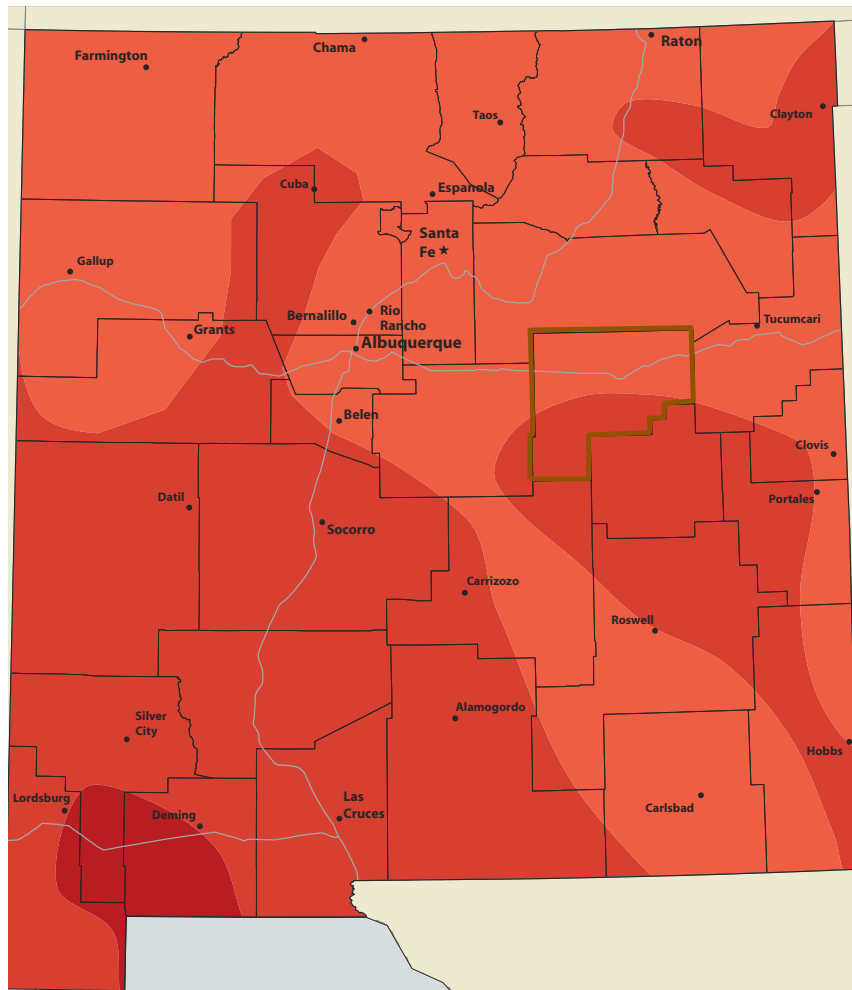
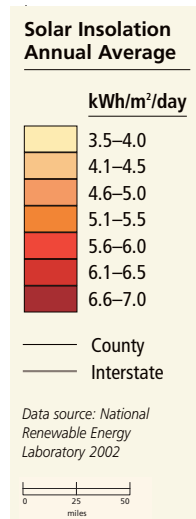
The portion of Colfax County east of Springer has significant wind power development potential.

Exhibit IV-12
Wind Speed Map
of New Mexico



While the southwest portion of New Mexico has the greatest solar energy potential, most of the state has great solar exposure and can generate electricity. The southeast corner of Colfax County has the best potential in the county.

Exhibit IV-13
Solar Insolation
Map of New Mexico



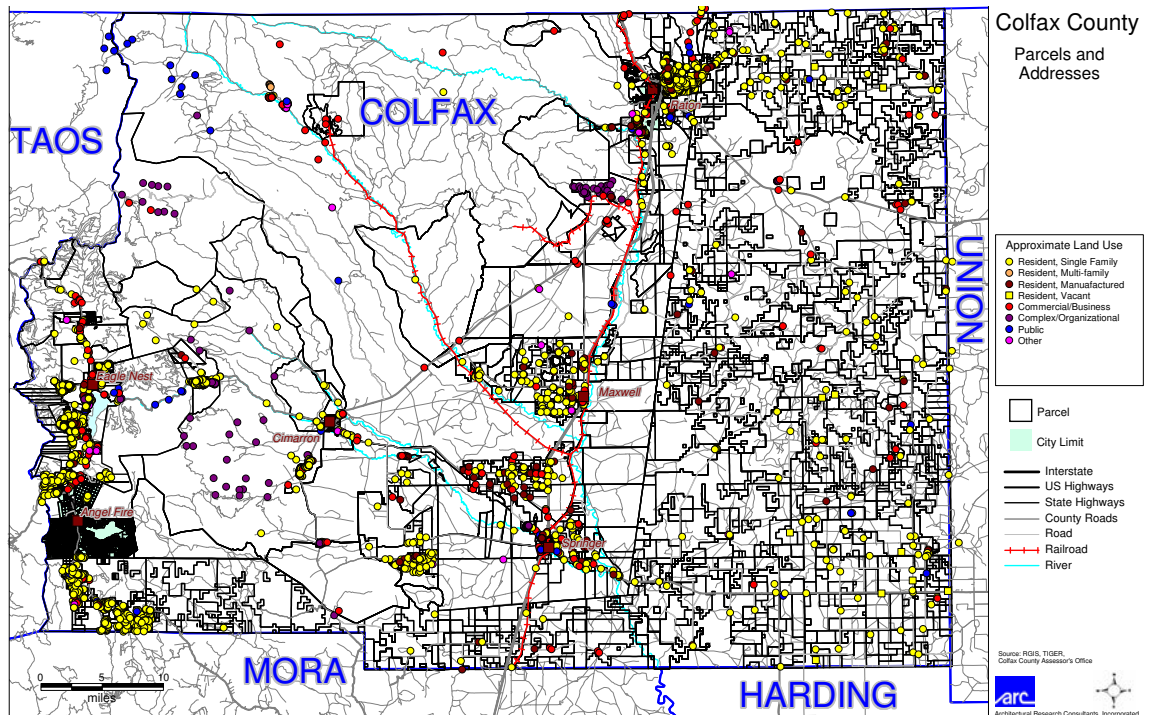
Source: www.EnergyAtlas.org

Existing Parcels and Land Use

An inventory of existing land use provides a basis for understanding use patterns and opportunities for future land use in Colfax County. The inventory is based on Colfax County's rural addressing database, and mainly focuses on housing in the unincorporated county areas.

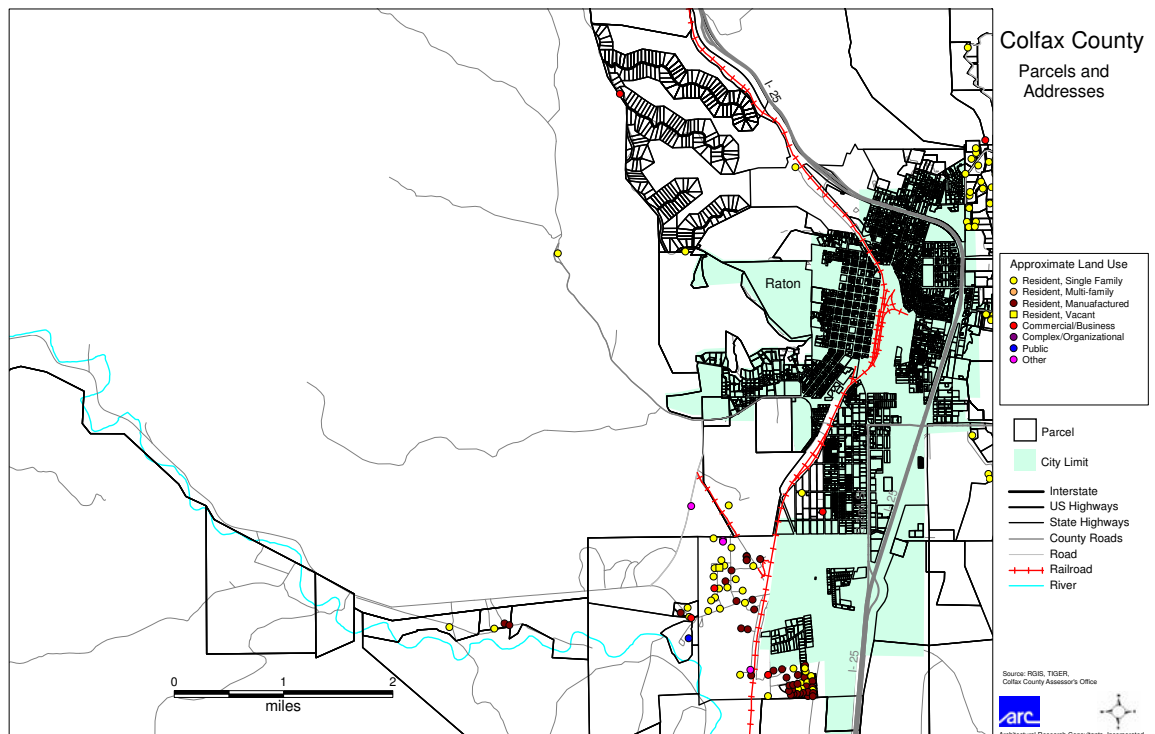
The following maps show the parceling and land use patterns in distinct communities of the county.

Exhibit IV-14
Colfax County
Existing Land
Use



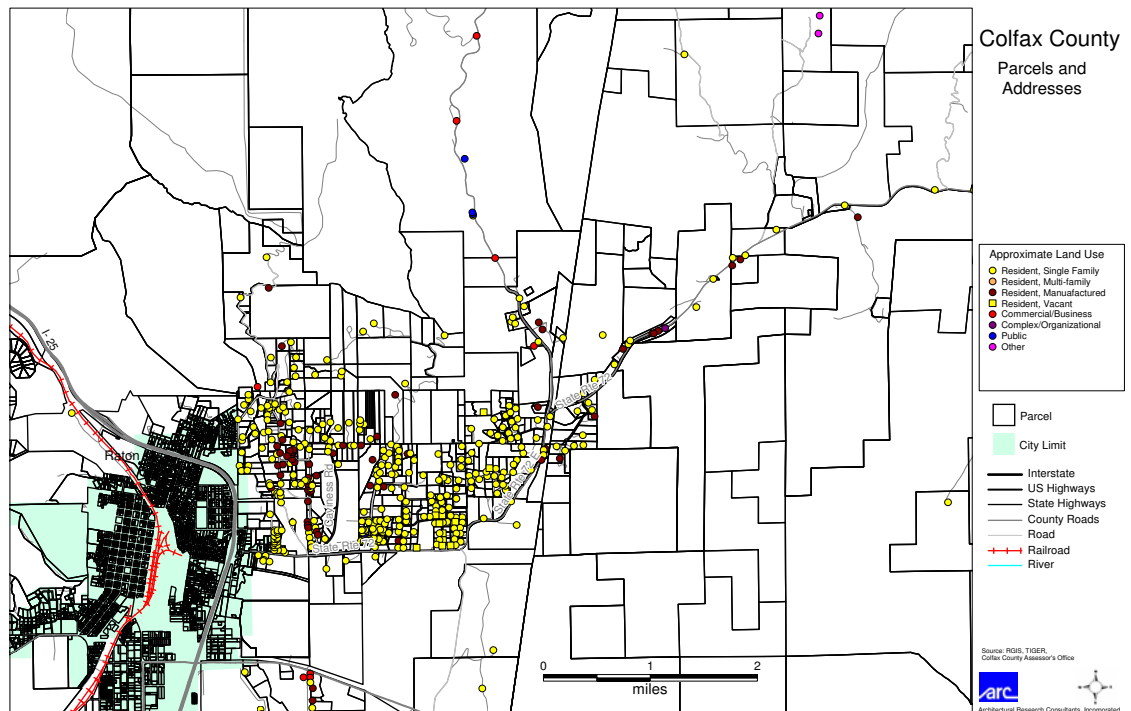
Large ranches are on the Maxwell Land Grant. The village of Cimarron is almost surrounded. Fairly large ranches are in the central and eastern areas of the county.

Exhibit IV-15
Raton North
and West
Existing Land
Use



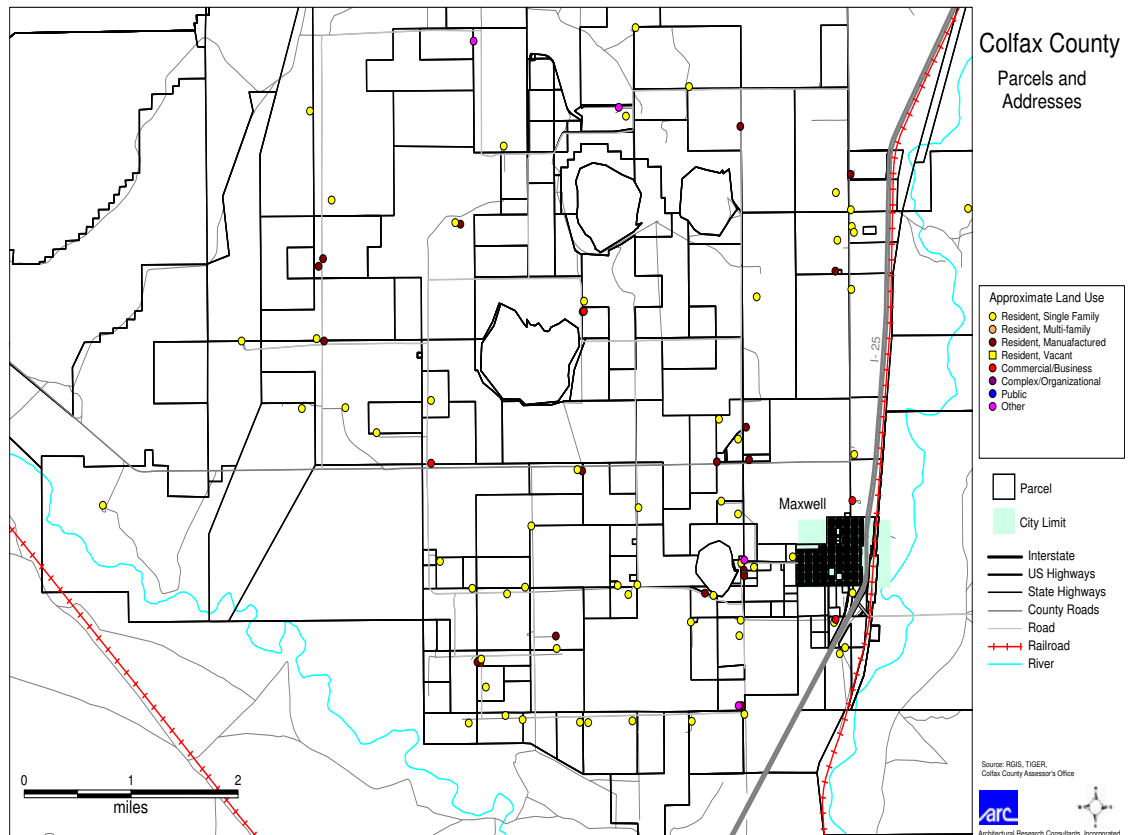
No municipal water or sewer serves large the subdivision north of Raton, consequently, it is not expected to grow.

Exhibit IV-16
Raton East
Existing Land Use



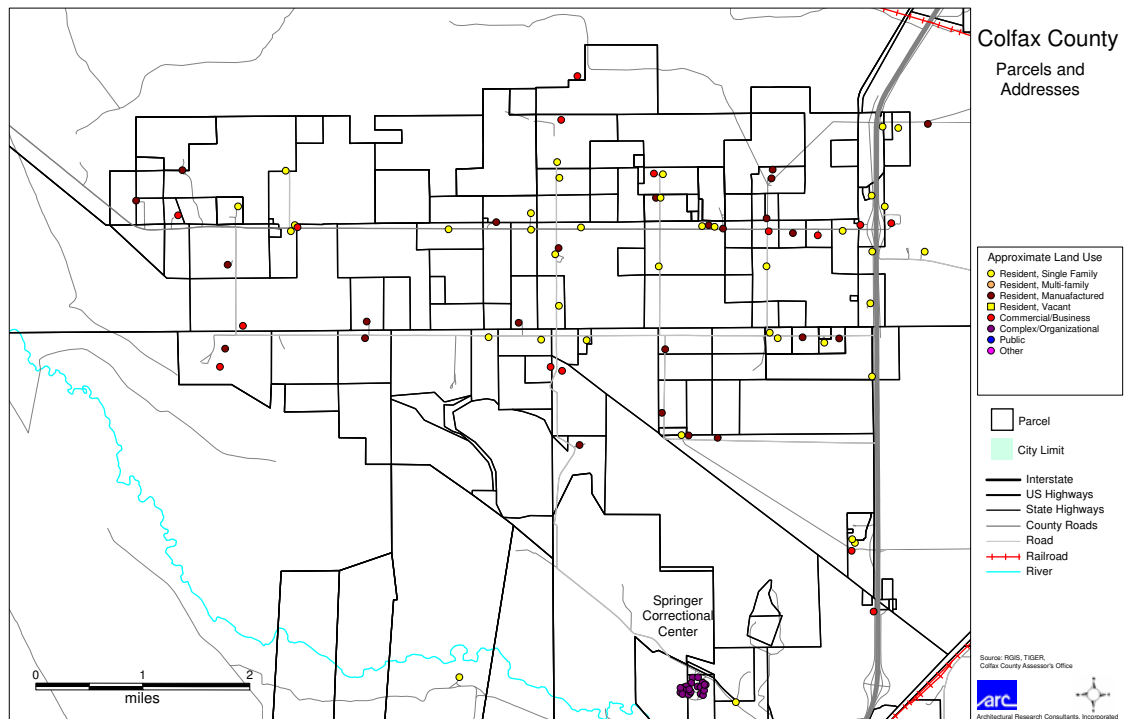
Residential growth out from the City of Raton has occurred in the direction of this area. The area has an attractive rural mountainous environment, is close to Raton and Sugarite State Park, and is likely to continue to grow.

Exhibit IV-17
Maxwell Area
Existing Land Use



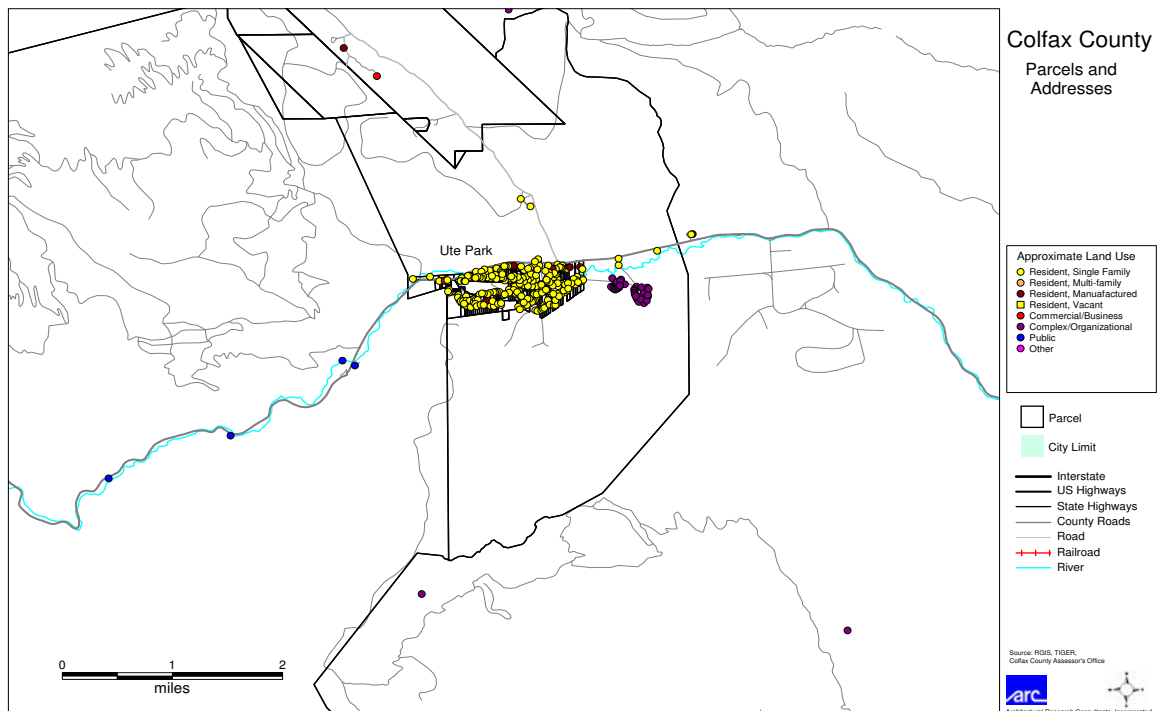
Most houses in the rural area near Maxwell are 30 to 50 years old. The area has very few newer structures, except for some mobile homes replacing older homes.

Exhibit IV-18
French Trap
Area Existing
Land Use



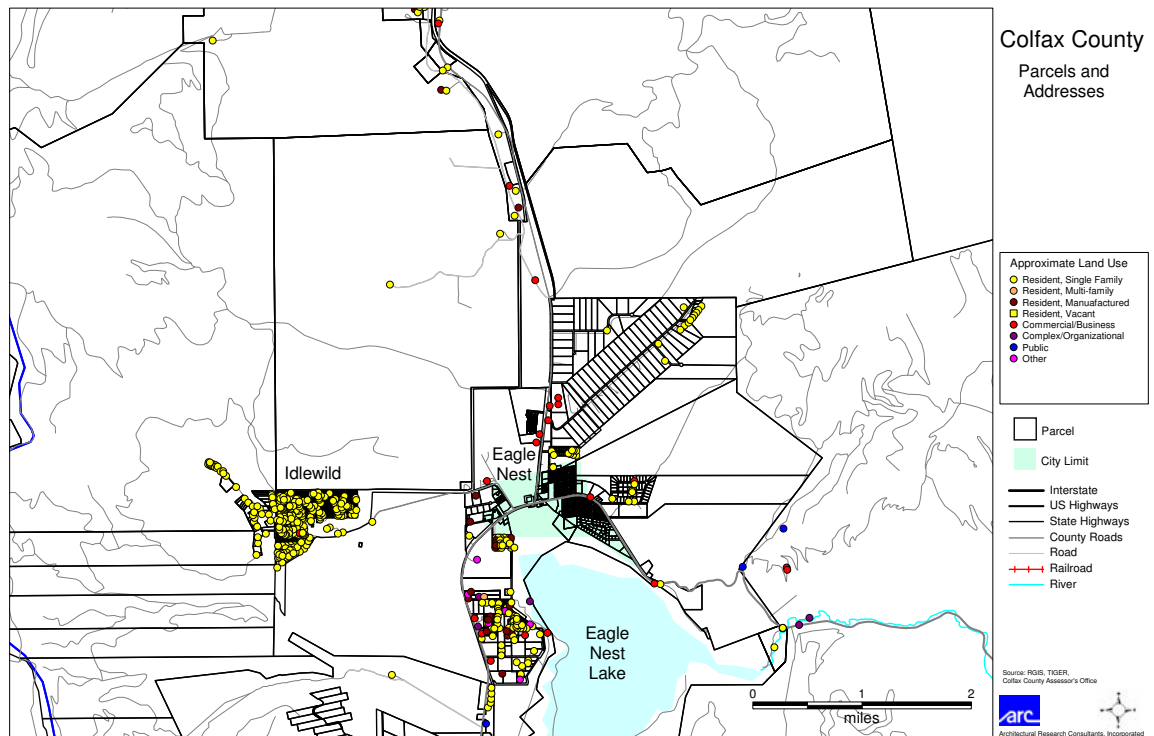
The Town of Springer recently annexed the reservoir. This area has experienced gradual population decline.

Exhibit IV-19
Ute Park
Existing Land Use



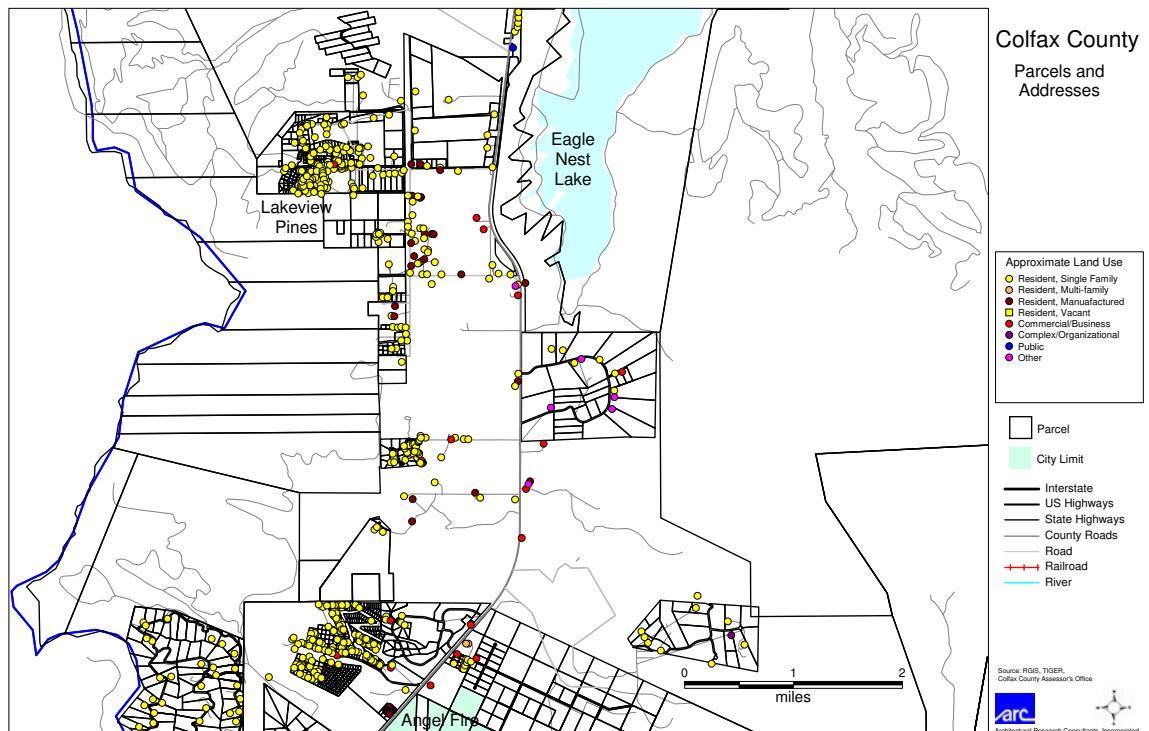
The Ute Park Landowners' Association has over 200 members. Approximately 70 households reside here year-round.

Exhibit IV-20
Miami
Existing Land Use



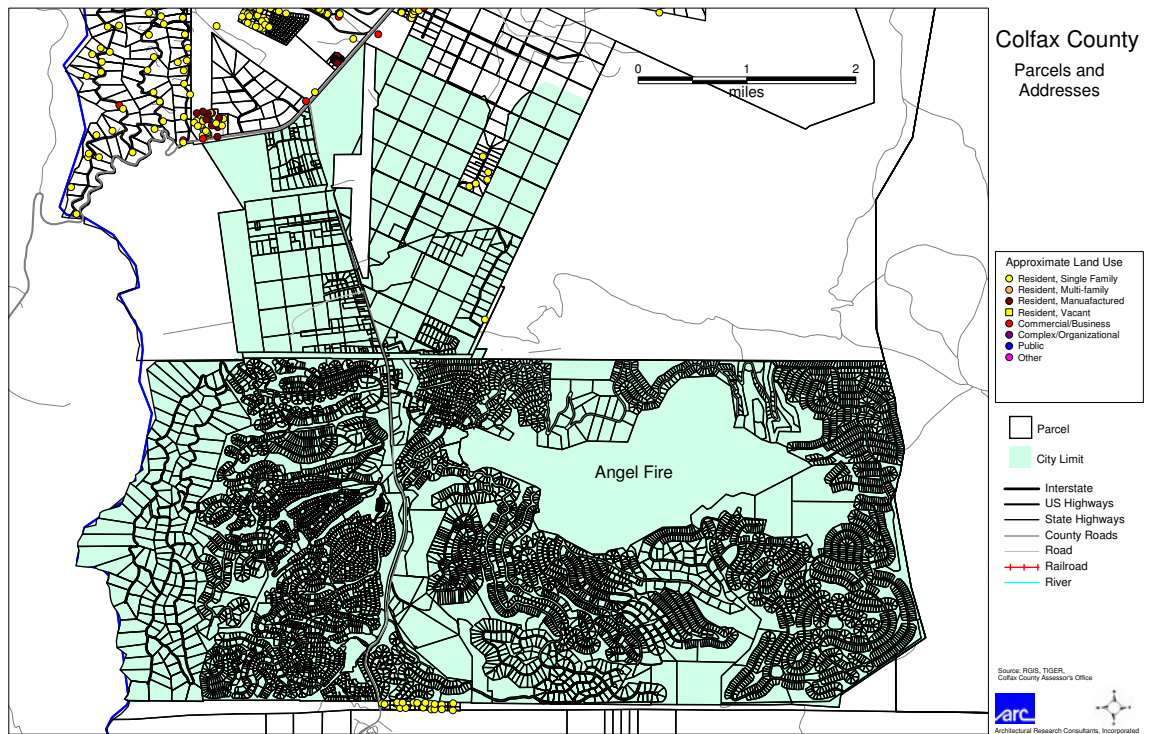
The Miami area has approximately 70 year-round households and a few seasonal residents. On grasslands near the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, it has growth potential, but also has water issues and lacks amenities, including broadband.

Exhibit IV-21
Eagle Nest-
Idlewild
Existing Land Use



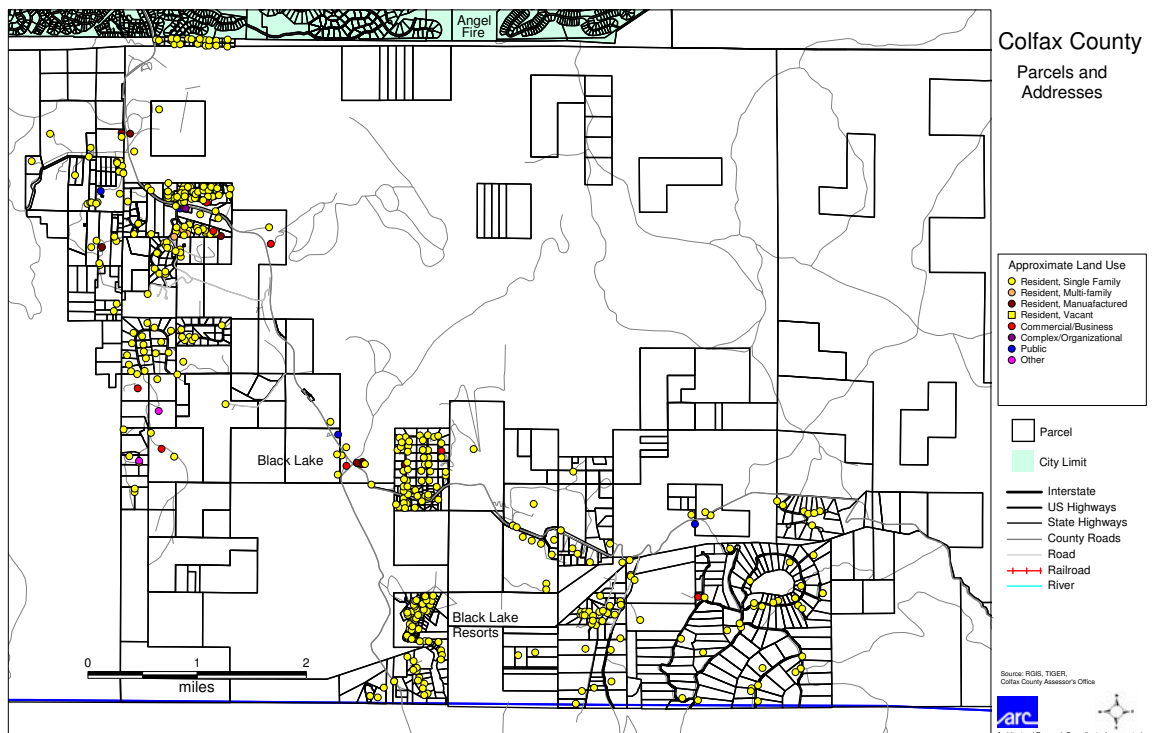
Westlake has older houses, some in disrepair. Lots remain for sale. Idlewild (almost all part-time residences) is served entirely by septic systems.

Exhibit IV-22
Angel Fire
Area Existing
Land Use



The Angel Fire area has the highest potential for growth in the county, with lots large enough for septic systems. Taos Pines boomed in 2005-06, but is not now actively growing.

Exhibit IV-23
Black Lake-
Hidden Lake
Existing Land Use



The Black Lake-Hidden Lake area has a large year-round population in the Moreno Valley, with still an estimated 90% seasonal residences. A huge inventory of lots are available for additional growth. Houses are for sale, however, there is little activity at this time.

C. Issues and Opportunities

Environmentally Sensitive Lands and Oil and Gas Development Potential

This subsection identifies environmentally sensitive lands in Colfax County for the primary purpose of supporting the regulation of oil and gas operations through an oil and gas ordinance. While oil and gas operations following all state and federal requirements may be highly appropriate in much of the county, there are certain areas that possess high environmental values to the County within which County restrictions on activities are appropriate.

Colfax County: Sensitive Lands map (Exhibit IV-24) is intended to be used in conjunction with a comprehensive set of regulations outlining requirements for each category of sensitive lands in the Colfax County Oil and Gas Ordinance, to be adopted. Standards will be established in the ordinance regarding the following parameters: groundwater, proximity of oil and gas structure, site evaluation, development plan, mitigation plan and reclamation plan.

Separate parties hold surface and mineral rights in much of Colfax County. Oil and gas regulations promote a level of protection for the interests of surface property. They also promote coordination among both surface and mineral rights owners regarding surface impacts of oil and gas development activity.

