



MRGCD Bosque

OVERVIEW

As river flows have diminished in recent decades, the Bosque has experienced an increase in vegetation density, often comprised of dead wood and invasive woody species such as salt cedar, Russian olive, and Siberian elm. With water supplies becoming more variable, the problem is growing and leading to increased fire hazards and a flood plain that is essentially locked in place and no longer dynamic. The Bosque is an important wildlife corridor supporting hundreds of species that when combined with the native vegetation, create a peaceful and beneficial recreational hub for our community.

MRGCD is committed to taking the lead on managing the land in a way that decreases fire danger, reduces unwanted evapotranspiration, and increases the community connection through safer spaces for all to enjoy. Sustained funding will allow for the continued treatment and maintenance required for this system to thrive for generations to come.

Recover after the Big Hole Fire in Belen



The 2022 Big Hole Fire in Belen NM burned 904 acres of Bosque habitat. The southeast side of the river has received restoration treatments that include dead tree removal, chipping, and herbicide application to invasive resprout.



Both left and right images show the beneficial effects of continuous treatment on a compromised landscape. Native Cottonwood, Coyote willow, New Mexico olive, and grasses have returned and are thriving three years after the fire.



Dense Salt cedar stand in Socorro County. The root system is tapped into the water table, increasing water usage in the Bosque. The density also contributes to risk of catastrophic fire events.



Forestry contractor use heavy machinery to extract salt cedar, reducing the use of herbicide. Restoration to native, more water conscious vegetation will begin when area has been cleared out.



Hand crews work to cut and treat invasive species while protecting established native grasses.



Bosque in Los Lunas that has been treated for invasives, allowing native meadow habitat to establish. Water usage and fire risk are greatly reduced in a healthy system.

Funding & Support

Guiding the Bosque to a healthy, fire resilient community, that also reduces depletions, is possible with consistent invasive treatment and native species revegetation. Currently, the limiting factor is available funding to keep work going season after season to establish long-term benefits. As climate pressures increase, it is imperative that we protect the Middle Rio Grande Valley and its priceless resources.