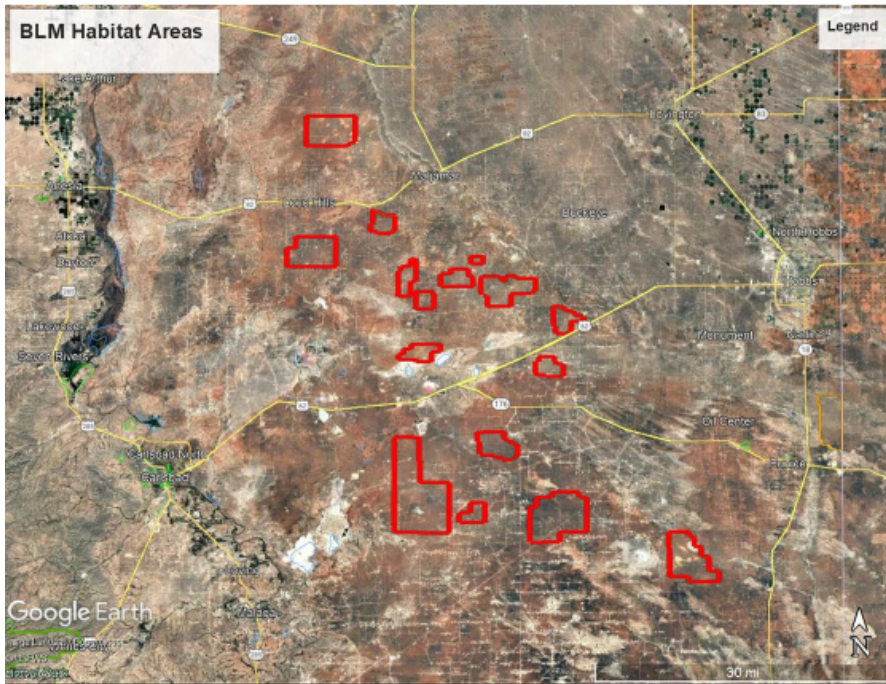




Project Contacts:

BLM - Carlsbad
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NMDGF - Roswell
Alexander McCarty
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Aerial Mesquite Treatment Habitat Improvement Project



- Scattered throughout the eastern side of the state near the Carlsbad field office (CFO) is 115,000 acres of managed wildlife habitat known as Habitat Areas (HAs). These consist of shinnery oak/sand sage dune complexes and are critical wildlife habitat within the area. These areas are beneficial to many game and non-game species including upland birds and pronghorn.
- In these HAs factors such as climate change and land use disturbances have caused mesquite to encroach, leading to habitat degradation. The objective of this project is to improve the sand-shinnery/ grassland habitat within these areas and enhance understory forage conditions
- The project area has some overlap with the Mescalero Sands Conservation Opportunity Area identified in New Mexico's State Wildlife Action Plan
- This work has been implemented on neighboring areas previously and is the first step in a BLM landscape scale initiative.

Proposed Management Action

- HSP funds will be utilized for the aerial application of herbicide on the areas, and leftover or extra funds can be used for mastication of brush across the areas identified.
- Following this implementation, the BLM Carlsbad FO will enter into a monitoring phase to evaluate the efficacy of this landscape restoration effort and adjust land management decisions in response to those monitoring reports.

• [Google Earth Link:](#)

[BLM CFO Lesser Prairie-Chicken / Habitat Areas - Google Earth](#)

<https://nmswap.org/conservation-opportunity-areas/mescalero-sands>

Estimated Budget : \$150,000

BLM Aerial Mesquite Treatment Carlsbad Field Office

BLM/NMDGF Habitat Improvement Project





Project Contacts :

NMDGF – Alexander McCarty
Alexander.mccarty@dgf.nm.gov



Picture 1: Area surrounding habitat areas expressing woody cover encroachment

Carlsbad BLM – Cassandra Aguillard
caguillard@blm.gov

CHALLENGE?

Mesquite encroachment within declining sand-shinnery oak / grassland habitats in Southeast New Mexico

GOAL?

Restore shinnery oak habitats through aerial pesticide application of mesquite to improve abundance and diversity of forbs and grasses in the understory for pronghorn and other wildlife species utilizing this important habitat type



Background & History

- Scattered throughout the eastern side of the state near the Carlsbad field office (CFO) is 115,000 acres of managed wildlife habitat known as Habitat Areas (HAs).
 - The project area has some overlap with the Mescalero Sands Conservation Opportunity Area identified in New Mexico's State Wildlife Action Plan
- These areas consist of shinnery oak/sand sage dune complexes and are critical wildlife habitat within the area.
- These areas are beneficial to many game and non- game species including upland birds, SGCN species and pronghorn antelope.



