

Rio Puerco Management Committee

Public Law 104-333
104th Congress

An Act

To provide for the administration of certain Presidio properties at minimal cost to the Federal taxpayer, and for other purposes.

<<NOTE: Nov. 12, 1996 - [H.R. 4236]>>

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

This Act may be cited as the ``Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996''.

TITLE IV--RIVERS AND TRAILS

SEC. 401. RIO PUERCO WATERSHED.

(a) Management Program.--

(1) In general.--The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management shall--

(A) in consultation with the Rio Puerco Management Committee established by subsection (b)--

- (i) establish a clearinghouse for research and information on management within the area identified as the Rio Puerco Drainage Basin, as depicted on the map entitled ``the Rio Puerco Watershed'' dated June 1994, including--
 - (I) current and historical natural resource conditions; an
 - (II) data concerning the extent and causes of watershed impairment; and
- (ii) establish an inventory of best management practices and related monitoring activities that have been or may be implemented within the area identified as the Rio Puerco Watershed Project, as depicted on the map entitled ``the Rio Puerco Watershed'' dated June 1994; and

(B) provide support to the Rio Puerco Management Committee to identify objectives, monitor results of ongoing projects, and develop alternative watershed management plans for the Rio Puerco Drainage Basin, based on best management practices.

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(2) Rio puerco management report.--

(A) In general.--Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Rio Puerco Management Committee, shall prepare a report for the improvement of watershed conditions in the Rio Puerco Drainage Basis described in paragraph (1)(A).

(B) Contents.--The report under subparagraph (A) shall--

- (i) identify reasonable and appropriate goals and objectives for landowners and managers in the Rio Puerco Watershed;
- (ii) describe potential alternative actions to meet the goals and objectives, including proven best management practices and costs associated with implementing the actions;
- (iii) recommend voluntary implementation of appropriate best management practices on public and private lands;
- (iv) provide for cooperative development of management guidelines for maintaining and improving the ecological, cultural, and economic conditions on public and private lands;
- (v) provide for the development of public participation and community outreach programs that would include proposals for--
 - (I) cooperative efforts with private landowners to encourage implementation of best management practices within the watershed; and
 - (II) involvement of private citizens in restoring the watershed;
- (vi) provide for the development of proposals for voluntary cooperative programs among the members of the Rio Puerco Management Committee to implement best management practices in a coordinated, consistent, and cost-effective manner;
- (vii) provide for the encouragement of, and support implementation of, best management practices on private lands; and
- (viii) provide for the development of proposals for a monitoring system that--
 - (I) builds on existing data available from private, Federal, and State sources;
 - (II) provides for the coordinated collection, evaluation, and interpretation of additional data as needed or collected; and
 - (III) will provide information to assess existing resource and socioeconomic conditions; identify priority implementation actions; and assess the effectiveness of actions taken.

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(b) Rio Puerco Management Committee.--

(1) Establishment.--There is established the Rio Puerco Management Committee (referred to in this section as the "Committee").

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(2) Membership.--The Committee shall be convened by a representative of the Bureau of Land Management and shall include representatives from--

- (A) the Rio Puerco Watershed Committee;
- (B) affected tribes and pueblos;
- (C) the National Forest Service of the Dept. of Agriculture;
- (D) the Bureau of Reclamation;
- (E) the United States Geological Survey;
- (F) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- (G) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service;
- (H) the Army Corps of Engineers;
- (I) the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the Dept. of Agriculture;
- (J) the State of New Mexico, including the New Mexico Environment Dept. of the State Engineer;
- (K) affected local soil and water conservation districts;
- (L) the Elephant Butte Irrigation District;
- (M) private landowners; and
- (N) other interested citizens.

(3) Duties.--The Rio Puerco Management Committee shall--

- (A) advise the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, on the development and implementation of the Rio Puerco Management Program described in subsection (a); and
- (B) serve as a forum for information about activities that may affect or further the development and implementation of the best management practices described in subsection (a)

(4) Termination.--The Committee shall terminate on the date that is 10 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) Report.--Not later than the date that is 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and biennially thereafter, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Rio Puerco Management Committee, shall transmit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives a report containing--

- (1) a summary of activities of the management program under subsection (a); and
- (2) proposals for joint implementation efforts, including funding recommendations.

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(d) Lower Rio Grande Habitat Study.--

(1) In general.--The Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with appropriate State agencies, shall conduct a study of the Rio Grande that--

(A) shall cover the distance from Caballo Lake to Sunland Park, New Mexico; and

(B) may cover a greater distance.

(2) Contents.--The study under paragraph (1) shall include--

(A) a survey of the current habitat conditions of the river and its riparian environment;

(B) identification of the changes in vegetation and habitat over the past 400 years and the effect of the changes on the river and riparian area; and

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(C) an assessment of the feasibility, benefits, and problems associated with activities to prevent further habitat loss and to restore habitat through reintroduction or establishment of appropriate native plant species.

(3) Transmittal.--Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this section, the Secretary of the Interior shall transmit the study under paragraph (1) to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives.

(e) Authorization of Appropriations.--There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section a total of \$7,500,000 for the 10 fiscal years beginning after the date of enactment of this Act.