



*Pinon-juniper forest thinning operation to improve habitat for migratory birds, wildlife and forest health.*

Photograph by Nancy D. Riley/USFWS

#### *Forest Habitats*

Forests provide habitat for resident and migratory birds; resident wildlife such as elk, deer and wild turkey; and, several rare, threatened or endangered species including the federally endangered Mexican spotted owl. Montane forests contain headwaters of many large watersheds, such as the Rio Grande, Pecos and Gila rivers. Pinyon-juniper woodlands provide habitat for a host of wildlife species, especially migratory birds.

#### *Conservation Strategies*

Fire suppression has led to over crowding, disease and insect outbreaks that kill many trees, and greatly increased the risks of catastrophic wildfires. The Partners Program helps private landowners to thin their forests to promote better forest health and improve wildlife habitat. We also provide funds to fence riparian areas, restore stream channels, and restore forest meadows.

#### **Other Habitat Restoration Activities**

The Partners Program also funds outdoor classrooms that provide schoolchildren and communities with “hands-on” educational opportunities. These projects benefit both the fish and wildlife species that inhabit them and the individuals and communities that learn from them.

We hope you give us a call. We would be happy to talk to you about your ideas for habitat improvement on your land and help you through our application process. Our contact information is at the end of this brochure.

#### **Be A New Mexico Partner!**

Join the private landowners, counties, communities, schools, Native Americans, and local agencies who have restored their lands with the help of the Partners Program. Many Federal, State, and non-profit organizations may contribute cost-share funds and/or technical assistance. Some of these partners are:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - Natural Resources Conservation Service
  - Farm Service Agency
  - Forest Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- New Mexico State Land Office
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- New Mexico Environment Department
- University of New Mexico
- New Mexico Office of the State Engineer
- New Mexico Historic Preservation Office
- Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Quivira Coalition
- The Nature Conservancy of New Mexico
- Ducks Unlimited
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- New Mexico Riparian Council
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Local Watershed Associations

#### **For Further Information**

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*Front Cover, Sangre de Cristo Mountains*  
 Photograph by Maureen Murphy/USFWS

## **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# **Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program**

## *New Mexico*



#### **Accomplishments**

*1990-2007*

244 projects have been completed to improve or restore habitat on more than 77,078 acres in New Mexico, including:

- 1,340 acres of wetlands,
- 5,328 acres of riparian area,
- 349 riparian miles,
- 68,931 acres of (grasslands, forests, and shrublands), and
- 93 in-stream miles.

## General Information

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program is a voluntary partnership program that provides technical and financial assistance to non-Federal landowners to improve fish and wildlife habitats for Federal trust species (e.g., threatened, endangered, and candidate species, migratory birds, and other declining species). With more than half of New Mexico in private ownership, there are ample opportunities for habitat restoration on private land.



### New Mexico Activities

- Restoring habitat for migratory birds and declining, threatened, and endangered species in:
  - Grasslands;
  - Riparian Corridors;
  - In-stream;
  - Forests and Shrubland;
  - Wetlands,
- Fencing sensitive areas,
- Controlling invasive and non-native vegetation,
- Replanting native plants,
- Public outreach and education,
- Installing wildlife or livestock water sources to benefit wildlife.

Private landowners generally provide 25 percent of the cost-share funding and/or in-kind services (labor, maintenance, and materials). One-to-one cost share often is achieved by partnering with a host of nationally based and local partners with wildlife habitat funding programs and technical expertise. We help bring landowners and other partners together on restoration projects to benefit from their expertise.

### Habitats of Special Concern and Conservation Strategies In-Stream, Riparian, and Wetland Habitats

In the arid Southwest, these relatively moist, lush areas are among the most productive wildlife habitats for breeding, wintering, and migration. Desert riparian ecosystems have the highest density of breeding birds in North America, with at least 400 different bird species observed. Riparian areas comprise 1-2 percent of the landscape, yet 75 percent of the vertebrate species in New Mexico depend on riparian habitat for at least a portion of their life cycle. The endangered southwestern willow flycatcher and threatened bald eagle migrate through and sometimes nest in riparian corridors within the State. Wetlands connected to river systems provide nursery and resting areas for many species of fish and invertebrates.

### Conservation Strategies

Fencing is an effective way to protect in-stream, riparian and wetland habitats from livestock. Fences can also reduce impacts caused by recreational uses. Habitats recover rapidly in these protected areas. Removing of non-native species such as salt cedar and Russian olive, and revegetation with native species help restore the native habitat.

Restoring wetlands within the floodplains of river systems provides wetland functions lost by human activities which have adversely affected the natural ecological functions.

In-stream work concentrates on the concept of natural channel design that reduces erosion and sedimentation, improves fish and wildlife habitat, and reestablishes a more stable stream channel.



*The landowners and the Partners Program plan to install a post vane to induce stream meandering in an intermittent stream in southwestern New Mexico.*



*The same site 10 months later shows the post vane did encourage the stream to meander:*

Both photographs by Van Clothier/Stream Dynamics



### Prairie, Grassland and Shrubland Habitats

The plains-mesa sand scrub areas with their associated grasslands are habitat for prairie species such as the lesser prairie-chicken, sand dune lizard, and a variety of song birds and mammals. Studies show that lesser prairie-chicken and sand dune lizard populations have decreased, which is directly correlated with the decline in the quantity and quality of their habitat.



*Lesser prairie-chicken male in courtship display.*

Photograph by Nancy D. Riley/USFWS

The plains-mesa sand scrub habitat tends to become dominated by junipers or other desert scrub species with heavy use. Restoring these areas to their native grasses and shrubs is important to migrating and resident songbirds, raptors, reptiles, and mammals. Grasslands also provide valuable water quality benefits (e.g., reduce runoff, minimize erosion, and trap or filter pollutants) to some of the major river systems in the State.

### Conservation Strategies

The Partners Program works with landowners to remove invasive shrubs (e.g., juniper, mesquite), reseed native grasses and forbs, mulch eroding areas, and build sediment catchment structures in eroding arroyo channels. The Partners Program also provides cost share for cross fencing, stock tanks and other water sources that enable landowners to rotate their livestock and rest pastures for one or more growing seasons to improve wildlife habitat.