In addition to compliance with the oil and gas regulation, a mineral rights owner should establish a use agreement with the surface rights holder to further protect the quality of life of the residents on these lands. These agreements can address, but are not limited to:

- » Definition of the use of a proposed site for both the mineral and surface rights holder
- » Compensation terms
- » Noise and land disruption parameters
- » Mitigation and reclamation requirements
- » Site design elements including screening, access and setback

Sensitive Areas Categories

1. Critical Management Areas

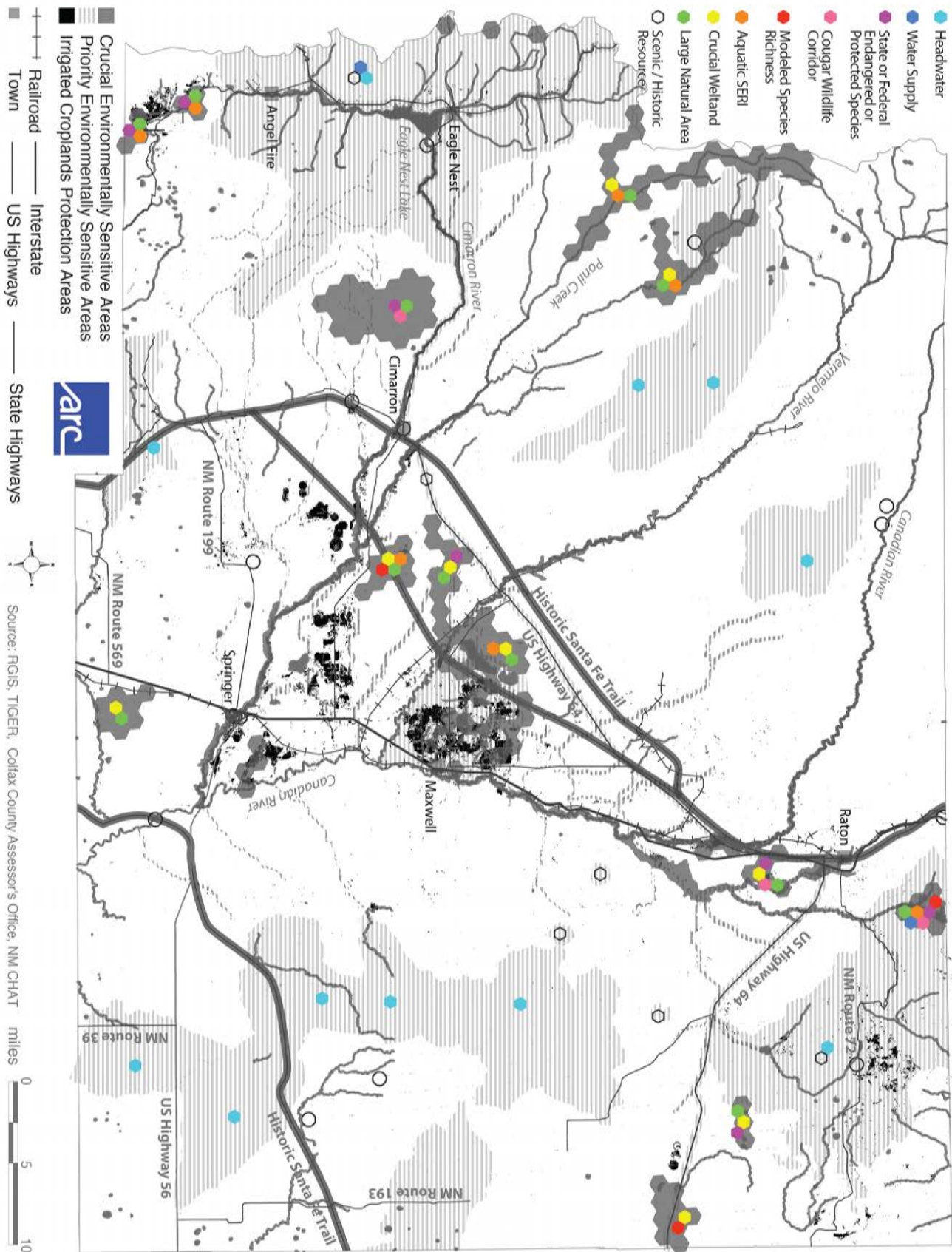
In critical management areas, oil and gas operations should be restricted. The onus will be on the developer to demonstrate that a proposed project will not disturb site conditions beyond the parameters established in the Colfax County Oil and Gas Ordinance.

This category includes waterways and bodies of water (proposed 400' buffer), FEMA floodplains (400' buffer), irrigated land concentrations and crucial habitat as identified by New Mexico Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (NM CHAT), a collaborative of New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, Natural Heritage New Mexico at the University of New Mexico, and the Western Governors' Association's Wildlife Council. Critical habitats include protected species habitat, wildlife corridors, important wetland and riparian habitat, aquatic and terrestrial

In developing county oil and gas regulations, the Board of County Commissioners may designate areas and assign regulatory standards by areas somewhat differently than recommended in this plan.

Exhibit IV-24 Environmentally Sensitive Land Map

Colfax County: Environmentally Sensitive Lands



species of economic and recreational importance (SERI), watershed status and large natural areas. Critical habitat is designated as areas of top level concern in any one of the eight categories, but often includes top-level concerns in more than one category.

2. Priority Sensitive Land Areas

Oil and gas operations should be restricted in priority sensitive land areas through requiring public hearings, stricter development standards (see below) and stringent mitigation and reclamation requirements. These zones include headwaters and the Highway 64 scenic route.

Parameters To Be Regulated in Priority Sensitive Land Areas

The County should consider in its oil and gas regulations establishing restricting standards for the following aspects of oil and gas operations:

- Distance of oil and gas development is greater to surface waterways, scenic roads, and other features delineated on the map
- Self-contained wastewater: require closed loop (“pitless”) drilling systems and closed containment of stored fluids
- Distance from existing houses greater
- Monitoring of hydraulic fracturing and acidizing practices
- Noise abatement
- Lessen density of wells and pads
- Increased visual impact mitigation, such as through screening, buffering and enclosure
- Limit outdoor light pollution
- Limit outdoor storage of construction debris or other waste
- Higher standard of reclamation
- Increased distance from bottom of permanent pit to groundwater
- Increased terrain slope restrictions (augmented “stability” definition)
- Limitation and/or prohibition on road development across waterways
- Imposition of impact fees
- Prohibition of waiving monitoring well and baseline sample requirements

Colfax County land use regulations, including oil and gas regulations, apply to private lands in unincorporated areas and not to state and federal lands. Managers of state and federal lands have their own permitting processes. The County should urge state and federal land managers to reference environmentally sensitive areas identified in this plan and in County standards.

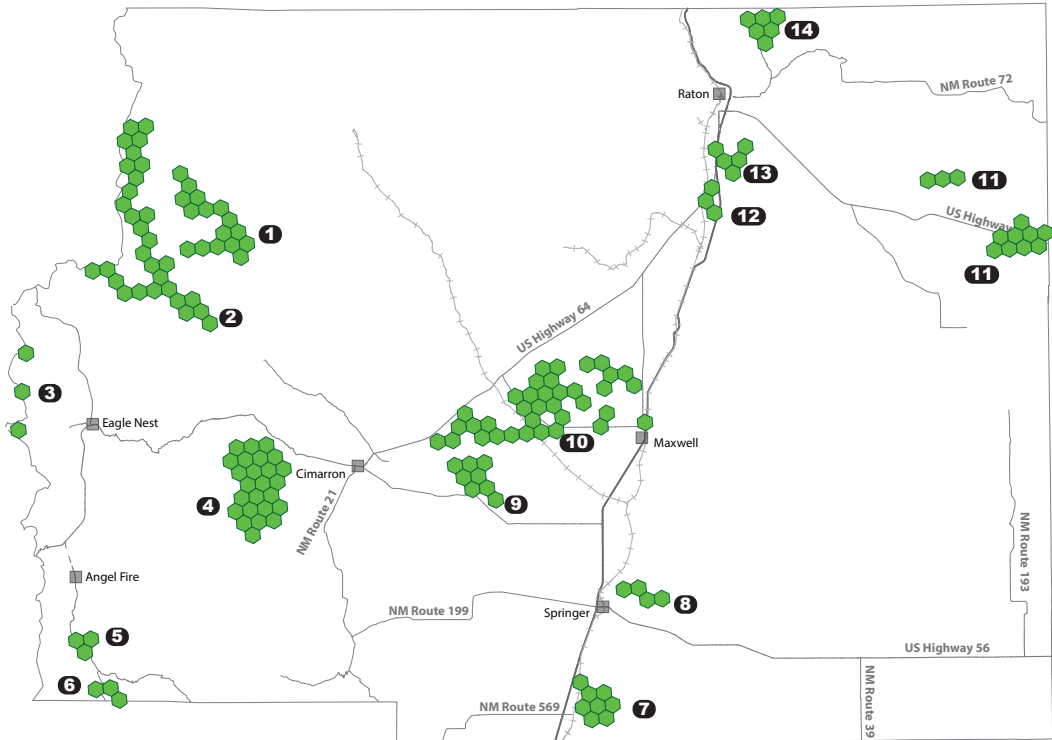
Environmentally Sensitive Lands Assets

The following maps provide more specific information about the environmental features contained in the composite Sensitive Lands Map. The County may find these maps useful for guiding land use in addition to oil and gas.

Exhibit IV-25 Crucial Habitat by Type Map

- 1** Crucial Habitat: Wetland & Riparian Priority Level 1 and Aquatic SERI 1 (includes sportfish)
- 2** Crucial Habitat: State or Federal Endangered or Protected Species or observation of critically imperiled (G1) species, Cougar Wildlife Corridor, Large Natural Area Priority Level 1
- 3** Crucial Habitat: Wetland /Riparian Priority Level 1
- 4** Crucial Habitat: Large Natural Area Priority Level 1, Aquatic SERI Level 1 (includes sportfish), Wetland /Riparian Priority Level 1
- 5** Crucial Habitat: Wetland and Riparian Priority Level 1
- 6** Critical Habitat: Wetlands & Riparian, Wildlife corridor
- 7** Critical Habitat: Wetlands & Riparian, Aquatic SERI, Modeled Species Richness
- 8** Crucial Habitat: Federal or State Protected or imperiled (G1) species, wildlife corridor, Aquatic SERI 1 (+ sportfish) and includes FWS Critical Habitat
- 9**
- 10**
- 11**
- 12**
- 13**
- 14**

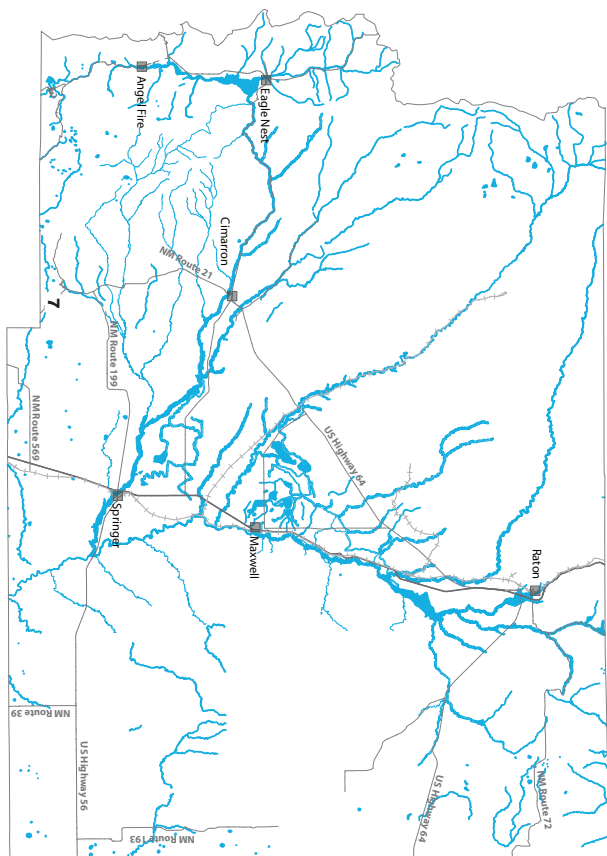
Colfax County Crucial Habitat Areas



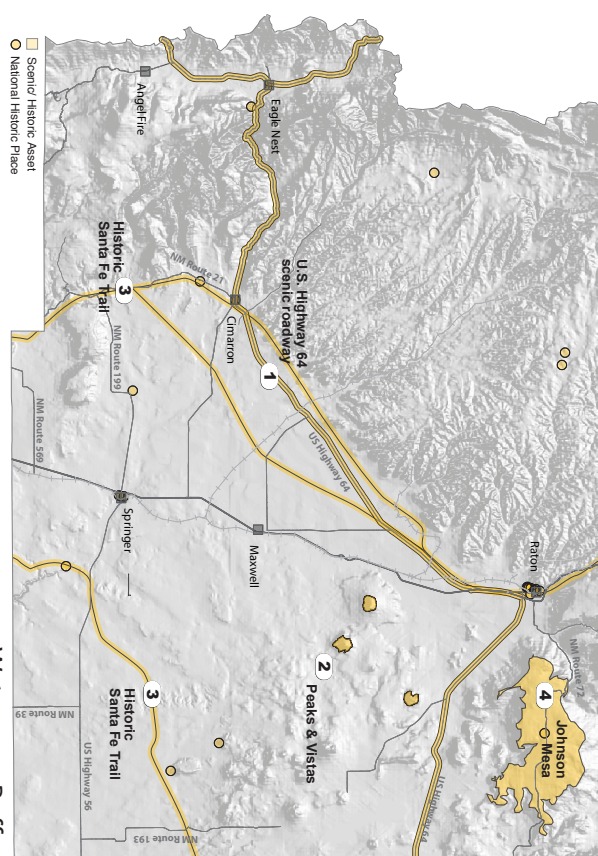
Development of the environmentally sensitive lands assets maps used the following sources:

- New Mexico Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (NM CHAT): web site, metadata, online mapper and GIS data download
- New Mexico Department of Transportation, New Mexico Scenic Byways, New Mexico True: web site, online maps (Enchanted Circle)
- United States Fish & Wildlife, Critical Habitat: online mapper, GIS data download
- United States Department of Agriculture: Croplands online mapper
- Federal Emergency Management, flood areas GIS data download
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, federal delineation of hydrologic unit boundaries, GIS data downloaded from NMRGIS online

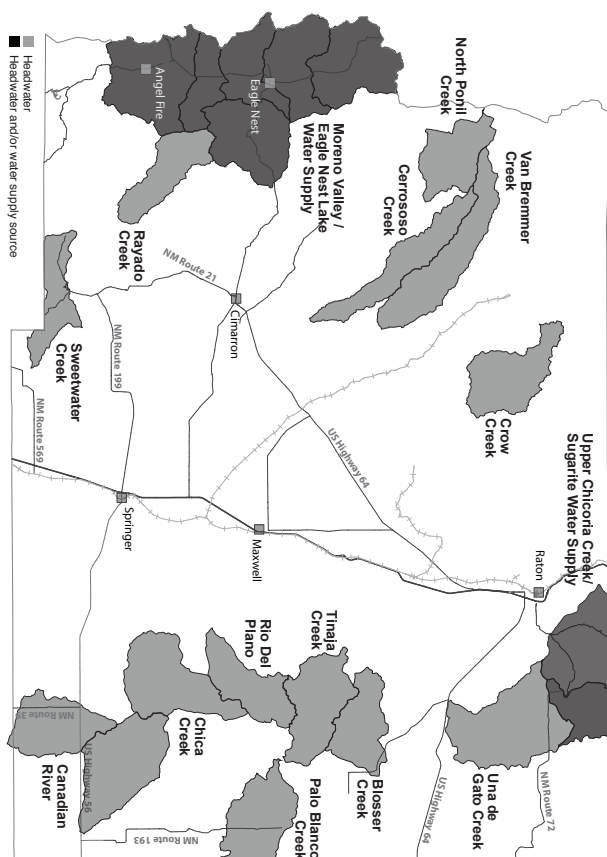
Exhibit IV-26 Environmentally Sensitive Lands Assets



Waterways Buffer



Scenic & Historic Assets



Headwaters & Water Supplies



Irrigated Agriculture

Ordinance and Planning References

Development of the recommended approach to oil and gas operations referenced the following draft and adopted ordinances and plans:

- Draft Colfax County Oil and Gas Ordinance, 2013
- Rio Arriba County Oil and Gas Ordinance, 2009
- Rio Arriba County Comprehensive Plan, 2014
- Colfax County Oil and Gas *Ad Hoc* Steering Committee Recommendations, 2013

NM CHAT Critical Habitat Designation Criteria – Additional Information Overview

Derivation of Crucial Habitat Rank was from a categorical combination of the other layers' Priority Level values where 1 is "Most Crucial" and 6 "Least Crucial." The layers include: Species of Concern, Large Natural Areas, Natural Vegetation Communities, Freshwater Integrity, Wetland and Riparian Areas, Wildlife Corridors, and Species of Economic and Recreational Importance (Terrestrial and Aquatic SERI). The exhibit below summarizes the categorical rules applied to the eight underlying data layers to arrive at a Crucial Habitat Rank.

Priority Level 1

Species of Concern priority level = 1, OR a Terrestrial Species of Economic and Recreational Importance priority level = 1, OR Wetland and Riparian Areas priority level = rank of 1

Priority Level 2

Species of Concern priority level = 2, OR Aquatic Species of Economic and Recreational Importance priority level = 1, OR Wetland, Riparian priority level = 2

Priority Level 3

Species of Concern priority level = 3, OR Wildlife Corridors priority level = 1, OR Wetland and Riparian priority level = 3

Priority Level 4

Species of Concern priority level = 4, OR Terrestrial Species of Economic and Recreational Importance priority level = 2, OR Large Natural Areas priority level = 1, OR Freshwater Integrity priority level = 1, OR Natural Vegetation Communities priority level = 1 or 2

Priority Level 5

Species of Concern priority level = 5, OR Terrestrial Species of Economic and Recreational Importance priority level = 3, OR Large Natural Areas priority level = 2, OR Wetland and Riparian Areas priority level = 5, OR Freshwater Integrity priority level = 2, OR Natural Vegetation Communities priority level = 3 or 4

Priority Level 6

All other priority levels (Species of Concern = 6 or Terrestrial Species of Economic and Recreational Importance = 4 or 5, OR Large Natural Areas = 3, OR no data)

Exhibit IV-27
Crucial Habitat
Rank Categorical
Rules

Categorical Rules for Assigning a Crucial Habitat Rank to a Hexagon								
Crucial Habitat Rank	CHAT Layer Score							
	Species of Concern	Terrestrial SERI	Aquatic SERI	Wildlife Corridors	Large Natural Areas	Wetland & Riparian	Freshwater Integrity	Natural Vegetation Communities
1	1	1				1		
2	2		1			2		
3	3			1		3		
4	4	2			1	4	1	1 or 2
5	5	3			2	5	2	3 or 4
6		4 or 5			3			

Source: New Mexico Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool metadata, 2015

Accommodating Growth in County

Since 1960, about 80% of county residents have lived inside municipalities. Planners anticipate that this trend will continue, and relatively little development will occur in unincorporated areas. Nonetheless, Colfax County should be prepared to guide growth into suitable areas and adhere to desired development practices.

Available Parcels In Existing Subdivisions

Moreno Valley

All municipalities have some vacant lots that can accommodate additional growth. Angel Fire in particular has an abundance of undeveloped lots. The Angel Fire Resort reportedly owns 1,000 undeveloped lots inside the village.

Existing county subdivisions near Angel Fire contain many vacant lots that can be developed. Some observers of Moreno Valley development trends believe that since so many vacant lots are available, very little new subdivision is anticipated until the inventory of vacant lots is depleted. At this time, there is very little development pressure for either subdividing ranch land or build-out of existing subdivisions on the Moreno Valley floor.

Raton Area

Additional lands east of Raton may be subject to subdivision, which is the favored direction of growth out from the city. Few subdivision lots are available in this area, while there are a number of large parcels that conceivably could be subdivided. Since the city's economic growth is not currently strong, there is likely little pressure. However, because this area is close to Raton, the County should work with the City of Raton on extraterritorial zoning (ETZ) to address desired development character and standards.

Large industrial businesses that may be attracted to the Raton area through economic development efforts are likely to be located in the unincorporated county land base. Accessibility to I-25 and land suitability for large footprints are major considerations for nonresidential development. Most likely, flat land adjacent to the city on the east side, or to the south and west towards the Raton Municipal Airport would be suitable locations.

The ETZ zoning ordinance and subdivision standards should be in force to guide nonresidential development. The City may also consider annexation of areas to assure compliance with city regulations and likely higher levels of service for infrastructure and public safety.

Exhibit IV-28
Raton Area
Physiography
Showing
Relatively Flat
Areas (tan) Near
Raton



Source: <http://store.usgs.gov>.

Ranches for Sale

Several large ranches in various sections of the county are for sale. Typically, in areas with development pressures, ranches may be split up, either into lots through subdivision or through the 140-acre minimum parcel size exemption to subdivisions provided for in the New Mexico Subdivision Act. However, ranches may also be sold and continue to be working ranches. The listings give no indication whether properties were marketed for their appeal for subdividing. Asking prices for the larger ranches currently vary from \$475 to \$9,063 per acre.

Exhibit IV-29
Ranches for Sale
Listing

Ranch Properties For Sale in Colfax County 200 Acres and Larger

Ranch Name	Acreage	Location	Asking Price	Asking Price Per Acre
Mitchell Ranch	22,298	NE of Springer	\$10,591,550	\$475
American Creek Ranch	3,082	Near Angel Fire	\$8,950,000	\$2,904
Cimarron Ranch	1,854	8 miles NW of Springer	\$2,500,000	\$1,348
Not Named	1,792	Near Eagle Nest	\$14,000,000	\$7,813
La Mesa Ranch	1,260	Trincera Creek, ~35 miles east of Raton	\$3,400,000	\$2,698
Brushy Canyon Ranch	1,230	Near Sugarite Canyon	\$3,920,000	\$3,187
Reverse Rocking R Ranch	1,033	Near Maxwell	\$1,600,000	\$1,549
Not Named	959	East of Raton	\$1,100,000	\$1,147
Not Named	939	Near Springer	\$559,900	\$596
Not Named	762	6 miles north of Eagle Nest	\$6,399,000	\$8,398
Not Named	624	Maxwell, surrounding Lake 11	\$717,631	\$1,150
Not Named	597	5 minutes to Angel Fire Airport	\$3,300,000	\$5,528
Not Named	401	Ocate Mesa, top of	\$2,400,000	\$5,985
Devine Homestead	331	Outside Eagle Nest	\$2,999,999	\$9,063
Not Named	328	Near Point of Rocks and Dorsey Mansion	\$175,000	\$534
Not Named	296	Cieneguilla Creek upstream of Eagle Nest Lake	\$1,000,000	\$3,378
Not Named	283	Black Lake	\$1,750,000	\$6,184
Not Named	248	Miami	\$1,550,000	\$6,250
Not Named	205	Maxwell area, with shares of irrigation water from Vermejo Conservancy District	\$276,000	\$1,346

Source: <http://www.landwatch.com>, May 26, 2015

Coordination with Municipalities on Development Activity in Unincorporated Areas Near Municipalities

Only the City of Raton has sufficient population in the county to qualify for extraterritorial zoning (ETZ); the other municipalities have populations smaller than 1,500 persons. Colfax County and City of Raton opted into an agreement to implement extraterritorial zoning, as well as subdivision review. The Raton Fire Chief is responsible for ETZ zoning code enforcement.

Extraterritorial subdivision regulations should be in place for areas in proximity to all municipalities, including Maxwell, Springer, Cimarron and Angel Fire. Extraterritorial planning and platting reflect the responsibility shared between counties and municipalities to plan for unincorporated areas in proximity to the municipalities. Both municipalities and counties must regulate subdivisions.

Statutory Authority for Extraterritorial Planning, Platting and Zoning

The State of New Mexico enables and directs the application of extraterritorial planning platting and zoning through several statutes, including:

- Establishment of boundaries of the extraterritorial planning and platting jurisdiction in Section 3-19-5 NMSA 1978
- Subdivision regulations in municipal planning and platting jurisdiction in Section 3-19-6 NMSA 1978
- Master planning in Section 3-19-9 NMSA 1978
- Concurrent jurisdiction of subdivisions in Section 3-20-5 NMSA 1978
- Extraterritorial zoning in Section 3-21-3 1978
- Extraterritorial zoning and subdivision regulations in Section 3-21-3.1 NMSA 1978

Counties and municipalities are enabled, but not required to establish a joint municipal-county zoning authority to adopt, amend and regulate subdivision regulations. Section 3-21-3.1 states "... such subdivision ordinances and regulations may define 'subdivision' in a manner which differs from the definitions set forth in Subsection A of Section 3-20-1 NMSA 1978 and in Subsection I of Section 47-6-2 NMSA 1978" where county subdivision exemptions are defined.

Purposes of Extraterritorial Planning, Platting and Zoning

The main purposes of extraterritorial planning, platting and zoning include:

- Assurance that lands likely be annexed are developed to the standards of the municipality so that annexation does not require major upgrading at the expense of the municipality
- Cooperative planning for land development activities to proceed in locations where they can be supported in a timely and efficient way
- Assurance that environmental conditions affecting areas in the unincorporated county and municipality, such as drainages or steep hillsides, are appropriately protected or that impacts of development are mitigated
- Guidance to ensure the desired character of gateways to cities and areas of interface between urban and rural land use and development pattern

County Subdivision Regulations

Colfax County subdivision regulations were adopted through ordinance in 1991, consistent with the New Mexico Subdivision Act. In 2013, the County adopted through resolution various application forms to be submitted by subdivision applicants. While it has little current subdivision activity, the County should update its subdivision regulations to be prepared for possible activity at a later time.

The intent behind the New Mexico Subdivision Act is for counties to add their own criteria and development standards for considering subdivision applications, while following the template in the Subdivision Act. Review criteria provides guidance to what the county wants in a subdivision, and provides rationale for the county to deny or impose conditions for approval of subdivision applications where appropriate. Planners recommend adding criteria for determining unsuitability of land for subdivision, such as:

- Land subject to periodic flooding
- Land unsuited for development because of topography
- Soils subject to excessive erosion
- Land subject to seasonally high water tables

- Soils which, due to shallow depth or slow percolation rates, are unsuitable for sewage absorption fields
- Inadequate water supply for the requirements of the fully developed subdivision
- Projects which would generate a large number of students who would place an unacceptable burden on local school districts
- Other criteria that may be mentioned in guidelines for subdivision regulations prepared by the New Mexico Environment Department, New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, New Mexico Department of Transportation, Office of Cultural Affairs and the local soil and water conservation district

Subdivision regulations should also be updated to add development standards, including:

- Road standards, either incorporated directly or by reference to separate adopted road standards that may be periodically updated: right-of-way dedication, r.o.w./express easements, surface width, all-weather surface if not paving, and erosion control in drainage swales
- Community water system requirements
- Terrain management (e.g., cut and fill)
- Proof of water supply, including submittal of geohydrologic reports demonstrating that groundwater sufficient to meet the maximum annual water requirement of the subdivision is physically available and can be practically recovered to sustain the development for a continuous period of 50 years.
- Allow for phasing, improvement guarantee (simply addressed)
- Firewise design: clearing, tire truck turnarounds, two ways in and out, maximum length of cul-de-sac/dead-end roads

Consideration of Other Land Use Regulations

The County has no zoning. As discussed above under the section “Environmentally Sensitive Lands and Oil and Gas Development Potential,” oil and gas regulations are intended to be exercised through zoning. However, the County is not required to develop additional regulations.

Examples of land use changes that may impact surrounding land uses and environmental quality include: a sawmill adjacent to an established residential area in or outside of a municipality, gravel operations close to residential areas, or development in entryways to the Moreno Valley. Nonetheless, the County should continue to take a measured approach to its needs at this time, rather than “over-regulate” uses that may not ever occur.

Many counties in New Mexico have struggled with the question of whether to implement zoning. For example, San Juan County, New Mexico decided in recent years that rather than approve zoning, it would adopt ordinances to regulate only specific uses. Between 2008 and 2014, San Juan County adopted separate ordinances regulating:

- Junk yards
- Trash and junk
- Manufactured home placement

- RV parks
- Adult entertainment location

San Juan County also adopted an ordinance establishing a code compliance officer.

Planners recommend a phased approach to initiating some additional land use regulations in Colfax County, including the following steps:

- Adopt oil and gas ordinance as single-purpose zoning overlay districts
- Consider whether the County has interest in regulating a single activity that could become a nuisance, similar to what San Juan County regulates
- At a later time, consider developing an overall county performance zoning approach that establishes a use permit process for changes in land use. Evaluation of each use permit request would be based upon criteria consistent with the Colfax County Comprehensive Plan, measuring environmental, infrastructure, visual and other impacts of the proposed land use. This county performance zoning would apply to lands subject to county land use jurisdiction which is not within extraterritorial zoning boundaries. The County should consider requiring stricter development standards in environmentally sensitive areas as mapped in this Element.
- Consider at a later time more specific zoning for subareas of the county through a community-based process.

Coordination with State and Federal Agencies on Public Lands' Land Use Practices

The County and state and federal agencies share many interests in forest health, watershed management, timbering, potential oil and gas operations and threats of fire and drought. The County should meet on a periodic basis to discuss interests and issues which multiple land management agencies need consider in their coordination. Where appropriate, property owners should also be invited to such meetings. As with economic development (addressed in the Economic Development Element), the County has a major role in countywide coordination.

D. Goal, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Guide development of the unincorporated county through land use planning and regulations to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the residents and visitors, and promote the economy, convenience and good appearance of the county

Objective: Preserve the treasures of Colfax County and encourage growth that benefits the county.

- Recognize and encourage continued land stewardship practiced by ranchers of Colfax County, thereby continuing sustainable grazing, retaining healthy rangeland and forested land, protecting streams and arroyos to reduce erosion and safeguard water quality, and retaining wildlife and scenic qualities on their ranches
- Promote thinning of forests to improve forest health and protect the watershed
- Promote selected timbering operations to create economic activity and

improve forest health.

- Work with federal and state agencies, private landowners and municipalities to conduct a multijurisdictional planning process to develop a best practices manual for Colfax County forest health and thinning/timbering activities
- Coordinate with U.S. Forest Service, New Mexico State Land Office, New Mexico State Parks Division, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, and other federal and state agencies on land management practices

Objective: Provide planning, platting and zoning of areas in close proximity to municipalities to assure that development provides a desirable pattern compatible with nearby unincorporated and municipal land uses, and consistency in standards.

- Support the current Raton ETZ, periodically updating the zoning ordinance and official zoning map as needed
 - » Develop specific zoning districts for commercial and industrial areas in the Raton ETZ to encourage desired economic development uses
 - » The Raton Extraterritorial Zoning Authority should assign to the Extraterritorial Commission the tasks of studying the ETZ to determine suitable and appropriate areas for such uses and recommend rezoning to the Authority
- Create extraterritorial subdivision review outside Angel Fire, Cimarron, and Springer through working with the municipalities to develop regulations
- Work with municipalities to develop a fair approach to jointly participate in staffing or helping to pay for staffing of ETZ implementation and enforcement activities

Objective: Update County subdivision regulations.

- Add criteria for determining land unsuitable for subdivision as guided by the Land Use Element
- Add development standards to the ordinance as guided by the Land Use Element
- Clarify in the ordinance that the County may approve, approve with conditions or deny subdivision applications based on findings
- Require property owners to apply for any of the 13 exemptions to the definition of subdivisions established in the New Mexico Subdivision Act before recording new deeds with the County Clerk. This application process should be streamlined to assure that.

Objective: Develop a county oil and gas ordinance that guides oil and gas operations to minimize impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.

- Use the environmentally sensitive lands (ESL) map in this comprehensive plan as a reference in the oil and gas ordinance, and create in the ordinance higher development and design standards for any oil and gas activity within the designated ESLs compared to those areas outside the ESL areas

Objective: Consider a phased approach to initiating additional land use regulations in Colfax County, including the following steps.

- Begin with the oil and gas ordinance as a single-purpose zone district
- Consider regulating other select activities that could become nuisances without developing a full zoning code
- Consider developing an overall county performance zoning approach that establishes a use permit process for changes in land use
 - » Consider using the environmentally sensitive lands map to require stricter development standards for other uses, such as wind turbines or industrial uses
 - Evaluate each use permit request based upon criteria consistent with the Colfax County Comprehensive Plan to measure environmental, infrastructure, visual and other impacts of the proposed land use
- Consider more specific zoning for subareas of the county through a community-based process

Objective: Develop code enforcement capacity accompanying regulations, including but not limited to: extraterritorial zoning, oil and gas ordinance, performance zoning, junked car regulations, and animal control.

- Consider hiring or sharing with another local jurisdiction an enforcement official

Objective: Support renewable energy development, particularly wind turbines and solar energy farms.

- Establish a visual impacts permit system to determine the suitability of proposed alternative energy development and encourage mitigation of visual impacts in those areas demarcated in the Environmentally Sensitive Areas map.

Objective: Continue to improve countywide geographic information system mapping.

- Form a GIS working group including County Assessor's Office, E911 Emergency Services, Roads, Fire Marshal, and other departments of the County currently using or interested in using GIS
 - » Add GIS data for County properties, utilities, irrigation ditches, and other important physical and man-made features in the county
- Provide training in GIS to assigned GIS staff
 - » Use GIS mapping layers and databases created for this comprehensive plan

Purpose of the Community Character Element is to identify valued urban and rural design characteristics that should be promoted and protected, and to consider means for protection and promotion of those assets, such as: recognition, designation, guidelines, regulations, and designs.

Exhibit V-1
Downtown Raton

V. Community Character

A. Introduction

The high quality of spaces in Colfax County, both urban and natural, has been repeatedly cited as one of its major strengths and draws. Clean water and air, rich night sky and incredible geology define its landscape and a rich texture of small towns and historic structures make up its communities. Stretching from great grass plains in the east to high alpine mountain ranges in the west, the rural setting defines the county.



Photo: Ben Prepelka, Google Maps

B. Existing Conditions

Special characteristics of the rural and urban fabric of Colfax County include:

Rural Fabric	Urban Fabric
Setting	Density
Roads	Streets
Uses	Setting
Lot Size	History
Natural Systems	

Colfax County Community Character

Urban Fabric

The county has several exceptional urban places. Raton, Cimarron and Eagle Nest all boast high quality main streets. Springer has some very high quality residential fabric and both Springer and Maxwell have some beautiful historic buildings.

The close-set, sidewalk-fronted buildings that line many of the county's main streets have wide, welcoming windows, attractive signs or facades, and little or no setback. They are often two-story buildings, creating a sense of place and community. These places attract visitors and residents alike, especially pedestrian traffic which brings shoppers and vitality to the city.

Rural Fabric

The rural fabric of Colfax County is, in many cases, exceptional. The Moreno Valley especially boasts some spectacular views. The low density, tucked away development does not detract from the experience and small country roads are not overbuilt or intrusive so as to detract from the setting.

Exhibit V-2

Colfax County,
Near Maxwell



Colfax County has some exceptional and valuable built and natural environments. Preserving these and ensuring that future development does not detract from this invaluable resource will ensure that this resource will be available to future generations and that the county will remain a beautiful place to live and visit.

C. Approaches and Uses

The character of a place depends directly on the quality of its urban and rural fabric, its environment and people. A community can use placemaking tools to develop, restore and protect the elements that make it special, cared for and sought after.

In an urban setting, density, street layout and streetscape, building qualities, setting and history describe the fabric of the place. In a rural setting, land use, road character, vistas and the natural environment have a greater effect on the fabric, but density and building qualities do play a significant role. Low density sprawl, especially out-of-character or low visual quality structures, may destroy the natural charm of a place. For example, Angel Fire focus group participants mentioned an unsightly junk yard.

Approaches

Community character approaches may include nonregulatory focus on community gateways, downtown planning, scenic corridors, viewsheds, historic preservation, wayfinding, placemaking (usually related to zoning), landscaping, community clean-ups, architectural guidelines, programmatic facilitation and cultural event development.

Community character approaches can also work closely with land use and related types of regulations such as zoning, subdivision regulations, code enforcement, trash and junked car regulation, historic preservation requirements, and cell tower or wind turbine standards. Regulation can also direct the form and quality of development while only minimally restricting use.

