

White Sands Missile Range

—A Full Regiment of Military Readiness and Land Conservation

NMLC is honored to have been the land trust selected to assist the Department of Defense (DoD) and White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) in their efforts to curtail encroaching development on lands adjacent to the “Range.”

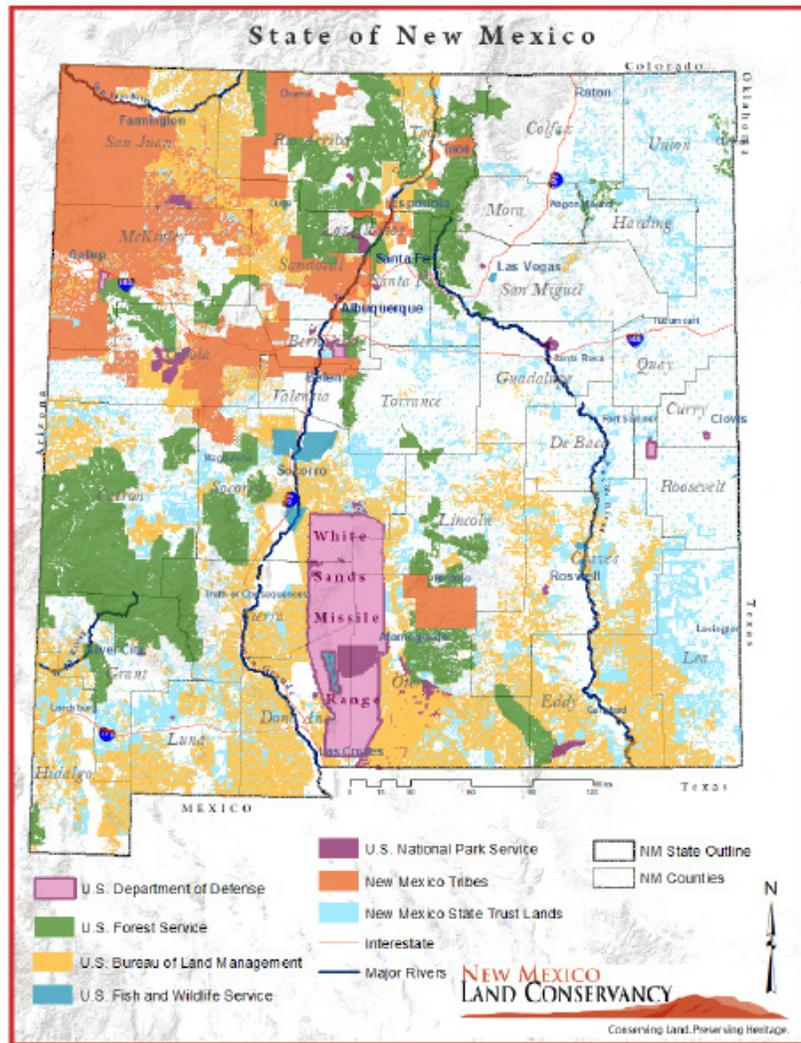
Under DoD’s Readiness and Environmental Integration Program (REPI), NMLC and WSMR entered into a long-term contract in which NMLC is charged with working with neighboring landowners to preserve the open space surrounding WSMR. We will be working with landowners situated in the “buffer area” in the hopes of placing conservation easements across these working ranches. This is a tall order as there are approximately 850,000 acres of state and private lands within the targeted area.

Military installations across the country, due to their vastness of unfragmented lands protected under high security and little public use, frequently represent the last refugia of numerous populations of various species of plants and animals, often including threatened and endangered species, as well.

Spanning 100 miles north and south, and 45 miles east and west, the 2 million-acre WSMR is no exception to this phenomenon. This large area of Chihuahuan desert grasslands with its alkali springs and numerous mountain ranges is home to populations of pronghorn, desert

bighorn sheep, elk, bats, mule deer, non-native oryx, White Sands pupfish, and a myriad of other species. We are excited to use this unique funding source to expand this vast unfragmented area by working with neighboring landowners in the hope of acquiring conservation easements across their properties.

NMLC sees this as a valuable conservation opportunity to not only protect New Mexico’s land heritage and the long list of conservation values that we normally protect – such as cultural values, agriculture, future food production, fish and wildlife habitat, watershed health, scenic vistas and valuable open space – but to also to help preserve WSMR’s important military and economic role. Ongoing training and testing missions conducted at White Sands Missile Range are extremely important relative to our national security and to New Mexico’s economy.



During 2018, NMLC’s efforts have been focused on outreach with numerous landowners in the “buffer area” to determine their level of interest in conservation easements. We are pleased with the initial results of those efforts and are currently working with individual landowners to permanently protect nearly 25,000 acres of private land as part of this effort. #

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