

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall goal of Reclamation's Wetland/Riparian Mitigation and Monitoring Plan has been to restore a naturally self-sustaining riparian ecosystem within the Mitigation Area (MA) that supports the best functional conditions that can be practicably established. This mitigation completion report describes success in meeting both the 95% development milestone for physical features of wetland/riparian mitigation that must be met before the Animas-La Plata (ALP) Project can begin operation as well as in meeting the full mitigation requirements for wetland/riparian and wildlife/upland vegetation mitigation for the ALP Project. Reclamation will now begin long-term management of the MA to assure resource benefits are protected.

95% Completion of Wetland/Riparian Vegetation Mitigation Physical Features:

- ☑ All lands to mitigate ALP wetland/riparian habitat loss were acquired by Reclamation in 2002, prior to initiation of construction.
- ☑ All of the (riparian tracts of the) MA have been adequately fenced to prevent livestock trespass.
- ☑ All river restoration construction downstream of Long Hollow has been completed and monitored to ensure the constructed banks, floodplain and plantings are functioning properly.
- ☑ All river banks outside of the channel restoration segment within the MA have been monitored to ensure natural recovery is occurring.
- ☑ 100% of tamarisk (*Tamarix* spp.) and Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) trees have been removed from the tree and shrub canopies of the MA. Reclamation has also implemented an Integrated Vegetation Management Plan (IVMP) for the riparian and riparian buffer areas of the MA.
- ☑ Planting and re-seeding with desirable species has been accomplished and monitored for the riparian areas being restored.

Full Completion of Wetland/Riparian Vegetation Mitigation:

- ☑ All of the fencing is installed around the (riparian areas in) MA to prevent livestock trespass.
- ☑ All tamarisk and Russian olive trees will have been removed from the riparian forest-scrub/shrub (tree and shrub) canopies.
- ☑ Reclamation has reduced weed infestations to less than 10% areal coverage through the implementation of an IVMP.
- ☑ All weed-treated areas within the MA have been re-seeded with desirable herbaceous species where herbaceous canopy cover has been reduced due to weed treatment activities.
- ☑ Areas cleared of Russian olives and tamarisks have been revegetated with native vegetation, emphasizing native cottonwood and willow species.

Wildlife Habitat and Upland Vegetation Mitigation:

For wildlife and upland vegetation mitigation, Reclamation was required to replace and enhance 2700-2900 acres. Reclamation has acquired almost 6,000 acres, seeded 200 of those acres and operated two water wells in upland areas for wildlife enhancement purposes. Reclamation has employed the IVMP for all uplands, including significant weed control efforts. Reclamation has exceeded the requirements for wildlife/upland vegetation mitigation as set forth in the FSEIS and is providing for public use where such use does not conflict with mitigation values.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Reclamation would like to thank the following individuals and companies for their outstanding contributions and efforts, without which we could not have succeeded in our mitigation requirements. These good people have worked harder and better for a good cause than others might have. These names are presented in alphabetical order.

- Ms. Peggy Bailey and Ms. Alaina Briggs and the staff of Tetra Tech, Inc., Breckenridge, CO.
- Ms. Juliann Campbell and the crew of Horizon Environmental Services, Bayfield, CO.
- Mr. Scott Dillon and Mr. Brendan Dillon and the crew of Dillon Fencing and Contracting, Naturita, CO.
- Mr. Paul Evans and Mr. Simon Martinez and the crew of the Ute Mountain Ute Farm and Ranch Enterprise, Towaoc, CO.
- Mr. Mike Fitzgerald and the staff of Ecosphere Environmental Services, Durango, CO.
- Mr. R. Joaquin Huntington and Mr. Connie Huntington, Redmesa, CO.
- Mr. Jerry Sutherlin of Cortez, CO.
- Mr. Dennis Wenger and Mr. Dale Munson of Frontier Corporation USA, Providence, UT.
- Mr. Mark Williams of T&M Enterprises, Redmesa, CO.
- Mr. Mike Williams and his family of On Site Environmental and Construction Services, Inc. of Cortez, CO.
- Mr. Don Weiscamp and Mr. Mark Ackee and the crew of Weeminuche Construction Authority of Towaoc, CO.