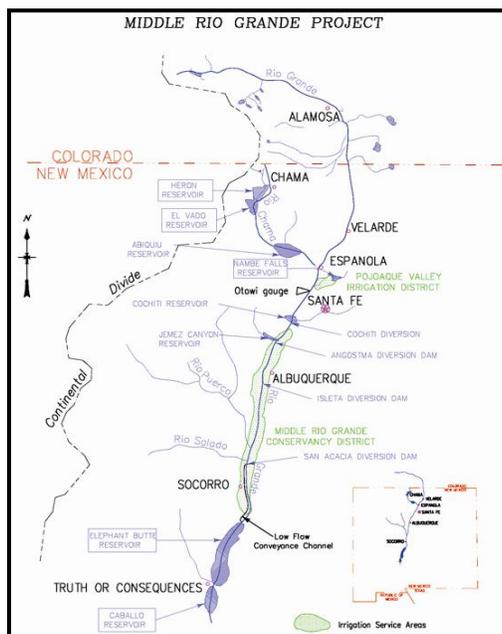


## Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program

**Project Summary:** The Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program (Collaborative Program) is a partnership involving federal, state, tribal and local signatories organized to protect and improve the status of endangered species along the Middle Rio Grande of New Mexico while protecting existing and future regional water uses. Two species of particular concern are the Rio Grande silvery minnow and Southwestern willow flycatcher. Program activities include habitat restoration, endangered species monitoring, silvery minnow propagation and rescue, water acquisition and management, and water quality studies. The Collaborative Program is managed by the Bureau of Reclamation. Together, Reclamation and the Collaborative Program have funded more than 1,000 acres of habitat improvement and restoration projects in the Middle Rio Grande. This work goes hand in hand with the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The river and surrounding area are being restored to create more habitat for endangered species and for future generations to enjoy.

**Strategic Value:** The Rio Grande has long been viewed as one of the most essential resources in New Mexico from a cultural, agricultural, environmental, and economic perspective. The wooded area surrounding the Middle Rio Grande is known as the Rio Grande Bosque. This area has become increasingly important in recent years as a place for recreation, especially within Albuquerque. The wooded areas are popular for hiking, exercising, picnicking and bird watching.

**Benefits:** The main purpose of the Collaborative Program's habitat restoration work is to benefit the Rio Grande silvery minnow and Southwestern willow flycatcher in order to fulfill the requirements of a 2003 biological opinion. A key objective for the Habitat Restoration Work Group of the Collaborative Program is to provide technical assistance in coordinating reach specific habitat improvement and long-term, basinwide habitat effectiveness monitoring plans. These plans will actively integrate river function, riparian community, and hydrology, resulting in improved habitats for endangered species. These projects vary in complexity, but typically lower the bank lines of the Rio Grande to reconnect with the river and clear non-native species. In some cases, they reintroduce native plant species and create shallow ephemeral channels or low-velocity habitats important for Rio Grande silvery minnow egg and larval development. The Collaborative Program helps to provide Endangered Species Act coverage under the 2003 biological opinion for the Middle Rio Grande project, allowing continued delivery of approximately 350,000 acre feet of water annually to about 90,000 acres of land, including 30,000 acres of Indian water rights lands within the project.



Habitat restoration project funded by the Collaborative Program on Sandia Pueblo