Community Maintenance

Wherever possible, the County should promote and encourage historic preservation, however, municipalities have primary responsibilities for any historic preservation efforts within their respective communities. While historic preservation is often an expensive and difficult endeavor, it is essential to preserving community character. The highly desirable “main street” quality of many of Colfax County’s communities is the direct result of historic preservation.

Exhibit V-3
Colfax County
Courthouse,
Raton



Keeping people involved and active in their community is a major factor in developing community character. Organizing community clean-up/beautification events produces the double benefit of improving the built environment while engaging the community and getting people together. Community gardens, mural painting and special events improve community ties and bring vitality to a place.

Public places, gateways and programming can all strengthen the identity of a place and build pride in the community. Creative programmatic approaches, like turning an abandoned school into a tool-lending library or holding a bison festival, can catalyze investment, interest and creativity. Improving the use or condition of public places, and installing gateways for communities and/or neighborhoods are small steps that can have a big effect on the pride people feel for their community, their willingness to stay, the ability of the place to attract new residents and visitors, and the reputation of the place in the larger community.

Accessibility and Wayfinding

It is important to be able to move throughout a community in a variety of modes and at a variety of speeds to become familiar with and fond of a place. Accessibility and wayfinding includes the development of multimodal paths like bike lanes, walking paths, and trails, and also includes providing information to assist in finding and appreciating significant places.

Wayfinding techniques like gateways, trail markers or a detailed county map of attractions can guide visitors and residents through natural, historic, recreational, or scenic routes and provide them with information about the context and history that make a place memorable and unique.

Given Colfax County's wealth of recreational opportunities, this element is especially important. For example, some visitors may not know about Valle Vidal in Carson National Forest, or how to find it.

Rural Quality

Because so much of the county is rural and so much recreation relies on the high quality rural and natural environment, ensuring the lasting high quality of rural Colfax County will provide market stability as well as ensure lasting high quality of community character for residents.

Limited but thoughtful provisions can protect this important asset from thoughtless, careless or otherwise harmful future development that currently may be unforeseen. Even simply establishing protections for valuable vistas and agricultural land can assure preservation of the important elements of rural Colfax County character.

Existing Regulations

Colfax County currently has no zoning in the unincorporated area, although it does have subdivision regulations and a 3-mile extraterritorial zone (ETZ) around the Raton city limits.

Zoning districts and standards in the ETZ differ from the zoning districts and standards in the City of Raton, which has created some issues of legal nonconforming uses when land has been annexed. Within the ETZ, the City of Raton will only extend water lines to parcels 2.5 acres or larger. This restriction limits the diversity of potential development and encourages sprawl.

The County updated its subdivision regulation in 2013 with additional surface, solid and liquid waste management plan requirements; water quality, availability and system proposals; and road construction specifications.

D. Issues and Opportunities

What's Special About Colfax County

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan for Colfax County addressed land use and community character. It cited these community character issues:

- Historic preservation
- County's natural beauty
- Maintaining low light pollution
- Cellular tower siting guidelines
- Open Space

The citizen's value statement from the 2008 plan is very similar to the 2014-2015 visioning session input in the chart below.

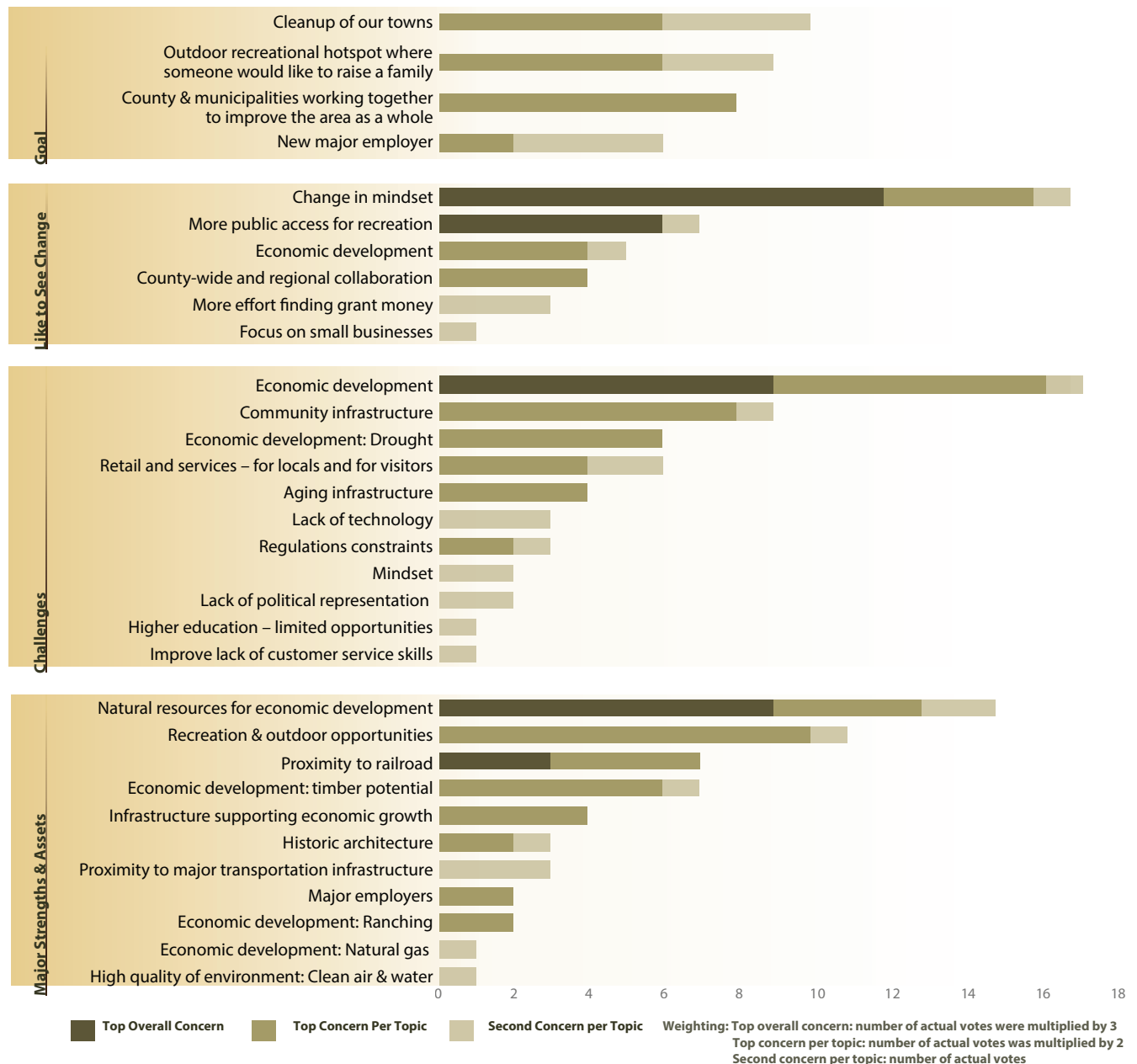
Cultural activities and attractions:

- Theatre and arts
- Museums in each community
- Philmont Scout Ranch Library
- History: Santa Fe Trail, mining, Colfax County War, archeology

Exhibit V-4

Visioning Results

Colfax County Comprehensive Plan | Steering Committee Visioning Priorities: Weighted Votes



Historic Assets

The community has identified the historic sites and buildings of Colfax County as important assets to be promoted and preserved. Colfax County has many historic place. From the 10,000 year old Folsom site, to beautiful New Deal-era architecture and art, the county is a treasure trove of history. While the county is identifying new applications for historic status, there are also some instances of neglect. However, the County currently has no tools to mitigate neglect.

Rural Character

Residents repeatedly referenced the high quality of the environment, the wide open spaces and clear night sky as the most beloved aspect of life in the county. However, attitudes can change drastically with the degradation of place. A few careless developments can affect the quality of space far beyond their boundaries. But with careful site design and thoughtful master planning, development can enhance rural character. The County currently has only minimal subdivision regulation and therefore has little authority to guide the quality of future of development in its borders or to prevent development that could degrade the value of existing quality assets.

Exhibit V-5
Colfax County,
Near Springer



Evaluating Major Visual Impacts

Development of large mechanical infrastructure such as wind turbines can impact rural character. While Colfax County encourages alternative energy development, it should discourage large commercial wind and solar activities in important viewsheds. Of particular concern are “cultural landscapes” and particular views acknowledged to have special scenic qualities.

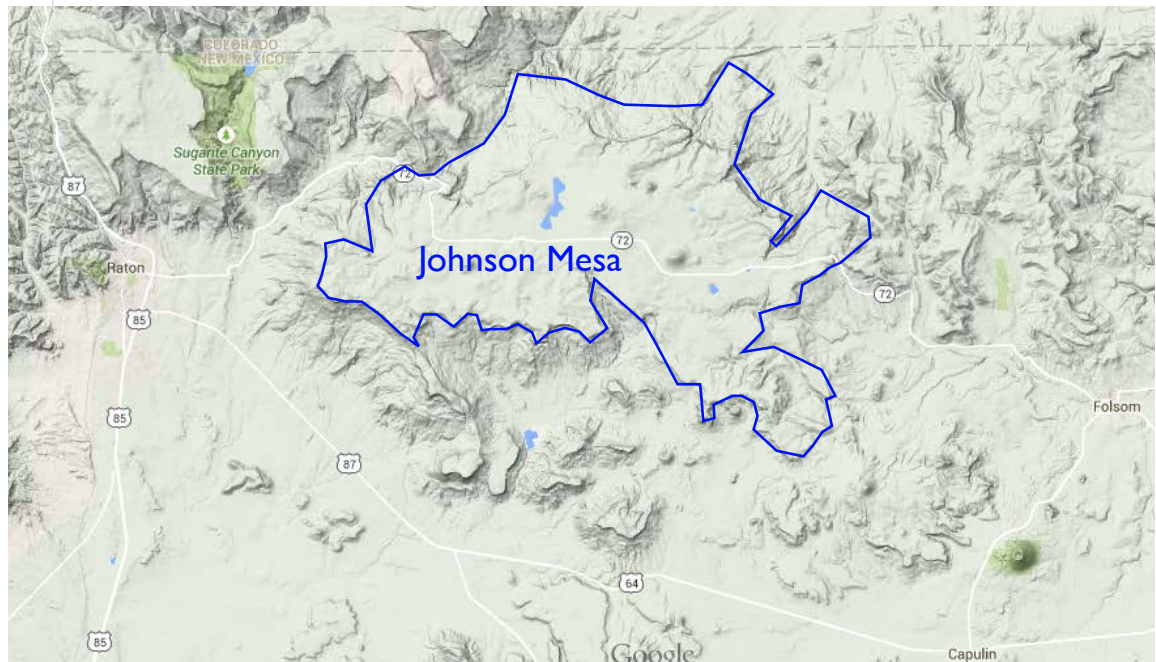
For example, Johnson Mesa is a prominent landscape feature with historic farming and ranching. It is visible from a large portion of the county and has a special “top-of-the-world” atmosphere that looks over the eastern plains, extending to the volcanoes to the south and the Colorado mountains to the north. Another example is the Moreno Valley, valued by visitors and locals alike for its high-country character with the tallest peaks in New Mexico and conifer forests along its edges.

One method of protecting important viewsheds is acquisition of conservation easements that specify certain limits on development activities. The County or alternately, land trusts, can purchase and maintain conservation easements. A major benefit of a conservation easement is compensation to property owners for foregone development opportunities. The New Mexico Land Conservancy has successfully acquired conservation easements on several ranches in Colfax County, including one property on Johnson Mesa. It should be noted that not all conservation easements need to limit alternative energy development, depending on the conservation goals for that property.

The County should also establish a visual impact permit for alternative energy development. This permit should use a point system for evaluating visual impacts to increase use of objective information, and a public hearing process to elicit comments. Regarding visual impact, the County can use the Environmentally Sensitive Lands map (Exhibit IV-24) to delineate areas that require a visual impact permit, outside of which no such permit is needed. Not all environmentally sensitive lands should be restricted, but for the County to make such a determination, the applicant should present a visual impact analysis for proposed energy development in mapped sensitive areas.

A visual impact application should include color photographs of the proposed site from at least two locations, accurately depicting the existing conditions. It should include computerized photographic simulation that demonstrates visual impacts of a project from strategic vantage points. Visual analysis may also indicate the color treatment of a structure, such as a wind turbine, and visual screening may be proposed to lessen the visual prominence of the structure.

Exhibit V-6
Johnson Mesa



Source: GoogleMaps

The Springer Mainstreet organization is rebuilding. It is applying for Frontier Community status for Springer.

Springer has held a successful Light Parade with good participation by residents, fostering a positive community outlook.

Exhibit V-7
Sangre de Cristo Mountains High Country

Community Engagement

Colfax County residents are ready to be engaged, participate and work to preserve and improve their communities. Working with municipalities to organize clean-up days will engage citizens and connect communities. Clean-up efforts can also be tied with youth internship and training programs to build a home improvement collaboration to assist elderly homeowners. Painting projects including murals, graffiti removal and restoration can go a long way to improving community pride and desirability, while requiring only paint and organization. Planting projects are similarly effective, from community gardens to median improvements, planting can bring pride and cohesion to a community while adding to the overall aesthetic.

The County holds a fair each year and could expand this effort to hold other county festivals or fairs. For instance, with a theme that reflects county identity, the Santa Fe Trail or recreational activities, the County could organize festivals that draw visitors and engage citizens. By teaming with municipalities and MainStreet organizations, events could expand to municipalities and incorporate a broader range of possible activities and involvement.

Wayfinding

An essential element of community character is wayfinding. Not only is it important for the practicality of helping people find their way through the community, it is also builds identity. Identifying a theme for the community, building a brand and establishing wayfinding language are the groundwork in this effort. The county can build a comprehensive wayfinding system via maps that identify trails, historic sites and points of interest. It has been noted that visitors, especially those who arrive by train, have difficulty navigating to Philmont Scout Ranch or the NRA Whittington Center. These attractions, as well as important ranches could be included in the wayfinding effort. Trail mapping should be comprehensive and include all necessary information to allow users to find their ideal experience. To entice visitors and bolster community pride these maps could publicize local businesses and the many assets and amenities available. The County may also consider building a gateway network to identify the entrance and exit boundaries of each community and the county.

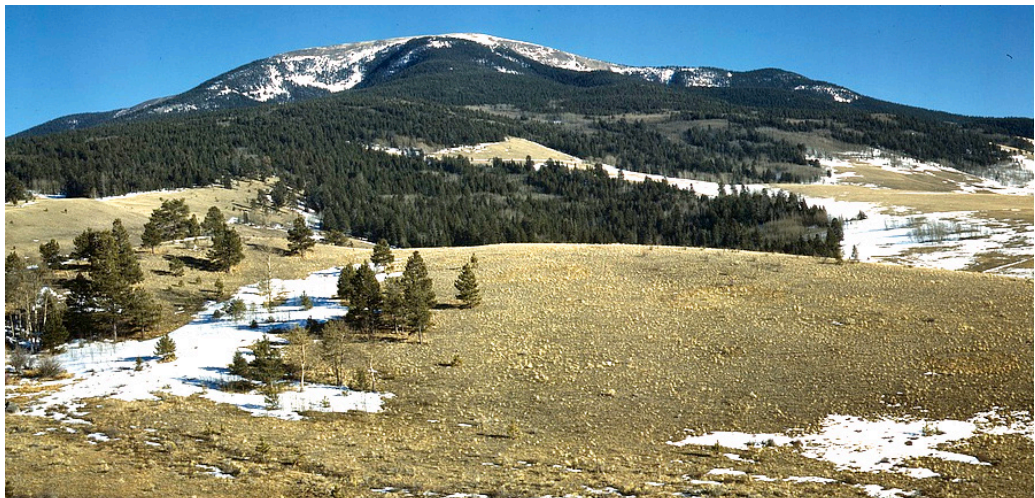
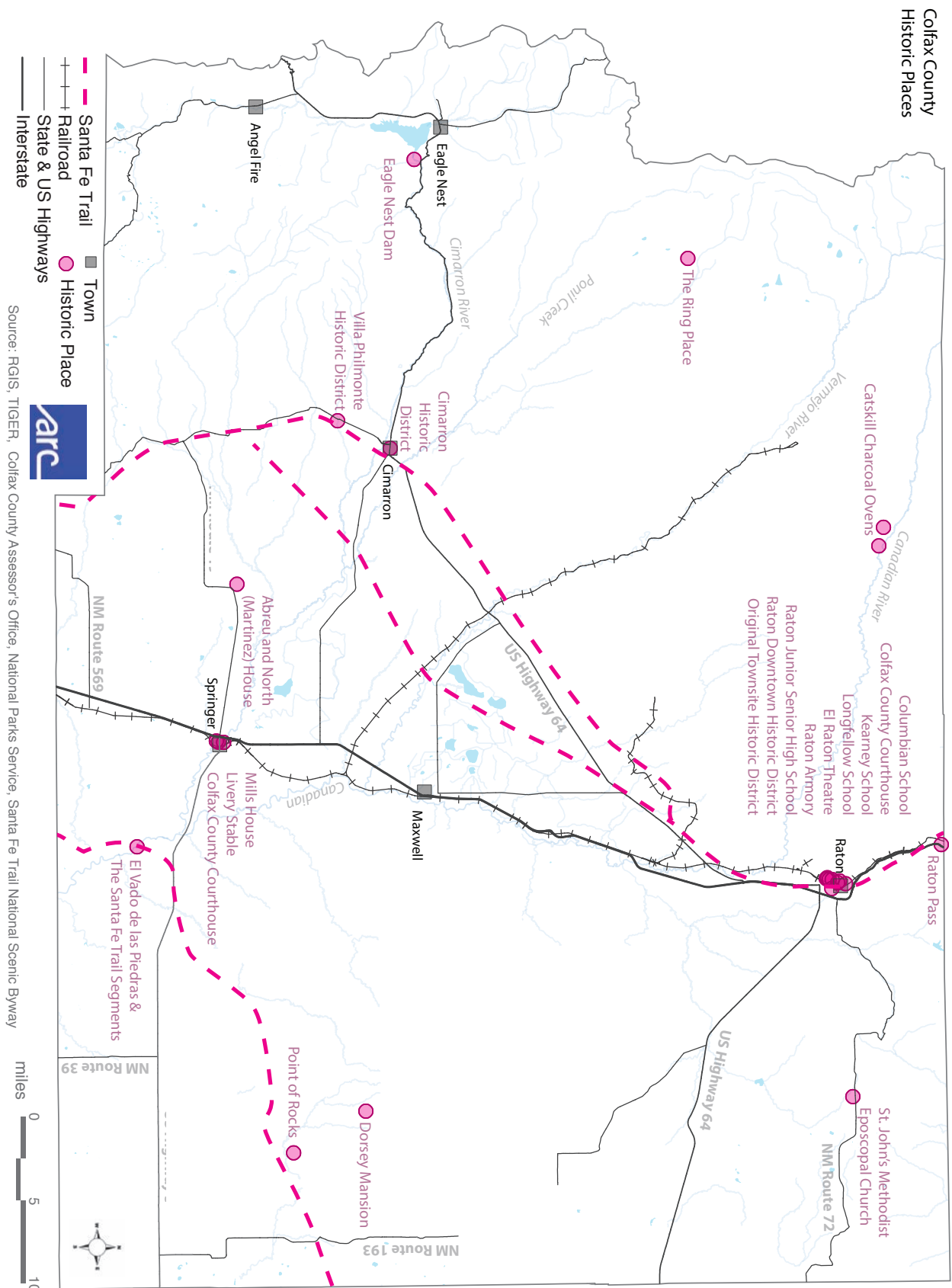


Photo: John Collier, 1941 Transfer from U.S. Office of War Information, 1944

Exhibit V-8 Colfax County Historic Places



E. National Register of Historic Places for Colfax County

Catskill Charcoal Ovens

Added 1978

Period of Significance: 1875-1899

35 mi. (56 km) W of Raton, Raton

Cimarron Historic District

Added 1973

Period of Significance: 1850-1874

S edge of city along NM 21, Cimarron

Clifton House Site

Added 1995

Period of Significance: 1875-1899, 1850-1874

Address Restricted, Raton

Colfax County Courthouse

Added 1987

Period of Significance: 1925-1949

Third and Savage, Raton

Colfax County Courthouse in Springer

Also known as Santa Fe Trail Museum

Added 1987

Period of Significance: 1875-1899

614 Maxwell Ave., Springer

Columbian School

Added 1996

Period of Significance: 1925-1949

700 N. 2nd St., Raton

Cowan, R. H., Livery Stable

Added 1979

Period of Significance: 1900-1924, 1875-1899

220 Maxwell Ave., Springer

Dawson Cemetery

Also known as Evergreen Cemetery

Added 1992

Period of Significance: 1925-1949, 1900-1924

Approximately 4 mi. NW of jct. of US 64 and the Dawson Rd., Dawson

Dorsey Mansion

Added 1970

Period of Significance: 1875-1899

About 12 mi. NE of Abbott off U.S. 56., Abbott

Eagle Nest Dam

Added 1979

Period of Significance: 1900-1924

3 mi. SE of Eagle Nest off U.S. 64, Eagle Nest

El Raton Theater

Added 2007

Period of Significance: 1950-1974, 1925-1949

115 N. Second St., Raton

El Vado de las Piedras and the Santa Fe Trail—Colfax County Trail Segments

Also known as Rock Crossing of the Canadian River

Added 1994

Period of Significance: 1850-1874, 1825-1849, 1800-1824

1.5 mi. S of US 56, at the Canadian R., Springer

Folsom Site

Added 1966

Period of Significance: 7000-8999 BC

Address Restricted, Folsom

Kearny School

Added 1996

Period of Significance: 1925-1949

800 S. 3rd St., Raton

Longfellow School

Added 1996

Period of Significance: 1925-1949

700 E. 4th St., Raton

Maxwell-Abreu and North (Martinez) Houses

Also known as Rayado Ranch Headquarters

Added 1993

Period of Significance: 1900-1924, 1875-1899, 1850-1874, 1825-1849

Jct. of NM 121 and Rayado Creek Rd., NW corner, Cimarron

Mills House

Added 1970

Period of Significance: 1875-1899, 1850-1874

509 1st St., Springer

Original Townsite Historic District

Added 2008

Period of Significance: 1925-1949, 1900-1924, 1875-1899

Roughly bounded by Clark & Cimarron Aves., S. 2nd & S. 7th Sts., Raton

Point of Rocks Historic District

Added 1994

Period of Significance: 1850-1874, 1825-1849, 1800-1824

Jones Well Rd., 1.5 mi. E of Point of Rocks Rd., Springer

Raton Armory

Also known as Raton Convention--Recreation Center

Added 1996

Period of Significance: 1925-1949

901 S. 3rd St., Raton

Raton Downtown Historic District

Added 1977

Period of Significance: 1900-1924, 1875-1899, 1850-1874

Roughly bounded by Rio Grande, Clark, 1st and 3rd Sts., Raton

Raton Junior--Senior High School

Also known as Raton Middle School

Added 1996

Period of Significance: 1925-1949

500 S. 3rd St., Raton

Raton Pass

Added 1966

Period of Significance: 1875-1899, 1850-1874, 1825-1849, 1800-1824

U.S. 85-87, CO/NM border, Raton

The Ring Place

Also known as Ring Ranch

Added 1988

Period of Significance: 1925-1949, 1900-1924, 1875-1899

Questa Ranger District, Carson National Forest, Forest Rds. 1950 and 1918A, Cimarron

St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church

Added 1978

Period of Significance: 1875-1899

17 mi. (27 km) E of Raton on NM 72, Raton

Villa Philmonte Historic District

Added 1995

Period of Significance: 1925-1949

Philmont Scout Ranch, Cimarron

National Historic Landmarks:

Folsom Site

Raton Pass

New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties

Segment West of Point of Rock, Santa Fe Trail

Aztec Mill, Cimarron

Colfax County Courthouse (Former), Cimarron

Dawson Coke Ovens, Cimarron

North Ponil Canyon Archeological District, Cimarron

Philtun Rocky Mountain Scout Camp (now Philmont), Cimarron

Saint James Hotel, Cimarron

Maxwell Irrigation Project

Carl's Electric Building, Raton

Cooks Hall, Raton

Coors Building, Raton

Corner Bar and Raton Hotel, Raton

Gardiner Coke Ovens, Raton

Haven Hotel, Raton

Investment Block, Raton

Joseph Building, Raton

New York and Golden Rule Stores, Raton

Palace Hotel, Raton

Raton Water Works, Raton

Fred Roth Building, Raton

Shuler Theater, Raton

Swastika Hotel, Raton

Rayado Historic District

The Springer Brown Hotel

Sources:

National Register of Historic Places

New Mexico Historic Preservation Division

GIS data used to create historic places map was obtained from the National Park Service, Cultural Resources

F. Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Promote and preserve county historic resources

Objective: Preserve and protect historic resources and promote historic assets to attract visitors and augment quality of life.

- Integrate marketing of historic places into promotional material
- Encourage the identification of historic assets and nomination for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and State Historic Register
- Assist in historic registry nomination process, technically and/or collaboratively
- Identify culturally significant areas and sites
 - » Develop cultural asset mapping to serve as a base for protecting assets
 - » Mapping should be kept up to date and adjusted to align to community feedback
 - » Cultural asset areas may be identified for zoning purposes in the future to protect these community assets from deterioration of quality, access or setting as a result of development

Goal 2: Protect the rural character of the Colfax County unincorporated area as an investment and integral aspect of the property value and quality of life for Colfax County residents

Objective: Improve the quality of the built environment and actively protect the urban and rural character from degradation.

- Review extraterritorial zoning and subdivision regulations and enforcement capacity to assure that the code and regulations are up to date in protecting valued environmental qualities
- Prepare guidelines to advise builders on the best rural subdivision practices
 - » Promote the development of pedestrian-friendly, multimodally accessible design to promote community health, interaction and future value
 - » Promote the development of environmentally responsible and sustainable design to protect resources and encourage community resilience
 - » Promote high quality design that is context-sensitive and responsible to the community
 - » Protect dark skies

Goal 3: Recognize the value of citizen participation in community character

Objective: Engage citizens to participate in community upkeep and improvement to promote community cohesion and personal agency.

- Organize regular clean-up and beautification days to encourage community engagement and promote community pride
 - » “Clean up Your County” events
 - » Median adoption program
 - » Beautification projects for youth engagement
 - Mural painting, graffiti removal
 - Median planting, community gardens
 - Home maintenance and repair assistance for the elderly
- Encourage the development and growth of community organizations

- » Community gardens
- » Neighborhood groups
- Partner with municipalities to find and develop funding and/or community participation for beautification projects
- Seek out a suitable theme and location for a county festival or series of festivals
 - » Work with municipalities to expand festival activities into incorporated locations and activities

Goal 4: Promote community assets

Objective: Develop a comprehensive and accessible wayfinding system to improve awareness of cultural and natural assets for visitors and residents.

- Develop coherent wayfinding signage and maps, and gateway design and installation to develop and promote countywide identity
 - » Incorporate cultural and recreational assets mapping
- Prioritize promotion of these assets
 - » Bike and hike trails
 - » Historic sites and districts
 - » Santa Fe Trail
 - » Attractions and institutions
 - Include businesses, destination properties, event locations and attractions

Objective: Improve public awareness of trails.

- Ensure the availability of comprehensive trails maps
 - » Produce, publish and distribute trails maps
 - » Include routes, trail capacity, difficulty level, completion times, and natural, commercial and historic attractions in maps
 - » Keep maps updated as trails are developed or retired
- Publicize trails as an amenity for residents and visitors alike
- Install wayfinding material at Raton train station
 - » Include county wayfinding material
 - » Include directions to Philmont Scout Ranch and provide descriptions of transportation options

The Economic Development Element provides long-range strategies and policies to guide economic growth in the community.

VI. Economic Development Element

A. Introduction

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to provide overarching themes, strategies and policies to guide the economic development of Colfax County for the next 20 years. The element describes the traditional economic “drivers” of the county economy and identifies target industries. It focuses on base economy, community economic development and creative economic development approaches. The topic of economic development is integrally interconnected with other subjects of the comprehensive plan, including community character, land use, housing and transportation.

B. Existing Conditions

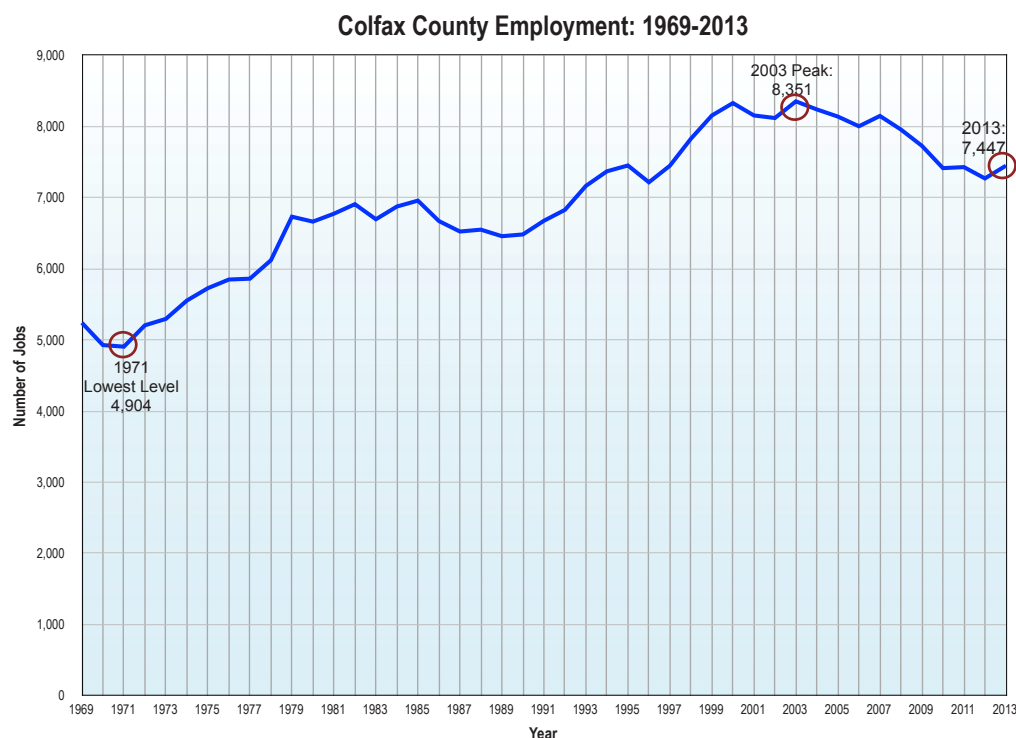
Current Economic Conditions

General Trends and Sectors of the Economy

Colfax County has achieved impressive long-range employment growth by adding some 2,500 jobs between 1971 and 2013. Employment peaked in 2003, with 8,351 jobs. Employment has been somewhat cyclical, as reflected by the following intervals:

- Grew: 1971 to 1985
- Declined: 1985 to 1990
- Grew: 1990 to 2000
- Leveled: 2000 to 2003
- Declined gradually since 2003

Exhibit VI-1
Colfax County
Employment



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic analysis

Exhibit VI-2
Major Industrial
Sectors

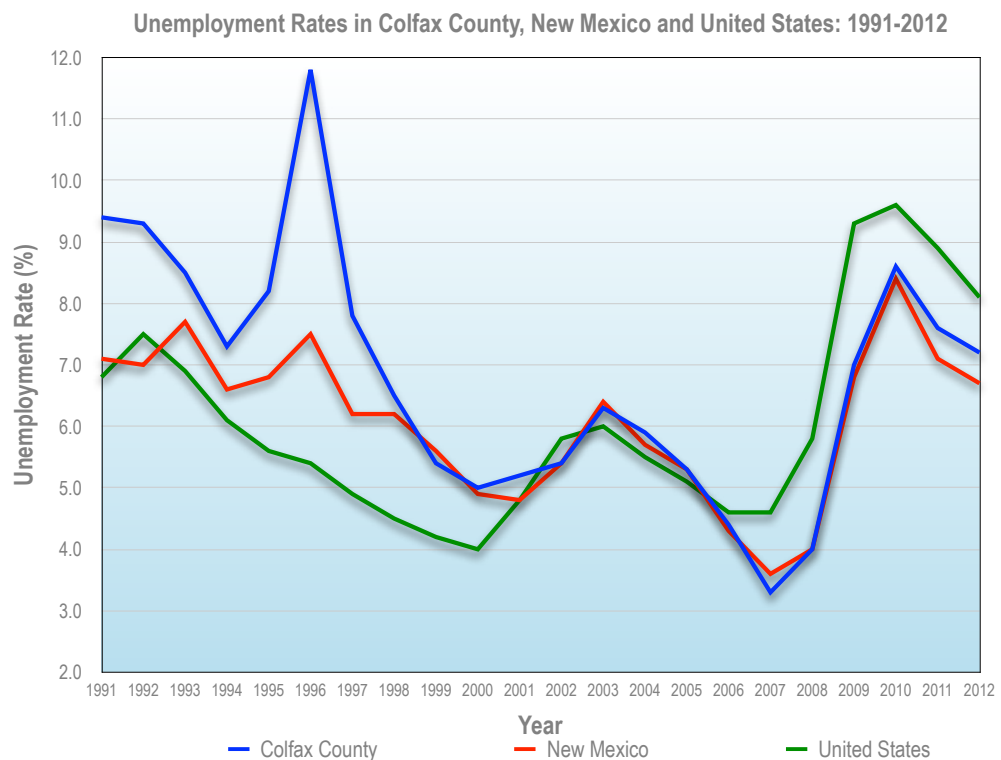
The strongest sectors are total government employment and the accommodation and food services sector. These two sectors accounted for 51% of total employment in 2013. Between 2001 and 2013, employment in accommodation and food services grew, as did health care and social services and “other services.” Most other sectors declined. Since the recession began in 2008, total employment declined by 298 jobs, or 5.6%.

