



Canyons of the Ancients National Monument

-Recovery Act Projects -

Montezuma & Dolores Counties



The Recovery Act is helping fund eradication of invasive tamarisk on 1,000 acres in Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

The BLM has already sprayed herbicide on tamarisk infestations in the main canyons of Yellowjacket, Sandstone and Woods. The initial plan was to expand spraying into side drainages and adjacent ponds. However, monitoring revealed that leaf beetles, a biological control agent released nearby in 2007, were already doing a good job, so the focus has turned to monitoring the beetles and promoting their continued existence.

Meanwhile, another 1,000 acres are targeted for inventory and treatment of other noxious weeds, including Russian knapweed, which often invades after tamarisks are removed. County weed offices are being funded to spray 300 acres along roads and trails. Next year, gall midges, a biological control agent for knapweed, are planned for release in remote areas, where spraying is difficult.

The counties are also being funded to conduct inventories of weed infestations via Global Positioning Systems (GPS) technology for storage in a BLM corporate database for future monitoring.

Native riparian ecosystems along two miles of Yellow Jacket Canyon Creek are being restored to reduce erosion and prevent invasive plants. Following herbicide treatments, 1,500 willow shoots were planted along the stream banks. Willows will also be planted on two additional miles of an upper reach of Yellow Jacket Canyon Creek.



Canyons of the Ancients National Monument – Recovery Act Projects continued



An old unused water catch-basin on Mockingbird Mesa is being restored to a natural condition. The basin was originally intended to catch rain and funnel it into a rubber-lined pond to offer water to big-game animals. However, the pond received little use, its liner was torn, the basin silted in, and the area denuded. The liner was removed and the area re-seeded.

Restoration efforts are underway to restore properties that have been acquired from willing sellers. Crews are applying herbicides and planting native seeds and seedlings to reestablish native plant communities on 300 acres acquired by the Monument in 2004. The former Murphy and Dirk Hood properties, which were fallow fields used for livestock grazing and crop production, are heavily infested with noxious weeds. This Recovery Act project has targeted these areas for treatment and re-vegetation.



Large amounts of trash have been removed from another former private parcel acquired by the Monument, where eight tons of old baling wire and metal debris were contaminating the floodplain between McElmo Creek and County Road G. Discarded wire had

accumulated in the area over several years, posing a hazard to both humans and wildlife. Five loads of wire were hauled to a nearby salvage yard for recycling.



Numerous user-created routes exist in the Monument; many passing through sensitive cultural sites and areas where they cause soil erosion, disturb wildlife habitat, and provide avenues for the spread of noxious weeds. Two miles of user-created routes leading into the backcountry off County Road 10 and the road to Hovenweep National Park have been closed and rehabilitated by raking and seeding, being covered with debris and erecting closure signs. Another 31 miles of roads and trails will be decommissioned in the same manner next year. These illegal routes are not part of the transportation system as identified in the 2010 Management Plan.

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument - Recovery Act Projects continued

These projects in the BLM Canyons of the Ancients National Monument are funded by the Recovery Act through participating agreements with:

- Southwest Conservation Corps of Durango
- Dolores Conservation District
- Montezuma and Dolores County weed offices

