

Taos Plateau Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Project

Taos District, Bureau of Land Management



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Project Partners

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Conversion of Net-wire Fence and Non-wildlife friendly fence to 4 Strand Wildlife Friendly Fence

Historically, Net-wire Fence as well as 5 or more strand barbed wire fence was installed extensively throughout the western United States in an effort to make it possible to manage Public Land Ranching operations.

These types of fences are very effective at keeping domestic livestock on the intended pastures, however, they are also significant barriers to wildlife movement.

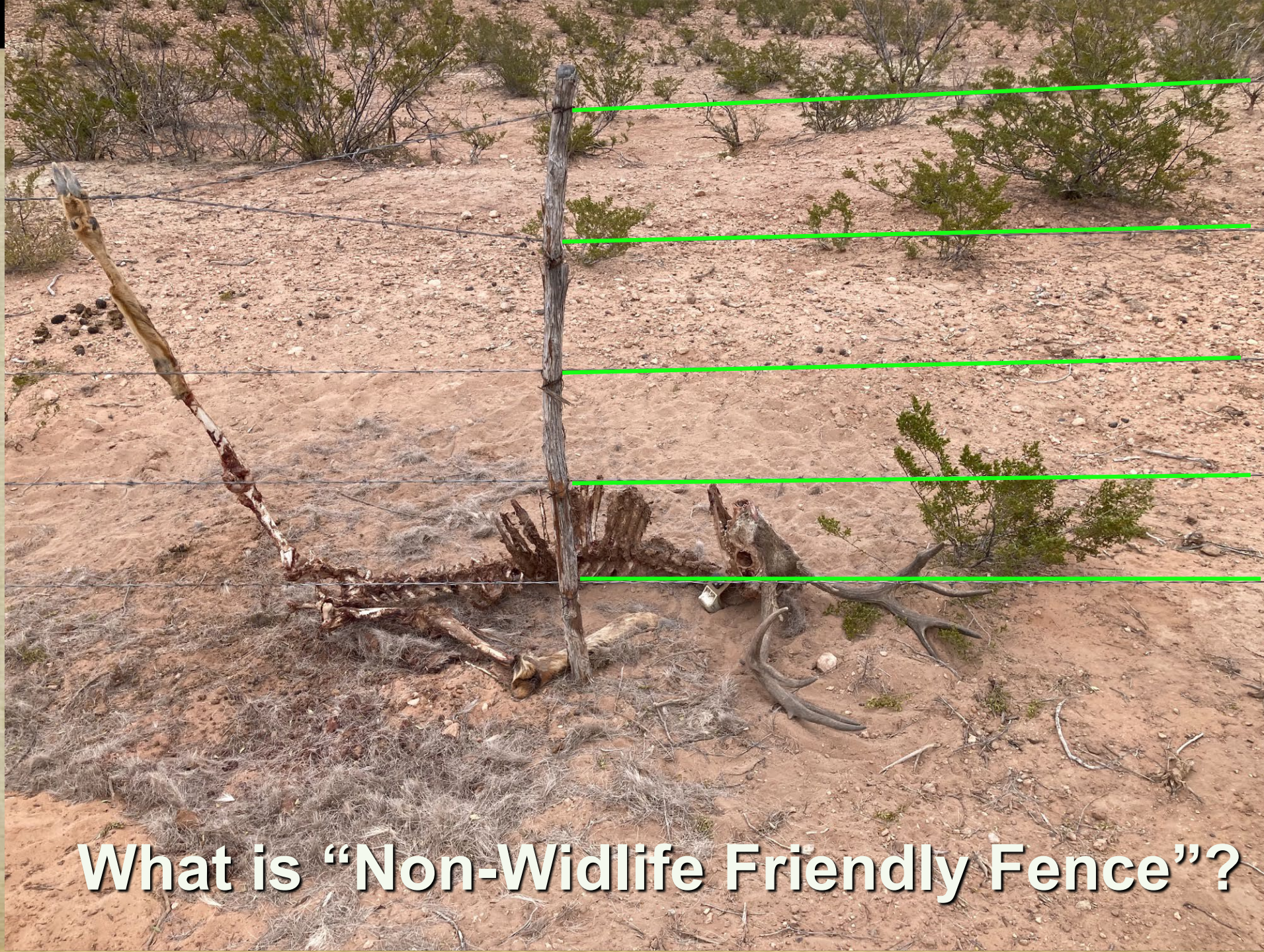


Photo: Texas Parks
And Wildlife,
*Landowners Guide
to Pronghorn
Friendly Fence*



5 or more strand wire fencing, or wire strand fencing that has a top wire higher than 42" has a higher potential to trap adult ungulates that are jumping over it

