



San Luis Valley Habitat Conservation Plan

2024 New Year!



Overview of Mitigation

Mitigation and monitoring of impact on riparian habitat resulting from activities covered by the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) are essential. To fulfill this obligation, the district collaborated with landowners to enroll mitigation sites on private lands through voluntary, cooperative agreements. These agreements enable the inclusion of a specific property in the HCP Mitigation Program, granting mitigation credits quantified in acres. These credits play a crucial role in counterbalancing all habitat impacts arising from covered activities within the San Luis Valley.

Land eligibility for enrollment in the mitigation program is contingent on the presence of high-quality riparian habitat and protection through a conservation easement, management agreement, or a similar mechanism ensuring habitat conservation. Participants in the mitigation program commit to maintain established land management practices and permitting routine habitat monitoring.

WHAT'S COMING IN 2024

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is almost FULL!

The upcoming steering committee meeting will take place on **Earth Day, April 22nd, at 1:30 PM**. The meeting will take place at the Rio Grande Water Conservation District and will also be accessible via Zoom.

Adding new property to the HCP.

What's been going on?

The upcoming Steering Committee meeting has been rescheduled to coincide with Earth Day on April 22nd at 1:30 PM. The meeting will take place at the Rio Grande Water Conservation District and will also be accessible via Zoom. Join us in celebrating Earth Day by attending the HCP meeting. The meetings in April and November typically occur on the second Monday of each month. This change was prompted by the Solar Eclipse, serving as a reminder to prepare your solar-viewing glasses. We apologize for any inconvenience but are excited about this opportunity.

Anticipated agenda items for the upcoming meeting include the welcoming of new steering committee members, discussions on the HCP impact protocol, and the determination of HCP coverage. Furthermore, our objective is to harmonize perspectives as we progress. It is imperative to underscore that there is absolutely no room for hate; it is a non-negotiable principle. Henceforth, let us stand together, resolute in our rejection of hate, and work in synergy towards cultivating a world defined by compassion and inclusivity.



New HCP Coordinator



Greetings! I'm Crystal Benavidez, and I'm thrilled to serve as the new HCP Coordinator for the Rio Grande Water Conservation District. From the outset, I've been deeply engaged in my fieldwork. One of the highlights of my journey was participating in the YBCU Advanced Field Camp (affectionately known as *Cuckoo Camp*), a cherished opportunity for me.

My focus for the upcoming year is to enhance awareness and expand outreach initiatives. Recently, I actively participated in both the Agricultural Conference and Crane Festival, where I distributed stickers and wildflower seeds and engaged in meaningful discussions about the HCP.

Future endeavors include collaborating with college students to create origami birds and sparking dialogues with children about birds and their habitats. Through these initiatives, we aim to deepen their connection to the natural world. Stay tuned for more exciting initiatives!

Silverspot Butterfly



Meet the enchanting *Speyeria nokomis nokomis*, affectionately known as the Silverspot butterfly, gracefully fluttering through its pristine abode in wet meadows, springs, seep areas and occurs in the SLV. But alas, this ethereal creature finds itself listed as threatened under the protective embrace of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). As we commemorate the golden jubilee of the ESA's inception in 1973, let us revel in its super heroic feats, swooping in like a majestic cape to safeguard not only our winged companions but a myriad of endangered species, ensuring their habitats remain havens of safety and serenity. The Silverspot butterfly is not part of the HCP but please be mindful of impacts to its habitat.