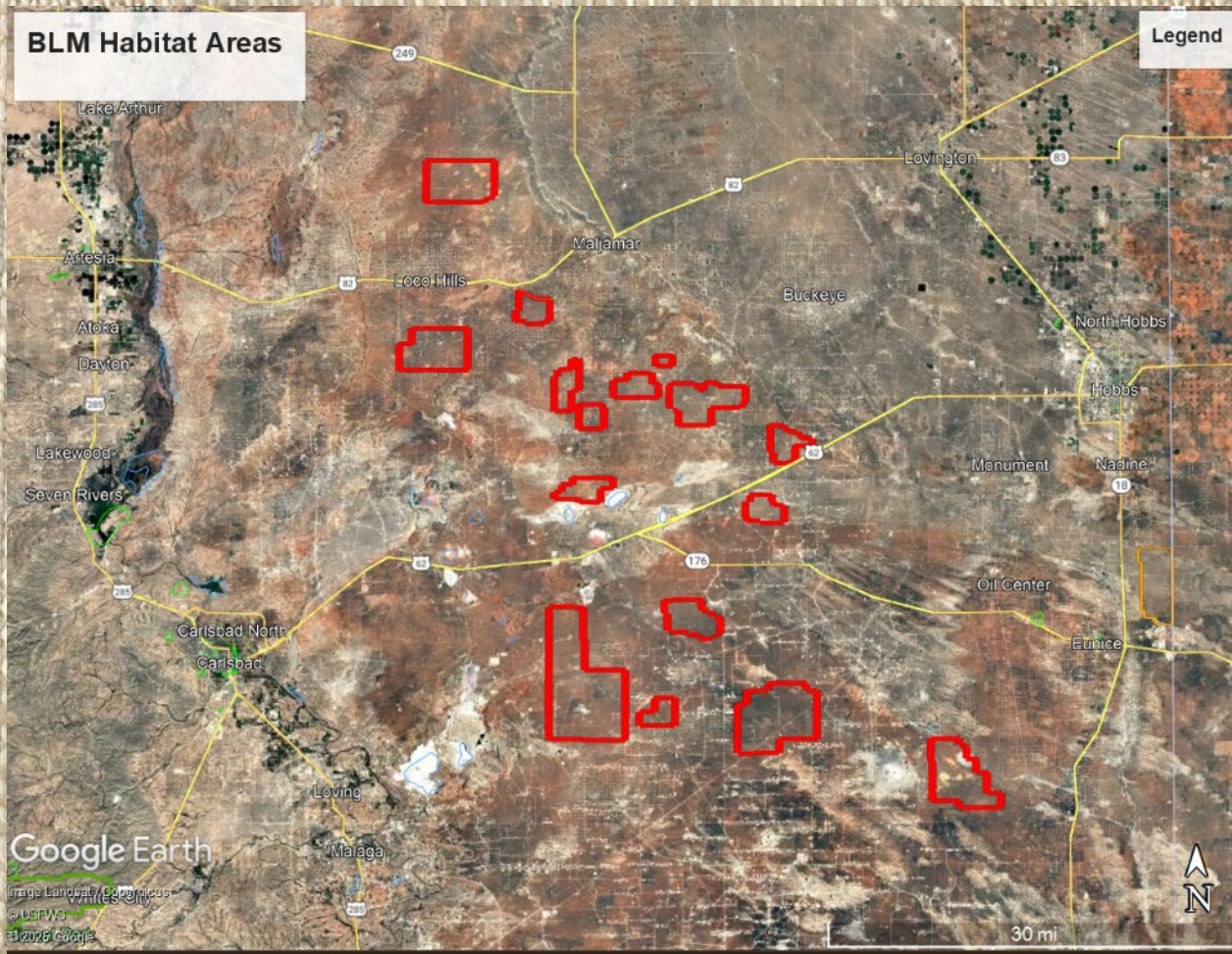


Figure 1: satellite imagery of Habitat Areas outlined in red

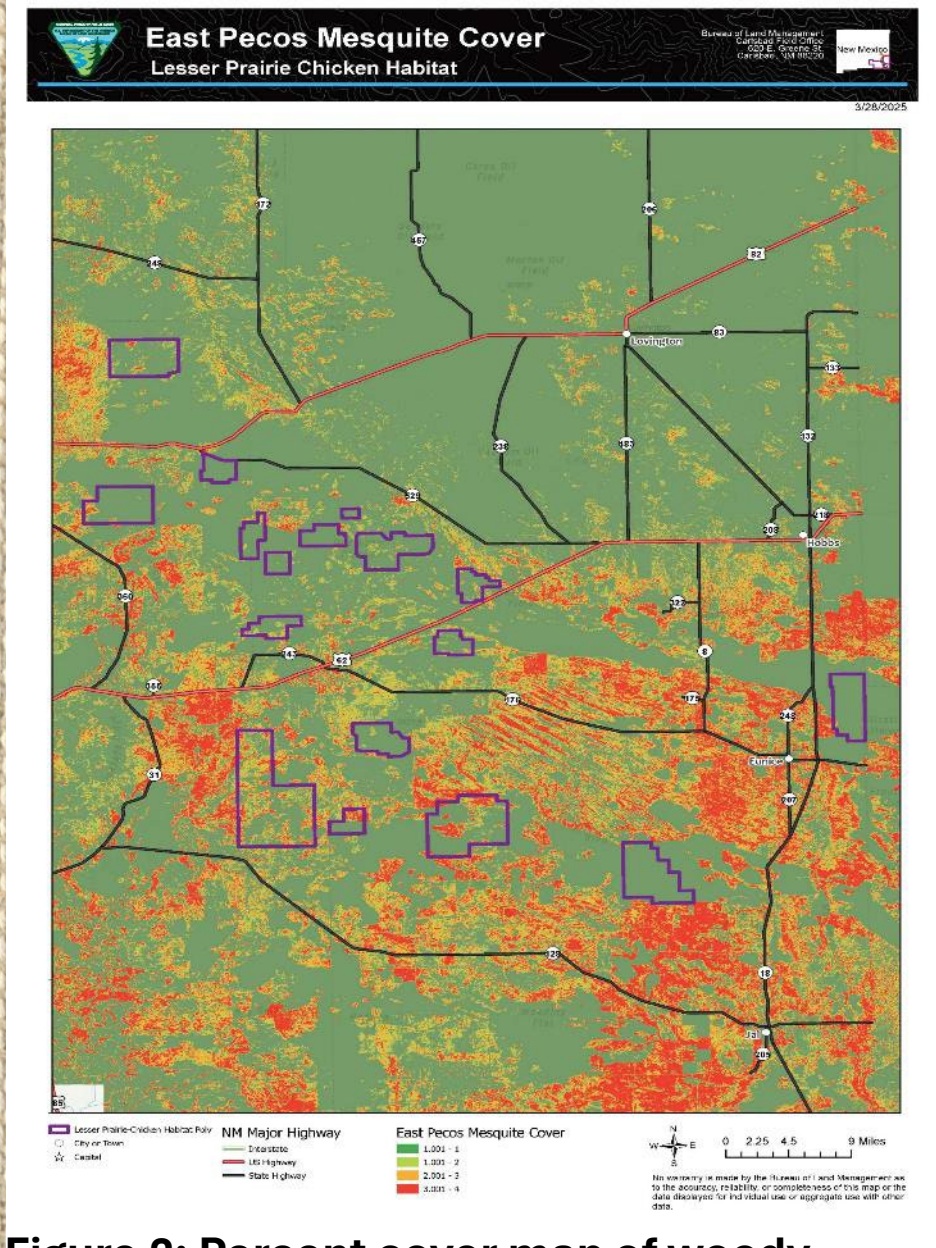


Figure 2: Percent cover map of woody encroachment on habitat areas

This project is the beginning of a broader BLM landscape initiative and borders areas previously treated in the same manner with success.