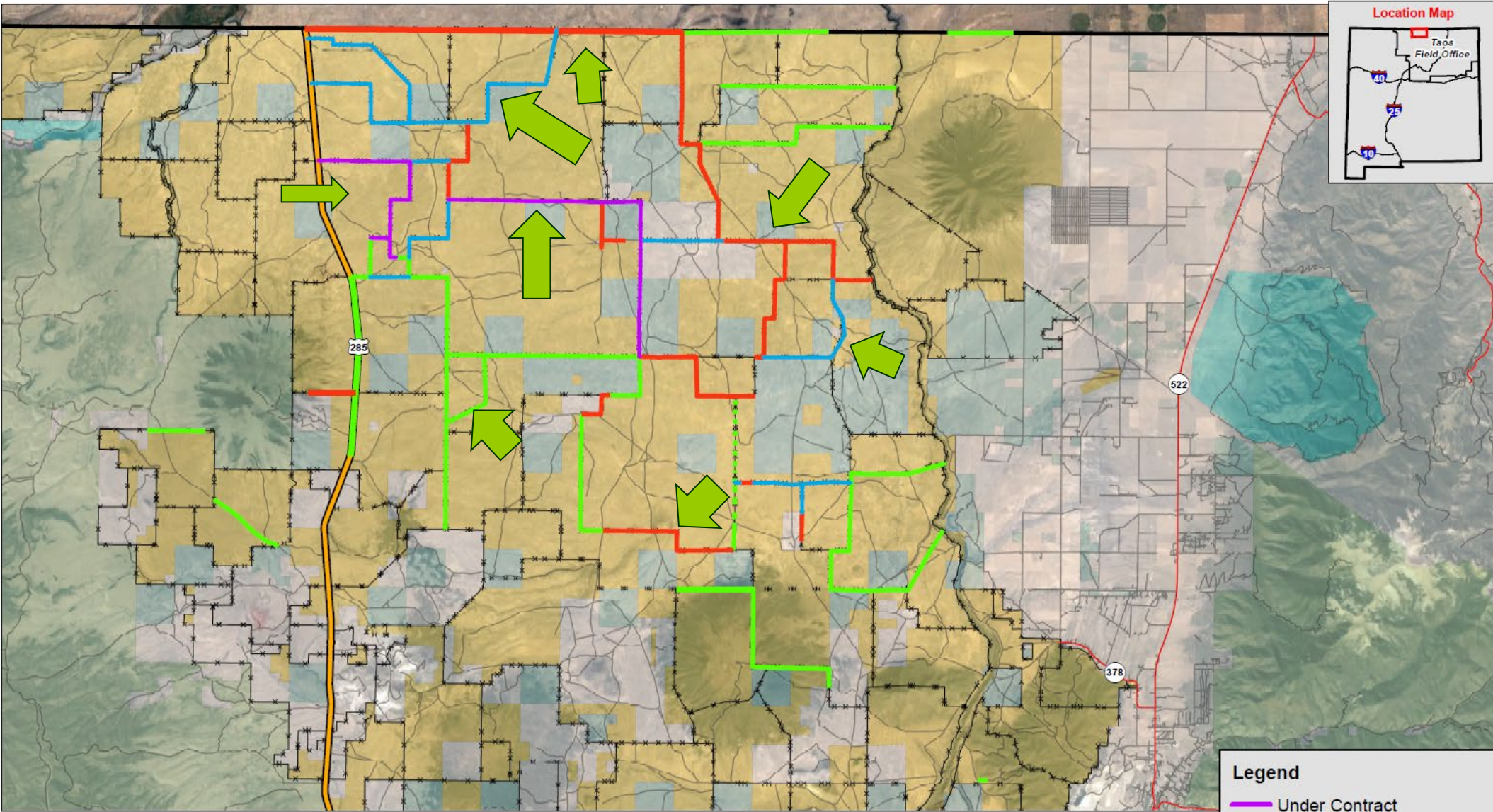
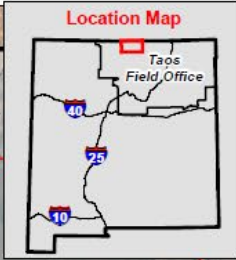
Photo: Andrew Joliff
NMDGF



What is “Non-Wildlife Friendly Fence”?