Colfax County Average Annual Covered Employment by Major Industrial Sector																									
Sector	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2,012	2013	Change											
														2001-2013	2008-2013	2008-2013									
Grand Total	5,580	5,607	5,704	5,584	5,438	5,280	5,323	5,351	5,135	5,044	5,065	4,930	5,053	-527	-298	-5.6%									
Total Private	4,025	4,028	4,110	3,991	3,830	3,663	3,773	3,790	3,577	3,512	3,594	3,459	3,603	-422	-187	-4.9%									
Ag. For. Fish. & Hunting	73	60	48	51	48	51	40	40	D	D	D	54	52	-21	12	30.0%									
Mining	197	181	150	134	68	51	62	51	D	D	D	58	D												
Utilities	37	40	42	37	35	35	35	35	35	36	36	32	40	3	5	14.3%									
Construction	276	281	322	312	318	301	330	284	227	226	212	181	164	-112	-120	-42.3%									
Manufacturing	247	235	234	225	217	215	212	203	167	144	137	116	117	-130	-86	-42.4%									
Wholesale Trade	38	34	30	56	64	65	70	80	78	77	71	63	D												
Retail Trade	808	683	668	634	628	640	638	694	691	697	696	664	644	-164	-50	-7.2%									
Transportation & Warehousing	60	57	68	59	61	57	56	68	49	47	43	43	35	-25	-33	-48.5%									
Information	60	48	48	49	D	39	D	30	35	31	44	40	34	-26	4	13.3%									
Finance & Insurance	117	130	141	165	173	160	166	170	162	151	144	142	137	20	-33	-19.4%									
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	49	61	76	70	68	82	85	84	65	58	54	55	60	11	-24	-28.6%									
Professional & Technical Services	114	133	141	140	137	146	145	133	117	111	110	125	87	-27	-46	-34.6%									
Management of Companies & Enterprises	50	43	45	48	45	46	44	42	37	30	28	23	23	-27	-19	-45.2%									
Administrative & Waste Services	73	106	105	105	82	49	47	14	13	15	25	28	34	-39	20	142.9%									
Educational Services	24	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	1	0	-24											
Health Care & Social Assistance	327	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	328	399	72											
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	43	46	48	43	38	41	45	41	36	37	33	39	34	-9	-7	-17.1%									
Accommodation & Food Services	1,002	1,099	1,160	1,098	1,039	964	1,009	1,015	974	955	999	1,014	1,119	117	104	10.2%									
Other Services, ex. Public Administration	432	444	463	435	416	401	428	471	453	444	487	452	503	71	32	6.8%									
Unclassified	0	2	4	2	D	1	D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0										
Total Government	1,555	1,579	1,593	1,593	1,608	1,616	1,551	1,561	1,559	1,531	1,472	1,471	1,449	-106	-112	-7.2%									
Federal	60	60	58	56	56	57	59	57	58	71	53	52	55	-5	-2	-3.5%									
State	742	750	747	740	761	767	710	725	718	713	681	680	682	-60	-43	-5.9%									
Local	753	768	789	797	791	791	782	779	783	747	738	740	712	-41	-41	-5.3%									
Notes: All years have been revised in accordance with U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, databases.																									
Data are by location of the employer's establishment and represent counts of workers covered by New Mexico unemployment insurance (UI) law and related statutes																									
D Withheld to avoid disclosing confidential data. Data that are not disclosed for individual industries are always included in the totals. Therefore, the individual industries may not sum to the totals.																									
Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, <i>Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages</i> .																									

Unemployment

Colfax County had high unemployment prior to 1998. It peaked in 1996, due to loss in coal mining jobs. The county has generally tracked a little higher in unemployment than has New Mexico since 1998, and from 2006, has been lower than for the U.S.

Exhibit VI-3
County, NM
and U.S.
Unemployment
Rates



Location Quotients

Location quotients are ratios that compare the concentration of a resource or activity, such as employment, in a defined area to that of a larger area or base. This discussion compares, by industry, employment in Colfax County to employment in the state of New Mexico. If a sector employs a larger number of Colfax County employees per capita compared to the state average for that sector, the location quotient is higher than 1. This quotient is a direct comparison of ratios (percentages), so a location quotient of 2 indicates that Colfax County has twice as many persons employed in that sector per capita (of all employed persons) than in the state as a whole. Similarly, a location quotient of 0.5 indicates that only half as many persons are employed in that sector per capita.

“Other services, except public administration” has the highest location quotient, at 4.2. This sector includes membership associations and organizations, and private households (e.g., gardeners). It plays a much larger role in Colfax County employment than it does in the state as a whole, employing 503, or 14% of the county’s 3,597 employees. In New Mexico, the sector employs 3.3% of all employees. The Bureau of Labor Statistics does not disclose exact numbers for membership associations and private households to protect the identity of cooperating employers. The membership associations and organizations category is broad, covering club and association membership services, resale, event planning, trade shows, licensing rights, business planning, social services and childcare. The category also includes tours and recreational camps, which may account for significant employment at Philmont Scout Ranch and notable private recreation ranches in Colfax County. It does not include ski resorts.

Exhibit VI-4
*Location
 Quotients of
 Industries*

Accommodation and food services has the second highest location quotient, exceeding a value of 2 and indicating the strength of travel and tourism in the county.

Colfax County Location Quotient

Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.85
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.34
Utilities	1.53
Construction	0.66
Manufacturing	0.68
Wholesale trade	0.53
Retail trade	1.20
Professional and technical services	0.26
Management of companies and enterprises	0.77
Administration and waste services	0.13
Educational services	NC
Health care and social assistance	0.64
Transportation and warehousing	0.34
Information	0.44
Finance and Insurance	1.11
Real estate and rental leasing	1.01
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.66
Accommodation and food service	2.39
Other activities, except public administration	4.21

Calculated from Quarterly Census of Employment Wages and Data
 Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013

Colfax County is also strong in retail, which employs 18% of all employees with a location quotient of 1.2. The Colfax County sector with the lowest location quotient is professional and technical services, which accounts for 0.25% of total employment, the same as in the state. Health care and social assistance employs 399 people in Colfax County, or 12% of the total employment compared to 17.5% for New Mexico.

New Mexico and Colfax County: Employment Share by Industry

	New Mexico		Colfax County	
	Percent	Total	Percent	Total
Base Industry: Total, all industries	100%	610,148	100%	3,597
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1.7%	10,628	1.5%	53
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	4.3%	26,010	1.5%	52
Utilities	0.7%	4,443	1.1%	40
Construction	6.9%	42,216	4.6%	164
Manufacturing	4.8%	29,083	3.3%	117
Wholesale trade	3.5%	21,575	1.9%	67
Retail trade	15.0%	91,750	18.0%	648
Professional and technical services	8.6%	52,278	2.2%	79
Management of companies and enterprises	0.8%	5,075	0.6%	23
Administrative and waste services	6.8%	41,544	0.9%	32
Educational services	1.5%	8,836	NC	NC
Health care and social assistance	17.5%	106,556	11.1%	399
Transportation and warehousing	2.8%	17,326	1.0%	35
Information	2.1%	13,072	1.0%	34
Finance and insurance	3.5%	21,162	3.8%	138
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.6%	9,906	1.6%	59
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1.5%	8,931	1.0%	35
Accommodation and food services	13.0%	79,493	31.1%	1,118
Other services, except public administration	3.3%	20,267	14.0%	503

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013

Employment Trends in Individual Communities

The U.S. Census American Communities Survey estimates employment by industrial sector at the community level. Data from this source, relying on small sample sizes, may not be reliable, but it is interesting to consider. Distribution of estimated employment in the municipalities and unincorporated county was very similar to the population distribution.

The following table indicates that employment is stronger in Angel Fire than in the county on average in construction, finance and insurance, professional, scientific and management, and arts and entertainment.

- *Cimarron* employment exceeds the county average in arts and entertainment and other services.
- *Eagle Nest* employment is stronger than the county in construction, retail trade, and arts and entertainment.
- *Maxwell* employment, while its numbers are small, exceeds county averages in agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting mining, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and other services.
- *Raton* employment's strengths are in, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, health care and social assistance
 - » While not higher than the county's average employment per capita, Raton has more jobs than any other community in the county in construction, manufacturing, retail trade and arts and entertainment.

- *Springer* has employment strength in retail trade, transportation and warehousing, and public administration.

Exhibit VI-6
County and
Municipality
Employment

Estimated Employment by Sectors in Colfax County and Municipalities

Industrial Sector	Angel Fire	Cimarron	Eagle Nest	Maxwell	Raton	Springer	Unincorporated Colfax County	Colfax County
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	15	17	7	9	178	0	115	341
Construction	111	45	26	7	136	30	55	410
Manufacturing	17	0	1	8	193	0	28	247
Wholesale trade	0	0	0	0	12	0	11	23
Retail trade	6	81	42	3	268	56	191	647
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	0	13	2	14	258	36	68	391
Information	6	0	0	0	7	0	0	13
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	58	6	4	7	128	20	60	283
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	121	24	2	0	124	12	153	436
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	58	76	12	18	801	78	188	1,231
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	207	122	27	0	347	15	215	933
Other services, except public administration	41	36	0	6	35	19	14	151
Public administration	9	16	7	7	214	77	55	385
Total	649	436	130	79	2,701	343	1,153	5,491

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey

3% or more higher share than total County
3% or more lower share than total County

Income

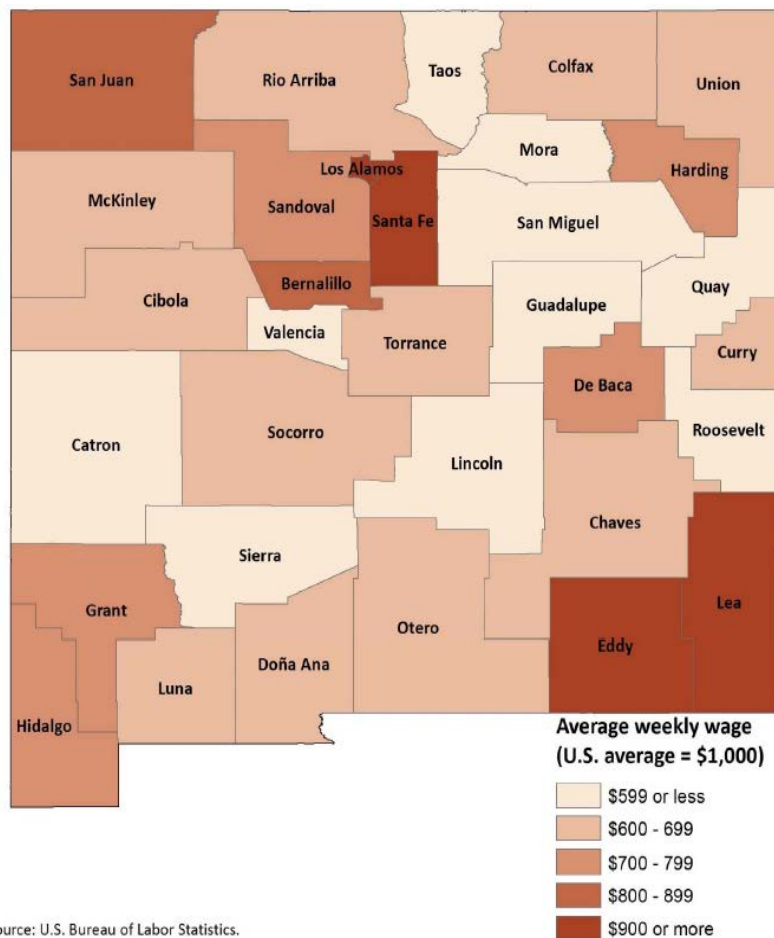
Colfax County was in the middle tier of counties of average weekly wages, while trailing the state average, typical of rural counties in New Mexico.

- \$602 in Colfax County
- \$814 in New Mexico
- \$1,000 in the U.S.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for Fourth Quarter of 2013.

Exhibit VI-7
N.M. Counties
Average Wages

Average Weekly Wages by N.M. County, 4th Quarter, 2013



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Colfax County's per capita income was reported as ninth highest of New Mexico's 33 counties, and slightly higher than the state average.

Exhibit VI-8
N.M. Counties
Personal Income

Per Capita Personal Income by New Mexico Counties 2001-2011

County	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 ^r	2010 ^r	2011 ^p
New Mexico	\$24,751	\$24,977	\$25,639	\$27,092	\$28,641	\$30,209	\$31,675	\$33,490	\$32,200	\$32,940	\$34,133
Colfax	\$22,851	\$22,730	\$24,079	\$24,929	\$26,171	\$26,872	\$28,563	\$31,346	\$31,099	\$31,730	\$34,359

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. Data released November 2012.

Table Prepared by: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of New Mexico.

Poverty

The U.S. Census Bureau, Data Integration Division, Small Area Estimates Branch estimated that 2,580 persons in Colfax County were living below the poverty level in 2011, or 19.5% of the total population. This rate is lower than for New Mexico, estimated at 20.9%.

Exhibit VI-9
Total Oil and Tax
Production Value

Ranching and Farming

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Census of Agriculture indicates long-term stability in the number of farms and ranches in Colfax County, some decline in farm/ranch size between 2002 and 2012, significant decline in irrigated acres, significant decline in heads of cattle and calves, and a slight decline in the market value of agricultural products when adjusted for inflation.

Major Employers

The major employers in Colfax County include the school districts, Miner's Colfax Medical Center, Angel Fire Ski Resort (seasonal), Philmont Scout Ranch (seasonal), and local governments.

Oil and Gas Industry

Colfax County reportedly had \$91.7 million in oil and gas production value in 2013. While significant, it represents only 0.6% of the total oil and gas production value in the state in 2013. Nonetheless, the Raton Basin (natural gas) may have significant resources that could be developed.

Colfax County Oil and Gas Total Production Value: 2009 to 2013

County	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009 to 2013	
						Change	% Change
Colfax	\$87,426,076	\$110,595,407	\$105,180,911	\$73,624,268	\$91,705,699	\$4,279,622	5%

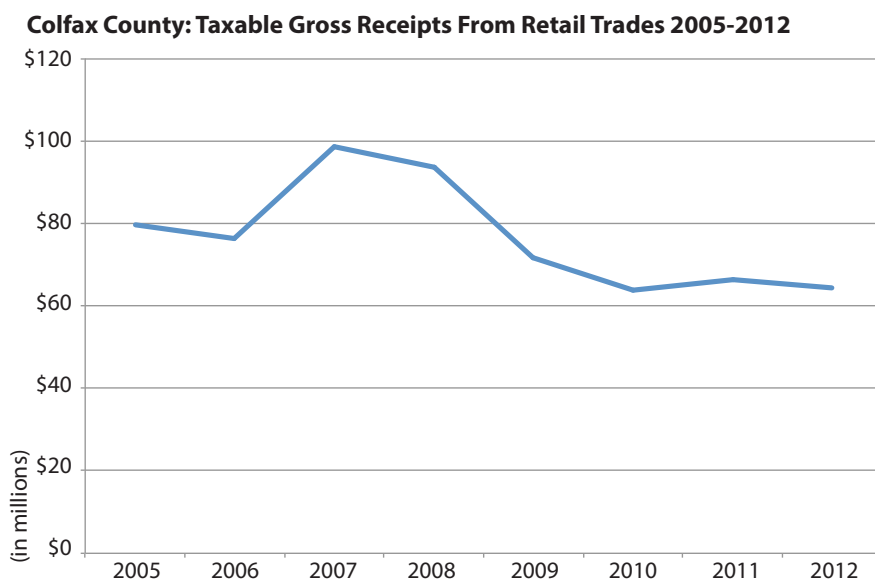
Source: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, UNM records from New Mexico Oil Conservation Division.

Between 1999 and 2003, 256 natural gas wells were drilled in the county. Reportedly, Colfax County currently has over 800 wells. Following a boom in the Raton Basin coalbed methane in Colorado starting in 1994, a group of investors who acquired the Pennzoil Vermejo Park mineral estate completed a pipeline in October 1999 from the Raton Basin to Colorado. Landowner Ted Turner has imposed strict environmental controls for natural gas extraction on the natural gas drillers and producers. Atlas Energy is the current producer. (Source: New Mexico's Raton Basin coalbed methane play, Gretchen K. Hoffman and Brian S. Brister, New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, 2003.)

Gross Receipts Tax Revenues

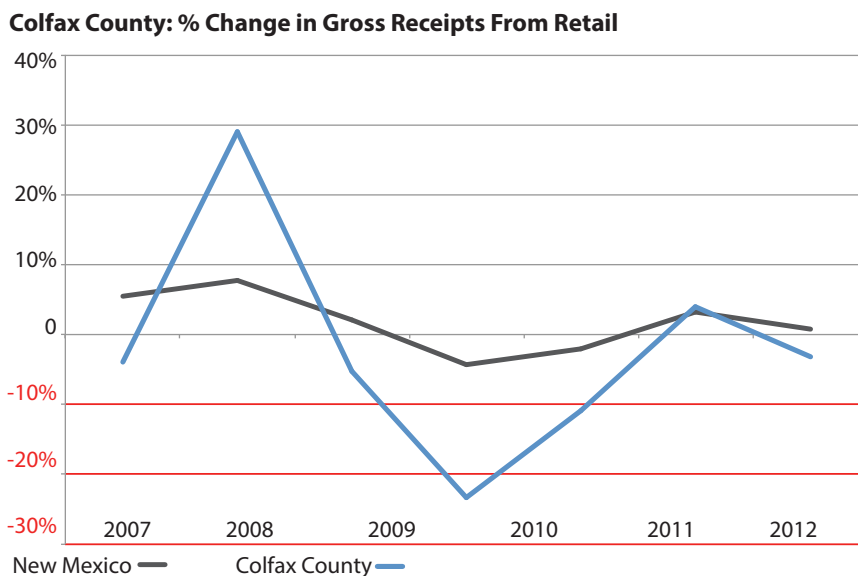
Taxable gross receipts from retail trade in Colfax County jumped from \$76 million in 2006 to \$98 million in 2007, but then fell dramatically to \$63 million by 2010. As of 2012, revenues had not recovered much from the economic downturn, hovering around \$65 million between 2011 and 2012. This pattern is similar to the retail taxable gross receipts in the state as a whole, but is more highly amplified in Colfax County's small economy.

Exhibit VI-10
Taxable Gross
Receipts



Source: New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department, Analysis of Gross Receipts Tax & Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of New Mexico

Exhibit VI-11
Change in Taxable
Gross Receipts



Source: New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department, Analysis of Gross Receipts Tax & Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of New Mexico

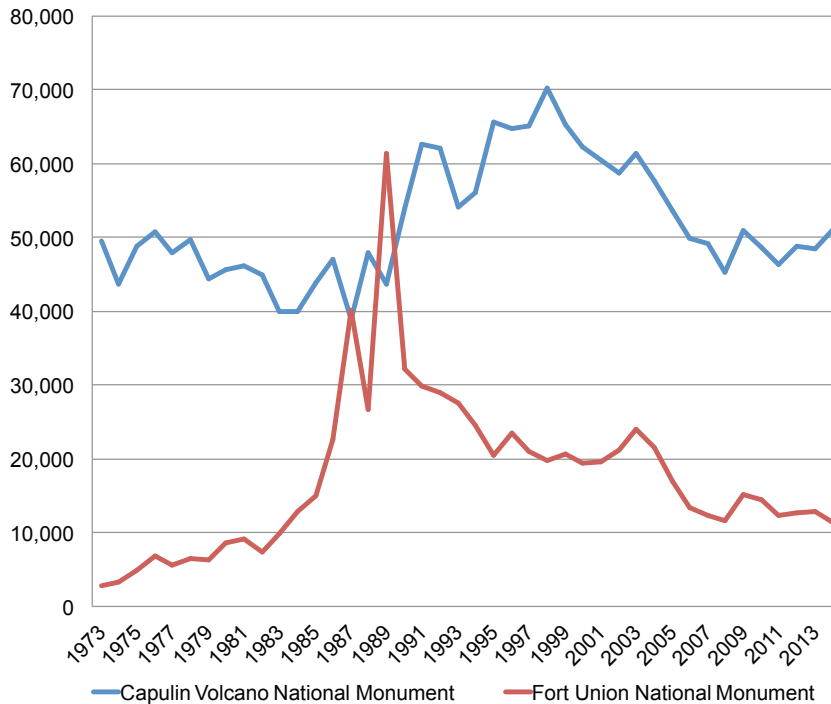
Indicators of Travel and Tourism

National Park Visitorship

Although Colfax County has no national parks, nearby parks may indicate trends in recreational interest in the area. Two nearby national parks are Capulin Volcano National Monument to the northeast and Fort Union National Monument to the southwest. The parks experienced opposite visitorship trends in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with Fort Union increasing and Capulin declining, then both increasing. Since about 1995, visitorship in both national monuments generally declined.

Exhibit VI-12
National Park
Visitorship

National Park Visitorship 1973-2013



Source: National Park Service, Visitor Use Statistics, 2015

National Forest Visitors and Spending

An estimated 960,000 people visited Carson National Forest in 2008 (U.S. Forest Service). Nonlocal visitors to the park spent \$56,644,000 associated with their park visits in 2008, excluding downhill skiing in parts of the forest that are in other counties. Market spending surveying by the National Forest Service found that restaurant and lodging constituted the majority of spending for nonlocals, but gas and oil, as well as retail, also reported significant segments of spending. Much of the Carson National Forest is in Taos and Rio Arriba Counties and specific information regarding the Colfax County portion of the National Forest was not available. (Source: USDA Forest Service, Single Forest Recreation Economics Contribution Reports, 2008-2012, <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/economics/recreation-contributions/single-reports.shtml>)

Philmont Scout Ranch

The Philmont Scout Camp is a major recreational destination that attracts 22,000 visitors a year. (Source: <http://www.philmontscout ranch.org/PTC/PromotePTC/request/tips.aspx>) No data are available on the web page characterizing economic contributions to the county, but they are likely significant.

2014 Philmont Scout Ranch Statistics

- Backcountry backpacking expedition: 22,702 participants
- Philmont Training Center: 4,728 participants
- September - April season: 5,000 visitors and participants
- Seasonal summer staff: 1,130
- Year-round employees: 82

Source: Philmont Scout Ranch, 2015

NRA Whittington Center

The National Rifle Association's (NRA's) Whittington Center south of Raton is a great asset to the County and has the potential to become an even more important economic driver for nearby communities. With 180,000 visitors in 2007 and providing an estimated 1,100 seasonal jobs, the Whittington Center is already an essential contributor to the economy of Colfax County. (Source: New York Times, "The N.R.A. Whittington Center Shooting Range in New Mexico Caters to All in the Middle of Nowhere," May 2, 2009)

However, more could be done to promote longer stays by Whittington visitors to enjoy local attractions and patronize other businesses. Entrepreneurs might also provide more specialty goods, such as gunsmithing and producing rifle accessories, and services for the Whittington Center. County events could include activities such as archery and marksmanship competitions to draw people to the center. Developing a stronger economic relationship between the County and the Whittington Center and its guests should be a top County priority.

Angel Fire Resort

Angel Fire had approximately 150,000 skier-day visits in the 2007-08 season. (Source: Village of Angel Fire Comprehensive Plan, 2008).

C. Issues and Opportunities

Economic Development-Related Visioning Goals

Visioning participants identified the following goals and assets:

- Countywide communication: County and municipalities should work well together to advance economic development, provide services, maintain facilities, advertise and market the county experience, and advocate for the county's interests
- The County's web site could be an important communication tool for all local governments in the county
- The County and communities of county should participate in "New Mexico True," a New Mexico Tourism Department campaign
- The County should initiate a countywide tourism promotion
- Tourism materials should identify:
 - » Great places for walking, hiking and bicycling
 - » Great places to have dinner
 - » Great places to see a sunset
- Historic architecture or geology tours should be offered

Target Industries

Following are candidate target industries that the County and municipalities should consider as the focus for economic development strategies. All these industries currently have existing operations. Priorities may differ by community.

Exhibit VI-13
Candidate Target
Industries

Colfax Country Candidate Target Industries

- 1 Travel / tourism
- 2 Recreation
- 3 Agriculture
- 4 Wind / solar
- 5 Timber
- 6 Oil and gas
- 7 Retiree recruitment
- 8 Warehousing and manufacturing
- 9 Entrepreneurship - local services and goods
- 10 Medical and behavioral health services
- 11 Downtown / historic preservation / cultural activities

The City of Raton's economic development entity, GrowRaton!, listed the following target industries and markets as part of their strategic planning:

Exhibit VI-14
Current and
Possible
Economic
Opportunities in
Raton

Raton's economy currently includes:

Agriculture
Arts, entertainment and recreation
Business and professional services
Education
Forest and wood products
Government
Healthcare and medical services
Hospitality
Information technology
Light manufacturing
Research and development
Retail

Raton is ideally suited for opportunities in:

Aircraft maintenance
Back office operations
Call centers
Consulting
Cultural heritage and historical tours
Distribution and logistics
E-Commerce
Film locations
Firearms manufacturing and sales
Food processing
Outdoor recreational goods
Renewable energy

Quality of Place, Robust Local Economies and Economic Development Efforts in Growth Areas of the County

Most economic activity in Colfax County is in the municipalities, where most of the county's population lives. Retail businesses, tourism, transportation-related businesses, offices, and health care are among the activities located there. The locational strategy of the comprehensive plan is to encourage growth (including economic activities) in the municipalities, while anticipating that some residential development and certainly some industrial development is best suited for unincorporated county areas. The beautiful places of the county on both public and private lands are central to tourism activities.

Improving economic development opportunities depends a great deal on the "quality of place" in small communities and positive attitudes. Recommendations in the Community Character Element address features that contribute to quality of place, which in turn improves prospects for county economic development.

Economic developer David J. Ivan gave a widely attended talk to the community of Raton on March 9, 2015. His message for economic development in rural areas included the need to:

- Advocate positive attitudes
- Find small things to build on
- Work with youth groups, such as scouting, 4-H, and young veterans returning from the armed forces

Economic Development Organization

Need for Communication and Organization

Participants in the planning process repeatedly highlighted the need for cohesive economic development. It was thought that one obstacle is a lack of cooperation among the county, municipalities and various economic development organizations. However, the great distances between communities in the county have certainly proven to impede cooperation, rather than lack of willingness.

Appropriate Organization

Colfax County needs a clear economic development vision, defined goals with measurable benchmarks and a cohesive strategy that outlines specific steps to attaining those goals. It also needs strong leadership with the participation and input from all communities across the county. An economic development corporation, with great input from the County, should direct this effort.

Economic development is a systematic approach that over time creates employment and higher income opportunities. Development of an organized approach with sufficient capacity and capability to accomplish economic development is critical. Economic development is usually challenging and risky — however, the rate of success in any particular recruitment or program development is not always high.

The functions of economic development include:

- *Research* - collect information, develop depository and active files on important economic sectors, obtain current information on resources, follow markets, and contact experts and developers
- *Planning* - set goals and priorities, coordinate activities, conduct periodic visioning, integrate the self-interest of advocates for business development with the broader interests of the community, track progress toward goals, and report economic development status and progress to elected officials
- *Management* - conduct specific projects with the authority to act on behalf of the County or other entities that may be involved, negotiate leases, and package agreements that are sometimes very complex
- *Leadership* - effectively work in a public-private arena that includes decision makers and stakeholders who make decisions and effect change, rally individuals and groups to a perspective, supervise staff, keep people involved (making sure not to dismiss effective individuals whether or not they fully agree with an approach), advocate for a positive civic culture (including business leaders as well as government officials), and encourage long-range efforts
- *Marketing* - oversee advertising and branding, attend trade shows, respond to

requests for information, and talk with various individuals to promote ideas or business development

- *Grant writing and fundraising* - support or supplement the operating budget, or raise funds as part of a package with a prospective business
- *Technical assistance* - connect people, increase skill sets within the community, solve problems, assist with business plans for potential public funding, and mediate among disagreeing parties

A countywide economic development corporation might be a viable alternative if the County and other local governmental entities decide that a cooperative, multi-jurisdictional approach is needed, thus eliminating some redundancy between efforts of different communities.

Assigning the most qualified and appropriate group or individual to manage such an effort will be essential to its success. The identified individual or group must have the interest of all communities in Colfax County at heart, must be willing and able to enact the vision presented in this Comprehensive Plan and the vision and flexibility to adapt initiatives to changing economic tides.

The chosen individual or group will lead an organization composed of representatives from across the county to drive a disciplined economic development effort. The effort will derive goals and strategies from the County Comprehensive Plan, though updates, modifications and additions are advisable to allow for adaptation.

The draft LEDA ordinance of June 2015 has language directing the development, structure and procedures of a Colfax County Economic Development Corporation that are in accord with the recommendations in this document.

LEDA Ordinance and Use

The County currently has a local economic development act (LEDA) ordinance and is currently updating it. The ordinance allows the County to make resources such as land, buildings and infrastructure available for economic development projects.

Ordinance No. 2011-01 It is purpose of the ordinance to implement the Local Economic Development Act, Section 5-10-1 through 5-10-3 NMSA 1978. The 1994 constitutional amendment to Article IX, Section 14 of the Constitution of New Mexico to allow support of economic development to foster, promote and enhance local economic development efforts while continuing to protect against the unauthorized use of public money and other public resources. This act also allows municipalities and counties to enter into joint powers agreements to plan and support regional economic development projects. (Source: Colfax County Draft LEDA Ordinance, June 2015)

This ordinance is an important economic development tool for the County to contribute to expanding base industries in the county. For example, timber and logging may be eligible for LEDA benefits and warrant County LEDA incentives. This target industry is an important source of private sector jobs, has room for growth, and has the added benefit of improving forest health through thinning. The

County has also identified information technology, renewable energy and highway transportation as target growth industries.

In addition to local LEDA incentives for base employment growth, the State of New Mexico has LEDA funds that it may contribute to projects. The County should advocate for matching State LEDA funds for particularly important economic development projects.

Oil and Gas Development

Over the years, investors have expressed interest in developing energy resources in Colfax County. Although the price of oil is currently too low to drive much oil and gas drilling, at a later time, the Raton Basin may host oil and gas fields in addition to the current operations in the Vermejo Ranch.

Colfax County also realizes the importance of having protections in place before development begins in order to protect the high quality environment and natural resources in the county. The Land Use Element identifies environmentally sensitive areas for the purpose of regulating oil and gas activities.

Fiber Optics and Opportunities for Computer-Based Operations

Planning committee members discussed the presence of major fiber optic lines in Colfax County and the possibility that these lines could serve major computer facilities. Members suggested that existing infrastructure could support a data center. Based on the county's cool climate and available land, such development may be feasible. Additional research is needed to ascertain the feasibility of a data center and the level of interest in developing such a facility.

D. Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1. Generate economic development activities that will create employment, create wealth, retain youth, attract new residents and support economic clusters and that will create organizational capacity

Objective 1: Organize a formal, countywide strategic economic development collaboration effort.

- Organize an economic development committee to coordinate activities among various communities and develop a strong county economic function
 - » Conduct an audit of economic development capacity, including assessing existing organizations, initiatives and their goals, and progress in accomplishing those goals
 - » Invite participants in the summit including County officials, local governments, chambers of commerce and all other economic development organizations
 - » Unite behind a defined set of economic development strategies and goals
 - » Determine the structure of an economic development organization
- Establish an economic development organization

Objective 2: Advance coordinative efforts among various economic development groups.

- Establish a countywide coordinative effort that includes local municipalities, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, and major employers, including ranch, resort and camp representatives
 - » Include representative voices from across the county to encompass all communities
 - » Work to maintain fair distribution of resources and burdens
 - » Work together to establish and align clear, attainable and measurable economic development goals
 - Goals should be based on the Colfax County Comprehensive Plan but allow flexibility to address local interests and capacities
 - Goals should focus on the education of local entrepreneurs and the recruitment of new talent
- Organize and publicize periodic meetings to include all members of the cooperative effort
 - » Provide space in a County facility for holding periodic meetings
 - » Encourage informal networking
- Develop and expand access to a County communications network
 - » Use online tools to enable and expand access to the County communications network

Goal 2. Develop and encourage workforce training and education programs focusing on developing local capacity

Objective: Develop partnerships with area schools and tradespeople to establish internship and apprenticeship programs, and develop vocational and trades training programs.

- Develop a channel or resource to connect job seekers and youth to potential internship and apprentice opportunities
- Engage local, aging business owners to develop successor training
 - » Integrate with an apprenticeship program
- Engage local employers, especially ranches and resorts, to collaborate in the development of local workforce training programs
 - » The local workforce can serve the ski resort in winter and ranches in summer to ease the housing fluctuation produced by the influx of separate, seasonal workers
 - » Encourage creative solutions to workforce housing, especially in the Angel Fire area
 - » The County and municipalities should work with businesses to develop transportation solutions for the local workforce
- Encourage collaboration with Trinidad State Junior College to develop community education programming in the former New Mexico Highlands University building in Raton
 - » Focus on workforce education and career training
 - » Encourage hospitality and healthcare training programs
 - » Link programming to local rehabilitation efforts to reduce incarceration and recidivism

- Partner with local institutions to develop rehabilitation programming to treat substance abuse and reduce incarceration and recidivism

Goal 3. Identify target industries that have the potential for growth, based on market demand, available resources and opportunities and that, with some development, can lead to measurable economic development gains.

Objective 1: Foster the development and expansion of local industries and develop a diverse and well supported economic base.

- Engage the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to identify additional areas of potential development and employment needs

Healthcare & Medical Industry

- Support the Miner's Colfax Medical Center expansion
- Encourage local healthcare facilities to develop in-house medical career training programs for noncertified positions such as:
 - » Medical assistant, nursing assistant, home care aide, occupational therapy aide, psychiatric aide and medical secretary
 - » "Train to hire" programs will enable the development of a local medical workforce
- Conduct outreach to regional higher educational institutions to develop training programs
 - » Luna Community College
 - » New Mexico Highlands University
 - » Trinidad State Junior College

Agricultural Economy

- Work with local municipalities and land owners to create an agricultural goods production market
 - » Local, organic farms and farming
 - » Farmers' markets
 - » Local, organic branding
 - » Value-added goods
- Reach out to local resorts and ranches to develop a local supply market to meet the needs of their guests with locally produced goods

Local Arts and Crafts

- Encourage local arts and crafts
 - » Identify a potential low-cost studio, arts center and gallery space
 - » Market and advertise as an arts and crafts destination to draw talent and entrepreneurs
 - » Coordinate with internship/apprentice programs to build workforce skills
 - » Integrate into area branding and wayfinding campaigns
- Research the potential for a local gunsmithing economy
 - » Potential collaboration with Whittington Center
 - Potential customer base
- Research the potential for a local leather saddle-making economy

Recreation and Tourism

- Continue to develop an extensive network of bike and hiking trails
 - » Design and distribute an attractive, easy-to-read map outlining routes and attractions
- Develop communication with local ranches and resorts to collaborate on improving community wellbeing
 - » If possible, collaborate with private land owners to build county bike and hiking trails that link communities and attractions
 - A trail from Angel Fire to Philmont, for example
- Improve access to and the variety of recreational opportunities for youth
 - » Engage youth to determine recreational needs and wishes
 - » Seek out productive partnerships to improve the availability of youth programs
 - » Involve youth in the management of county assets
 - Recruit youth as summer parks and recreation employees or interns
 - » Assess the need for a recreational center for youth
- Continue to develop and market recreational events that use the county's natural assets (elevation changes, waterways, canyons, etc.) such as:
 - » Bike rides
 - » Veterans' runs
 - » Wildlife viewing
 - » Shooting contests, 3D archery shoots
 - » Waterway trails along Cimarron and Canadian Rivers
 - » Riding the canyons
 - » Races: adventure and relay
 - » Expansion of equestrian trails and kayaking routes in Sugarite
 - » Tours
 - Historic, geologic, wildlife, artistic and cultural
- Research ways to use the Old Raton Pass as a recreational attraction
 - » Integrate it into bike and hike trails
 - » Semiannual opening events may be possible
- Integrate the county's historic and scenic assets into a tour route
 - » Provide a map of route and attractions
 - » Link to regional attractions and tour routes (Enchanted Circle, Santa Fe, Taos, Jemez)
- Embrace the presence of the Santa Fe Trail in Colfax County
 - » Market the upcoming 200th anniversary (2021) as countywide event
 - Highlight recreational possibilities
 - Encourage collaboration across the county
- Aggressively market area assets
 - » Engage a collaborative, countywide effort
 - » Work with the New Mexico True campaign to develop and publicize a marketing campaign

Timber

- Work with local mills to remove barriers and impediments to developing and expanding timber harvesting based on thinning, and product fabrication and

export

- Collaborate with local land owners and municipalities to identify prime thinning / harvesting areas and environmentally responsible access routes
- Promote the expansion of the state's Job Training Incentive Program and area mills' use of local and state Local Economic Development Act

Information Technology

- Research broadband transmission cable potential
 - » Evaluate the feasibility of using existing broadband transmission cables to attract information technology industry, including consideration of the county's cool, arid climate to mitigate the cost of cooling servers

Warehousing and Manufacturing

- Assess the capacity to develop warehousing and manufacturing industries
- Engage municipalities to pursue development in these areas

Objective 2: Periodically review and revise the list of target industries identified in this Comprehensive Plan

- Identify the county's capacity to develop those industries
- Establish a development plan
- Outline goals and strategies
- Identify tools and responsible parties
- Identify and seek funding sources
- Outline an implementation plan
- Establish quantifiable goals and measurements of the success of each strategy, including time frames
- Periodically assess the success of strategies as defined by those goals and time lines
 - » Update strategies accordingly

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This section provides background information on Colfax County housing including inventory and affordability and presents options for improving housing stock and availability

VII. Housing Element

A. Existing Conditions

Housing Units, Vacancy and Housing Type

Housing Units

Colfax County had 10,042 housing units in 2010 up from 8,277 in 1990 and 6,022 households, up from 4,966 in 1990. 1,274 (21%) of the 6,022 households lived outside municipalities in 2010.

