

Colorado State Conservation Board 2008 Matching Grants Project:
Mancos Conservation District Association: Mancos River Restoration

What natural resource problem(s) did the project address?

The Mancos River is the primary water source for the Mancos Valley in south west Colorado. The Mancos Conservation District had contracted for assessments along the Mancos River and it's tributaries to determine the health of the river and its riparian corridor. **The assessments concluded that removing woody invasive species, controlling livestock grazing and re-vegetating with native species in some areas would be highly beneficial in improving river function and wildlife habitat.**

Working with landowners along the river and using the technical expertise of the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the University of New Mexico, **the Mancos Conservation District began in 2008 to implement the steps necessary to restore the river.** The Division of Wildlife has also provided funding for this project through their Habitat Protection Program.

What was achieved?

- 5 acres of moderate to dense stands of Russian olive and tamarisk invasive species cut and stumps treated to prevent re-growth.
- Wood from felled invasive species used for firewood by local community members - and, in one case, for furniture.
- 3,800 linear feet of fencing installed to protect riparian habitat from livestock trampling - a total of 12 miles of the river now fenced
- Sites monitored to determine success of natural re-vegetation by willow, cottonwood, buffalo-berry and ash trees - additional native plantings will be carried out if necessary and retreatment of sprouting invasives.
- Seed source for downstream invasive species reduced
- Loss of livestock calves due to spring flooding reduced in fenced riparian areas
- Further areas for treatment downstream have been identified and are planned for.



Restoration of the beautiful, ecologically and economically important Mancos River of far southwestern Colorado, is a focus of the Mancos Conservation District.