In these photos, a herd of elk is seen running along a section of net-wire fence, until reaching a section of the fence that was modified for wildlife crossing.





- Legend**
- Under Contract
 - Non Wildlife Friendly
 - Netwire
 - Modified
 - Taos Plateau Roads
 - Grazing Pasture Polygons

Notes:
Approximately 42.9 miles netwire
Approximately 27.7 miles wire-strand non-wildlife friendly
For a total of approximately 70.6 miles of fenceline that require modification.

2022 Taos Plateau Fence Modification Project

0 1.75 3.5 7 Miles



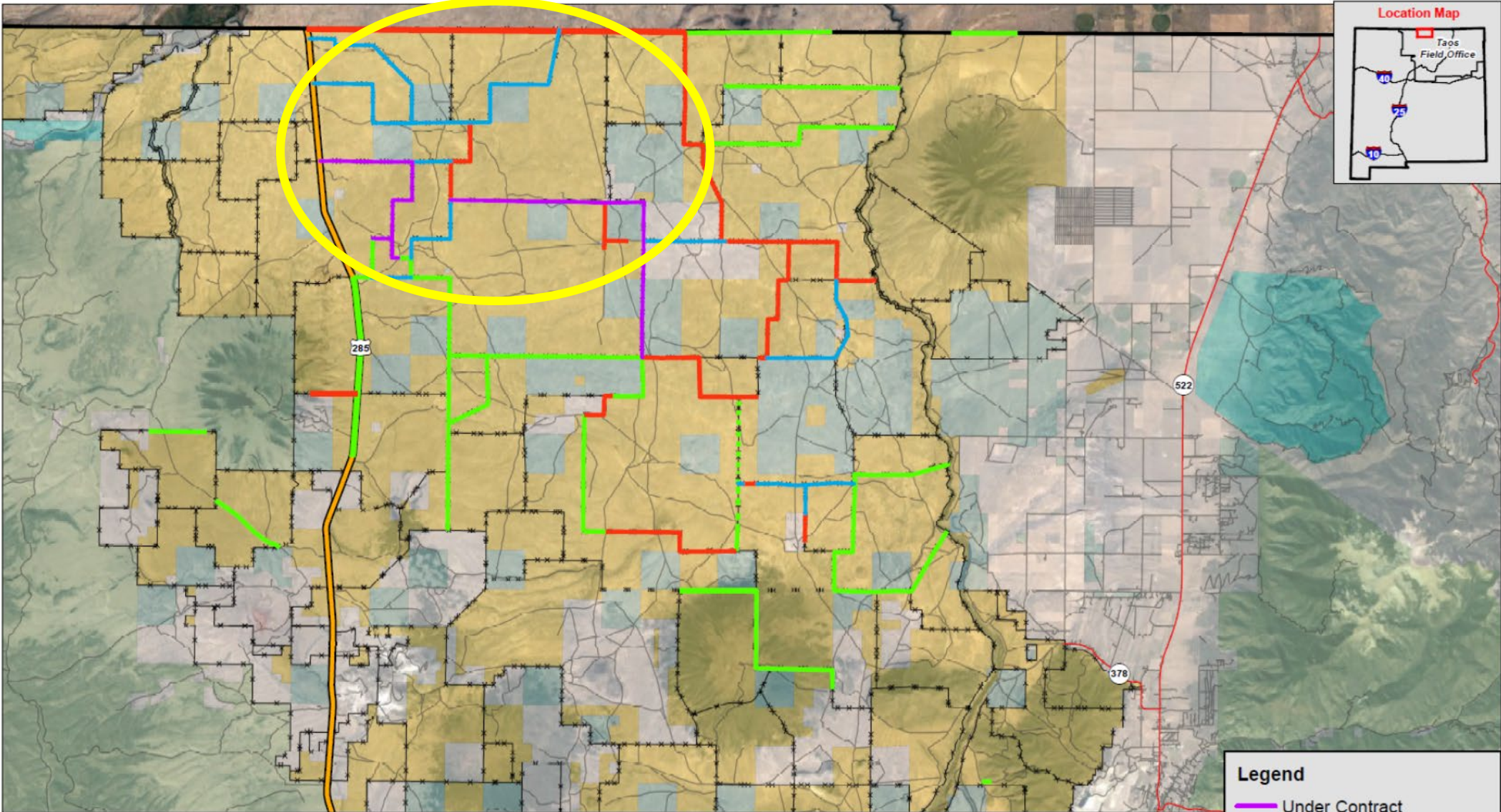
Background Info

- Partners that have been involved:
NMDGF, NMDOT, NFWF, RMEF, MDF, TSWCD, NMSU Department of Fish & Conservation Ecology, Pheasants Forever, Inc. and Quail Forever
- Implementation of Secretarial Order 3362 Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors
