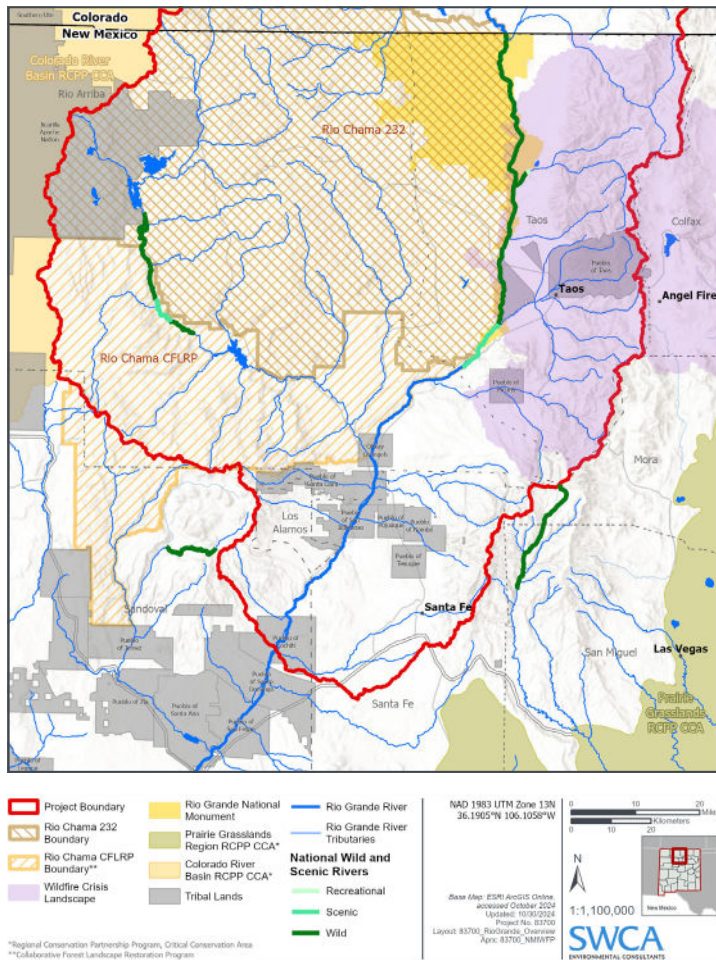


# RIBBONS OF LIFE: UPPER RIO GRANDE BASIN RIPARIAN CONSERVATION, RESTORATION, AND WATERSHED HEALTH INITIATIVE INTEGRATED WATER FINANCING PLAN

## THE NEED...

The Upper Rio Grande (URG) basin is the headwaters of the Rio Grande, providing drinking water to local communities and supporting critical forest, riparian, and freshwater habitats. Riparian areas in the URG basin (>2,000 stream miles) are one of the most threatened ecosystems in the Southwest due to drying, sedimentation from higher intensity wildfire and floods, and habitat loss. For the purposes of the Integrated Water Financing Plan, we are focused on acreage within NM.



## ENHANCED WATERSHED HEALTH IN THE UPPER RIO GRANDE BASIN IS NEEDED FOR:

- Ecological resilience and habitat connectivity
- Preserving healthy headwaters
- Reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire
- Protecting critical community water supplies

More information available at: [nwf.org/ribbons-of-life](http://nwf.org/ribbons-of-life)

## PROMISING FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

Federal Program Nexus	Applicability	Potential Funding
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (USBR)	Supports watershed coalition building and planning for restoration implementation.	\$300,000
Collaborative Capacity Program for Forests and Communities (USFS, NFF)	Collaboration to support long-term strategy for achieving stewardship outcomes benefiting National Forest lands.	\$150,000
WaterSMART Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program (USBR)	Design and on-the-ground implementation for restoration of aquatic habitat.	Design up to \$2,000,000; construction up to \$20,000,000
WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Projects (USBR)	Collaborative ecological value or watershed health projects that increase water savings.	Up to \$5 million for a watershed group.
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (FEMA)	On-the-ground projects, plans, and/or partnership building.	Wide range; could be multiple millions.
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (FEMA)	On-the-ground projects and plans.	Wide range; could be multiple millions.
Landowner Cost Share Payment Programs for Climate Mitigation and/or Forest Resilience Practices (USFS)	Collaboration to support long-term strategy for achieving stewardship outcomes benefiting National Forest lands.	\$10,000 to \$150,000

## FUNDING NEEDS

**\$9,132,800**

Strengthen coalition of partners and fund identified on-the-ground projects including stream restoration, fish passage, and noxious weed management.

**SIGNIFICANT NEED FOR ON-THE-GROUND PROJECTS NOT YET QUANTIFIED.**

## IMMEDIATE FUNDING NEXT STEPS\*

- 1** Secure funding for coalition capacity and support through applications to WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (USBR) and/or Collaborative Capacity Program for Forests and Communities (USFS, National Forest Foundation).  
**Lead: National Wildlife Federation. Target date: Jan 2025**
- 2** Apply for WaterSMART funding through Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Program and Environmental Water Resources Program.  
**Lead entity: Coalition partners TBD. Target date: Jan 28, 2025 for AERP and Mar 11, 2025 for EWRP**
- 3** Apply for Building Resilience Infrastructure and Communities program funding (FEMA) to support on-the-ground projects and/or partnership building.  
**Lead entity: Coalition partners TBD. Target date: Feb 2025**
- 4** Apply for Landowner Cost Share Payment Programs for Climate Mitigation and/or Forest Resilience Practices to support on-the-ground projects.  
**Lead entity: Coalition partners TBD. Target date: 2025 cycle deadline, once available.**

## PLANNING AND POLICY ACTIONS\*

- Request National Water Quality Initiative designation from NRCS.  
**Lead entity: NMED.**
- Prepare and submit Regional Conservation Partnership Program application to NRCS for multiple-state or non-Critical Conservation Area project.  
**Lead entity: Coalition partners TBD.**
- Increase legislative appropriations to secure state match for federal grants through the NM Match Fund and the River Stewardship Program.  
**Lead entity: Coalition partners TBD. Target date: Legislative session 2025**
- Update Ribbons of Life Action Plan to include alignment of individual on-the-ground project needs with recurring funding opportunities.  
**Lead entity: National Wildlife Federation. Target date: Annually (on-going)**
- Pursue designation of federal funding explicitly for the Rio Grande Basin.

\*Note: To be vetted with Coalition partners.

## KEY PARTNERS

### RIBBONS OF LIFE COALITION

- National Wildlife Federation
- Multiple Pueblos
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- Amigos Bravos
- New Mexico Wildlife Federation

- Trout Unlimited
- Forest Stewards Guild
- Rio Grande Return
- And many others!

### STATE

- New Mexico Forestry Division
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- New Mexico Office of the State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission
- Natural Heritage New Mexico (UNM)
- New Mexico Environment Department, Watershed Protection Program

### FEDERAL

- Bureau of Land Management
- USDA – Forest Service
- USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Federal Emergency Management Agency

## FUTURE STEPS

- 1. Build and sustain local capacity and critical resources that will accelerate the rate of riparian restoration work.**
- 2. Collaborate with and support the nine Pueblos and the Jicarilla Apache Nation.**
- 3. Cultivate and advance new projects that are ready for application submittal as funding opportunities arise.**