

**DECISION RECORD**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**  
**DOI-BLM-NM-F020-2010-0011-EA**

**Ojo Sarco Aquatic, Wetland and Riparian Habitat  
Stabilization and Enhancement**

**Decision:**

It is my decision to implement Alternative A: Proposed Action as presented and analyzed in environmental assessment DOI-BLM-NM-F020-2010-0011-EA. The selected alternative is to implement engineering controls combined with native plant revegetation of the riparian zone of BLM managed segments of the Cañada de Ojo Sarco floodplain between Upper Cañoncito and Ojo Sarco in Rio Arriba County, NM. Engineering controls would include structures and earthworks that keep the channel from incising below its current elevation, and regrading of the channel to increase sinuosity through the floodplain. Specific designs are shown in Appendix A of the document. The BLM will implement the project internally or contract with a construction company. The project would start when funds becomes available (fiscal year 2010 or 11) and would be completed in phases over numerous years.

The proposed action described in DOI-BLM-NM-F020-2010-0011-EA included elements designed to mitigate impacts:

1. All project areas would be replanted or reseeded with native vegetation to assist with recovery and stabilization, as well was to increase habitat and suppress weeds.
2. All vehicles entering the site will be pressure washed prior to entry with inspection required.
3. Weed species found in the project area will be removed as per the Taos BLM programmatic plan, currently under preparation. If that plan remains incomplete and this project is ready, weeds would be removed in the project areas mechanically.
4. If implementation is scheduled during the breeding bird season (mid-March through mid-September), a qualified wildlife biologist would conduct a nest search in the project area where activity is to occur (up to a minimum of 200 feet on either side of the stream). If an active nest is located, the nest site (ground, tree or shrub) would be left undisturbed, including a 100 foot circular buffer zone around the nest, until the end of the current breeding bird season.
5. Changes within the scope of the original analysis that improve action success may be adopted without re-analysis. This adaptive management process would entail completion of a phase of rehabilitation followed by assessment of success of the activities through at least one season of high flows.
6. The BLM will work with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) to move fish from adjacent tributaries or stock hatchery reared fish. Only native species known to occur in the area would be considered for stocking.
7. The BLM, in cooperation with NMDGF, would actively remove exotic fish species from the Cañada de Ojo Sarco.
8. Prior to any activity occurring, the BLM will consult with the Army Corps of Engineers and New Mexico Environment Department regarding permits required under the Clean Water Act.
9. Monitoring may include the following:

<u>Desired outcome</u>	<u>Monitoring method</u>	<u>Protocol Schedule</u>
Increase riparian canopy	Densimeter readings	Before and After implementation
Increase pool size and number	Fish Habitat Protocol	Before and After implementation
Attain Proper Functioning Condition	PFC assessment	Before and After implementation

**Compliance:**

Based on the analyses described in DOI-BLM-NM-F020-2010-0011-EA, this project complies with federal laws including the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and other laws that apply to BLM activities. The action is in conformance with the Taos Resource Management Plan (1988) and the Riparian and Aquatic Habitat Management Plan (2000). A Finding of No Significant Impact has been prepared and signed prior to this decision being signed.

**Public Participation:**

The Taos Field Office (TAFO) staff was notified via internal scoping of the proposed project. All specialists were allowed to review the proposed action and comments were incorporated.

The TAFO held 2 scoping meetings in the community of Dixon concerning projects identified for the Cañada de Ojo Sarco. The first meeting was on 10 April 2006 and the public was asked generally about their opinion of protecting and rehabilitating the drainage. Another meeting specific to this project was held on 24 September 2009 and outlined the plans as developed by the BLM consultant. No substantive comments were received from the public during the development of the proposed action.

The TAFO provided a 30 day public comment period for DOI-BLM-NM-F020-2010-0011-EA and unsigned FONSI starting on 2 August 2010. No comments were received during this period.

**Rationale:**

Implementation of the proposed action from DOI-BLM-NM-F020-2010-0011-EA will meet the purpose and need identified – stabilizing the Cañada de Ojo Sarco channel and increasing riparian and aquatic habitat area and quality. Improving riparian and aquatic habitat condition is consistent with BLM guidance and standards. Lack of implementation will result in continued incision of the active channel during high flow flood events. Incision results in channel instability that inhibits full development of riparian and aquatic habitat or results in poor quality habitat. Thus, lack of implementation would likely result in the TAFO not being able to meet BLM standards for riparian condition.

s/ Sam Desgeorges

9/16/2010

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Field Office Manager

Date