

**FY 2025 Wildlife
Habitat Restoration
Project Opportunity**

**Soda Springs
Restoration**

Soda Spring Restoration Project



- The Soda Spring enclosure surrounds 100 acres encompassing a natural spring and earthen dam with the capacity to hold ~8.5 acre-feet inundating >30 acres in wet years. This area supports essential riparian and aquatic wildlife habitat for mule deer, pronghorn, elk, and waterfowl. It is imperiled by excessive livestock pressure on the present barbed wire enclosure, rendering the current enclosure ineffective.
- This area is a sensitive riparian area where BLM aims to protect essential water resources and wildlife habitat by excluding livestock from the area.

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NMDGF - Brock Lorenzen



Proposed Management Action

- The NMDGF, in collaboration with the BLM, will contract the removal of the present barbed wire fence and installation of a pipe and cable fence that will require little to no maintenance, better excluding cattle and providing wildlife better access to this resource. Following installation of the new fence invasive plants that have established within the enclosure will be removed and the enclosure re-vegetated with native seedings and plantings.
- HSP funds will be utilized for the purchase of material, labor wages to operate machinery for removing the barbed wire fence, installing the pipe and cable fence, mechanically and chemically removing invasive plants, and seeding and planting native vegetation.
- Following this implementation, the NMDGF and BLM will enter into a monitoring phase to evaluate the efficacy of this restoration effort, and adjust land management decisions in response to those monitoring reports.

Google Earth Link: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/MtNZukm9SzcSMKPG8>

**Estimated
Budget: \$315,000**

Project Name:

Soda Spring Restoration Project

Project relation to CAC advice or priorities:

This project benefits several wildlife game species. Soda Springs and the associated dirt tank is one of the few water sources on this dry landscape and is utilized by mule deer, pronghorn, elk, and waterfowl. Once implemented, this project will protect this resource from livestock degradation, and improve water and forage availability for wildlife.

Project Specific Details:

This project is a two stage project. First the ineffective barbed wire fence will be replaced with a pipe and cable fence that requires little to no maintenance and effectively excludes livestock from this riparian area. Following the fence construction, invasive vegetation will be removed from within the enclosure, and re-vegetated with native seedings and plantings.

Historical Data:

Livestock were historically excluded from this area to protect riparian health and maintain the resource for wildlife use. However, the barbed wire fence currently in use cannot reasonably withstand the amount of livestock pressure it faces, and livestock have degraded this riparian area.

Itemized Use of Funds:

Removal of barbed wire and installation of pipe and cable fence- \$285,000
Invasive vegetation removal - \$10,000
Re-vegetation seeding and planting - \$20,000

Comprehensive Project Analysis:

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

Monitoring Plan/ Strategy:

Soda Springs is monitored by BLM staff, including Range, Wildlife, Hydrologists and other specialists. Following completion of this project, the NMDGF will enter into a monitoring phase of restoration results at Soda Springs.

Project Emphasis Species:

Mule deer, Pronghorn, Elk, and Waterfowl

Soda Spring Project



Soda Spring Project

Project Contacts



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The Soda Spring enclosure is located in Sandoval County northeast of the Cabezon Wilderness Study Area. The present barbed wire enclosure covers an area of 100 acres with a perimeter of 9,500 linear feet, encompassing a natural spring and earthen dam with the capacity to hold ~8.5 acre-feet inundating >30 acres in wet years. This area supports essential riparian and aquatic wildlife habitat for pronghorn, elk, deer, and waterfowl.

Conservation Issues

- Fence damaged → livestock trespass
- Invasive plant establishment
- Erosion and downcutting



Soda Spring Enclosure



The present barbed wire enclosure experiences too much livestock pressure to remain effective despite maintenance efforts from BLM. Posts are knocked over, barbed wire is cut, and strands are missing in numerous locations. Currently not an effective riparian enclosure.



The non functional enclosure has led to heavy livestock pressure near this sensitive riparian habitat and water source, overgrazing of grasses and forbs, cow trails that cause erosion and downcutting, and disturbed soil paving the way for invasive establishment.



Actions

Replace the present barbed wire fence with a pipe and cable fence that requires little to no maintenance and will prevent livestock from accessing this area, giving the riparian habitat time to recover, conserving it for wildlife use, and providing wildlife with easier access.

After completion of the pipe and cable fence, invasive plants (salt cedar, Russian olive, etc.) shall be mechanically and chemically removed. Slash from removed woody vegetation will then be piled, dried, and used for erosion control or burned.

Following invasive removal, native vegetation will be seeded, and planted as cuttings and container plants.



**Potential
Continuing Rio
Puerco BLM
Management:**



- ▶ Continued invasive plant control
- ▶ Low tech process-based erosion control structures to prevent downcutting of the wet meadow
- ▶ Maintenance of cattle guards to prevent silting in



Summary of Project

Project is “Shovel Ready”

Exclosure and Vegetation Treatments:
\$315,000

