

RESTORATION PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Questa Mine Site | Questa, New Mexico

Public Meeting November 2017

RESTORATION PROJECTS EVALUATED BY THE TRUSTEES

After reviewing the restoration project proposals and comparing against their restoration screening criteria, the Trustees identified six restoration projects that met the screening criteria. These six projects were evaluated further and included in the Trustees' Preferred Restoration Alternative (see table). The Preferred Restoration Alternative is presented in two tiers. Tier 1 includes the five projects the Trustees prioritized for funding. Tier 2 includes the South Ditch Diversion Structure, which met the restoration screening criteria and was evaluated further by the Trustees but is not being recommended for funding at this time (due to funding limitations).

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND GOAL	PROJECT TYPE
Tier 1 Preferred Restoration Projects		
Aquatic Habitat Restoration in the Red River on Forest Service (FS) Lands	The goal of this project is to restore aquatic habitat for the benefit of riparian natural resources (e.g., trout and other wildlife) and resource services by improving the impaired river morphology on a portion of the Red River to a more natural state. This would be accomplished using a variety of techniques, such as filling and revegetating a bank area, excavating the channel bed, removing vegetation, installing rock features, and constructing log jams.	River Restoration
Municipal Sanitary Sewer System Improvements for the Village of Questa	This project would include extending the municipal sewer service in the Village of Questa to protect groundwater and surface water resources. The project would extend sewer main collector lines and individual service lines to 80 households that currently operate on private septic systems, extend service to a new business park, and replace aging and defective pipes, including sewer lines to three homes. Replacing septic systems, which require regular maintenance and can often leak pollutants, will reduce the risk of sewer line failures and in turn the risk of contaminating natural resources.	Groundwater Restoration
New Municipal Water Supply Well for the Village of Questa	This project would include construction of a new municipal water supply well in the Village of Questa. The construction of a deeper and better-engineered municipal well in a semi-isolated portion of the aquifer will help to restore the natural flux of fresh groundwater to the shallow aquifer system from recharge areas. This will in turn protect groundwater and surface water resources and restore the groundwater quality.	Groundwater Restoration
Red River Aquatic Habitat Restoration within the Village of Questa (Poor and Fair Sections)	This project involves aquatic habitat restoration along the Red River in the Village of Questa, and includes: 1) replacing man-made diversions; 2) riparian habitat restoration efforts; 3) and efforts to restore the natural dimension, pattern, and profile of the river. The Trustees are proposing to fund a portion of the project, as described in more detail in the Draft Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment. This project would restore the natural dimension, pattern, and profile of a portion of the Red River to promote highly functioning aquatic/riparian habitat areas.	River Restoration
Restoration of the Midnight Meadows Wetland	This project would restore hydrology (including water-holding capacity), vegetative structure, and ecological resilience to a portion of the Midnight Meadows wetland fen. Specifically, the project would repair and/or install four riparian wetland exclosures to limit the impacts of livestock grazing and vehicles, protecting nearly one stream mile of Bitter Creek in the Carson National Forest; would install erosion control structures, such as rock dams or other similar designs, in the Bitter Creek and Cabresto Creek headwaters; and would address priority restoration work on 9 hectares of wetland.	Wetland Restoration
Tier 2 Preferred Restoration Projects		
South Ditch Diversion Structure	This project would include the replacement of an existing diversion structure that is located upstream of the Forest Service Questa Ranger District office along the Red River, with a new, more efficient diversion structure that incorporates a fish ladder. Replacing the existing structure would reduce erosion and increase water flow conditions.	Diversion & Irrigation

