

KEY AREAS FOR CONSERVATION ACTION

All landscapes in New Mexico are important for conserving the full suite of components that collectively comprise our state’s biodiversity, while providing important social and economic benefits for our citizens. However, because time and resources are limited, it is important to identify and focus upon key areas for conservation action.

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We used four criteria to identify key areas based on information gained in developing the CWCS for New Mexico; key habitats, SGCN presence, analyses of factors that influence habitats, and SWReGAP land status estimates. Our Approach chapter details methods used in this analysis, and provides information pertaining to the four model input variables. Findings to date suggest that key areas upon which to focus conservation efforts in New Mexico may include riparian and aquatic habitats throughout the state, areas in the “boot heel” region of southwestern New Mexico extending northward into the Madrean habitats, and areas of the shortgrass prairie and western mountain ranges where they converge with Chihuahuan Desert and Pecos River habitats (Fig. 4-8). These areas contain key habitats, have a high diversity of SGCN, are subjected to a moderate to high magnitude of multiple habitat altering factors, and lack legal constraints or long-term management plans protecting them from habitat conversion. Having identified these key areas it remains to engage appropriate federal, state, local, and tribal governments, NGOs, and private interests in determining where, when, what, and how conservation actions will be implemented.

Landscapes in New Mexico to consider in planning conservation efforts were:

- Areas within key habitats,
- Areas that had a high diversity of terrestrial and aquatic SGCN taxa,
- Areas that may be potentially altered by synergistic effects that influence habitats, and
- Areas without long-term management plans or legal constraints that protect them from habitat conversion.

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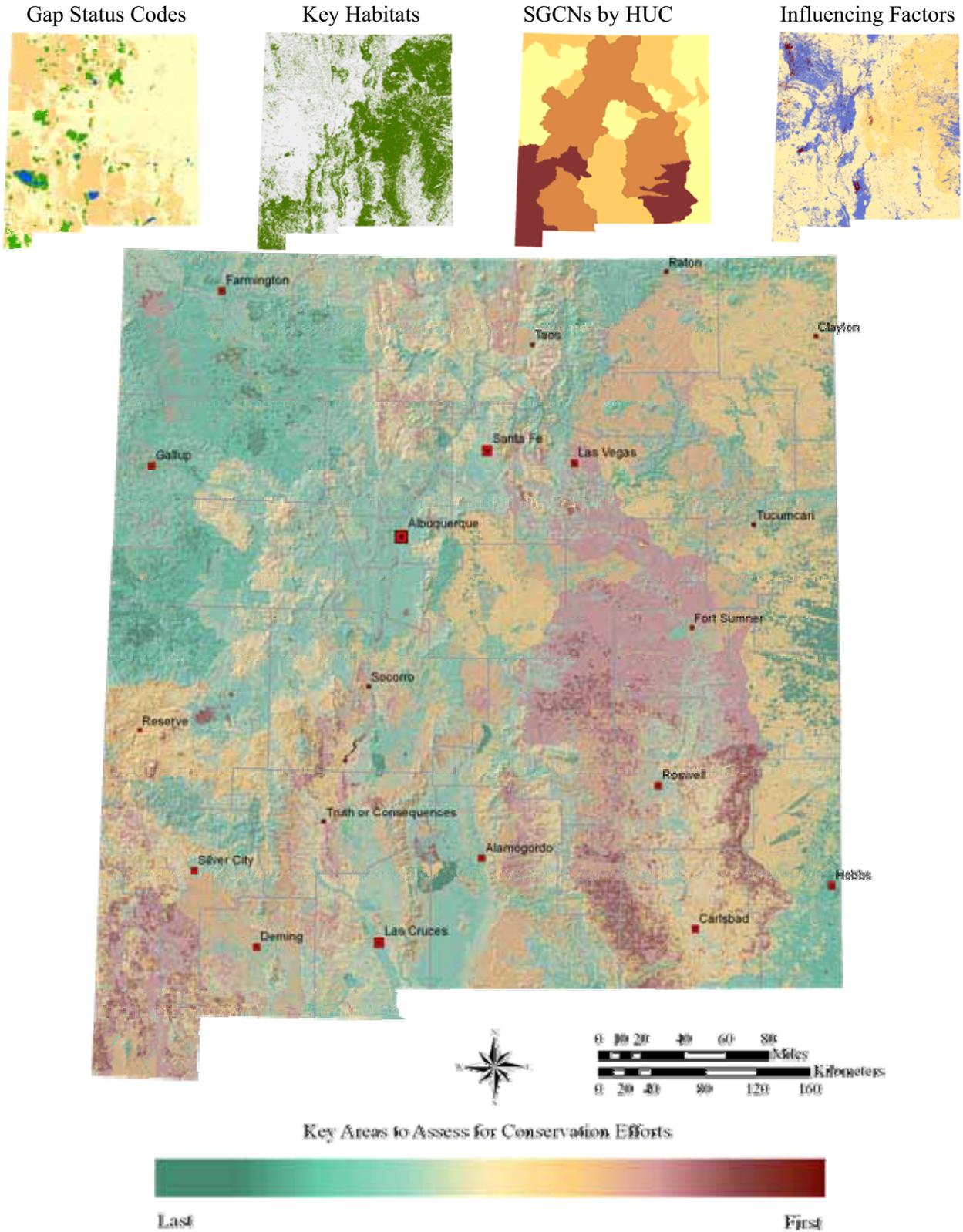


Figure 4-8. Key areas to consider for planning conservation efforts. This spatial representation is designed to enhance our understanding of geographic areas where conservation efforts may be needed. This analysis should not be used to locate small parcels of land.