- Habitat Connectivity on Public Lands IM 2023-005, Change 1
 - ensuring habitats for native fish, wildlife, and plant populations are sufficiently inter- connected



For this next phase, the plan will be to focus our efforts in the Northern part of the Taos Plateau.

In future deployments, we will work our way southeast.



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Project Summary

- \$1,000,000 will be required to convert the 43 miles of net-wire into wildlife friendly fence, and an additional \$500,000 will be needed to convert the remaining 28 miles of non-wildlife friendly fence into a wildlife friendly design.
- This will be a multi year project.
- \$375,000 is needed for the first phase.
- This project will primarily benefit Pronghorn Antelope, Mule Deer, and Elk





Photo:BLM

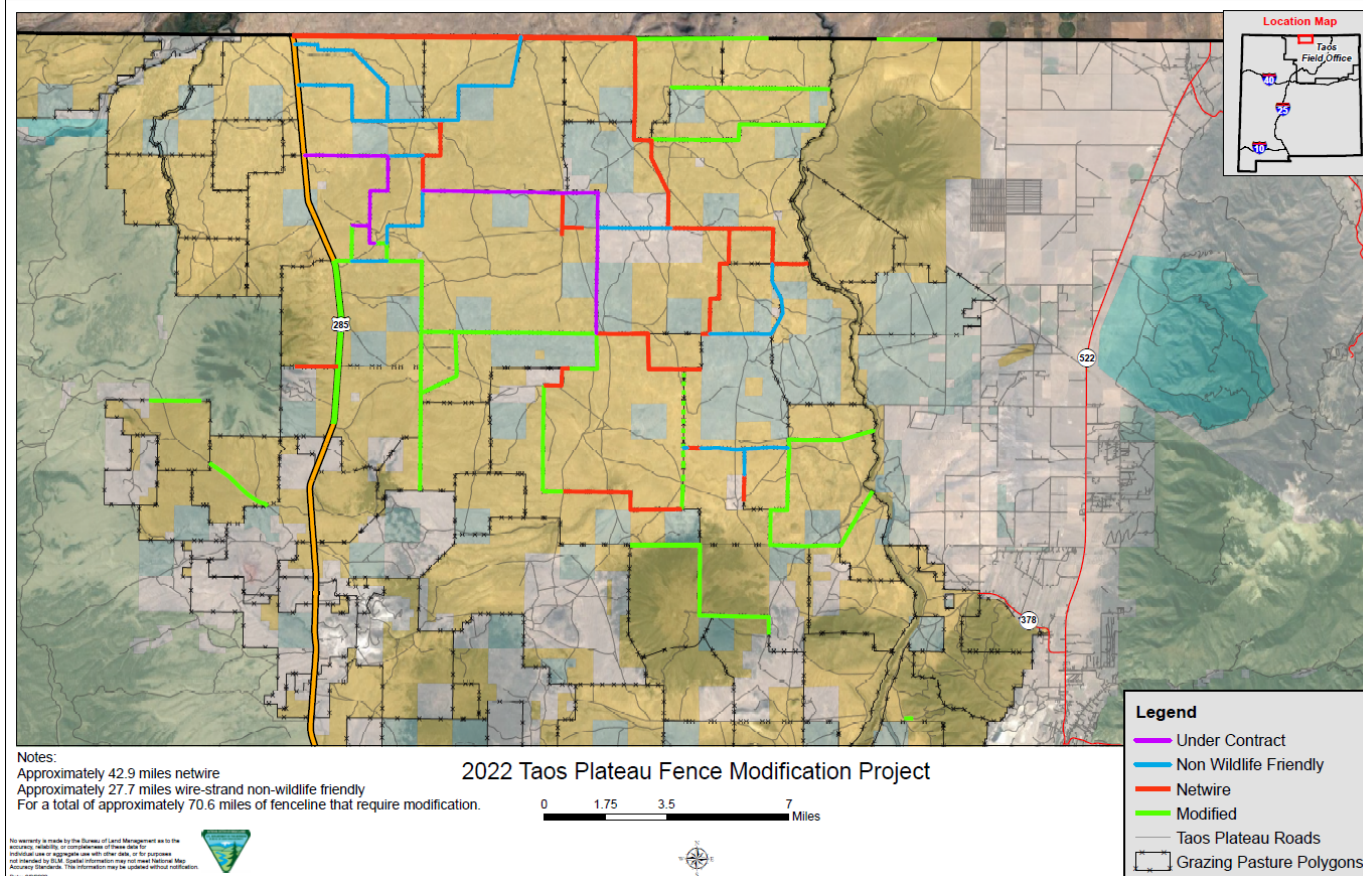
Taos Plateau Wildlife Habitat Connectivity



