

Jemez River Watershed

Initiative/Project Title:

Rio de las Vacas Wetlands Restoration Project

Watershed Location:

New Mexico

Watershed Size:

661,760 acres

Start-End Dates:

October, 2005 – October, 2008

Project Highlights: The Jemez River is significantly impaired due to soil erosion, which is thought to have resulted from a variety of natural and other activities such as grazing, recreation, stream bank modification, removal of riparian vegetation, silviculture, road construction and maintenance, and channel widening. The Rio de las Vacas Wetlands Restoration Project encompasses approximately 40-50 individual projects.



Techniques Used: This project utilizes a combination of restoration, enhancement, and public education to improve wetlands in the target watershed on both public and private lands. This includes restoring almost 2 miles of stream along Rio de las Vacas; reducing non-point source pollution into the streams by modifying and rehabbing campsites located along Rio de las Vacas; reconstructing and maintaining an existing buck and pole fence on the Middle Rio de las Vacas; and restoring the wetlands along the Rio de Las Vacas using bioengineering, planting of native plants, and structural techniques. The plan also identifies promoting awareness of the role beavers play as wetland implementers and the importance of water protection and conservation.

Expected Benefits: Enhanced water quality, increased water retention, and more resilient habitat through increased biodiversity and habitat productivity.

Lessons Learned:

- Time management is very important
- Be prepared to deal with varying levels of interest and understanding from private landowners.
- It was also an important lesson to keep communication open with the Cuba Ranger District, especially Range staff, to address trespass cattle issues.
- The ability to compromise has been our biggest asset in moving forward with this project.