Western Colorado Wildlife Habitat Association
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(if we’re out in the field when you call, please leave a message)

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A not-for-profit organization dedicated to the development and preservation of permanent wildlife habitat along the Colorado River

Standing alone on the mountaintop it is easy to realize that whatever special nests we make—leaves and moss like the marmots and birds, or tents or piled stone—we all dwell in a house of one room—the world...

John Muir 1890
Preserving a rapidly disappearing Colorado River riparian habitat

Canals Became a Problem
For many years, irrigation canals in the Grand Valley—both Federal and private—provided a riparian habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. By the late 1970s, however, these canals had become a liability.

The problem? The soils of the Grand Valley abound in salt. As water passes through unlined irrigation canals, the salt leaches out and eventually flows into the Colorado River. Some 580,000 tons of salt were flowing into the River every year—posing a hazard to fish, waterfowl and humans and failing to comply with water quality requirements for delivery to Mexico.

Solving the Problem
To solve the problem, the Bureau of Reclamation and other government entities collaborated to implement the Colorado River Salinity Control Project—which included piping and lining selected irrigation canals.

Creating New Habitat
As canals were improved, scattered wetlands and other wildlife habitat dried up and were lost. To compensate for this loss, approximately 2,300 acres of prime habitat along the Colorado River were acquired, developed and preserved.

Meeting the Newest Challenge
As growth and development continue to expand in western Colorado, these areas will play a key role in preserving the rapidly disappearing Colorado River riparian habitat.

Who We Are
The Western Colorado Wildlife Habitat Association is a not for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Under contract with the Bureau of Reclamation, we manage four Wildlife Areas along the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers comprising over 1,000 acres in Mesa and Garfield Counties.

What We Do
- restore native cottonwood riparian forests
- plant trees, shrubs and grasslands
- create wetlands
- plant food plots including sunflowers, millet, winter wheat and corn
- eradicate noxious weeds and tamarisk

The Wildlife Population
These Wildlife Areas play host to an abundance of wildlife, from migratory birds, waterfowl, otters and Sandhill Cranes to deer, elk and the occasional mountain lion or bear.

Our Commitment
These “islands” of habitat belong to the wildlife that dwells upon them. We are simply stewards of the land.

To ensure protection for these areas, access by the public is limited—with seasonal closures for nesting, for example. Access restrictions are posted on our website and at Wildlife Area boundaries. Camping, bicycling and dog walking are not allowed.

How You Can Become Involved
- Community service oversight
- Habitat tour guide
- School liaisons
- Bird nest box building
- Fence repair
- Mowing
- Irrigation
- Weed and brush control
- Planting
- Tree thinning
- Site monitoring
- Equipment repair and maintenance
- Volunteer coordination
- Graphic arts
- Web site design and maintenance
- Computer data base design and maintenance

We accept financial donations (tax deductible) as well as farm-related equipment and materials. Please see our website or call for additional information.