

RÍO PUERTO MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
CREATING A HEALTHY WATERSHED THROUGH COLLABORATION



MEMBER AGENCIES

Local
Army Corps of Engineers
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Environmental Protection Agency
Fish and Wildlife Service
Forest Service
Geological Survey
National Resources Conservation Service

Indigenous
Arizona Apache Tribe
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Indian Affairs

State of New Mexico
Department of Game and Fish
Department of Environment
New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service
State Engineer
State Highway & Transportation Department
Water Conservation District
Water Conservation District
Water Conservation District
Water Conservation District

Private
Albuquerque Wildlife Federation
Arizona Water Pipeline Association
Center for Holistic Management
Judith Coalition
Mesa Club, Rio Grande Chapter
Rio Puerco Watershed Committee
Private landowners
Public at large

Río Puerco Watershed Act of 1996

Biennial Report

Presented to
The United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
and
The United States House of Representatives Committee on Resources

By Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt
in collaboration with
The Río Puerco Management Committee

November 1998

Established November 12, 1996, through Public Law 104-535

RÍO PUERCO MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CONGRESSIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

SUMMARY:

The Río Puerco Watershed (New Mexico) contributes less than 10% of the water, but more than 70% percent of the silt to the Río Grande north of Elephant Butte Reservoir. The Río Puerco Watershed Act (November 1996) directed the BLM to establish the Río Puerco Management Committee (RPMC), a partnership consensus group charged with compiling data and developing best management practices to reduce watershed erosion, increase native vegetation, and improve riparian habitat while supporting the rural, agrarian characteristics of the drainage basin. The RPMC has developed goals for watershed restoration, on-the-ground projects, and a unique collaborative process which involves a broad-based, watershed-wide stewardship commitment. Beginning its third year, the authorized appropriations for the RPMC must be made available if the group's work is to continue.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The New Mexico Environment Department has classified the Río Puerco as an impaired watershed, primarily because of the high levels of sedimentation it deposits in the Río Grande.
- As mandated in the Río Puerco Watershed Act, the BLM Albuquerque District/Field Office first convened the RPMC in February 1997. Current membership includes state, federal and tribal agencies, soil and water conservation districts, residents from the rural communities in the watershed, environmental and conservation groups, and the public-at-large. Members have shown outstanding interest in and commitment to this new way of doing business.
- The RPMC recently received the 1998 Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Excellence Award in the area of non-point source pollution.
- The RPMC has developed consensus-based goals for a healthy watershed. In June 1998, the Management Committee approved six on-the-ground and research project proposals based on watershed-wide best management practices. Scheduled for implementation in FY99, those projects address non-point source pollution, riparian enhancement, biologic diversity, environmental education and rural economic development.