

River Management Alternatives for the Rio Grande Canalization Project

United States Section,
International Boundary and Water Commission

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River Management Alternatives EIS

- 1999 –2001 Public Scoping and Consultation
- December 2003 Draft EIS released for public comment
- July 2004 Final EIS released and approved by EPA
- August 2004 Record of Decision expected
- Governor Richardson, Senators Bingamon and Domenici, and Key Stakeholders request delay in signing the ROD

EIS Alternatives

- Canalization Project EIS evaluated long-term River Management Alternatives:
 - No Action
 - Flood Control Improvement
 - Integrated Land Management
 - Targeted River Restoration
- Goal to accomplish flood control, water delivery, O&M activities in a manner that would enhance or restore the river ecosystem

Record of Decision

- Commissioner Bill Ruth signed Record of Decision June 4, 2009
- Worked with Key Stakeholders: Irrigation Districts, Environmental Groups, and Local Community Leaders to take a hard look at the preferred alternative
- Continue work with EBID to complete a Water Rights Framework in New Mexico

Integrated Land Management Alternative

- Retains O&M activities for flood protection and efficient water delivery
- Modify grazing lease program to improve erosion control
- Recreational use of project considered under cooperative agreements
- Partial changes in floodplain maintenance
 - Measures within USIBWC ROW
 - Develop riparian corridor for bank stabilization, flood attenuation, reduce erosion
 - Stream bank reconfiguration for over bank flows

Major Issues Addressed in ROD

- Water delivery and flood control are the core mission of the Project.
 - Enhance river ecosystem health without impacting the mission
- Water Use
 - Restoration measures consider water depletions (evapo-transpiration, infiltration, floodplain storage losses)
 - Environmental water could be leased or acquired through cooperative water transactions program with EBID, EP #1 and willing water rights holders

Major Issues Addressed in ROD

- Maintaining Farmland in Production
 - Nearly all measures under consideration will be conducted in non-Ag lands maintained by USIBWC
- Environmental Improvements
 - Conceptual Plan for 30 sites (includes mosaic of aquatic habitat, riparian, woodland and grassland communities)
 - Conceptual Plan serves as template and does not preclude other restoration opportunities
 - www.ibwc.state.gov/Organization/Environmental/canalization_eis.html

Major Issues Addressed in ROD

- Endangered Species Act Liability
 - Coordinate with USFWS to utilize Safe Harbor Agreement concept
- Channel Maintenance
 - Update the 2004 River Management Plan
 - Establish a data collection and monitoring program “science based approach” to evaluating channel maintenance needs