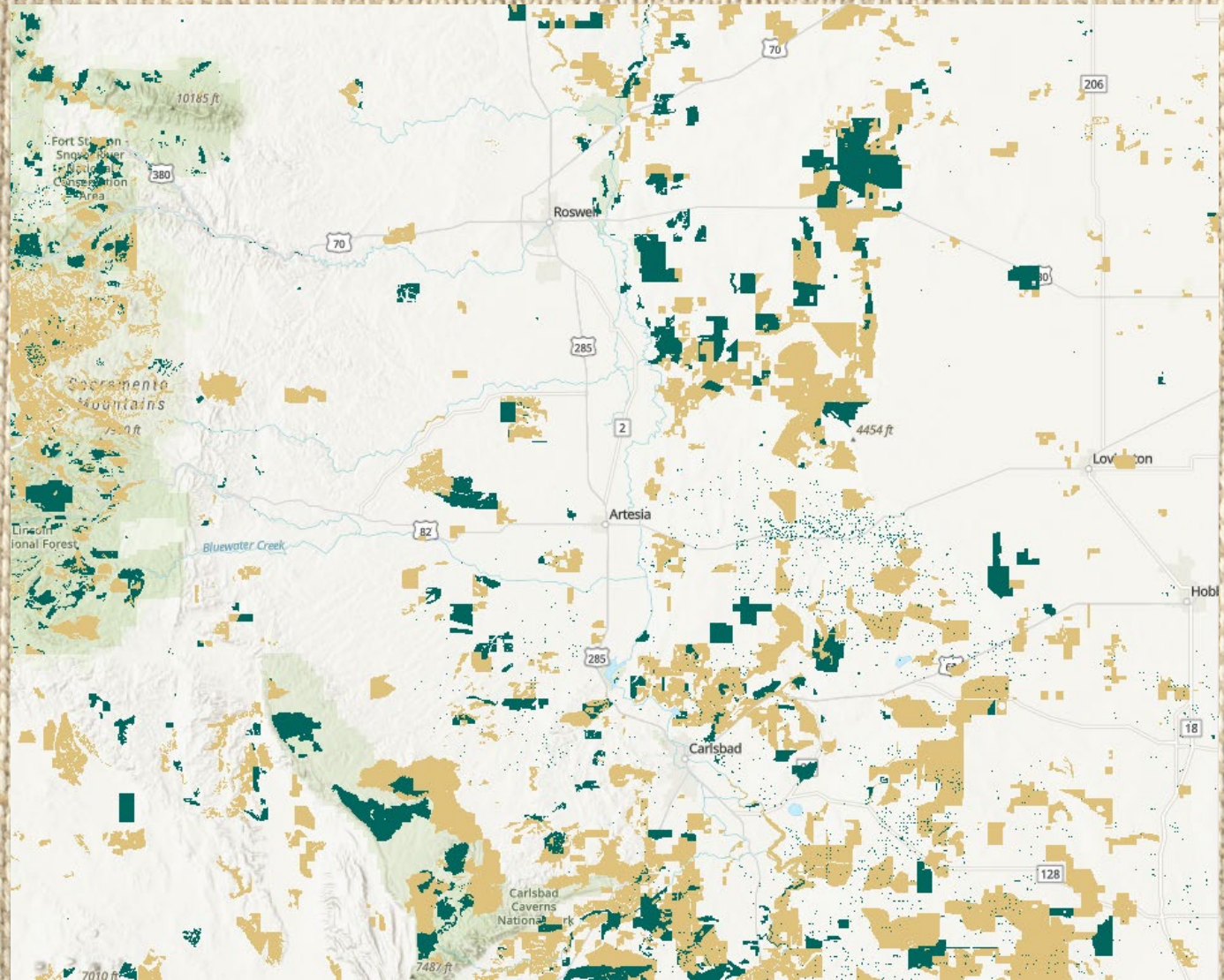


Figure 3: Historical and completed brush treatments surrounding proposed Habitat areas (Dark green - treated vegetation, yellow – historical treatments)

