

Four Years of Collaboration in the

BIG BEND- RÍO BRAVO

Region



Commission for Environmental Cooperation





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Four years of collaboration in the Big Bend-Río Bravo region



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From 2011 to 2015, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) supported experts from Mexico and the United States (US) in increasing the knowledge and capacity for conservation practices within the citizenry of the Big Bend-Río Bravo borderland. This region provides vital riparian, grassland and mountainous habitats that harbor endangered plants and animals, supports migrating species, and provides ecosystem services to agriculture and communities, both near and far.

Results

- Mexican and US land managers and scientists identified 29 priority areas for joint work on conservation and management strategies, and published an overview of each area.
- Scientists gathered vegetation and wildlife information and developed monitoring protocols for the Rio Grande, its tributaries, and its uplands. This information will be invaluable for maintaining a productive landscape in the face of climate change.
- Experts removed invasive plant species and planted nearly 3,000 native trees in riparian habitats in the protected natural areas of Big Bend National Park and the Cañon de Santa Elena.
- Community members in Mexico received training in ecosystem restoration and protection.
- Several Mexican communities provided input for creating ecotourism opportunities.



Charlie Robertson

Impacts on the people

- Exchanging knowledge with landowners, ranchers and farmers will improve their management practices in ways that conserve and support the ecosystem.
- Community engagement will strengthen a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the region's unique natural and cultural resources.
- Increased ecotourism will create employment opportunities that promote environmental protection.



Impacts on the ecosystem

- Binational agreement on strategies and planning will be the bedrock for future conservation.
- Increased knowledge of ecosystem process and land carrying capacities will improve managers' capacity to monitor ecosystem changes.
- Restored riparian and other habitats will bring natural ecosystems back to health, ensuring they are resilient and able to withstand climate change, drought, and anthropogenic impacts.

Legacy

- A growing collaboration between Mexican and US partners
- Implementation of binational protocols for monitoring and restoring the region
- Stronger involvement of local communities in restoration activities and ecotourism



Reforestation of sandbar willow along Terlingua Creek in Big Bend National Park

About the CEC

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) was established by the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States through the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, the environmental side agreement to NAFTA. An intergovernmental organization, the CEC is composed of a Council of cabinet-level environmental officials from the three countries, a Joint Public Advisory Committee and a Secretariat that provides operational support for cooperative work between the three countries. The organization brings together citizens and experts from governments, nongovernmental organizations, scientists, researchers and businesses to seek solutions to protect North America's shared environment while supporting sustainable economic development.



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