



Benefits of wetlands

Wetlands and riparian areas constitute a small percentage of land in the arid southwest. Therefore, they are critically important to both humans and wildlife. Wetlands in healthy condition generally have lush vegetation and a food base to support a wide diversity of wildlife, including threatened and endangered species.

Many species depend on wetlands for all or part of their life cycles. For example, riparian zones are particularly important in the southwestern United States, where approximately 77% of 166 nesting bird species are associated with riparian habitat, and 50% of nesting bird species are completely dependent on riparian ecosystems.

Recreational activities, including hiking, biking, fishing, rafting, kayaking, and canoeing, are also enhanced by healthy riparian areas. Protection and appropriate management will allow our wetland and riparian ecosystems to function properly, protect our native wildlife, and elevate the enjoyment level of recreation.

Wetlands can also contribute to ground water recharge, store large amounts of water during storms and spring runoff, and release the water slowly back into channels or ground water.

For wildlife, wetlands

- provide water, food, cover, and shelter from extreme weather
- provide nesting sites for birds
- provide cool, clean water and critical habitat for fish and amphibians
- support biological diversity



For livestock, healthy riparian areas provide water, forage, shade, and excellent hay crops in wet meadows.

For humans, healthy wetlands and riparian areas provide

- many and varied recreational activities, including hunting and fishing
- wildlife viewing
- shade and cooler temperatures
- reduced flood risks
- improved water quality through physical, chemical and biological cleansing
- educational and scientific research opportunities
- open space

Riparian and wetland vegetation

- provides high water quality
- reduces erosion
- acts as a sponge to hold water in the stream bank and increases the amount of water available for Irrigation
- reduces risks of flash floods
- reduces non-point source pollution
- is a critical component of the aquatic food web
- provides corridors for immigration, emigration, and migration of wildlife

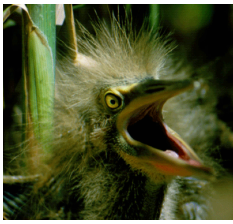


Serving Southwest Colorado since 2001



The Southwest Wetland Focus Area Committee is a non-regulatory, not-for-profit partnership of voluntary and diverse participants sharing the goal of healthy wetlands.

www.swcoloradowetlands.org



Mission Statement

The Southwest Wetland Focus Area Committee works with partners to restore, enhance, and protect wetlands, riparian areas, and associated uplands and to promote the values of functional resilient wetlands and riparian areas through education and outreach.

Implementing plans at a local level:

- Colorado Wetland Wildlife Conservation Program
- Intermountain West Joint Venture
- North American Bird Conservation Initiative
- North American Waterbird Conservation Plan
- North American Waterfowl Management Plan



Assisting the community with wetland improvement projects

Contact Information

See our website for up-to-date contacts

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Our overarching goals

1. Conservation of wetlands and riparian areas

Assist landowners and managers of public and tribal lands in restoration and enhancement of wetlands and riparian areas to improve and/or maintain biodiversity, water quality, and native habitat for wetland-dependent wildlife that will be resilient through environmental change over time.

2. Education and outreach

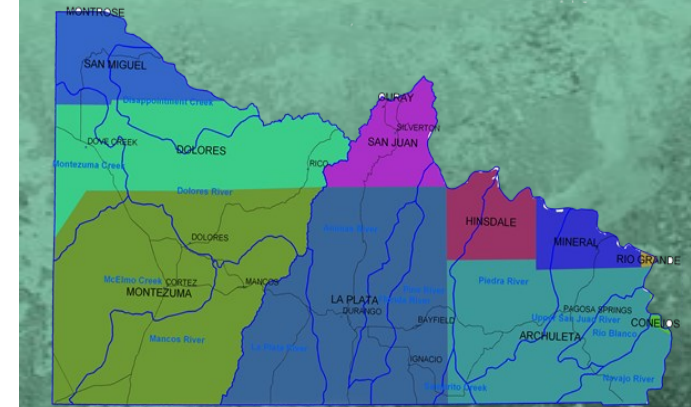
Provide education and outreach that will facilitate our efforts in conservation of wetlands and riparian areas. This may include landowners/managers, K-12 and college students, professionals in the wetland business, and the general public.



What is a Wetland Focus Area?

Role of Wetland Focus Area Committees to Colorado Wetland Wildlife Conservation Program:

- Generate projects and prioritize funding proposals
- Provide local knowledge of wetlands
- Arrange site visits
- Community education and outreach
- Provide forum for discussions
- Support wetland conservation partnerships
- Assist communities with wetland conservation



More resources for landowners and land managers can be found on our website.

- Links to useful resources for landowners and land managers
 - ⇒ Agencies and organizations
 - ⇒ Handbooks and guidelines
 - ⇒ Videos of restoration techniques
 - ⇒ Funding opportunities
 - ⇒ Mitigation banking
- Wetland species fact sheets and scorecards
- Land conservancies
- News and events