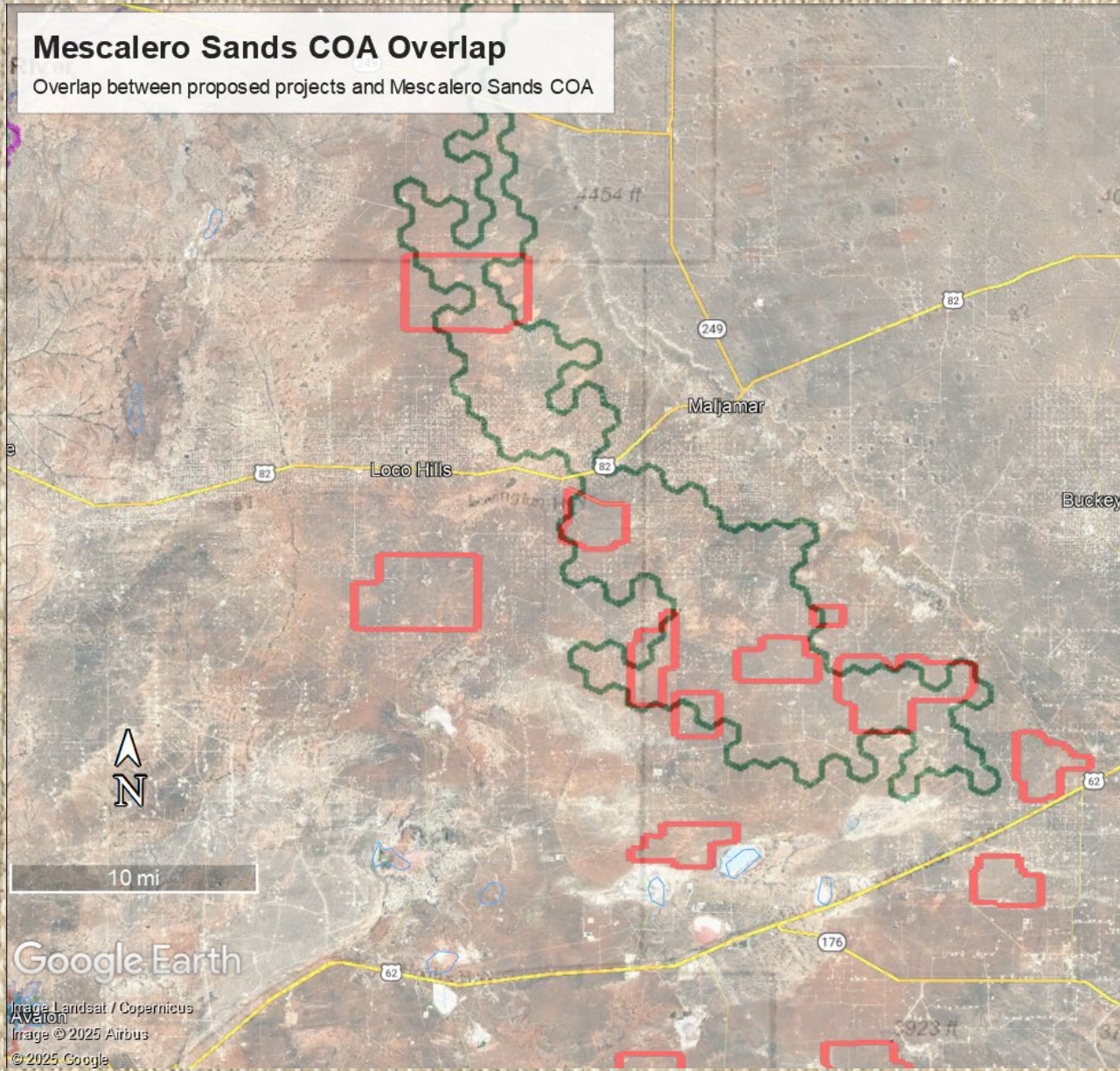


Figure 4: overlay map of Mescalero sands and proposed treatment areas

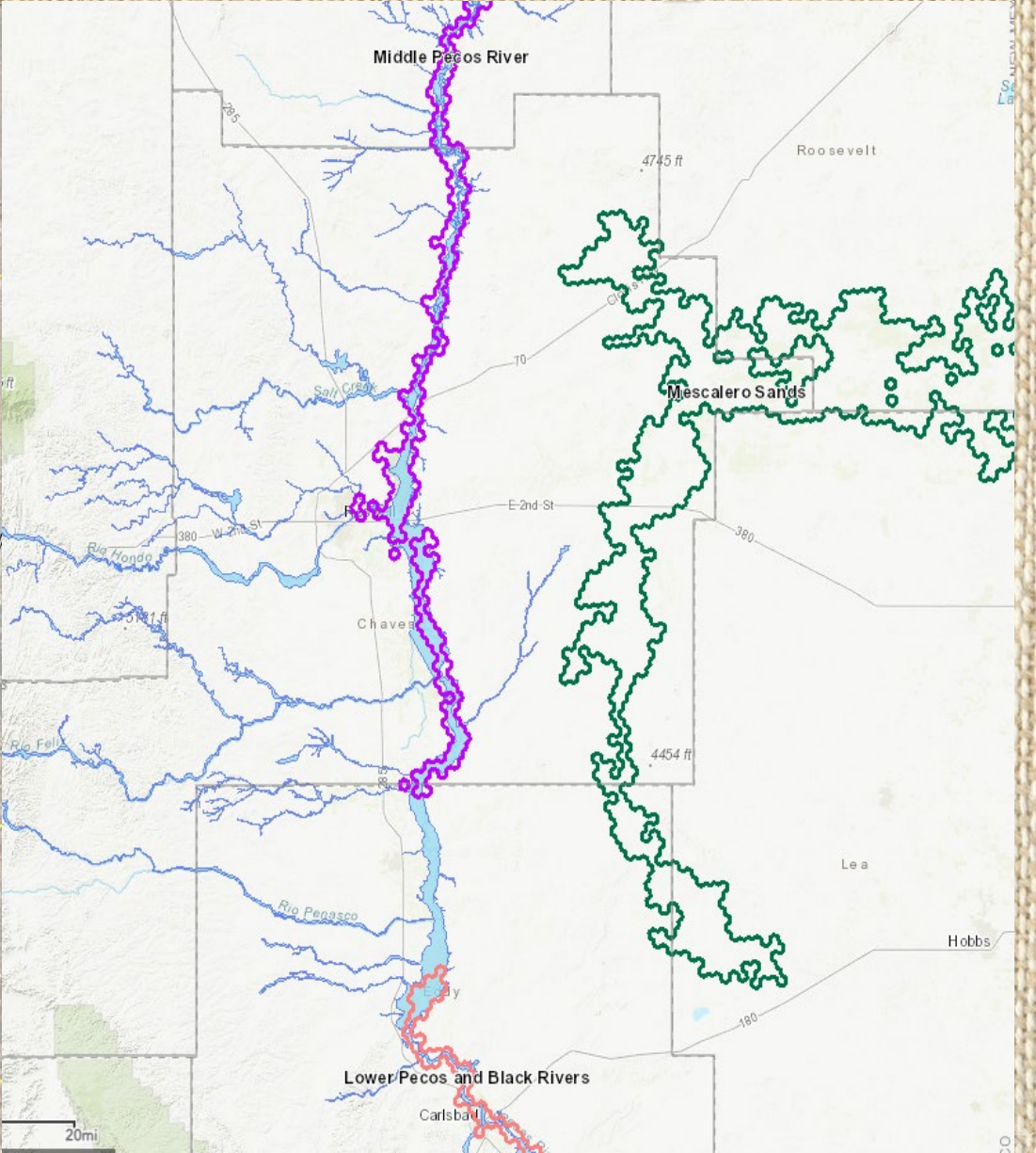


Figure 5: Map of the Mescalero Sands COA with middle and lower Pecos COA's

Proposed Management Actions

The NMDGF, in collaboration with the BLM Carlsbad field office, will contract the aerial application of herbicide project across 16 habitat areas.

- Following treatment, a grazing rest period will be implemented to allow for grassland revival
- HSP funds will be utilized for the aerial application of herbicide on the areas



Photo credit: CK2AZ, inaturalist

Total Cost & Monitoring Plan

The Habitat Areas are monitored by the BLM staff, including Range, Wildlife, Hydrologists and other specialists.

- As this project is completed, the BLM Carlsbad FO will enter a monitoring phase for contracted aerial application work on the HAs to ensure satisfactory outcomes across the treated areas.
- Following this implementation, the BLM Carlsbad FO will enter into a monitoring phase to evaluate the efficacy of this landscape restoration effort and adjust land management decisions in response to those monitoring reports.

Total Cost Estimate : \$150,000

Calculated total cost is based on cumulative treated acres and estimated cost per acre for application.

BLM Aerial Mesquite Treatment Habitat Improvement Project

Project Name:

Project relation to CAC advice or priorities:

This project benefits pronghorn, and other non-game species across 115,000 acres of managed habitat in the southeast region of the state and overlaps areas of the Mescalero Sands Conservation Opportunity Area.

Project Specific Details:

This project will consist of an aerial herbicide application across 16 BLM habitat areas constituting 115,000 acres of habitat near Carlsbad and Hobbs. With the goal to control woody encroachment in shinnery oak/grassland habitat, and increase availability of forage across the landscape.

Historical Data:

This project is the beginning of a broader BLM landscape initiative and borders areas previously treated in the same manner with success.

Itemized Use of Funds:

Calculated total cost based on cumulative acres and estimated cost per acre for application.

Total Cost : \$150,000

Comprehensive Project Analysis:

Please see the attached design packet and presentation for these details.

Monitoring Plan/ Strategy:

The Habitat Areas in question are monitored by the BLM staff, including Range, Wildlife, Hydrologists and other specialists. As this project is completed, the BLM Carlsbad FO will enter a monitoring phase for contracted aerial application work on the HAs to ensure satisfactory outcomes across the treated areas.

Project Emphasis Species:

Pronghorn, SGCN species