Exhibit VII-1

Households and Housing Units in Colfax County

Colfax County Households and Housing Units

		Decennial Counts			1990-2000		2000-2010	
		1990	2000	2010	Change	Average Annual Rate of Change	Change	Average Annual Rate of Change
Colfax County	Population	12,937	14,190	13,770	1,253	0.93%	-420	-0.30%
	Households	4,966	5,825	6,022	859	1.61%	197	0.33%
	Housing Units	8,277	8,965	10,042	688	0.80%	1,077	1.14%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990, 2000, 2010

Exhibit VII-2

Households and Housing Units by School District

Most of the county's population is in the Raton School District, but the number of housing units in Raton is slightly lower than in the Cimarron district. The Cimarron school district, which includes Angel Fire, also has the largest difference between housing units and households, with 3,108 fewer households than housing units. Most of this difference is due to the high number of seasonal housing in the resort community.

Population and Household by School District

					1990-2000		2000-2010		1990-2010	
					Change	Average Annual Rate of Change	Change	Average Annual Rate of Change	Change	Average Annual Rate of Change
Springer Municipal School District	Population	2,003	2,105	1,820	102	0.50%	-285	-1.44%	-183	-0.48%
	Households	764	780	741	16	0.21%	-39	-0.51%	-23	-0.15%
	Housing Units	864	930	952	66	0.74%	22	0.23%	88	0.49%
Maxwell Municipal School District	Population	432	455	442	23	0.52%	-13	-0.29%	10	0.11%
	Households	174	180	196	6	0.34%	16	0.86%	22	0.60%
	Housing Units	249	225	259	-24	-1.01%	34	1.42%	10	0.20%
Cimarron Municipal School District	Population	2,129	3,280	3,531	1,151	4.42%	251	0.74%	1402	2.56%
	Households	819	1,395	1,636	576	5.47%	241	1.61%	817	3.52%
	Housing Units	3,188	3,820	4,744	632	1.83%	924	2.19%	1556	2.01%
Raton Public School District	Population	8,373	8,350	7,977	-23	-0.03%	-373	-0.46%	-396	-0.24%
	Households	3,209	3,470	3,449	261	0.79%	-21	-0.06%	240	0.36%
	Housing Units	3,976	3,990	4,087	14	0.04%	97	0.24%	111	0.14%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990, 2000, 2010

In the Raton and Springer school districts between 1990 and 2010, population dropped. The number of housing units has changed little in either area, but the Cimarron school district added 1,556 units over the two decades, largely due to growth in Angel Fire.

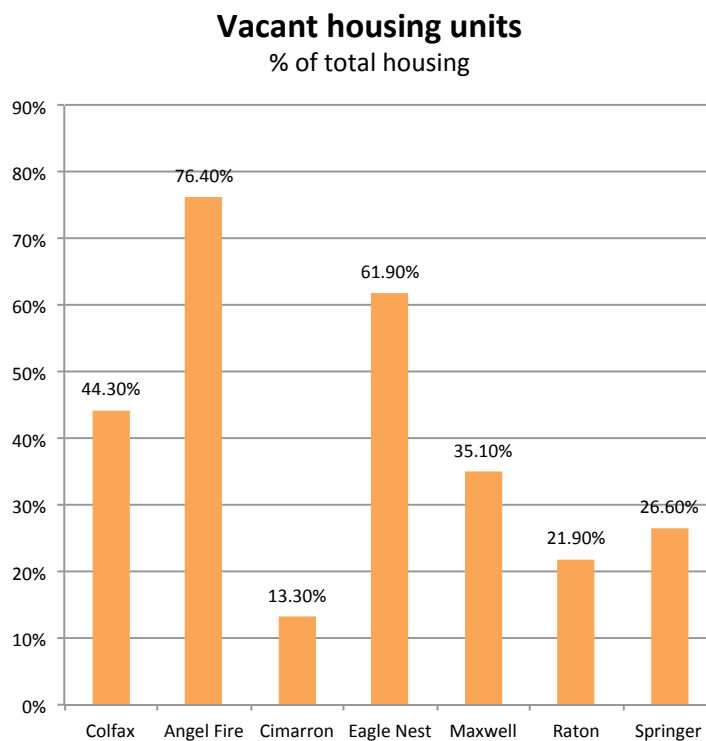
Vacancy

Recreational resort communities such as Angel Fire typically have high seasonal vacancies. In Angel Fire, 67% of housing units are seasonally vacant (76.4% vacant overall) and in nearby Eagle Nest, 44% of units are seasonally vacant (61.9% vacant overall).

Springer has an estimated overall vacancy of 26.6% or 145 units In 2012. The U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) categorized just ten those units as “for rent” and another nine as “seasonally vacant.” The remaining 126 were categorized as “other vacant,” generally an indication that the unit is abandoned.

Maxwell also has high vacancy, 35%, but Cimarron is about average at 13%. Estimates of the national average vacancy are 12.6% in 2014 with a 3.1% seasonal vacancy.

Exhibit VII-3
*Vacancy by
Community*



Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

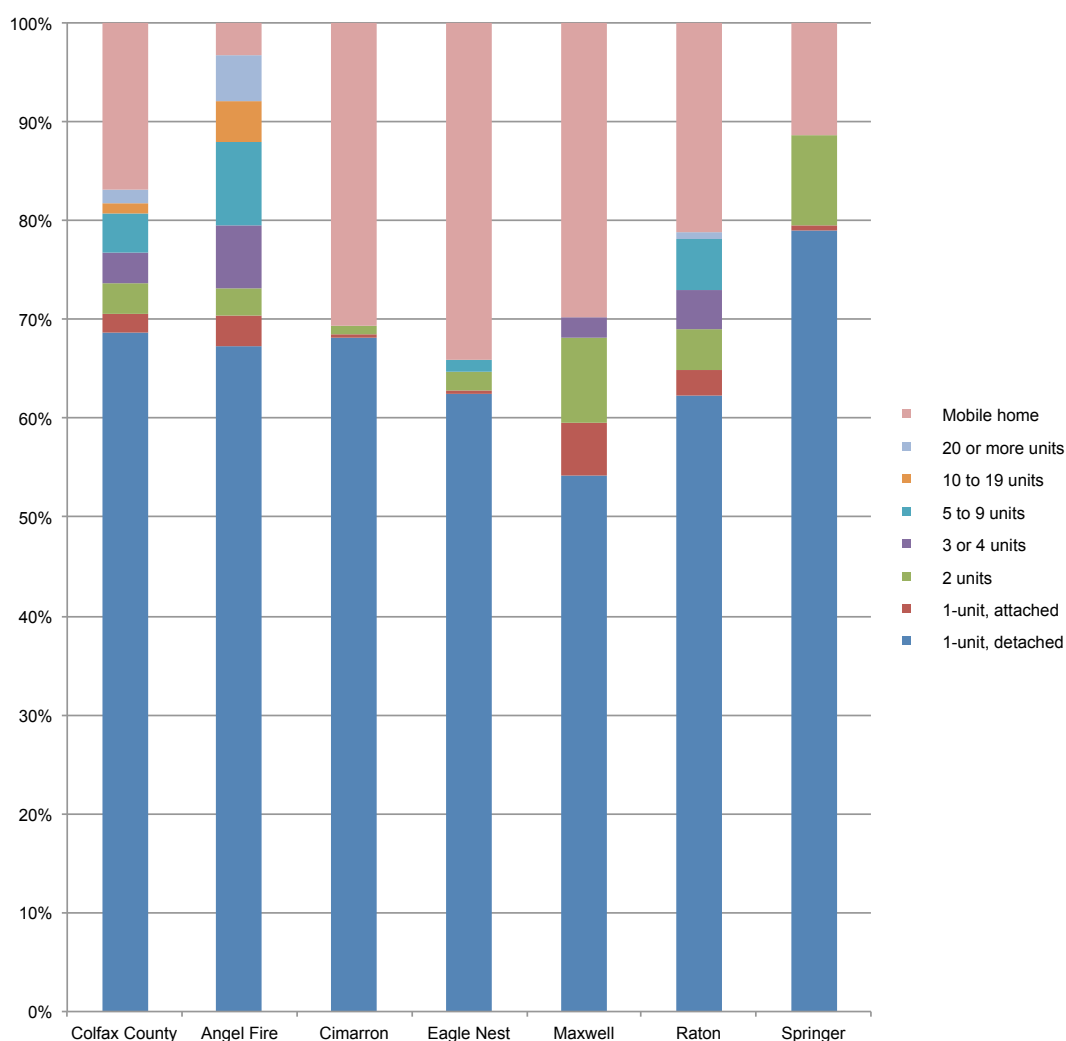
Housing Diversity

The county overall has good housing diversity, with over 10% of total stock in multifamily and 68.7% in single family units. However, the majority of multifamily units, which are often an important source for affordable and workforce housing, are located in Angel Fire and used as seasonal housing. Raton has 14% multi-unit housing. Springer has just over 9% (all duplexes) and Cimarron has less than 1%.

Exhibit VII-4
Housing Type

Angel Fire also has an extremely low percentage of mobile homes, often another important source for affordable housing, just 3.2%. The county has 16.9% mobile homes overall, but that total reflects Angel Fire's very low percentage. Cimarron, Eagle Nest and Maxwell all have about 30% and Raton has just over 21%. Springer falls below the county average at 11% for mobile homes and has a higher-than-average percentage of single family units (79%).

Distribution of Housing Types in Colfax County and Municipalities



Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

Housing Age

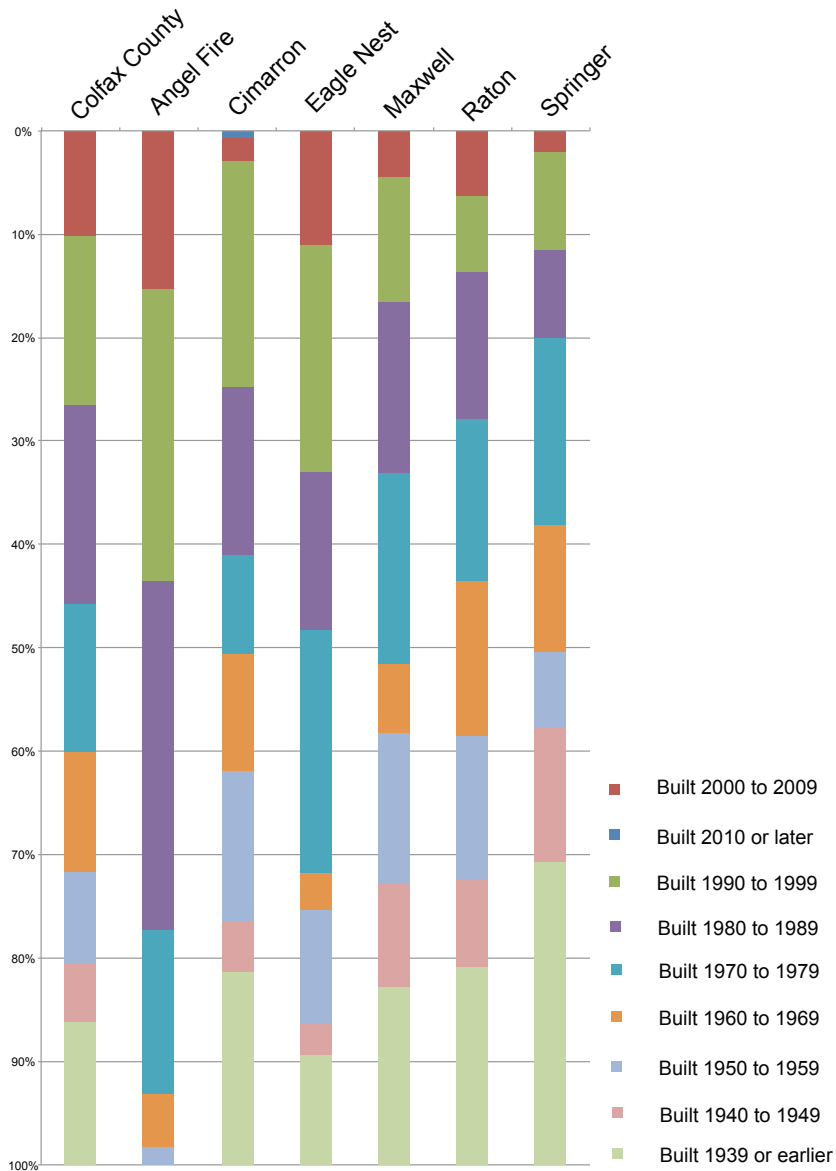
Average housing age in the county peaked with 19% of the units in the range of 25 to 35 years old, with smaller shares in other age groups; 28.3% of homes were built 1959 or before. Angel Fire has generally newer housing stock with 93% built after 1970. Springer has the oldest housing stock: just under half (49.6%) of the city's housing stock was built before 1949. Housing age can be an important indicator of the need for rehabilitation in a community.

ACS estimates virtually no new homes constructed in Colfax County after 2010.

Community members report that this is likely close to true, indicating that any new units in Maxwell were generally replacement units and likely mobile homes and that there has been no new housing in Springer, no projected growth in east Raton and perhaps 6 new units in Eagle Nest in the last decade. The housing market in Angel Fire has been in a seven year decline, according to local real estate sources who report that it is cheaper to buy an existing home than build new there.

Exhibit VII-5
Housing Age

Distribution of Housing By Age in Colfax County and Municipalities



Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

Housing Values

The median value of owner-occupied units in Colfax County was estimated at \$117,100 in 2013. Estimated median home values range widely among individual communities:

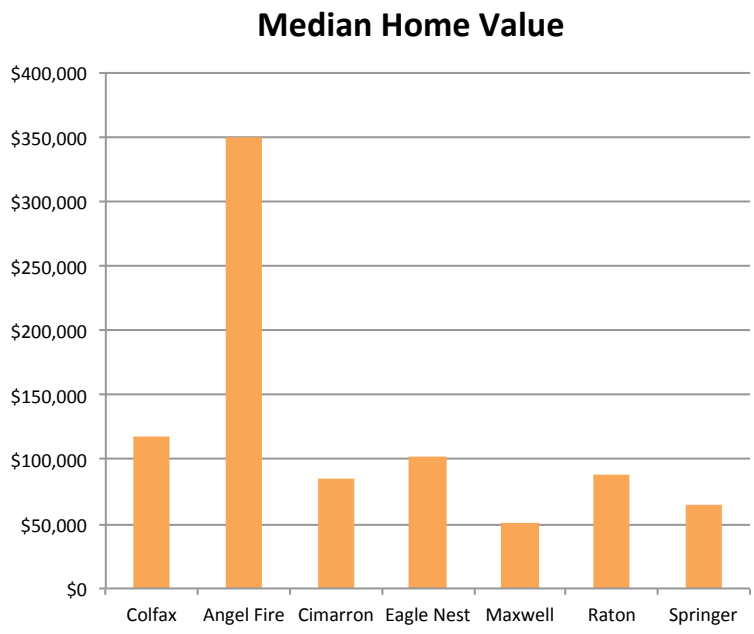
- Angel Fire \$349,600

Exhibit VII-6
Median Home
Value

- Cimarron \$ 85,000
- Eagle Nest \$102,100
- Maxwell \$ 51,300
- Raton \$ 88,900
- Springer \$ 65,100

Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Average Estimates

Home value distribution also varies widely. The majority of homes in all communities except Angel Fire were valued below \$99,999 while the vast majority of homes in Angel Fire were valued above \$200,000. Home sales records provided by an Angel Fire real estate professional show that the average price of homes sold rose from \$209,349 in 2000, peaked at \$423,020 in 2007, then remained comparatively high and settled at \$386,843 in 2014. Average home sale prices in the Moreno Valley as a whole were between \$50,000 to \$100,000 lower.



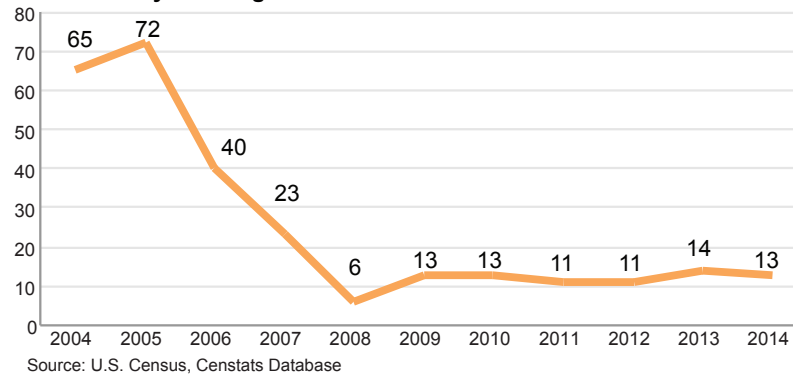
Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

Home sales in Colfax County as a whole have fallen slightly in the last two years from 96 sales in the last half of 2012 to 59 over the same period in 2013. First quarter home sales rose slightly from 2013 to 2014 from 32 to 37, but fell for the second and third quarters from a total of 77 in 2013 to 63 in 2012.

Building permits for new residential development in Colfax County fell sharply from 2005 to 2008, then began to inch up in 2009. The average cost climbed over the same period. Around this period, New Mexico average costs rose and fell slightly, and Colfax County construction costs continued to climb to just under \$450,000, well over twice New Mexico's average cost of \$180,000 in 2009. This cost is likely due to the relative confinement of new construction to Angel Fire during the time.

Exhibit VII-7
Residential
Building
Permits

Colfax County Building Permits



Household Size

The U.S. Census American Communities Survey for 2009-2013 estimates that the average household size in Colfax County is 2.33 persons per household. ACS estimated that Springer has the largest average household size (2.54) and the Ute Park had the smallest (1.28), followed by Angel Fire (1.99). Generally, household size has fallen in the U.S. and continues to do so as the population continues to prefer smaller families and to age.

Exhibit VII-8
Household Size

Colfax County Household Size

	1990	2000	2010
Household Size	2.53	2.37	2.22

Source: U.S. Census, 1990-2010

Households with Children

Households with their own children under 18 years compose 22% of households in the county. Individual percentages range from a high of 31.6% in Maxwell to 12.5% in Angel Fire, 29.3% in Springer and 22.5% in Raton. Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

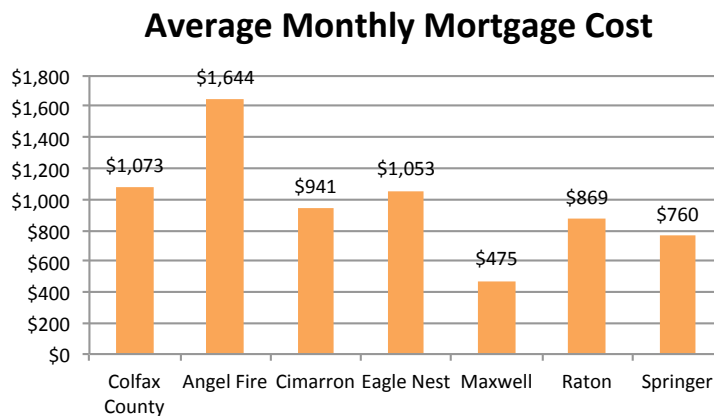
Tenure

In 2013, an estimated 67.9% of Colfax County units are owner-occupied and 32.1% are renter-occupied. This owner-occupied tenure is in line with the national average of between 64% and 65% in 2014. Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

Owner-Occupied Household Monthly Costs

ACS estimated that in the county, 45.3% of owner-occupied units had a mortgage with an average monthly cost of \$1,073. The highest percentage of mortgages were between \$1,000 and \$1,499, and composed about 30% of all mortgages on average. In Springer and Maxwell, however, mortgages were estimated to be much lower: 85.5% between \$500 and \$999 per month in Springer and 66.7% between \$300 and \$499 per month in Maxwell. Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

Exhibit VII-9 Mortgage Costs



Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

Rental Costs

ACS estimated that median monthly rent in Colfax County was \$582.281 (18.6% of occupied units paid no rent). Median rents range from around \$340 in Maxwell and Springer to \$792 in Angel Fire. Raton's median rent was \$555. In its *Mid-May 2014 Apartment Survey*, the University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research reported that Colfax County had the lowest average monthly rate of any county in the state at just above \$350 per month (for the 212 rental units on four properties in the county). Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

"Cost burden" is defined as more than 30% of household income paid for monthly housing costs.

Cost Burdened Owner-Occupied Households

Both renters and owners in the county reportedly have a high cost burden. In Colfax County, about 40% of homeowners with a mortgage and renters were estimated to be cost-burdened. The rate of housing payments/income is estimated to be highest in Angel Fire at around 50% and lower in Springer at around 20%.

Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

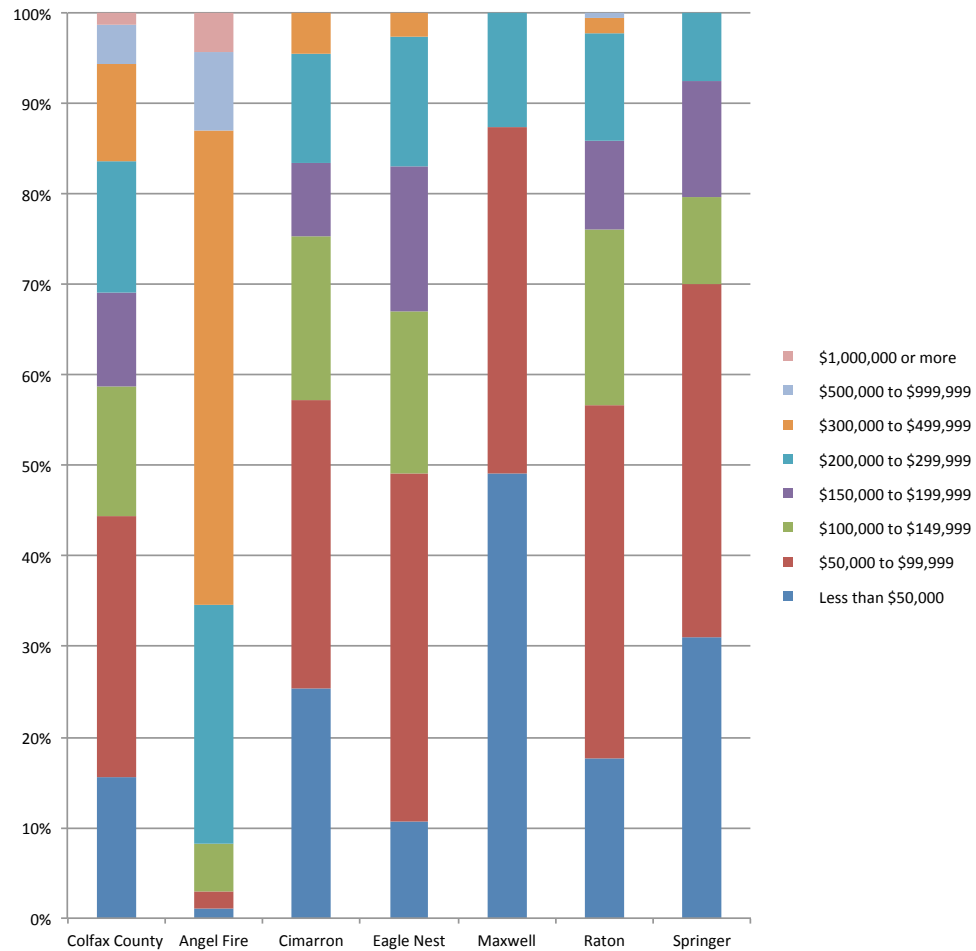
B. Issues and Opportunities

Housing Values

The spread between housing values is significant between communities. Most homes in all communities except Angel Fire had estimated values below \$99,999, yet the value of over 90% of homes in Angel Fire was more than twice that at over \$200,000. (Issues related to housing in Angel Fire are discussed below.) The rest of the county experiences below-average home values. Maxwell is particularly hard hit, with just under 50% of homes valued at less than \$50,000. Except for Eagle Nest, most housing stock in all these communities was built before 1970. These factors indicate a likely need for home rehabilitation assistance.

Exhibit VII-10
Home Values by
Communities

Distribution of Estimated Housing Values in Colfax County and Municipalities



Source: US Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates

Housing Costs in Angel Fire

Angel Fire homes and housing are significantly more costly than elsewhere in the county. The high cost of housing, seen in the high percentage of cost burdened individuals in the municipality, limits the ability of those working in Angel Fire, especially in service jobs, to find housing there. Because the median income is relatively high in Angel Fire, the community does not qualify for much of the affordable housing assistance available to other communities. Surrounding communities like Black Lake tend to absorb the Angel Fire workers, forcing them to commute to work. Maxwell and Eagle Nest have higher percentages of working age population than Angel Fire, and Eagle Nest in particular houses Angel Fire workforce.

Affordable housing development will be difficult to incentivize in Angel Fire but the County may wish to partner with the city to build an incentive package to offer to developers in the hopes of improving housing accessibility there. Regulatory incentives such as increased density allowances may be a useful tool.

The County may also consider providing, a shuttle into Angel Fire, or teaming with a private partner to provide a subscription shuttle. Such a program could also

Exhibit VII-11
2015 HUD
Income Limits:
Colfax County

resolve the transportation problem of providing transportation from the Angel Fire airport into Angel Fire.

Housing Authorities

There are local housing authorities in Cimarron, Maxwell, Springer and Raton. The capacity of these authorities to take on responsibilities beyond operating public housing projects varies and may be significantly limited, especially in smaller communities.

The regional authority serving Colfax County is Northern Regional Housing Authority, based in Taos. Regional housing authorities distribute Section 8 vouchers, aid in the development of affordable housing, operate public housing programs and maintains and manages reduced rent properties.

Section 8 housing income limits, or 80% of the median area income, are determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The 2015 income limits for Colfax County are listed below. A family of 4 with an income below \$41,350 qualifies for housing assistance in Colfax County.

	Median area income	Family Size							
		1 Person	2 People	3 People	4 People	5 People	6 People	7 People	8 People
Colfax County	51,700	28,950	33,100	37,250	41,350	44,700	48,000	51,300	54,600

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Land Banks for Residential Property

As communities such as Springer decline in population and household sizes, the number of vacant houses increases and they become more commonplace. As time passes, the condition of these houses tends to decline. At the same time, housing demand from residents moving into small communities tends to be for newer housing, either to rent or purchase.

Land banks can be a powerful tool for communities that face this issue. Land banks are nonprofit or government entities enabled by State legislation with the power to acquire tax-delinquent properties and return them to productive use as community assets. Land banks are generally granted authority to acquire tax-foreclosed properties at little or no cost, hold them tax-free and clear their tax liens. Rather than auctioning them, the State of New Mexico Taxation & Revenue Department, Property Tax Division can turn over tax-delinquent properties to the County, then to the land bank. Problem properties that are auctioned often have serious condition issues or substantial tax liens, and it is generally extremely difficult to find a productive reuse for them on the open market. A land bank, with the capacity to eliminate tax liens, can assume a property and convert it from a liability to an asset.

Land banks temporarily lease properties or sell them, based on the best use in alignment with community goals and strategies rather than on the highest bid. Best use is limited only by community goals and strategies and can include parks

and open space, affordable housing, and also retail and services. Land banks must work diligently with communities to assure continued alignment and development of goals and strategies, and to maintain absolute transparency about obtained properties and supported uses.

According to community needs, land banks follow different models and use different tools. In Michigan, for example, reducing time from delinquency to auction/disposition from five to two years broadened the pathway for tax-lien houses to return to productive reuse. New Mexico needs to develop enabling legislation for land banks. Once enabled, Colfax County should support the formation of a countywide nonprofit land bank to work with municipalities.

C. Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Improve the quality and availability of housing for all Colfax County residents and maintain and restore existing quality housing stock

Objective 1: Determine the organizational capacity and level of interest in improving affordable housing in Colfax County.

- Hold a meeting with the regional housing authority, local housing authorities and other interested residents to evaluate interest in pursuing possible initiatives, such as:
 - » Research appropriate housing programs, tax credits and other state, federal and foundation incentives in Colfax County and its municipalities, and publicize the information gained to stimulate interest in their use
 - » Invite USDA Rural Development representatives to give presentations on USDA housing programs and opportunities to partner with USDA to increase their use
 - » Organize a housing fair focusing on energy conservation and alternative energy to educate the public about cost savings and other benefits of energy conservation
 - » Activate weatherization and housing rehabilitation
 - » Develop a homeownership and financial literacy program for use by public schools, major employers and the general public
 - » Link economic development initiatives and wealth development with programs to improve housing conditions
 - » Work with local builders and contractors to encourage private initiatives and public-private partnerships to meet housing targets identified in this plan
 - » Encourage major employers to donate land or funds for housing and consider their own housing initiatives
 - » Encourage restoration and preservation of historic houses

Objective 2: Improve availability and access to quality affordable and workforce housing.

- Engage local and regional housing authorities and municipalities to develop affordable workforce housing
 - » Encourage Northern Regional Housing Authority to increase the number of

Section 8 vouchers allotted to the county

- » Measure the willingness and capacity of local housing authorities to extend services to county residents, such as credit counseling, homebuyer literacy, and affordable housing project development

Objective 3: Encourage and enable rehabilitation and preservation efforts.

- Conduct outreach to connect homeowners with rehabilitation assistance

Objective 4: Encourage and enable energy efficiency improvement efforts.

- Conduct outreach to educate and connect homeowners with assistance in energy efficiency improvement

Objective 5: Engage community organizations in developing financial literacy and homebuyer education outreach.

- Conduct outreach to educate and connect homeowners with homebuyer education, assistance and financial literacy education
- Consider developing an affordable housing plan that complies with the New Mexico Affordable Housing Act
 - » Seek funding from the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority for the plan
- Consider adopting an affordable housing ordinance that allows the County to contribute land, infrastructure or property for low- and moderate-income affordable housing

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The transportation element guides improvements to roads, highways, transit services, bicycling and pedestrian facilities.

VIII. Transportation Element

A. Introduction

The purpose of the transportation element is to guide improvements and expansion of the transportation system needed to meet the demands of the existing population and future growth over the next 20 years. The highways and railroad are pivotal to the county's economic development, allowing access for travelers and goods, as well as for local residents to jobs, goods and services. Much of the traffic on Colfax County highways is through-traffic rather than county resident or business traffic. However, some traffic is for recreation or tourism in the county. County concerns are to ensure safety and convenience for motor vehicle travelers. Amtrak serves Raton, providing a major transit alternative mostly for travelers into Colfax County, but also for residents who do not want to drive or fly. Needs for bicycling, walking and cross-county routes for equestrian travel are also considerations in the transportation element. Rural transit service is currently long-distance bus service, but in the future, could include inter-community buses or vans. Available county resources constrain budgeting and programming for transportation infrastructure improvements and maintenance, which must be prioritized.

Interstate 25, U.S. highways and state highways form the backbone of the road network serving Colfax County. County roads mainly serve as secondary routes for rural residents. With 570.3 miles of county roads, Colfax County is highly accessible for an area that is sparsely populated.

B. Existing Conditions

Transportation Infrastructure

Federal Highways

Federal highways within Colfax County constitute the federal-aid primary highway system:

- Interstate 25
- U.S. Highway 64 west of Raton to Cimarron, Eagle Nest and Angel Fire, continuing to Taos (Taos County)
- U.S. Highway 64/87 east of Raton to Clayton (Union County) and other points beyond
- U.S. Highway 56 between Springer and Clayton

The federal-aid primary highway system is a connected system of about 250,000 miles of main highways across the United States. Each state selects links of the system through its state transportation department, subject to mileage limitations prescribed by federal law and the approval of the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

Traffic on I-25 in Colfax County is lighter than I-40 traffic in comparably dense Guadalupe and Quay Counties in eastern New Mexico, but similar in volume to I-25 in Socorro County in the south central area of the state.

Colfax County

Road Classifications

- Interstate
- US Highways
- State Highways
- County Roads
- Forest Service Rd

City Limits

Railroad

Rivers/Creeks

Town

Source: RGIS, TIGER, Colfax County Assessor's Office

arc

Comparison of Interstate Traffic In Colfax County With Other Rural Areas: 2012

	I-25 at North Raton	I-25 at Springer	I-25 at Socorro	I-40 at Santa Rosa	I-40 at Tucumcari
Annual Average Daily Trips	4,026	2,225	3,937	6,925	6,519

In addition, New Mexico segments of I-25 have less commercial truck traffic than does I-40. Similarly, commercial traffic is not heavy on at least some U.S. highways through Colfax County. The following table shows that 87% of vehicles on a segment of U.S. 64 consisted of cars, pickups and motorcycles, while only 3% were tractor trailers.