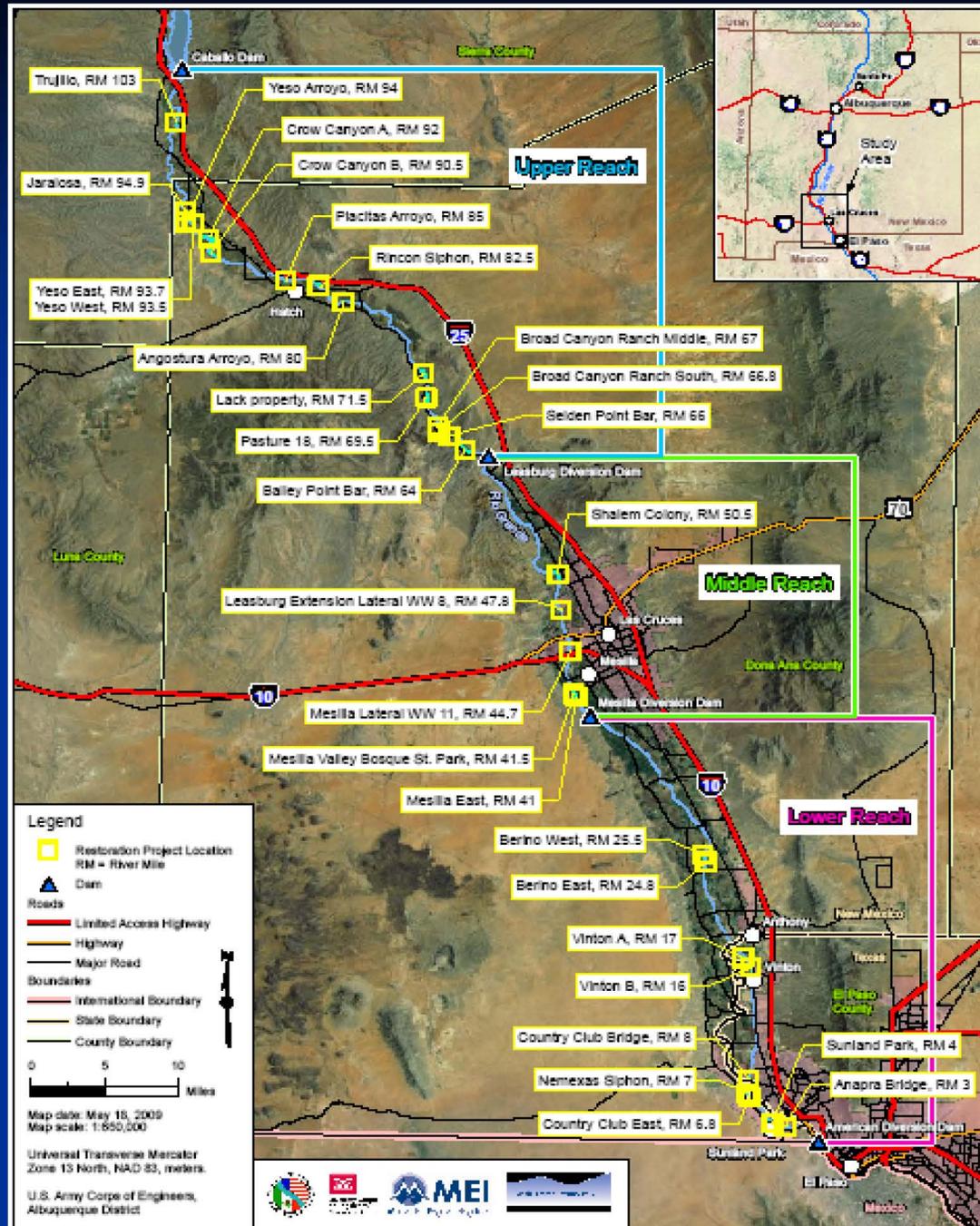
Major Issues Addressed in ROD

- Floodway Vegetative Management
 - Three “green zones” in SWEC MOU are made permanent
 - Salt cedar and Russian thistle management
 - Potential to develop study sites for modified grassland management

Vegetation Management has to consider impacts to flood control and water usage

Conceptual Restoration Plan

- 3 Technical Workshops conducted
- Corps developed conceptual designs for 30 restoration sites
- Determined overbank areas along river reach
- Considered impacts to flooding and irrigation releases
- Estimated water usage
- Calculated implementation costs



Implementation

- USIBWC conducts Technical Workshops
 - Trail Issues
 - Maintenance
 - Restoration
 - Vegetation Management
- Potential for Partnerships

Implementation

- 10-year implementation period
 - Phase 1 – Year 1-5 studies and pilot projects
 - Phase 2 – Year 6-10 complete implementation
- Grazing Leases – Phased out
- Adaptive Management will guide the implementation of environmental measures

Site No.	Site Name	River Mile and Bank	Acres	Riverine Features	Target Riparian habitat(s)	ET diff. (ac-ft/yr)	Discontinue Mowing (acres)	Ownership / Management	State	Restoration Cost
8	Placitas Arroyo	85 W	21.8	Arroyo mouth mgmnt.	Aquatic Habitat	-14.0	(Not mowed currently)	USIBWC	NM	\$4,010
17	Shalem Colony	50.5 E	14.2		Screwbean mesquite & riparian grassland	5.0	9.2	USIBWC	NM	\$5,000
10	Angostura Arroyo	80 W	15.4	Arroyo mouth mgmnt.	Aquatic Habitat	-16.9	(Not mowed currently)	USIBWC	NM	\$5,100
3	Yeso Arroyo	94 W	10.6	Arroyo mouth mgmnt.	Aquatic Habitat	-26.5	(Not mowed currently)	USIBWC	NM	\$5,165
5	Yeso West	93.5 W	2.5	Inset floodplain	Aquatic Habitat	-6.3	(Not mowed currently)	USIBWC	NM	\$12,260
30	Anapra Bridge	3 E	11.0		Open riparian woodland	5.5	11.0	USIBWC	NM	\$35,050

Other Issues to Balance

- Levee rehabilitation- Meet FEMA certification
- Invasive species control – salt cedar
- Water quality monitoring – TMDL's
- Water deliveries and water accounting

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www.ibwc.gov

Conceptual Restoration Plan:

www.ibwc.gov/Organization/Environmental/canalization_eis.html

Record of Decision:

www.ibwc.gov/Files/ROD_River_Mgnt_Alt_RGCP.pdf