

This WRAS is Currently Under Revision

Watershed Restoration Action Strategy Spur Ranch Project

Introduction and Purpose

This will document the Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) being implemented by Spur Ranch and partners in compliance with a number of existing plans and assessments. This strategy is tiered to the Gila National Forest Watershed Restoration Action Strategy because the Spur Ranch is wholly contained within the Gila National Forest portion of the Upper San Francisco River 5th code watershed. The Forest analysis of the 5th code watershed condition and proposed actions provide the overall basis for this project. The Spur Ranch Project implements the Forest strategy on private land holdings. The project is consistent with and complementary to the Forest plan. Other plans, assessments and agreements included by reference in this strategy include but are not limited to the following documents:

USDA Forest Service Soil and Water Conservation Practices Handbook (FSH 2209.22 Chapter 20)

NMED and the Spur Ranch Project Work plan and NMED Contract No. 00667 5000 0018.

Livestock Grazing Plan (developed in cooperation with NRCS Silver City)

Forest Stewardship Plan (developed by NM State Forestry Division, Doug Boykin)

USFWS Partnership Agreement and Safe Harbor Agreement

This WRAS is necessary as part of the requirement to qualify to secure 319 funds for the Spur Ranch Project.

The 303(d) List for Assessed Stream and River Reaches identifies Centerfire Creek as in non-support for the designated use of High Quality Cold Water Fishery. The probable source of pollutants is identified in the assessment as rangeland (livestock grazing practices). The specific pollutants identified as problems in this creek are conductivity and plant nutrients. Virtually all sources of pollutants can be tied to unsatisfactory riparian or watershed condition and agriculture.

The 303(d) list for New Mexico also establishes a priority for determining what the total maximum daily load (TMDL) is for the parameter being exceeded for a particular body of water. The New Mexico Environment Department is in the process of developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for Centerfire Creek. The Spur Ranch Project is participating in this process by providing existing and historical data to NMED and opportunities to collect additional data on the private land.

Planned Activities

Public Outreach

This project is a collaborative, integrated watershed, forest and range treatment on private land addressing water quality, riparian habitat, and forest health issues. The following agencies will or have provided funding, expertise, direct or indirect assistance, labor, and/or clearance to proceed:

NM Environment Department
NM EMNRD – Forestry and Resources Conservation Division
USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
US Army Corp of Engineers
USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service
USDA, Gila National Forest, Quemado Ranger District
New Mexico Office of the State Engineer
Catron County

The public outreach processes for the above listed agencies include various methods of project scoping, public meetings and notifications, and environmental assessment procedures.

The following organizations have provided funding and participated in planning:

San Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District (\$5000)
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (\$45,000)

Potentially affected private landowners, neighboring or downstream from the project area, were contacted and encouraged to participate in project design and implementation. Public meetings were held in Luna, New Mexico to encourage participation. Follow-up contacts reporting project activities are in progress. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the landowner have collaborated and are continuing to collaborate on educational and promotional articles, tours and news releases on the project. Development of a wildlife viewing area, workshops, and school training sessions are planned. Year-round access on the County-maintained road the project has a significant educational potential and is available, within reason, for on-site demonstrations or field schools or for other written or audio-visual educational programs directed to school children, college students, or adult education/training programs.

Tasks and Schedule

The Spur Ranch Project is a wetlands/riparian restoration project on Centerfire Creek, as it passes through the Spur Ranch near Luna, New Mexico. High levels of sediment in Centerfire Creek adversely affect water quality. This sediment is eroding from sensitive soils in the upper watershed (Forest Service) as well as some on site (Spur Ranch). The project addresses identified water quality problems of conductivity and plant nutrients by

trapping sediment, restoring a functional riparian habitat, and maintaining a healthy native fishery. The project is consistent with and complementary to Forest Service actions in the surrounding part of the 5th code watershed. The Spur Ranch Project has two stages. Stage I is the installation of the primary sediment/gradient control structure; development of management plans for livestock grazing, forest stewardship, and educational activities. Stage II builds on the results of Stage I by installing a second sediment/gradient control structure, re-establishing riparian vegetation, protecting stream and gully banks and restoring upland watershed conditions (thinning, burning, grazing)

TASK	SCHEDULE	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
Stage I		
Design sediment retention structure	May 2000	NRCS-Cunningham
Develop Forest Stewardship Plan	Prior to October 2000	NM EMNRD-Forestry Division - Boykin
Develop Livestock Grazing Plan	May 2000-December 2001	NRCS-Corn
Construct sediment retention structure	May-Oct 2000	Spur Ranch/Paterson
Seed disturbed soils	October 2000	Spur Ranch/Paterson
Develop Educational Plan	October 2001	Spur Ranch/Paterson
Develop TMDLs for Centerfire Creek		NMED-Cudia
Develop Safe Harbor Agreement	August 2001	USFWS-Rinkevich Spur Ranch/Paterson
Stage II		
Construct sediment control structure	June-Oct 2001	Spur Ranch/Paterson
Protect banks downstream of the plunge pool	June 2001-Oct 2002	Spur Ranch/Paterson
Slope banks	June 2001 – November 2003	Spur Ranch/Paterson
Seed disturbed areas	Annually, as needed, through 2003	Spur Ranch/Paterson
Plant riparian woody species	Winter 2001 – Winter 2003	Spur Ranch/Paterson RMEF
Thin ponderosa pine on the uplands	June 2001-Oct 2002	Spur Ranch/Paterson
Prescribed burn	Concurrent with USFS schedule	USFS/Spur Ranch
Monitoring TMDLs		NMED
Record photo points	Annually	Spur Ranch/Paterson
Road grading/erosion control structures	Annually	Catron County

FUNDING

TASK	SOURCE	FUNDING
Stage I		
TMDL development	NMED	\$3,000 ¹
Structure design and construction	NMED 319	\$105,000
Structure construction	RMEF	\$30,000
Structure design and construction	SFRCD	\$5,000
Structure design and construction, seeding, develop educational plan, administer contracts, develop agreements	Spur Ranch/Paterson	\$77,924
Structure design , grazing plan	NRCS	\$4,400 ²
Develop SHA, Structure design and construction, complete cultural resource clearance	USFWS	\$20,000
Develop Forest Stewardship Plan	NM State Forestry	\$1,200 ³
Stage II		
TMDL monitoring	NMED	\$3,000 ⁴
Structure/bank protection design and construction, bank sloping, seeding,	NMED 319	\$132,000
Structure/bank protection construction, bank sloping, seeding, riparian planting	RMEF	\$ 15,000
Structure/bank protection design and construction, bank sloping, seeding, riparian planting, thinning, prescribed burning,	Spur Ranch/Paterson	\$54,978
Structure design	NRCS	\$2,200 ⁵
Thinning and prescribed burning	NM State Forestry	\$1,200 ⁶
Road grading, erosion control structure maintenance	Catron County	\$1000

¹ Estimated at \$220 per day for 10 days plus \$800 for associated expenses.

² Estimated at \$220 per day for 20 days.

³ Estimated at \$220 per day for 5 days plus \$100 for associated expenses.

⁴ Estimated at \$220 per day for 10 days plus \$800 for associated expenses.

⁵ Estimated at \$220 per day for 10 days.

⁶ Estimated at \$220 per day for 5 days plus \$100 for associated expenses.