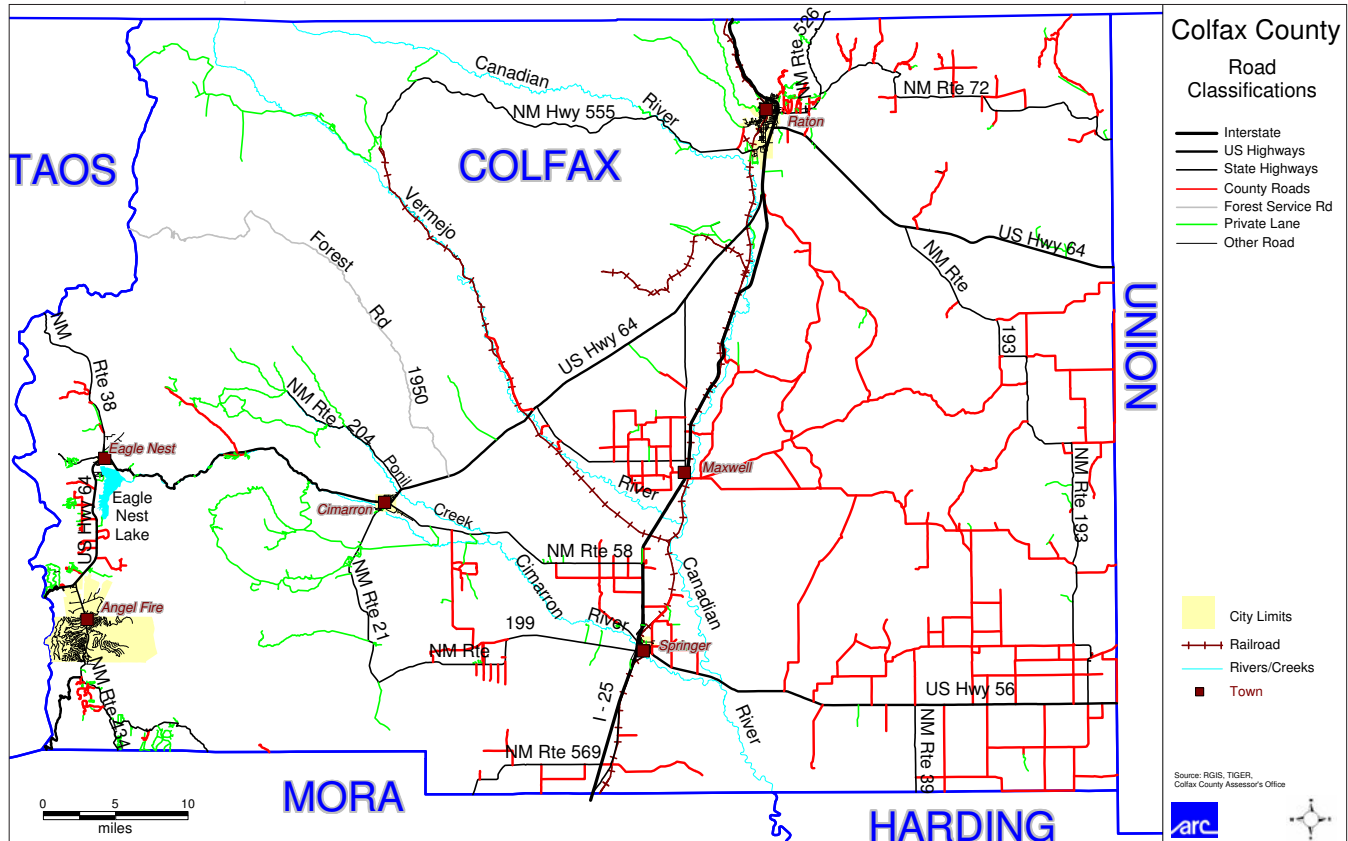
Vehicle Types Share on U.S. 64 West of I-25, East of NM 445

Vehicle Type	2013 Daily Average
Cars, Pickups and Motorcycles	86.8%
Buses	0.9%
Trucks and RV	8.9%
Tractor Trailers	3.4%
Total	100.0%

July 2015

Exhibit VIII-4

Colfax County Public and Private Roads



State Highways

State highways extend to both main and smaller communities in the county. The system includes:

- N.M. Route 39 south from Abbott to the Kiowa Grasslands and Mills (Harding County)
- N.M. Route 193 north of U.S. 56 to Farley and US. 64
- N.M. Route 72 east from Raton across Johnson Mesa to Folsom (Union County)
- N.M. Route 555 west from Raton along the Canadian River to the site of the former York Mine
- NM Route 505 from Maxwell west to Colfax
- N.M. Route 569 west and south from I-25 to Charrette Lake
- N.M. Route 58 from Cimarron east to I-25 north of Springer Lake
- N.M. Highway 468 northwest from Springer to Springer Lake
- N.M. Route 199 and N.M. 21 from Springer to Miami, Philmont and Cimarron
- N.M. Route 204 north from Cimarron along Ponil Creek
- N.M. Route 38 north from Eagle Nest to Red River (segment of Enchanted Circle in Colfax and Taos Counties)
- N.M. Route 434 from Angel Fire south to Mora (Mora County)

The New Mexico Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining state roads.

Exhibit VIII-5
*Mileage of Roads
and Streets In
Colfax County*

County Roads

Colfax County maintains 570.3 miles of county roads, mainly unpaved. Most of the county road system serves ranches and low-density residential properties throughout the county. School buses travel these roads. Because of the rural nature of their access, county roads do not serve as through-traffic routes for inter-regional or interstate travel.

County roads receive regular, periodic grading and other maintenance. An ongoing concern for the County is finding adequate funds to maintain and improve county roads. NMDOT Local Government Road Funds (commonly referred to as coop funds) are only sufficient to make improvements to approximately 3 to 4 miles per year. With additional county revenues, improvements can be made to 4 to 5 miles of road per year. Given the considerable mileage of roads, the maintenance schedule is too slow to meet all needs.

Private Roads

The County has approximately 352 miles of private roads, as shown on the map above. Most of these roads serve ranches or subdivisions in areas east of Raton, north of Angel Fire, at Black Lake and west of Eagle Nest.

Colfax County Inventory of Roads

Roads by Type	Distance (Miles)
Interstate 25	60.2
U.S. Highways	142.7
New Mexico Highways	274.2
County Roads	570.3
Private Lanes, Subdivision Roads and Unclassified Roads	352.0
Streets Within Municipalities	224.2

Source: Colfax County Assessor's Office GIS

Note: U.S. Forest Service roads are not included in this table.

Railroad

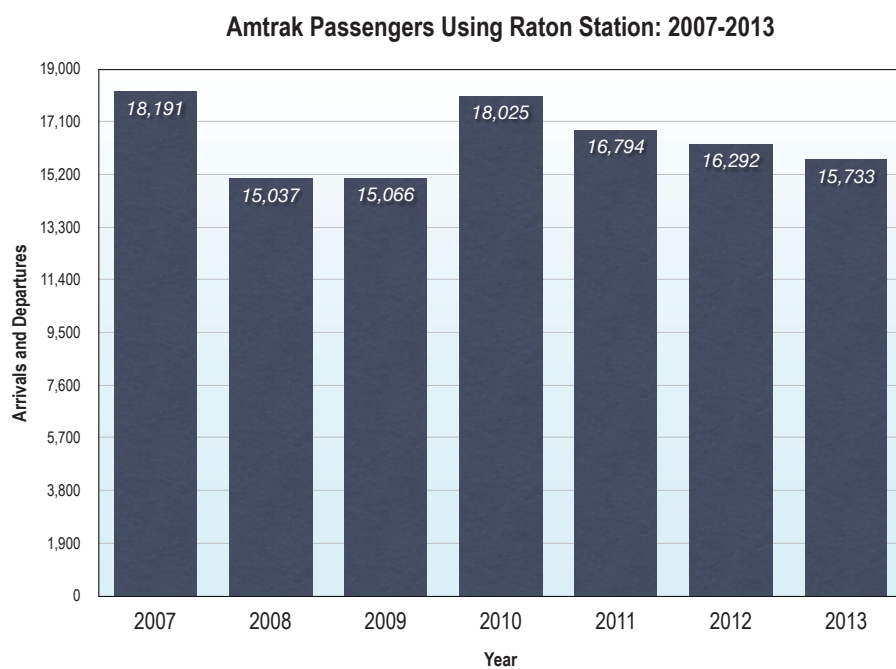
The Amtrak Southwest Chief route goes through Raton, originating in Chicago, IL and terminating in Los Angeles, CA. The schedule shows one passenger train in each direction stopping at the station every day (two train stops per day).

The 2013 Raton station ridership was 15,733 passengers with average fares of \$107, and average trip length of 833 miles. Ridership in Raton is the second highest in New Mexico to Albuquerque, with 78,126 passengers, and slightly more than Gallup, with 15,677, Lamy with 12,551 and Las Vegas with 5,376. Many Philmont Scouts in particular historically arrive by train.

BNSF Railway (formerly Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway) owns a rail siding from French on the main line to Colfax, Dawson and York Canyon along Vermejo Creek.

Exhibit VIII-6

Amtrak
Passengers
Arrivals and
Departures in
Raton



Source: National Association of Railroad Passengers, 2013

The New Mexico State Rail Plan (2013) projected future Amtrak ridership associated with the Raton station will increase at a slow average annual rate of 0.6%. (p. 4-48) The projections started from base year 2010, when passengers numbered over 19,000.

Exhibit VIII-7

Projected Amtrak
Ridership in NM

Projected Amtrak Ridership by County in NM, Base Case: 2015 to 2035

County	Associated Station	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
McKinley	Gallup	14,022	14,663	15,170	15,518	15,775
Bernalillo	Albuquerque	81,808	91,233	100,126	108,857	117,552
Santa Fe	Lamy	13,706	14,280	14,712	15,005	15,219
San Miguel	Las Vegas	4,676	4,838	4,948	5,034	5,127
Colfax+Denver	Raton	19,226	19,948	20,517	21,108	21,826
Southwest Chief		133,438	144,962	155,473	165,522	175,499
Hidalgo	Lordsburg	500	529	556	580	603
Luna	Deming	924	978	1,022	1,063	1,107
Sunset Limited		1,424	1,507	1,578	1,643	1,710
Total Amtrak Ridership		134,862	146,469	157,051	167,165	177,209

Source: New Mexico County Population Projections July 1, 2005 to July 1, 2035, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of New Mexico. Released August 2008.
State of Colorado, Division of Local Government, State Demography Office

The BNSF Railway line through Raton has provided no freight train service since the York Mine closed.

The condition of the railroad tracks has been an issue for the Amtrak Southwest Chief and has been a major encumbrance to freight service. While some communities in Colorado and the state of Kansas have raised funds to upgrade their lines, the state of New Mexico has been reluctant to commit public money to preserving the route.

Bus Transit Service

Greyhound Lines provides passenger bus service to Raton. The north/south bus serving Raton has one bus per day from Albuquerque and one bus per day from Clayton. Greyhound reduced the number of buses and routes in the county in 2004.

Airport

The Colfax County Airport at Angel Fire serves air traffic into and out of the Moreno Valley. Other noncounty airports are located near Maxwell and Raton.

Traffic Safety

General Crash Information

Driver inattention was the single largest specified contributing factor to accidents in Colfax County in 2013, followed by excessive speed. The largest category in 2013 was unspecified “other” contributing factors.

Exhibit VIII-8 *Top Contributing Factors to Traffic Crashes*

Crashes in Colfax County by Top Contributing Factor, 2013							
Contributing Factor	Crashes					People	
	Total	% of Total	Fatal	% of Fatal	Injury	Killed	Injured
Alcohol involvement	13	4	2	33	7	2	9
Red light running	9	3	0	0	2	0	5
Failing to yield	20	6	0	0	9	0	16
Excessive speed	51	16	0	0	13	0	15
Driving left of center	5	2	0	0	0	0	0
Following too close	9	3	0	0	2	0	3
Improper turning	5	2	0	0	1	0	1
Improper backing	16	5	0	0	1	0	1
Mechanical defect	7	2	0	0	1	0	2
Driver inattention	57	18	1	17	20	1	33
Improper driving	14	4	0	0	4	0	5
Other	107	34	3	50	14	3	22
Total	313	100	6	100	74	6	112

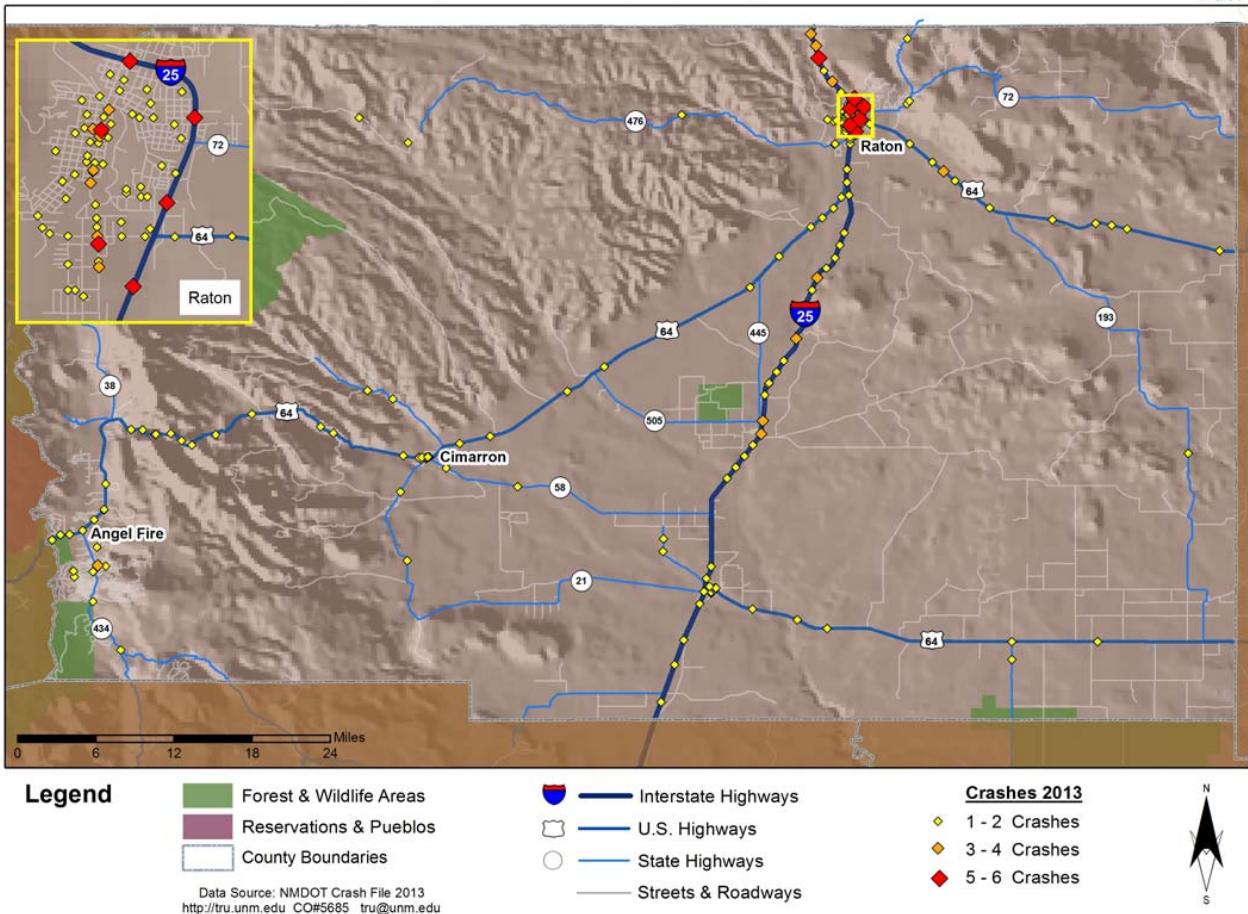
Source: NM Department of Transportation and University of New Mexico, Colfax County Report, 2013 ,www.dgr.unm.edu.

Exhibit VIII-9
Crashes in Colfax
County



Crashes in Colfax County, New Mexico, 2013

Map created by the Traffic Research Unit, Geospatial & Population Studies at UNM



Source: NM Dept. of Transportation and UNM, Colfax County Report, 2013, www.dgr.unm.edu.

The map above shows that most traffic accidents were dispersed along Interstate-25. Accidents on state and federal highways are fairly evenly distributed, rather than clustered in areas that have notably high risk. Nonetheless, County and State officials could use the map of accident locations to help identify areas that need safety improvements. NM Highway 434 south of Angel Fire has been cited as a route with several blind curves. Those critical points are south of Black Rock in Mora County.

C. Issues and Opportunities

Regional Transportation Planning and Access to NMDOT and USDOT Funds

The Northeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NERTPO) serves Colfax County. The NERTPO prepares regional transportation plans and transportation improvement programs that are then listed in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). The County currently participates in

Exhibit VIII-10
Facilities Projects
on FY 2016-
2020 ICIP

NERTPO meetings and lists needed highway projects in the county.

Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP)

The ICIP FY 2016-2020 identifies the following transportation capital projects. Most projects relate to maintaining and upgrading rail and improvements at the Colfax County Airport.

**Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan FY 2016-2020
Transportation Projects**

Project	Programmed Years	Total Project Cost
Colfax County Road & Bridge Improvements	2016-2017	\$1,100,000
BNSF Railway Upgrade	2016-2020	\$4,710,000
Economic Development Rail Spur	2018	\$850,000
Purchase Aging Vehicles for Seniors	2015-2016	\$186,000
Rail Spur Transfer Station (to transport solid waste to Wagon Mound)	2016	\$500,000
Compressed Natural Gas Station in Raton	2017	\$860,000
Colfax County Airport Helipad	2016	\$200,000
Colfax County Airport at Angel Fire	2016-2020	\$1,041,200
AWOS Upgrade (Airports)	2018	\$180,000
Extend Hangar Airport Taxiways	2018	\$220,000
Major Rehab of Runway 17-35	2019	\$6,500,000
Colfax County Airport Hangars	2020	\$500,000
Total		\$16,847,200

Programming and Funding for County Roads and Bridges Improvements

The County follows a systematic approach to prioritizing county road maintenance and improvements. More heavily traveled roads receive a higher level of maintenance than lightly traveled roads. The County also prioritizes repairing roads that wash out after storms.

The County is replacing bridges that are no longer considered safe. The Miami Bridge is currently under construction, using NMDOT's Local Government Road Fund to help fund it. Blossom Gap Bridge and Gardner Road Bridge are in poor condition, and should be repaired or replaced.

The County Roads Department should continue to develop an annual prioritized maintenance schedule, presenting it to the County Manager and Board of County Commissioners.

County Road Standards

Colfax County has adopted the New Mexico State Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Highway and Bridge Construction (NMDOT, 2014 Edition as may be updated). These standards address subsurface treatment, all-weather surface, and minimum width for roadways. The County should reference these standards in its subdivision regulations and it may need to develop additional criteria for considering acceptance of roads for County maintenance.

Erosion and Management of Erosion

Road cuts and wash-outs can contribute to erosion, reducing grass for grazing and affecting overall surface water quality. The Colfax County Road Department attempts to reduce erosion on dirt and gravel roads through grading to retain crowns, maintaining bar ditches, graveling roads that have heavy traffic, and placing rocks on the back slopes of ditches. Nonetheless, heavy rains can wash out roads which road crews need to repair.

The County should consider various best practices to minimize erosion. Bioswales are one possible approach, with identification of suitable locations for them.

County Roads Prescriptive Easements and Rights-of-Way

County roads are located mainly in prescriptive easements across private property rather than in established rights-of-way. While this situation is not ideal, the County desires to continue the practice, given the difficulty and likely expense of acquiring rights-of-way. Property owners typically benefit significantly from access to County roads across their property, so have little cause to object to easements.

Amtrak Southwest Chief Rail Service

The New Mexico State Rail Plan (2013) reports that the Raton Line (from Las Vegas to Trinidad) is Class 4 track with a maximum speed of 79 mph, although curvature and grade along the subdivision reduce portions of the route to Class 3 or Class 2 speeds. BNSF Railway would like Amtrak to pay the incremental cost of maintaining this track for 79 mph operations. On several occasions, the Railway has offered to reroute the Southwest Chief to the Transcon alignment through Amarillo, Clovis, and Belen that is already maintained at levels that can support 79 mph operations, but Amtrak has thus far declined, preferring the more direct northern routing. However, should Amtrak be required to pay the full incremental costs of maintaining the existing route, estimated to exceed \$10 million per year, it may be in its interest to reroute the Southwest Chief to the Transcon. This route would effectively eliminate Amtrak service to Raton, Las Vegas, and Lamy as well as communities in Kansas and Colorado.

Recently, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas and the various communities in those states served have made monetary commitments to help pay for improvements to the BNSF Railway tracks to keep Southwest Chief service. Those funds, including commitments from Colfax County, Raton, Springer and Maxwell, will match funds for a USDOT Tiger grant, led by La Junta, Colorado.

An added benefit of improving track besides supporting Amtrak is enabling freight service in the future. Economic development interests such as the movement of lumber could benefit from rail access. There is also interest in hauling solid waste by rail, which is less expensive than by truck.

Bicycling and Pedestrian Trails

The County should support adding widened shoulders for bicycles, or bicycle lanes, on state roads with prioritized bicycle routes. As discussed in the Economic

Development Element, recreational trails are a high priority. At a minimum, the County should urge the State to establish bicycle routes from Raton to Sugarite State Park and on the portion of the Enchanted Circle in Colfax County from Angel Fire to Eagle Nest and north of Eagle Nest. In general, traffic on County roads is light enough for mountain bikers to safely share the roads with motorists.

The County should also further study these possible trails:

- Rails to trails - Dawson
- Old Raton Pass (gated at the state line)

Transit Service

Currently, the senior centers in the county have vans for the exclusive use of seniors. The County is interested in establishing broader public van transit service. Identified needs are:

- Colfax County Airport - transit to Angel Fire, other communities in Moreno Valley and possibly to the Town of Taos
- Between Springer, Maxwell and Raton

The county should study the feasibility of these and other routes. Alternately, taxi service or a subscription shuttle service such as Uber or Lyft may fulfill needs in addition to or instead of a public bus transit service. The County should hold a meeting to measure public interest in a County transportation program.

D. Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Maintain and improve the transportation system to enhance safety, encourage all modes of transportation and meet existing and future needs of the County

Objective 1: Support the continued high maintenance of County roads and bridges.

- Prioritize and develop annual road repair and a maintenance schedule
 - » Research funding sources to improve the condition of County bridges

Objective 2: Improve erosion mitigation efforts.

- Establish road construction and maintenance standards that diminish the threat of erosion from roads and cuts, and fill for roads to protect surface and ground water quality, and improve the capacity for aquifer recharge
 - » Establish low-erosion design standards
 - » Develop an erosion mitigation program
- Conduct mitigation efforts on eroding sites
 - » Incorporate in roadway design the use of contours, swales, berms and mulching as simple, effective mitigation tools to reverse erosion
 - » Use gabions and surge basins in severe cases and in areas of concentrated water flow
 - » Plant grass and shrubs next to roadways to prevent erosion

- Preferably select native and drought-tolerant plants
- Schedule plantings to take advantage of the rainy season

Goal 2: Support the continued use of passenger rail serving Colfax County and the re-establishment of freight rail service

Objective 1: Support the continued presence of Amtrak on BNSF rail through county.

- Encourage local communities to contribute to cost-sharing funds to upgrade track
- Continue working with state leaders to support the continuation of the Amtrak Southwest Chief route

Objective 2: Encourage and support resumption of freight traffic on the BNSF Railway line.

Goal 3: Improve the mobility of residents and visitors

Objective 1 : Expand the existing van program for seniors into a regional system serving multiple users and functions.

- Consider developing transportation to connect workforce to jobs in the Moreno Valley
- Partner with municipalities to improve mobility between the county and municipalities
 - » Consider partnerships with educational, workforce training programs to provide transportation services that connect students / trainees to program locations
 - » Seek input from youth to determine transportation needs
 - Consider providing transportation services to connect youth to recreational and skill-development activities

Objective 2: Improve transportation from Angel Fire airport to Moreno Valley

- Conduct a community meeting to measure interest in developing a County transportation program or in recruiting a private taxi or subscription shuttle.
 - » Consider partnering with a private company to establish taxi service
 - » Consider extending van service to include airport shuttle service

Objective 3: Employ emerging transportation models to meet transportation needs

- To the extent possible, and responsibly, encourage emerging transportation models like Lyft and Uber to operate in the County to serve unmet transportation needs of residents and visitors

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The Facilities Element is intended to guide improvements to county-occupied and leased facilities

Exhibit IX-1
County Buildings and Grounds

Colfax County Courthouse

IX. Facilities Element

A. Introduction

The purpose of the Facilities Element is to identify county facilities and provide a general assessment of their conditions, and to guide short-and long-term strategies that will result in high quality, well-maintained facilities.

B. Existing Conditions

Major County Facilities (Buildings and Grounds)

Raton serves as the county seat; consequently, most administrative, court and other county service buildings are in Raton.

Facilities and Functions

Following is a list of Colfax County buildings and grounds.

Colfax County Facilities

Facilities	Addresses
<i>County-Occupied Buildings and Grounds</i>	
County Courthouse	200-230 N. 3rd. Street, Raton
Judicial Center	1413 S. 2nd. Street, Raton
Workshop Building	230 Fourth Avenue, Raton
Detention Center	444 Hereford, Raton
District Attorney's Office	442 Hereford, Raton
Road Department including maintenance and operation yards	207 Copper Avenue, Raton
County Airport (Angel Fire)	Angel Fire
Raton Rodeo Property	Jim Young Arena, NM 555, Raton
<i>Leased Buildings</i>	
County Annex	116 S. 3rd Street, Raton
County Health Office	226 E. Fourth Avenue, Raton
Raton Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center (Tri-County)	220 Fourth Avenue, Raton
SOY Building	101 Clifton Drive, Raton
Head Start Building	1144 Jones, Raton

Colfax County Courthouse



The County Courthouse is the County's primary administrative building. It is an historic structure, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Townes and Funk with R.W. Vorhees designed this five-story, art deco style building, built in 1936. The National Register nomination notes the third floor courtroom for its deco designs, terrazzo floors, tile wainscot and plaster walls, and ceiling plastered with classically styled corner molding and deco light fixtures.

Since district court vacated the building, it has had sufficient space to house

County administration, New Mexico Workforce Solutions Department office, and the Colfax County Extension Service. Perpendicular spaces in the front of the building and closest to the courthouse entrance provide most public parking. The number of spaces is somewhat limited in this vicinity, however, many on-street parking spaces in the vicinity are usually available during busy times.

The County recently repaired the roof and replaced aged wires. Upgrades and repairs to this old building tend to be costly and continuing.

The County should consider converting the courthouse lawn to xeric grasses to reduce water use. Unless the lawn is heavily used, xeric grasses should grow well.

Leon Karelitz Judicial Center

The approximately five-year-old Judicial Center is a relatively new building and has sufficient space that should adequately serve the County for years into the future.

Workshop Building

The County uses this building for maintenance.

Colfax County District Attorney's Office

The District Attorney, currently housed in an old portable building, will move into the Judicial Center after the Sheriff's Office moves to the Detention Center.

Colfax County Vigil-Maldonado Detention Center

The County is expanding the capacity of the Detention Center from 42 beds to 82 beds (the total number of beds is not finalized). The County has bonded for this major project and recently selected an architect and contractor for it.

The overall goal for the Detention Center is to reduce recidivism, thus eventually lowering the overall number of detainees. Unfortunately, it exceeds its current capacity for prisoners, and the County is responding cost-effectively to enlarge the facility.

The Sheriff's Department is housed in the Judicial Center and will move to the Detention Center.

Colfax County Road Department Building and Yards

The Road Department occupies two single-wide mobile buildings and a Quonset hut. One mobile building is for office space and the other is for a break room for the road crew. While fairly old, these facilities are currently adequate, but will need replacement at some point. The large Quonset hut houses loaders, back hoes, graders and pick-up trucks. The yard is adequate for storage and maintaining machines.

Colfax County Airport (Angel Fire)

The Colfax County Airport is a general aviation airport located one mile north of Angel Fire, 23 miles east of Taos and 80 miles west of Raton. It is the fifth highest elevation airport in the United States and boasts one of the longest runways in the

country at 8,900 feet. (Source: <http://www.co.colfax.nm.us/airport>)

The airport can accommodate nearly every aircraft, personal and charter that flies in today's airways. Surrounding mountains range from 11,086-foot high Agua Fria Peak on the south end of the valley to 12,441-foot Baldy Peak at the north end of the valley. Wheeler Peak at 13,161 feet, the highest mountain in the state, forms the northwest boundary of the valley. The airport mainly serves the Angel Fire community. A major component of Angel Fire's market area is Dallas, TX, an 11-hour drive from Angel Fire. Some Dallas residents with homes in Angel Fire and other visitors choose instead to fly there. The airport also serves travelers to the nearby Town of Taos.

Ultimately, the County and Village of Angel Fire would like scheduled commercial flights into the Colfax County Airport at Angel Fire. While demand may not merit this improvement at this time, it may be feasible in the future. Alternately, commercial flights to Taos or Raton would also benefit Angel Fire Resort and residents in Angel Fire and the Moreno Valley.

The County would like to improve the "general room" used by pilots and passengers to make it more comfortable and inviting. This capital improvement may be an item for a future County budget, separate from Federal Aviation Administration funding for airport planning and capital improvements to increase safety or capacity.

The airport does not have car rental services, which dissuades some visitors from flying into Angel Fire. It also lacks regular resort van transport or taxi service, which would be beneficial for users. The airport would benefit from taxi service or ride-sharing services. Once regulatory uncertainty is resolved, Lyft or Uber ride sharing may be the most appropriate due to their flexibility.

The fuel trucks that are available can refuel aircraft on site. These trucks are stored and protected in the large hanger.

The airport manager is responsible for staffing the airport to serve a variety of needs.

Rodeo Grounds (Springer and Raton)

Leased Buildings

Following is a brief description of users of county-owned and leased buildings:

- The County Annex building houses non-profit providers of services for disabled, children and mental health.
- The Health building is leased to the non-profit organization Children's Workshop.
- The Service Organization for Youth (SOY) building houses the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department.
- The Head Start Program's building is fairly new, although it has an identified need for improved grading to avoid flooding.

Exhibit IX-2
County Fire
Districts

Fire Departments in Colfax County

The County has a comprehensive set of fire districts covering the land area. Many districts have more than one fire station in order to disperse equipment closer to community areas and improve emergency response time. Two areas, Raton-District 8 and Angel Fire-Black Lake/Valverde have an agreement for automatic aid among fire departments that entails response by both fire departments to fire, guaranteeing a minimum response. All other fire districts have mutual aid agreements to call other nearby fire districts for additional assistance, if needed.

Fire Districts in Colfax County

Fire Districts	Ownership of Stations	Number of Fire Stations	Fire Stations	Mutual Aid or Automatic Aid	Approximate Number of Volunteers
Abbott/Farley	County	3	Main Station, Fire House Road; Point of Rocks in Farley	Mutual	18
Maxwell	Village	1	Village of Maxwell Fire Station	Mutual	
Raton (District 8)	City and County	2	City of Raton Fire Department; District 8 Fire Station	Automatic	
Springer	Town	1	Town of Springer Fire Department	Mutual	
French Tract	County	2	French Tract; half of building shared with Water Conservancy	Mutual	12
Miami	County	1	Miami	Mutual	
Cimarron	Village	1	Cimarron	Mutual	
Vermejo (District 7)	Private	1	Vermejo	Mutual	15
Philmont	Private	1	Philmont	Mutual	24
Ute Park (District 6)	County	1	Ute Park	Mutual	
Eagle Nest	Village	1	Eagle Nest	Mutual	
Angel Fire	Village	1	Angel Fire	Automatic	
Black Lake/Valverde	County	4	Black Lake; Valverde; Flechado; Aspen Hill		

The County intends to build a new fire station for District 8 on Highway 72 at a cost of approximately \$400,000.

Fire districts are reasonably well funded for equipment and training through a state program under the State Fire Marshal. All fire districts have relatively new equipment.

Countywide Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Springer EMS issues include the need for a full-time EMS technician and lack of an ambulance in Springer, requiring work with Cimarron and a long response time. The County could have a facility by Russell's Truck Stop that serves Springer and Maxwell.

Miner's Colfax Medical Center (non-County facility)

Miner's Colfax Medical Center is a 25-bed facility serving Colfax County and nearby areas. It offers:

- Acute care, including: intensive care unit, outpatient, radiology, surgery, laboratory and pharmacy
- Long-term care, including: intermediate care residential unit, assisted living (10-bed unit) and wellness center
- Miner's outreach services are available to coal miners afflicted with

pneumoconiosis (black lung) disease throughout the service area.

The medical center has approximately 190 employees. The State of New Mexico operates it and its own board of directors governs it. The medical center intends to upgrade from a level IV trauma center to a level III trauma center.

A new behavioral health clinic is planned for 2018. The clinic is projected to create 180 new jobs, and have a \$6M payroll. Thus far, it is uncertain whether the United Mine Workers of America will support the project. While lack of union support alone might not halt the project, it would necessitate funding from other sources.

With no current long-term drug and alcohol treatment facility in the county, the planned behavioral health clinic could be tied with higher education programs to reduce recidivism.

C. Issues and Opportunities

The following drivers will lead to the need for public facilities improvements:

- Population projections and trends in specific user groups
- Changes to county functions
- Aging buildings that need repair and updating
- Historic buildings
- ADA compliance
- Energy conservation

Colfax County has little projected population growth and an aging population, perhaps putting additional burden on senior centers. The County is considering several changes to County functions, such as economic development and web site improvements, which may lead to changes in facilities use. The main historic building is the County Courthouse, and the County does try to maintain the building, but repairs are expensive. The County should evaluate its compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. The County is expressing interest in advancing energy conservation and alternative energy.

Solar Energy Improvements

The County is interested in adding solar power to County buildings. Unfortunately, the County Courthouse is not a good candidate for conversion, since the roof would not support solar panels and there is little suitable area for them on the property. In addition, Raton Public Service (electric supplier) does not have incentives that support small solar electric generation.

Target candidates for solar panels include:

- Colfax County Detention Center
- Leon Karelitz Judicial Center
- Colfax County Airport
- Colfax County Courthouse (possible)

Exhibit IX-3
*Facilities
 Projects on FY
 2016-2020 ICIP*

Comments from Prior Comprehensive Plan Regarding Facilities

Issues related to facilities raised by participants during the development of A Comprehensive Plan for Colfax County, 2004 included:

- Animal control
- Solid waste
- Roads maintenance
- Fire protection

Since the 2004 plan, the County established the position of County Fire Marshal, thus elevating coordination among fire districts and enforcement of fire codes.

Projects Listed on FY 2016-2020 Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan
 The Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) is an annually adopted plan that identifies five years of capital improvement needs. The purpose of an annual ICIP is to establish and prioritize unmet facility and infrastructure needs through public improvement projects during a revolving five-year period, and to identify potential funding sources for implementing those projects. The County identifies and ranks the need for projects in its ICIP, a requirement for eligibility for certain public funding resources. The ICIP should be tied to the recommendations of the comprehensive plan.

Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan FY 2016-2020 Facilities Projects

Project	Years	Total Project Cost
Vigil Maldonado Detention Center Expansion	2016-2017	\$4,200,000
Courthouse Renovation	2016-2018	\$655,000
Information Technology Upgrades	2016-2020	\$650,000
Mora/Colfax Head Start Upgrades	2016	\$245,000
County Health Clinic Projects/Upgrades	2017	\$240,000
SOY Building Projects/Upgrades	2017	\$310,000
Taos Colfax Community Services Projects/Upgra	2017	\$260,000
Establish New County Fire Districts	2016-2020	\$650,000
Archiving County Records Building	2019	\$600,000

Funding Capital Projects

The County's major sources of revenue are property taxes and gross receipts taxes. The largest County expenditures are for roads and fire protection. In addition to local funding, state capital outlay and grants may be available to fund capital projects. The County should consider other options for facilities funding such as state and federal grants, public-private partnerships, and possibly grants from charitable foundations.