- The Taos BLM has been systematically removing sections of Netwire fencing and replacing it with wildlife friendly wire fence over the past decade in order to improve wildlife movement throughout this important migration corridor. The Department of Game and Fish strongly supports these efforts, and Habitat Stamp Funds have gone towards these modifications over the past several years.
- In 2022, the Citizen Advisory Committee prioritized the modification of 6 miles of netwire fence. That work is now complete, and the BLM has completed their inventory of remaining netwire on the Taos Plateau.
- There are 43 miles of Netwire (red) that remain on the Plateau, and while our completed efforts (shown in green and purple) are notable and impressive, we are now aiming to complete this work by removing the remaining netwire and replacing it with wildlife friendly 4 strand wire, in phases of approximately 15-20 miles per year.

Project Contacts:

BLM - Pamela Herrera-Olivas Pherrera@blm.gov
NMDGF - Daniel Lusk Daniel.lusk@state.nm.us



Proposed Management Action

- The NMDGF, in collaboration with the Taos BLM, will contract the modification of ~13 miles of netwire fence and other non-wildlife friendly fence to meet current wildlife friendly specifications.
- HSP funds will be utilized for the removal and modification of up to 15 miles of this fence, at an estimated cost of \$25,000 to \$35,000 per mile.
- The removed fence will be disposed of off site by the contractor.
- Google Earth Link:

Estimated Budget:
\$375,000

Project Name:

Taos Plateau Habitat Connectivity

Project relation to CAC advice or priorities:

CAC members have expressed an interest in habitat connectivity projects such as this one. This project is large scale and has been developed to improve big game movement and enhance wildlife corridors throughout the Taos Plateau.

Project Specific Details:

While the Habitat Stamp Program, as well as many other partners have been working on portions of this project for many years, we now have a complete inventory of all fence infrastructure on the Plateau. This information will allow us to move forward strategically, and to implement the remaining fence conversions.

Historical Data:

Historically, the fence infrastructure on the plateau was designed to improve domestic livestock grazing on the monument. This fencing has proven to be a barrier to wildlife, and at times, even a trap.

Itemized Use of Funds:

Fence Conversion cost per mile - Netwire -> wildlife friendly : \$35,000/mile

Fence Conversion cost per mile - Non-wildlife friendly -> Wildlife Friendly: \$25,000/mile

~13 miles of fence will be converted to be wildlife friendly at a cost of approximately \$375,000

Comprehensive Project Analysis:

Please see the attached design packet and presentation for these details.

Monitoring Plan/ Strategy:

Currently, a number of elk, pronghorn and deer on the Plateau are fitted with GPS collars. This will allow for an assessment to be made on how movement is affected after these conversions are in place.

Project Emphasis Species:

Pronghorn, Deer and Elk.