Facilities Master and Maintenance Plans

The County should consider developing a detailed inventory of facilities. A database of building systems and ages is a useful financial planning tool for cyclical renewal or replacement. A central database of all warranties, repairs, and requests

for repairs and improvements is also valuable.

Inappropriate operation of building systems can diminish the life cycle or efficiency of the systems or materials. The County should provide maintenance and operations manuals at each facility.

An energy audit can help identify which facilities are cost-effective to operate, and which are not. The audit makes recommendations for ways to increase the energy effectiveness at each facility which can be incorporated into future facility improvements.

D. Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Efficiently maintain County facilities in a usable condition and put them to best use to serve Colfax County residents

Objective 1: Understand assets inventory in order to most efficiently manage upkeep and use.

- Develop a detailed inventory of all County buildings to conduct assessments of:
 - » Condition of structure and building systems
 - » Needed repairs, upgrades and expansions
 - » Use capacity and efficiency of use
- Conduct review of all County-owned building under lease to evaluate level of service being provided by tenant to the public.
 - » Determine adequacy of level of service
 - » Determine appropriateness of lessee and community need for lessee's programming
 - » Evaluate against possible alternatives

Objective 2: Maintain and update existing County buildings.

- Conduct an ADA survey and plan of action to demonstrate compliance with the law.
- Maintain a central database of all warranties, repairs and requests for repairs and improvements.
- Conduct an energy audit and invest in improvements in the energy efficiency of County buildings to use less energy and water, and save money.

Objective 3: Plan for capital facilities needs due to growth or programmatic changes.

- Periodically conduct a space needs assessment of County facilities that identifies the need for renovated, repurposed or additional facilities space, based on projected growth and changes in functions.

Objective 4: Use County facilities improvements to support and expand economic development.

- Continue to locate administrative facilities in downtown Raton.
- Continue to operate and make improvements to Colfax County Airport in

- Angel Fire to serve Moreno Valley residents and visitors
 - » With planned airport improvements, capitalize on improved accessibility to and from Angel Fire airport to establish it as a desirable destination
- Maintain county fairgrounds in Springer.

Objective 5: Preserve and maintain historic buildings.

- Continue the use and upkeep of historic County buildings, particularly the County Courthouse, to preserve their structural integrity.
- When making alterations, consider retaining valued architectural features of old buildings whether or not they are listed on the state or national registers.

Objective 6: Maintain the Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP), consistent with the comprehensive plan.

- Prepare annual updates to the County's ICIP
- Tie the ICIP to the needs and approaches identified in the Facilities Element of the comprehensive plan
- Consult condition assessments when formulating the ICIP
- Prioritize capital improvements according to the County's goals and objectives, generally addressing health and safety before the need to increase or reorganize space
- Secure funds from the County's general budget and other sources that are sufficient to maintain and repair the County-owned building facilities

Objective 7: Support improvements to those major facilities not owned by the County but serving residents of the county.

- Provide policy support to improvements to Miner's Colfax Medical Center, including adding a behavioral health clinic, and other facilities in the county that contribute to the well-being of residents and enhance economic development

The purpose of the Utilities and Water Element is to establish base information about the existing solid waste system, water systems, and to identify major plans for utilities improvements in the future.

Utilities constitute essential public infrastructure networks that deliver services to the entire community. Because utilities are essential services, Colfax County should integrate planning for utilities with planning for land use, transportation, economic development, housing and facilities.

Exhibit X-1 Water Use in Colfax County

X. Utilities and Water Element

A. Introduction

The purpose of the Utilities Element is to establish base information about the existing solid waste system, water systems and policy, and to identify major plans for utilities improvements in the future. Utilities constitute an essential public infrastructure network that delivers services to the entire community. Because utilities are essential services, Colfax County should integrate planning for utilities with planning for land use, transportation, economic development, housing and facilities. This element specifically addresses water as a utility for domestic, industrial and agricultural uses, and more broadly as a resource because of its paramount importance for the county to survive and thrive.

B. Existing Conditions

Water

Water Use

According to the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, irrigated agriculture was the largest water use in Colfax County in 2010, using a total of 49,803 acre feet (af), accounting for 76% of all water used in the county in that year. The county had a total of 16,180 irrigated acres in 2010. Just over 80% of those acres used flood irrigation with surface water, accounting for over 90% of all water used for irrigation. The county had 3,200 sprinkler-irrigated acres that year; 1,900 acres used groundwater and the other 1,300 acres used surface water.

Reservoir evaporation accounted for the next largest water use in 2010 at 6,725 af and public water supply used 2,956 af. The county's total water use in 2010 was 60,573 af, of which 5,023 was groundwater withdraw.

Water Use in Colfax County in 2010 (acre feet)

	Surface Water Withdraw	Groundwater Withdraw	Total Withdraw
Commercial (self-supplied)	124	134	258
Domestic (self-supplied)	0	56	56
Industrial (self-supplied)	0	49	49
Irrigated Agriculture	46,091	3,712	49,803
Livestock (self-supplied)	199	219	418
Mining (self-supplied)	308	0	308
Power (self-supplied)	0	0	0
Public Water Supply	2,103	853	2,956
Reservoir Evaporation	6,725	0	6,725
County Total	55,550	5,023	60,573

New Mexico Office of the State Engineer Technical Report 54: New Mexico Water Use by Categories 2010

Water Systems

The following table identifies the 14 public and self-supplied water systems in the county; the City of Raton water system is the largest. Estimated gallons per capita per day (gpcpd) vary considerable, with a county average of 186 gpcpd.

Exhibit X-2
Colfax County
Public and Self-
Supplied Water
Systems

Public Water Supply and Self-Supplied Domestic Water Systems in Colfax County

Water Systems	Population	Estimated Average Gallons Per Capita Per Day
Angel Fire MHE	43	52
Angel Fire Services Corp.	2,382	218
Angel Nest Apartments	57	22
Cimarron Water System	874	103
Eagle Nest (Village Of)	291	151
Maxwell Cooperative Water	314	143
Maxwell Water System	361	91
Miami WUA	107	64
Raton Domestic Water System	7,310	178
Rural Self-Supplied Homes	624	80
Springer Water System	1,140	389
Val Verde 2 Water Association	75	80
Val Verde 5 Property Owners Association	100	80
Valverde Water Assoc.	73	24
Total	13,750	186

Source: New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, New Mexico Water Use by Categories 2010, Technical Report 54

Colfax County has a total 59 active water systems, including other community and noncommunity systems. Sixteen are community water systems (type C). Three are nontransient, noncommunity systems (type NTNC). Three systems use purchased surface water (type SWP) and five use surface water. The rest use groundwater.

Exhibit X-3
Colfax County
Active Water
Systems

Colfax County: Active Water Systems

Water System Name	Type	Source
ANGEL FIRE MOBILE HOME ESTATES	C	GW
ANGEL FIRE SERVICES - VILLAGE OF ANGEL F	C	GW
ANGEL NEST APARTMENTS	C	GW
CAMP ELLIOT BARKER	NC	GW
CARISBROOK PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION	C	SWP
CEDAR RAIL CAMPGROUND	NC	GW
CIMARRON CANYON ST PARK - TOLBY CG	NC	GW
CIMARRON WATER SYSTEM	C	SW
CIMARRON CANYON ST PARK - MAVERICK CG	NC	GW
CITY OF RATON/RATON WATER WORKS	C	SW
EAGLE NEST LAKE STATE PARK	NC	GW
EAGLE NEST RESIDENTIAL CENTER	NTNC	GW
FRENCH MDWCA/SWA	C	SWP
LEISURE ESTATES HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION	NC	GW
MAXWELL COOPERATIVE WATER USERS ASSOC	C	GW
MAXWELL WATER SYSTEM	C	GW
MIAMI WATER USERS ASSOCIATION	C	SW
PHILMONT BOY SCOUT RANCH - 30 water systems	1C, 29NC	SW
SPRINGER CORRECTIONAL FACILITY	NTNC	SWP
SPRINGER WATER SYSTEM	C	SW
SUGARITE - LAKE ALICE CAMPGROUND	NC	GW
THAXTON REST AREA	NC	GW
USFS CIMARRON CG/SHUREE PONDS	NC	GW
UU BAR	NTNC	GW
VAL VERDE 5 PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION	C	GW
VAL VERDE WATER ASSOCIATION	C	GW
VERMEJO PARK - HEADQUARTERS	C	GW
VERMEJO PARK LLC COSTILLA	NC	GW
VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL STATE PARK	NC	GW
VILLAGE OF EAGLE NEST	C	GW

Source: New Mexico Department of the Environment, Drinking Water Watch

Status definition
Status indicates whether the public water system is active (A) or inactive (I).

Type Definitions
C - Community
Serves at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves 25 year-round residents.

NTNC - Non-Transient Non-Community
Serves at least the same 25 nonresidential individuals during 6 months of the year.

NC - Transient Non-Community
Regularly serves at least 25 nonresidential individuals (transient) during 60 or more days per year.

The County and municipalities do not govern mutual domestic water and sewer districts, but the County requires disclosure of water source in subdivision applications.

Water Source

The vast majority of county water use is surface water (92%). Recent drought has strained this supply. In 2011, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Climatic Data Center reported that the first nine months of that year were the driest start to any year on record for New Mexico.

Climate change may cause depletion of surface water supplies in Colfax County, requiring alternative sources in the future. The U.S. Global Change Research Program projections anticipate precipitation drops of 10% to 30% by 2080 and significant loss of snowpack by 2050. An expected increase in wildfires may also threaten the surface water supply.

Groundwater quality in Colfax County is variable. Moreno Valley has good quality groundwater. However, many septic systems in rural subdivisions may leak and contaminate the aquifer. According to local realtors, the new State of New Mexico's requirement that if a property is sold, its septic systems must be inspected and brought up to code within a year of sale will reportedly result in the replacement of 80% of systems in the county. However, it will continue to be important for the County to work with the New Mexico Environment Department to assure compliance with septic tank regulations and monitoring of septic tanks and leach fields to ensure continued high quality of water sources.

Groundwater depletion may become an issue in the county. Maxwell's static groundwater level has reportedly dropped significantly. A 2013 study by the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources found that, due to the geology, in neighboring Union County the Ogallala aquifer has dropped dramatically with no significant recharge. (Source: *Hydrogeology of East-Central Union County, Northeastern New Mexico*, Open-file Report 555 prepared for Northeastern Soil and Water Conservation District, October 2013, Geoffrey C. Rawling) These circumstances may well be the case in Colfax County as well.

The projected worsening of drought conditions will likely threaten surface water availability and the County plans to work to develop alternative water sources. The County has expressed interest in groundwater desalination or other treatment techniques to meet this challenge and it could push for development of a program for a water treatment test area.

Solid Waste

Facilities and Programs

Colfax County has ten solid waste facilities licensed by the New Mexico Environment Department in 2013. Of those, four house recycling drop-off sites. Two recycling facilities are located in Raton: the Colfax County Container Route and the Raton Regional Recycling Hub Facility. Angel Fire handles full service recycling at the Angel Fire Collection Center.

Exhibit X-4
Colfax County
Solid Waste
Facilities and
Recycling
Programs

Colfax County waste is trucked to the privately owned Northeastern New Mexico Regional Landfill in Wagon Mound. County officials and industry spokespeople have expressed concern about reliability issues with the facility and the County has expressed a desire to develop an alternative. Raton awarded a bid to transport its solid waste to the Midway Landfill in Fountain, Colorado in 2014. The Raton municipal landfill submitted closure plans to the New Mexico Solid Waste Bureau (SWB) and the landfill has since limited what it accepts to just a few large items. The city contracts to transfer the majority of its waste to Colorado.

The closure of the Raton landfill has reportedly caused an increase in illegal dumping. With no facility nearby to handle large items, many residents find it much easier to dump them than expend the time and resources to properly dispose of them at a location that is farther away.

The County has commissioned an operations consultant to conduct a solid waste assessment and make recommendations, including a cost analysis of developing a solid waste facility in the county. The report is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2015.

Waste Generation and Recycling Rate

In 2013, Colfax County produced 17,373.91 tons of solid waste and 2,647.97 tons of material that was recycled. (Source: NM Solid Waste Bureau) The New Mexico Solid Waste Bureau reports that between 2009 and 2013, the county's rate of recycling dropped slightly from 16.95% to 15.24%, but the diversion rate, which includes all materials recycled and beneficially used, rose from 17.46% to 42.96%, third highest in the state behind Lincoln County (70.06%) and Rio Arriba County (48.73%).

County officials, community members and local leaders have expressed a desire to maintain and continue to improve recycling programs and report that recycling trailers are currently well used.

New Mexico Solid Waste Facilities & Recycling Programs

	Facility Type	Accepted Materials						
		Recycling						
		Waste	Metal	Glass	Cardboard & Paper	Electronics & Appliances	Batteries & Cell Phones	Plastics
Village of Angel Fire Solid Waste Transfer Station	Collection Center	x						
Angel Fire Recycling Park	Recycling Drop-Off Site		x	x	x	x	x	x
Cimarron Collection Center	Collection Center	x						
Cimarron Village Park Recycling Trailers	Recycling Drop-Off Site		x		x			x
Eagle Nest Collection Center	Collection Center	x						
Eagle Nest Recycling Program	Recycling Drop-Off Site		x		x	x (appliances)	x (batteries)	x
Maxwell Transfer Station	Collection Center	x	x		x			x
Raton Municipal Landfill	Landfill	Limited items	-	-	-	-	-	-
Raton Collection Center	Collection Center	x	x		x			x
Farley Collection Center	Collection Center	x						
Raton Regional Recycling Hub Facility	Recycling Facility		x		x			x
High Country Meats	Compost Facility							
Colfax County Container Route (Raton)	Recycling Facility	x						
Town of Springer Collection Center	Collection Center	x						
Ute Park Collection Center	Collection Center	x						
Miami Collection Center	Collection Center	x						
Farley Collection Center	Collection Center	x						

Sources: New Mexico Environmental Department, List of New Mexico Solid Waste Facilities by County, 2013 and New Mexico Recycling Coalition Online Directory

Community meeting participants suggested that a biomass plant could increase the diversion rate in the county.

Private Utilities

Electricity

Two electric cooperatives serve Colfax County: Kit Carson Electric Cooperative serves the western area and Springer Electric Cooperative serves the eastern area.

- Kit Carson Electric Cooperative serves 22,615 consumers living in Colfax, Río Arriba and Taos counties.
 - » The company owns 2,826 miles of distribution line. It has invested \$109.3 million in its service.
 - » The cooperative was energized in 1937 and incorporated in 1944.
 - » The utility also offers telecommunication and broadband service, and propane service.
- Springer Electric Cooperative serves 1,915 consumers living in Colfax, Harding, Mora, San Miguel and Union counties.
 - » The utility owns 1,729 miles of distribution line. It has invested \$17.4 million in its service.
 - » The cooperative was incorporated and energized in 1947.

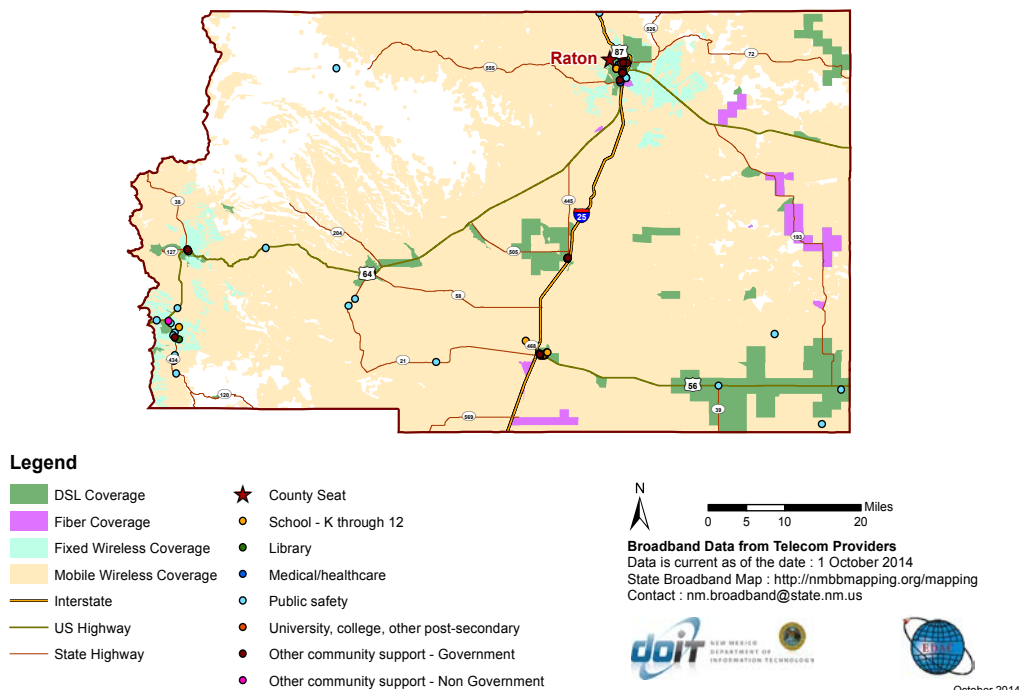
Broadband and Internet

Kit Carson Electric Cooperative has been installing fiber optic broadband in its service area. As of March, 2015, the company reported that the main line construction was 94% complete with fiber optic splicing at 68% complete. They reported that in Angel Fire, splicing was 70% complete.

Raton had several national Internet and telecommunication service providers in 2015, including AT&T and Comcast. Broadband service for communities is mainly via DSL and fixed wireless, but the county has some fiber coverage and several fiber optic lines. Access to connectivity coupled with the availability of land and relatively cool, high elevation climate in Colfax may combine to make the county an attractive location for data centers or hosting companies.

Broadband Availability - Colfax County

New Mexico Broadband Mapping Program



Source: New Mexico Department of Information Technology, New Mexico Broadband Program

C. Issues and Opportunities

Water

The County is currently revising the Region 9 - 2003 Colfax Regional Water Plan. It will provide comprehensive and in-depth analyses and recommendations concerning ground and surface water in Colfax County.

Conservation

Flood irrigation uses a great deal of the county's water. While effective, flood irrigation is not very efficient and it is thought that only half the water applied actually irrigates crops, with the other half lost to evaporation, runoff, over-irrigation, seeping into the ground and transpiration.

It is common for flood irrigators to release water until the entire field is covered. By flooding the entire field all at once, irrigators fail to take advantage of capillary movement of water through the soil, particularly in clay soils. This results in significant runoff, anaerobic conditions in the soil and around the root zone, and deep irrigation below the root zone that is unavailable to the plants.

The Alliance for Water Efficiency, http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/Flood_Irrigation_Introduction.aspx

Efficiency can be improved with a few simple measures:

- *Leveling fields* – because gravity transports water, it does not reach high spots in the field.
- *Surge flooding* – rather than releasing water all at once, it is released in intervals, allowing each release to infiltrate the soil before releasing additional water.
- *Recycling runoff* – water that runs off the end and sides of the irrigated area is captured in low-lying areas and pumped to the top of the field where it can be reused.

Improved irrigation techniques can raise field efficiency of 40% to 70% to an efficiency of 85%. (“Irrigation Efficiency,” *Encyclopedia of Water Science*, Howell, Terry, USDA, 2003) Replacing unlined irrigation water transportation infrastructure with lined pipes can also improve efficiency.

Education and encouraging implementation of water-saving techniques could improve irrigation and transportation efficiency in the county, and ease pressure on the water supply. With the predicted drop in surface water levels over the coming century due to climate change, implementing water-saving measures now will improve the county’s future resilience.

The County can establish its own water-saving measures. Integrating water-saving approaches into all new County development and redevelopment will build a groundwork for future water savings. The County can also institute water-saving measures in its approach to landscaping such as developing an index of preferred native and drought tolerant species for all County landscaping projects and replacing existing turfgrass on County properties with low water-use grasses. (Buffalograss and Blue Grama grass are good drought-tolerant grass options in high desert environments.)

Erosion

County officials have identified erosion as a major concern that affects groundwater quality and recharge. Erosion is especially notable on and alongside roads where compaction and improper design cause damaging runoff which produces gullies and a host of domino effects. Attention to proper road design, construction of bioswales and road crew education will be important steps in stemming erosion.

Groundwater

Improving erosion problems will improve groundwater recharge. Adoption of oil and gas development regulations to protect groundwater quality is another important safeguard to protect the community’s groundwater assets. Aquifer recharge will most likely become an issue in the future as surface water and snowpack levels are expected to drop. The County should put conservation and best management practices in place now to ensure future capacity. Developing an alternative water source will improve water security.

Regional Geohydrology Study

The County is currently working with neighboring counties to fund a regional groundwater study to identify aquifers and water quality issues such as salinity. Such a study will also establish base information on water quality before oil and gas drilling takes place to document whether this potential activity would affect groundwater. The study is a four-county effort with Mora, Harding and Union Counties, and is supported by the State Engineer, but the \$1.7 million cost is still unfunded. The counties will present the study in the 2015 budget later this year.

The Colfax Regional Water Plan Ground identifies water in much of the county as poor quality, due to a high volume of dissolved solids. Water consumption requires water treatment.

Solid Waste

It is costly to export solid waste. If the solid waste report finds it a cost effective approach, the County may consider developing its own treatment and storage facilities.

The current issue of illegal dumping will not likely abate without enforcement or a convenient recycling facility.

The County has improved the diversion rate of waste materials, but there is still room to improve its recycling rate. Education, outreach, drives and incentives can help expand recycling participation.

Broadband

Kit Carson Electric Cooperative's addition of fiber optic broadband access to the western side of the county will improve the capacity of those communities to attract businesses and residents. It will also provide important communications access to schools and other institutions.

The County should assess the condition of existing fiber optic cables. If conditions are favorable, the cable infrastructure could be an asset to draw IT companies and other businesses.

Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) 2014

Among projects outlined in the 2014 Colfax County ICIP are the following utilities projects:

- Colfax County solid waste program for 2016
 - » Purchase of solid waste disposal vehicles and containers
 - Funded to \$125,000 with \$287,500 unfunded
 - » The program will be located at 1413 South Second Street, Raton, NM 87740
 - Cost: \$860,000, unfunded
- Colfax County Geohydrology Study 2016
 - » \$28,000

D. Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Enable the efficient, cost-effective, responsible disposal of solid waste

Objective 1: Improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness of solid waste management in Colfax County.

- Consider recommendations in upcoming solid waste management report
- Work to implement recommendations in solid waste management report
 - » If the solid waste management report determines it is feasible and desirable, investigate possibilities of developing a solid waste treatment facility in the county

Objective 2: Improve reuse and recycling rates.

- Continue expanding recycling programs to include new geographic areas in the county and to recycle an increasing variety of materials
- Continue expanding improvements already made in the beneficial reuse of materials (diversion) rate

Goal 2: Protect water resources and develop a sustainable plan for future water use

Objective: Establish best practices for protecting surface and ground water quality and ensuring the continuation of water as a sustaining resource.

- Consider recommendations presented in the upcoming Colfax Regional Water Plan as the basis for County policy regarding water
- Institute a native plant policy highlighting plants that are preferable and identifying high water-using species not to be used in County projects
 - » Gradually replace turfgrass lawns around County buildings with more suitable landscaping
 - Promote more environmentally friendly, water-saving, native solutions to landscaping
- Measure interest in the development of a rain barrel program to assist homeowners in the purchase of rain barrels to capture and reuse rain water
- Institute a water conservation policy encouraging the consideration and implementation of water-saving practices and policies whenever the County conducts a development/redevelopment project

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The Hazards Mitigation Element identifies hazards that could potentially harm Colfax County and methods to prevent in advance or mitigate them. It is a broad analysis of hazard mitigation for Colfax County, identifying the major issues that the community may face.

XI. Hazards Mitigation

A. Introduction

Hazards mitigation is defined as “... any action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from natural and man-made hazards....” The emphasis on long-term risk distinguishes mitigation from actions geared primarily to emergency preparedness and short-term recovery. Examples of mitigating hazards are reduction of wildfire and flood risk, damage from acts of terrorism, and traffic or railroad accidents. Since some hazards are ongoing, hazards mitigation often focuses on reducing repetitive loss.

B. Hazards Mitigation Planning

The draft Colfax County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is currently in the final stages of update and will provide a comprehensive resource for risk assessment, hazards mitigation and resource identification. Colfax County and five communities within the county (Ute Park, Eagle Nest, Angel Fire, Miami and Cimarron) also have community wildfire protection plans.

Purpose of Hazards Mitigation Planning

- *Enhance Public Awareness and Understanding* – Help residents of the county to better understand the natural and human-caused hazards that threaten public health, safety and welfare, economic vitality, and the operational capability of important institutions
- *Create a Decision Tool for Management* – Provide information that managers and leaders of County government and other key institutions and organizations need to take action to address vulnerabilities to future disasters
- *Promote Compliance with Grant and Program Requirements* – Ensure that the County can take full advantage of state and federal grant programs, policies, and regulations that encourage or mandate that local governments develop comprehensive hazard mitigation plans
- *Enhance Local Policies for Hazard Mitigation Capability* – Provide the policy basis for mitigation actions that the County should promote to create a more disaster-resistant future

Benefits of Mitigation Planning

- Saves lives and reduces property damage
- Protects critical facilities and services
- Reduces long-term hazard vulnerability
- Contributes to the sustainability of the county
- Fosters Colfax County as an environmentally sound, economically viable and disaster-resistant area

Federal Requirements for Hazard Mitigation

In 2000, the U.S. Congress passed the Disaster Mitigation Act, which requires local communities to have mitigation plans in place in order to receive federal hazard mitigation grants. Protection of utilities began at that point. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, federal requirements for the increased security of

some government buildings were added as protective measures required on the part of communities, even local governments serving small populations. Funds are available to the County to develop a detailed plan and other needed processes and documents.

Examples of Hazard Combinations

Hazard types are not always separate from each other. Several examples are:

- Flooding — can cause property damage, collapse of steep slopes, and/or flotation of underground storage tanks that might leach fuel into groundwater. Flooding can also cripple vital transportation routes.
- Drought — can make flooding more severe because soils can no longer absorb heavy rains
- Wildland and structural fires — cause not only physical damage, but air pollution from smoke which affects health
- Road accidents — can negatively affect Colfax County's internal transportation access and residents' health and safety because of issues such as hazardous spills
- Winds — can cause power and communication outages

Relationship between Hazard Mitigation Planning and Emergency Preparedness

Hazards mitigation planning establishes sustained actions to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to life and property from hazard events. Emergency preparedness typically involves emergency operation manuals and procedures, and coordination designed to prevent, respond to and recover from a potential hazard. Colfax County community members have identified potential disasters that are not considered hazards under the definition of this element. However, they could be concerns that the County may wish to consider for emergency preparedness. These concerns are:

- Loss of utility service (natural gas, electricity and potable water)
- Loss of communications (cell phone communication towers, telephone land lines and radio transmitters)
- Hazardous material spills in roadways
 - » This hazard is especially of concern with commercial trucks that may carry hazardous materials that are not properly isolated in case of a fire. For example, a Walmart truck may have pallets of car batteries, white gas, chlorine bleach and other household chemicals.
 - » I-25 is a designated Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) route for transport of radioactive waste. While WIPP in Carlsbad is currently closed, it may in the future accept waste from Rocky Flats in Colorado, a facility in Idaho and Pantex in Texas.

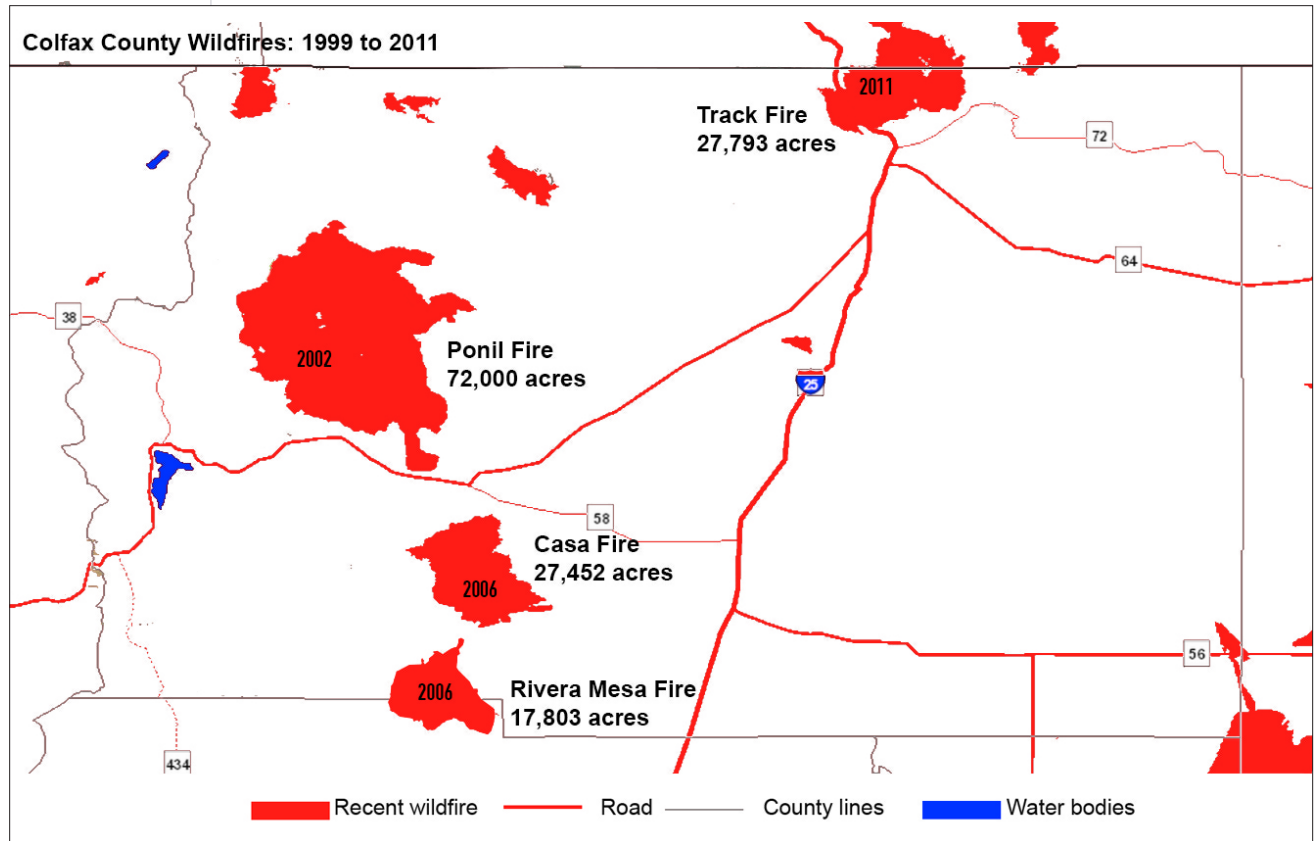
C. Existing Conditions

Major Hazards Identified for Colfax County

For this element, planners reviewed major hazard issues that Colfax County already faces or could face in the future. The risks identified for this element are:

- Wildland and structural fire
 - » Both wildland and structural fires have occurred in and near Colfax County. In 2011, the Track Fire burned over 27,000 acres and cost \$7.5 million in suppression alone. The following map shows significant wildfires that occurred between 1999 and 2011.

Exhibit XI-1
Colfax County
Wildfires



Source: U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency

- Flooding
 - » Colfax County contains abundant clay with high swelling potential, which can result in serious structural damage. In 2014, President Obama declared the Cimarron area a major disaster area due to flooding, and a tragic flood swept away four Boy Scouts on June 27, 2015 in North Ponil Canyon, one of whom drowned. As of December 2012, Colfax County had five dams with emergency action plans. The County submitted 14 dam incident notices to the State between 1890 and 2011, including three dam failures. (Source: New Mexico State Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2013)
- Drought
 - » Historically, droughts have been cyclical. In current drought years, conditions have been severe, made worse by climate change. Climate

models predict increasing drought severity and frequency in the next century. In 2009, the U.S. Department of Agriculture declared Colfax and Harding Counties disaster areas due to drought and winds.

- Erosion
 - » Often amplified by drought, erosion can threaten structures, infrastructure and groundwater quality.
- Weather events that affect community services
 - » Weather events include heavy snow and rainstorms that can cause road damage, and power and communication outages.
- Tornadoes
 - » In 2006, an F2 tornado destroyed 11 homes and seven businesses in Cimarron. Damages approached \$2 million.
- Earthquakes
 - » Since 1962, Colfax County has experienced a significant number of high-magnitude earthquakes, according to the New Mexico State Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2013.
- Terrorism
 - » While terrorism is unlikely in rural areas such as Colfax County, there could be risks associated with tampering with wells, intentional fires and livestock endangerment.
- Hazardous materials spills on the Interstate highway

D. Issues and Opportunities

Emergency Notification System

The County has a Reverse 911 emergency notification program in place that automatically calls 6,000 land lines and 900 subscribed phone numbers to report high alert events. Only subscribers receive low level event notifications. Events can include flooding, wildfire, evacuation or take-shelter danger, severe threatening weather, utility issues, and school and road closures.

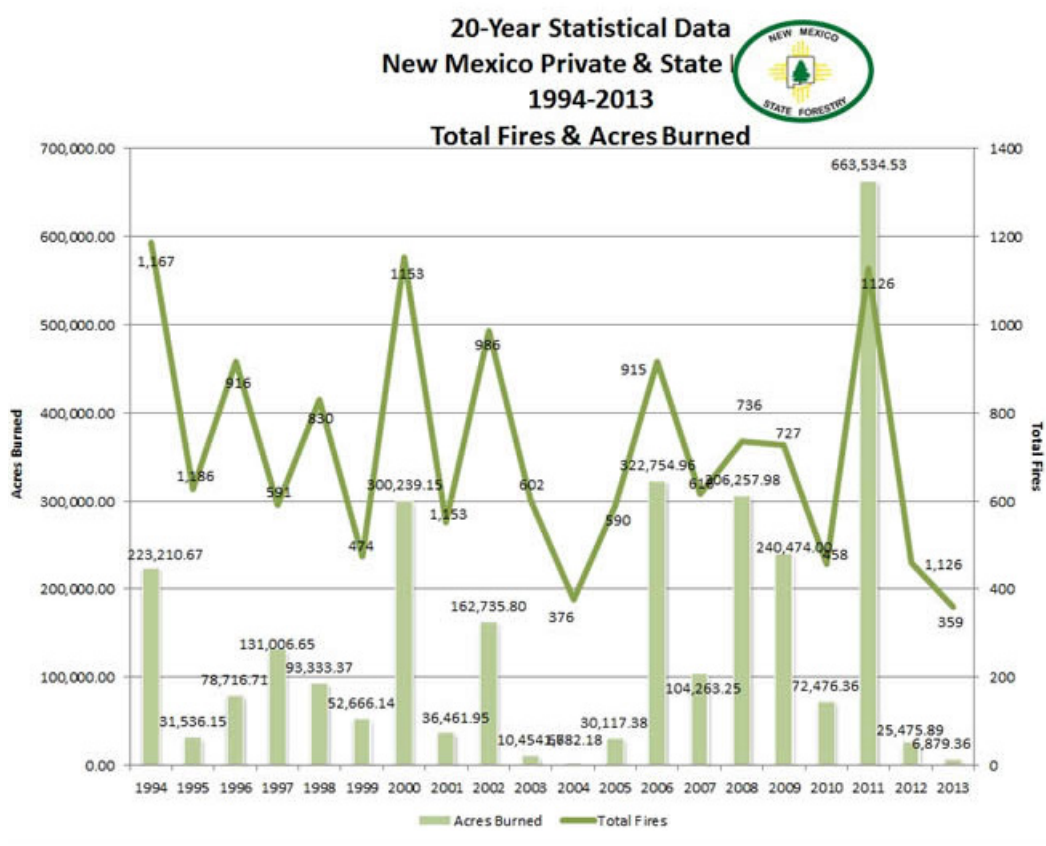
Effects of Climate Change

Scientific research shows that climate change already negatively affects New Mexico's environment. Colfax County sees intertwined issues of forest fires, floods, and the ongoing effects of drought. As the drought worsens, forest die-off will accelerate, amplifying wildfire risk and causing the rise of flooding, landslide, erosion and drinking water contamination risk. Wildfire also alters the flood pattern.

Wildfires

Throughout New Mexico, the quantity of wildfires has been cyclical, from highs in 2000 and 2011 with around 1,140 fires, to lows in 2004 and 2013 with around 300 fires. However, the acreage burned was significantly higher per fire from 2006 to 2011. In 2011, 1,126 fires burned over 650,000 acres while in 2000, 1,153 fires burned less than half that (300,239 acres). (Source: New Mexico State Forestry Division)

Exhibit XI-2
New Mexico Fire
20-Year History



Source: New Mexico State Forestry Department

Risk of Wildfires

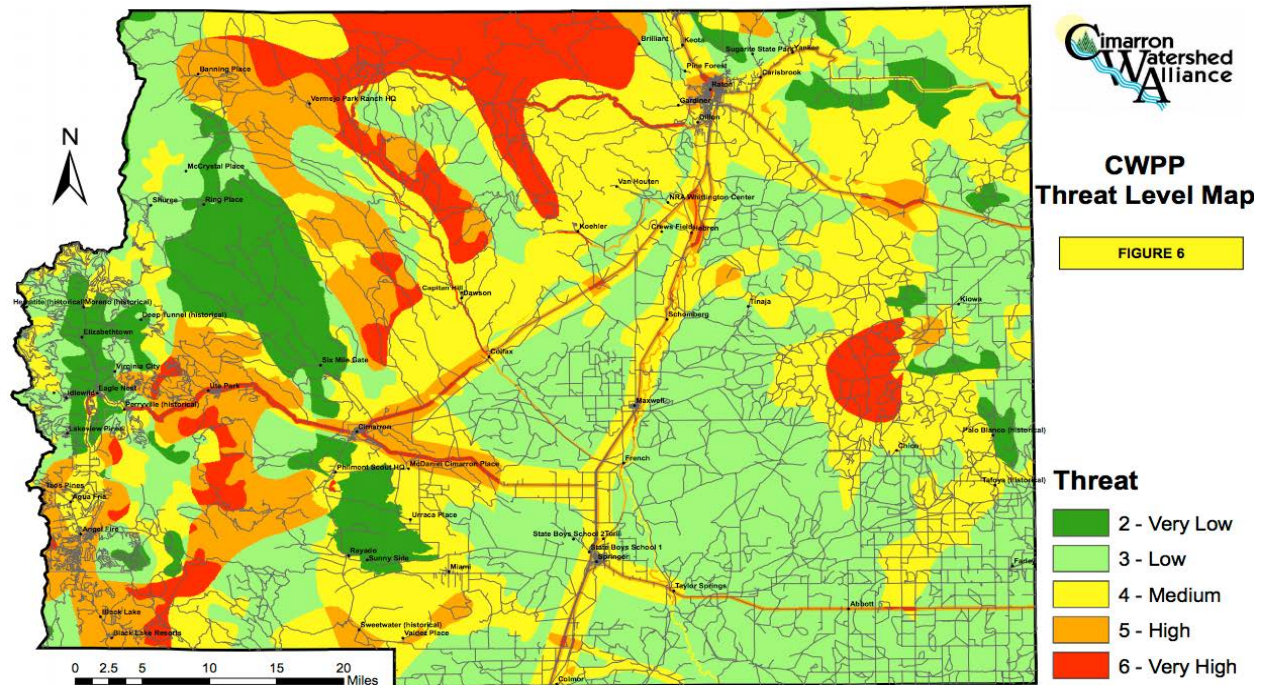
According to the 2014 New Mexico Communities at Risk Assessment Plan that identifies fire risk levels for New Mexico's counties and communities, the state has a high risk corridor across the Sangre de Cristo mountain range and some high risk areas in Sugarite.

According to the Colfax County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) of 2008, "The drought of the early 2000s created very dry conditions in Colfax County, and the accompanying catastrophic wildfires were responsible for a heightened awareness of wildfire risk from the prairie to timberline."

Lightning ignitions are common throughout the monsoon season, and typically occur from July through August and often into September. Most of these fires are detected early and suppressed before they grow large. However, depending on fire environment conditions and initial attack response times, they may spread rapidly across a sizable area, becoming difficult to suppress before they are effectively controlled. Moreover, an increasing concern is a growing number of human ignitions, particularly along roads, and in and around residences.

Forest health, drought and climate change issues addressed in the Existing Conditions section and Land Use Element, contribute to the threat of wildfire.

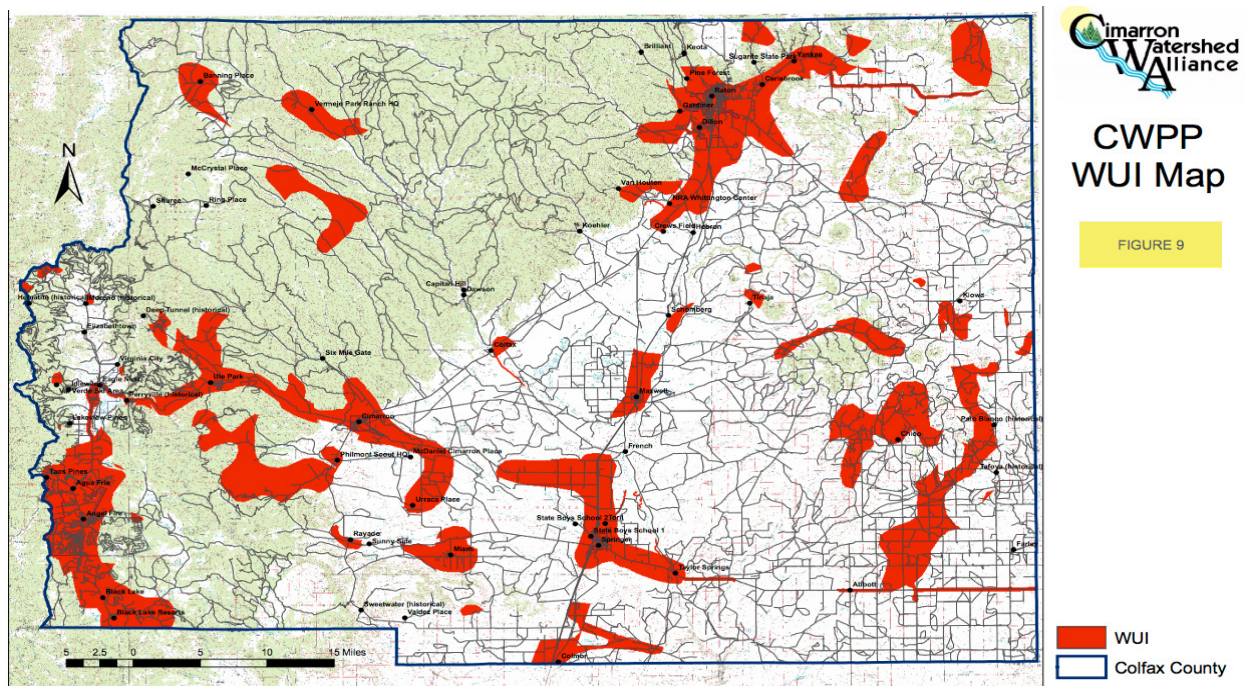
Colfax County Comprehensive Plan Update — Hazards Mitigation Element



Wildland Urban Interfaces

The Colfax County CWPP identified wildland urban interface (WUI) areas as those where human-valued assets meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. Identification of these areas prioritizes site-specific fuels mitigation treatments. Mitigation treatments include identification and creation of defensible space as well as fuels removal, i.e., thinning and increasing basal canopy height.

Exhibit XI-4 Wildland Urban Interface Map



Mitigation and Response Capacity

Colfax County recently became one of the first Firewise Communities in the state. This designation requires assessing fire risk and developing an action plan to address the findings of the assessment, providing \$2 per capita funding for Firewise actions and holding an annual “Firewise Day” event. The recognition increases awareness, offers an opportunity for assessment and planning, and opens access to funding and assistance. Working with the City of Raton and the Philmont Scout Ranch, the County has developed a regional mobilization plan and the Moreno Valley is actively developing grant proposals as a Firewise Community.

The County fire marshal is actively developing capacity in the county, and holding wildlands classes to further train firefighters. The County currently has over 20 firefighters with credentials to work on federally managed incidents. The fire marshal works with large local landowners to ensure coverage of access and training.

Emergency Access and Evacuation Capacity

Several communities in Colfax have been identified as being at particularly high risk due to limited access. Cimarron Canyon has limited access because it is only served by U.S. 54 and has no road network redundancy. A roadway blockage would jeopardize emergency access and/or evacuation ability, a concern especially considering the high risk of wildfire here. A fire in the canyon might produce a funneling effect, and pine beetle damage to forest has produced an abundance of dead and down trees. Ute Park’s location in the canyon makes it a community at risk.

Idlewild Subdivision could also be challenging to defend against a forest fire. Most houses have pine wood siding and shake roofs that are readily flammable. The subdivision is surrounded by Sandia Pueblo and Taos Pueblo private lands which make developing additional access roads more difficult. The County has discussed a temporary road, but it has not yet been approved by surrounding property owners. The County is also working on nearby fire breaks but may need other “firewise” methods. Homeowners should be encouraged or required through the Firewise Community program to create defensible spaces and replace exterior materials with more flame-resistant materials. Bicycle paths can serve as fire breaks and may improve access, especially in limited access areas.

Flooding

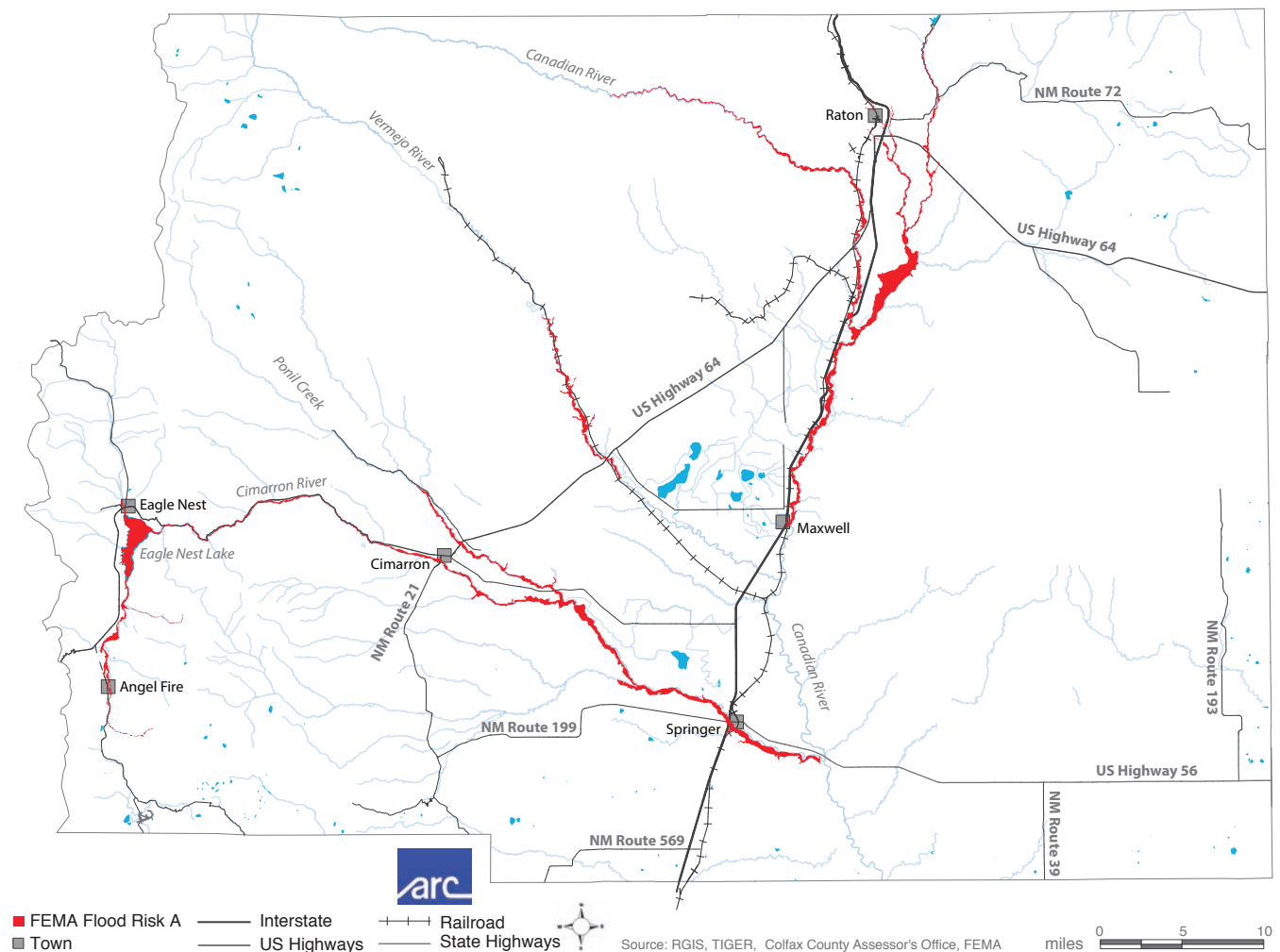
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) develops Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) floodplain maps for most communities around the U.S., but Colfax County has only very limited FEMA mapping. The existing FEMA mapping of Colfax County only identifies at-risk areas along waterways and lakes. (See the exhibit below.) To determine the true extent of flood risk, the County could map the flood risk for all areas. An accurate flood map would provide residents the tools for making informed decisions regarding their property, but may also raise flood insurance requirements and or premiums.

The 2013 New Mexico State Hazard Mitigation Plan noted abundant clay with

high swelling potential which can result in serious structural damage in Colfax County, and in 2014, President Obama declared the Cimarron area, among others, a major disaster area due to flooding. Wildfires, especially the larger and hotter ones experienced in recent years, increase flooding risk, and increased drought will decrease the absorption capacity of soils, further increasing the risk of flooding.

Erosion improvements will buffer surges and mitigate the flooding risk in some areas. The ditches in Raton are of special concern when it comes to pre-disaster flood mitigation. Plantings, especially in burn areas, increase the capacity of the land to hold and slow potential flood water. Ongoing post-fire mitigation efforts are underway at the Track Fire site.

Exhibit XI-5
FEMA Floodplain
Map



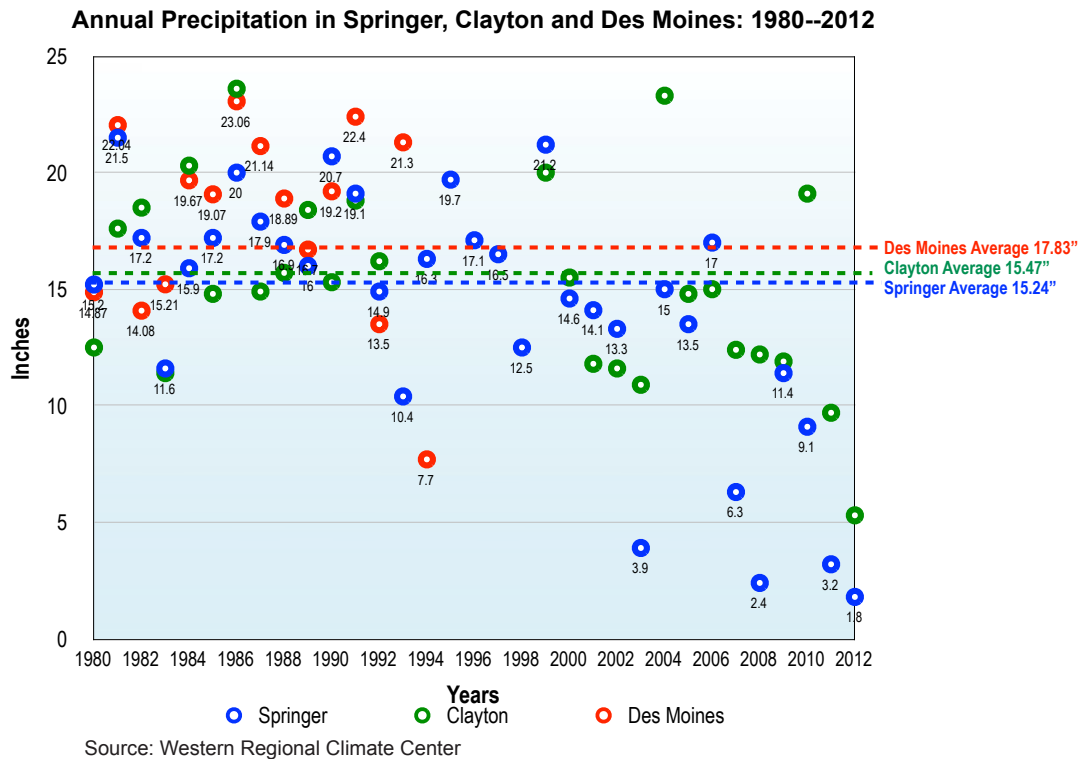
Drought

Drought is not solely a physical aspect of weather. It is also a measure of the balance between water supply and water demand. Hydrological drought occurs when water reserves in aquifers, reservoirs and lakes fall below an established statistical average. Meteorological drought is a prolonged period of deficient precipitation which causes a natural shortage of available water. Agricultural drought occurs when there is not enough moisture to support average crop production or average grass production on range land. Whenever human demands

for water exceed the natural availability of water, which is a common event during low average precipitation years, the result is drought. Because increasing precipitation is not an option, diminishing human demand will be essential.

The following exhibit shows the average precipitation in Springer from 1990 to 2012, compared to Clayton and Des Moines. In Springer, 12 of the 13 years between 1999-2012 were drier than average. In Clayton, 11 of the past 13 years were drier than average. Des Moines data ended in 1994.

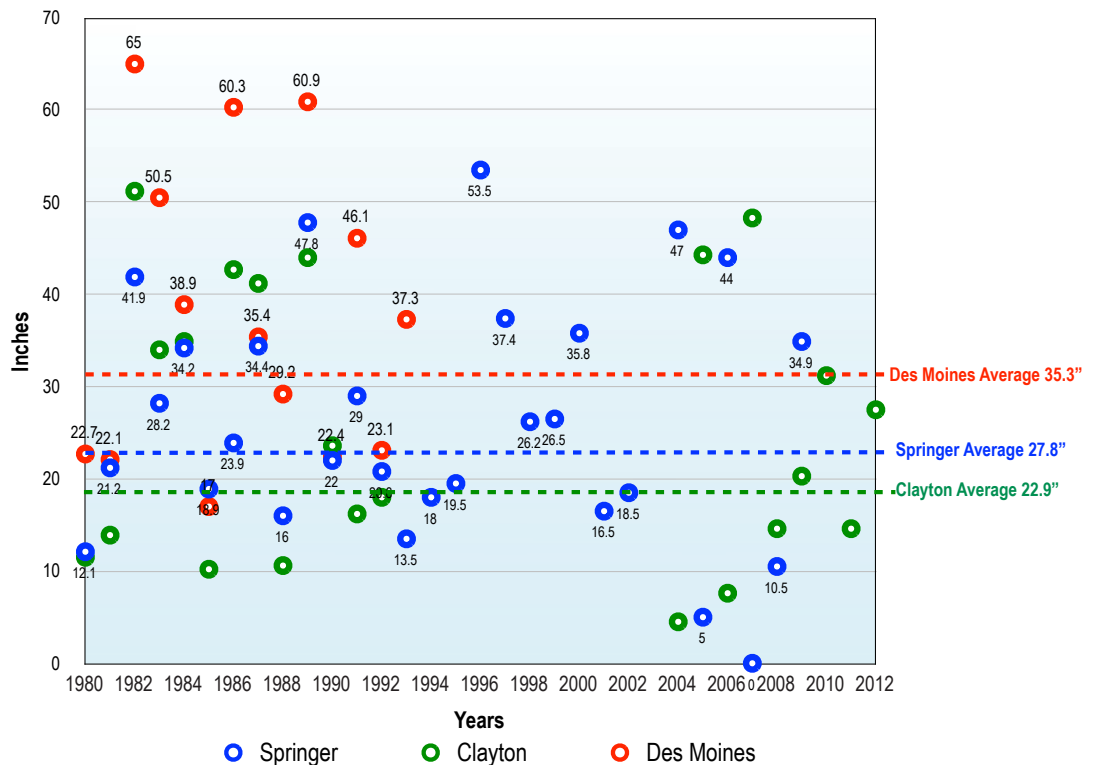
Exhibit XI-6
Annual
Precipitation



The following chart shows the average snowfall in the area from 1979 to 2011. In Springer, five of the most recent nine reported years had less snowfall than average. In Clayton, five of the past nine years saw less snowfall than average.

Exhibit XI-7
Seasonal Snowfall

Seasonal Snowfall in Springer, Clayton and Des Moines: 1979-80 to 2011-12



Source: Western Regional Climate Center, no records for some years

The recurrence of a severe multiyear drought like that in the 1950s is likely some time during this century (and could represent the drought cycle underway in the decade of the 2010s), regardless of human-caused climate change. When such a drought does recur, higher evaporation rates due to climate change's warmer temperatures will exacerbate the effects of drought.

Many effects of drought develop over the course of years. For instance, trees survive for years, but weaken over time, making way for the destructive effects of bark and pine beetles. Ground cover dies back, and soil loses its permeability, increasing risk of flooding. Wildlife lose food sources and the protection of vegetative cover. Recent drought conditions have caused significant grass die-off on range land, resulting in exposed top soil being blown away and a decrease in the capacity of the land to support cattle. Agriculture incomes have dropped off significantly due to the recent drought, and reportedly fewer ranchers are working in the county.

Drought will exacerbate the risk of flooding and wildfires in the county, as well as strain surface and groundwater resources. Drought will affect the economy and quality of life in Colfax County. Water conservation practices, education and innovations are essential, and innovative range and forest management practices may provide additional tools.

Severe Weather Events That Affect Community Services

Colfax County receives an average of 54" in snowfall per year and Raton Pass frequently becomes unpassable during heavy storms. The County clears County

roads and prioritizes school and emergency routes first. In late summer, monsoon rains are common. At these times, power outages are common, as is disruption of communications. Lightning, hail and high winds can all damage property and threaten infrastructure. Awareness is an important element of preparedness, but some other measures are important, such as identifying and reinforcing wind-susceptible structures.

Tornadoes

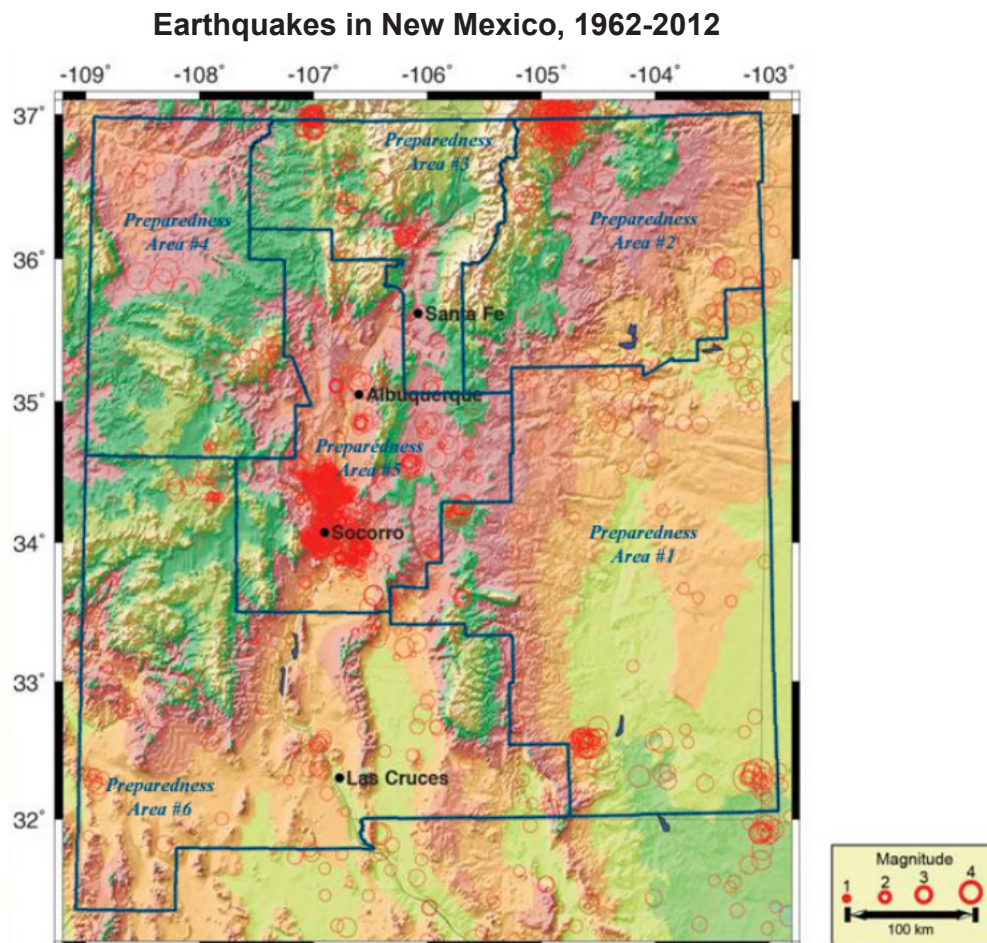
The County's emergency notification program notifies subscribers in the event of rotating clouds, large hail and tornado warnings. Preparedness education for residents and building standards for subdivisions can mitigate the risks posed by such events.

Earthquakes

The bulk of earthquakes in the county since 1962 have taken place in the rural and sparsely populated northwestern corner of the county. In 2005, a magnitude 5 earthquake occurred near Raton and the County has several identified fault lines. Reportedly another, more recent earthquake cracked the Raton Courthouse. However, the New Mexico State Hazard Mitigation Plan 2013 identifies no potential epicenter in the county and identifies very low peak ground acceleration (0.01g-0.05g) for the area.

Exhibit XI-8 ***Earthquake*** ***History***

Source: State of
New Mexico Hazard
Mitigation Plan 2013



Terrorism

Reportedly, intentionally set wildfires have been identified as a potential weapon by extremists, and these groups may have identified livestock as a target. Water sources are not secured by fences in Colfax County and security measures could be taken to protect them. However, no threat is known in Colfax County. Still, diligence should be kept regarding public safety in these matters.

Terrorism: Risk to County Facilities

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the federal government began requiring precautionary measures for local government buildings. Colfax County should keep abreast of further preventive actions that could be mandated in the future.

Major Accidents with Hazardous Materials

Certain areas of Colfax County are at risk from trucks that carry potentially hazardous materials. A major accident would affect residents and the provision of vital services. U.S. 64 and U.S. Interstate 40 are both major transportation routes that cross the length of the county.

Hazardous materials can include toxic chemicals such as chlorine or petroleum products, fertilizer, radioactive materials, infectious waste and other hazardous wastes. An accidental hazardous material release is possible wherever hazardous materials are manufactured, stored, transported or used in a certain area. Such releases can affect the nearby population and contaminate critical or sensitive environmental areas.

Responding to such an accident is the responsibility of the northeast HAZMAT team based in Raton. Colfax County has about 25 certified responders who back up the regional responders and assist with site security and materials clean-up.

Emergency Response

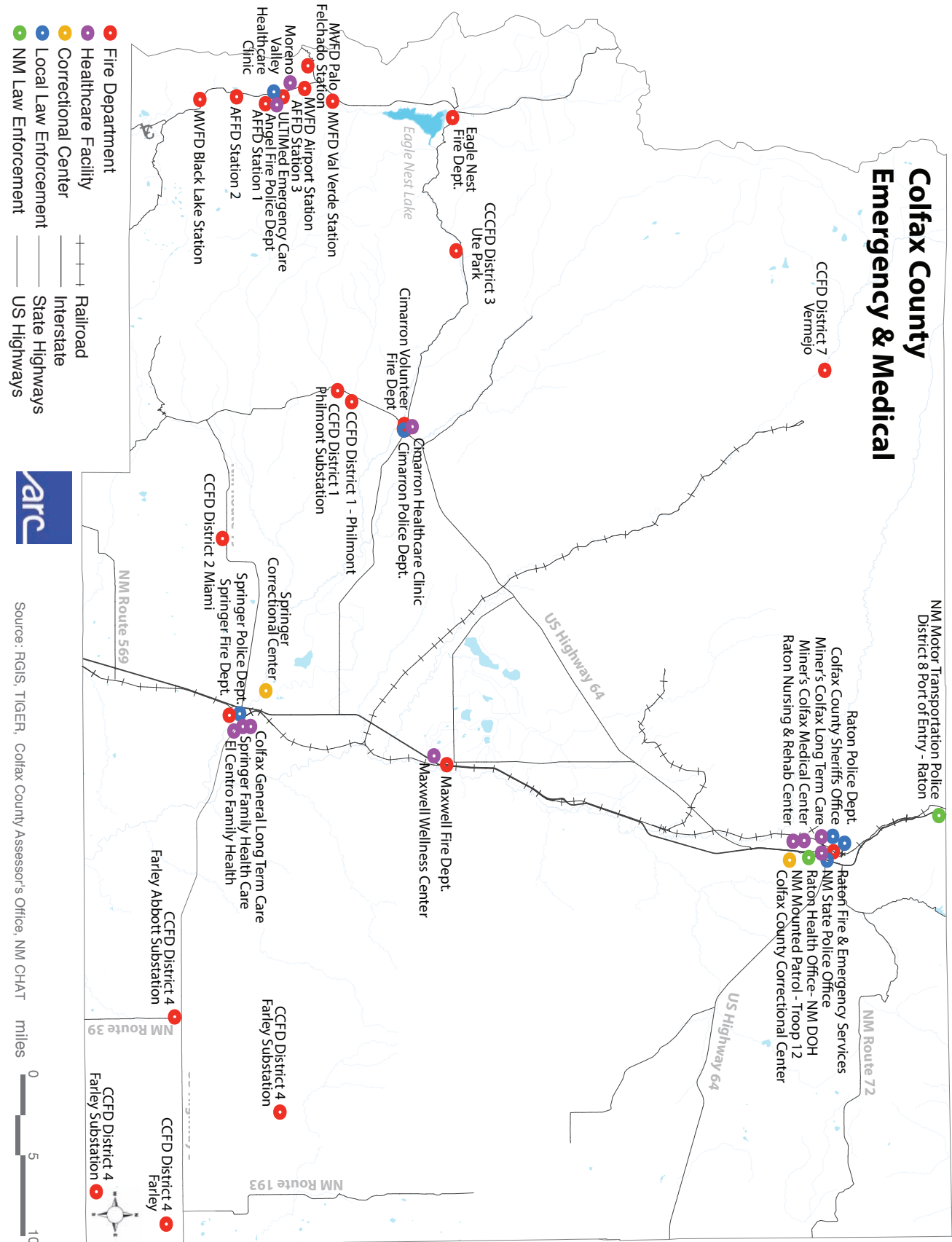
Overall, Colfax County has excellent law enforcement and fire protection. An active fire marshal and good cooperation between departments and agencies has enabled the County to develop a reliable and responsive emergency response team.

Emergency medical coverage is less reliable, however. The county has no emergency medical service (EMS) and the effort to build one has been poorly funded. The county has three volunteer ambulance services, including ones in Eagle Nest and Cimarron. Springer and Angel Fire face long response times and limited local treatment. In Angel Fire, the fire department must provide EMS service. The village has a basic clinic with capacity to take x-rays, but no full service medical facility, which is particularly an issue for the many retirees in the community. Springer has no ambulance service and no full-time EMS.

LifeLine medical helicopter service possibly may locate in Raton, but it would do little to shorten the response time in Springer, according to local officials. Rural areas are generally difficult to cover.

Exhibit XI-9

Colfax County Emergency and Medical Services



E. Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Create a safe and secure environment and enhance the capacity to manage natural threats and respond to emergencies in the interest of public safety.

Objective 1: Ensure the continued capacity to respond to wildfire threat.

- Support volunteer fire departments
- Coordinate with Raton and other municipal fire departments
- Continue to support membership as a Firewise Community
 - » Continue to support Firewise events

Objective 2: Ensure the safety of the water supply.

- Evaluate the security of County water facilities to determine the need to improve security of the county's water supply

Objective 3: Limit the risk of damage due to flooding.

- Obtain more detailed flood risk maps and identify high risk areas to determine risk mitigation approaches
- Ensure that flood insurance requirements are adequate

Objective 4: Limit the risk of damage or loss of County property.

- Conduct a study to determine hazards risk and an emergency response management procedure for County facilities and equipment

Objective 5: Support emergency managers in their efforts to safeguard the county.

- Support update of the Colfax County Local Hazards Mitigation Plan
- Support the implementation of recommendations proposed in plan
- Maintain a high level of regional response capacity to hazardous material through joint efforts with the City of Raton and other entities

Goal 2: Plan pragmatically and strategically to face climate change and improve resiliency to protect county citizens

Objective 1: Develop local responses to the effects of climate change on water for both drinking and irrigation.

- Keep abreast of developing climate projections
- Adapt water use, fire preparedness, rangeland use, forest management, and watershed management approaches and policies to meet changing climate projections
- Plan for the probability of increasingly severe drought conditions in the coming decades and its effect on the drinking water supply for residents
 - » Continue seeking funding to conduct a comprehensive groundwater study to determine availability, potability and level of depletion of groundwater
 - » Develop a detailed County or regional water plan recommending long-range solutions to developing alternative water sources

- Evaluate options and recommend a preferred alternative, including but not limited to: explore desalination options for potential future use of brackish groundwater
- Identify options for water conservation measures and recommend implementation actions
- Encourage erosion mitigation and riparian health to improve groundwater recharge and preserve groundwater quality
- Promote sustainable ranching and farming practices to encourage topsoil retention

Objective 2: Pursue responsible energy-consumption practices.

- » Support local efforts to reduce the emission of harmful green house gases that contribute to climate change
- » Continue efforts to find and encourage funding and support for energy efficiency improvement to outfit County buildings with solar-electric systems
- » Continue efforts to improve the efficiency of County building by improving window insulation
- » Whenever feasible, institute forward-thinking conservation measures when implementing repairs, upgrades and remodeling, or new construction

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