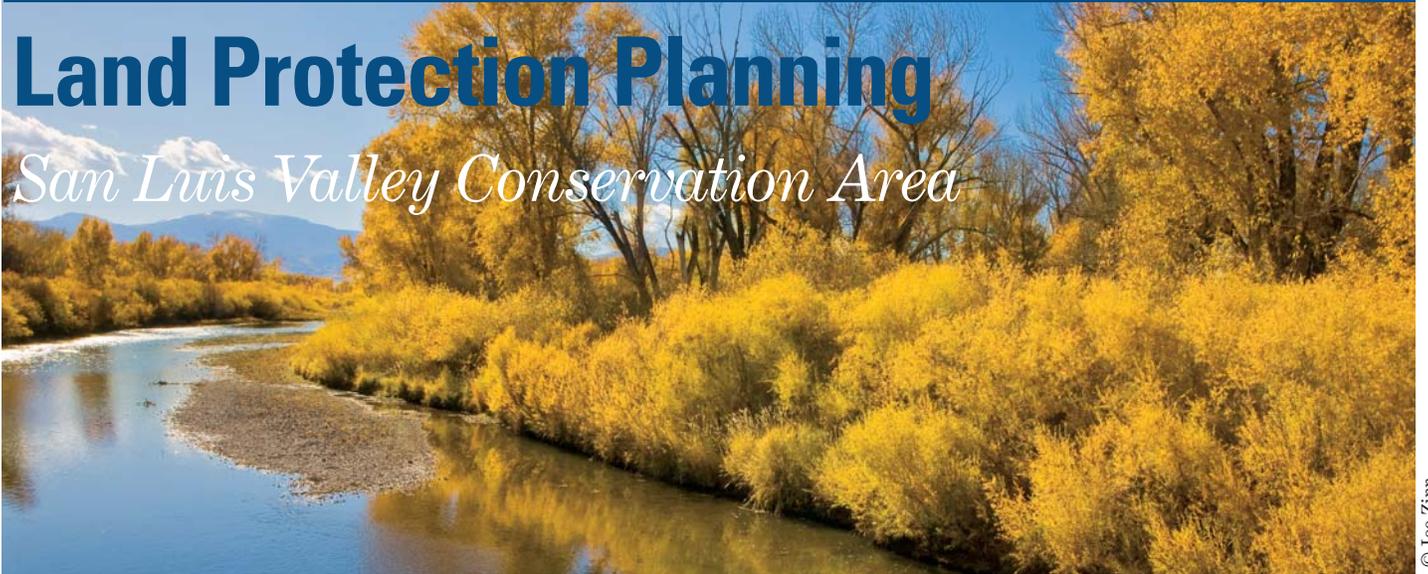


Land Protection Planning

San Luis Valley Conservation Area



© Joe Zimm

The project area includes wetland and riparian areas of the Rio Grande river.

The San Luis Valley Conservation Area is a landscape-level project designed to protect wildlife resources and wetland habitat in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. The project area contains a rich diversity of migratory birds and threatened,

endangered, and species of concern which are supported by a broad spectrum of habitat types. The area supports more than 1,300 species of vascular plants; 95 percent of the Rocky Mountain population of greater sand-hill cranes; waterfowl; and priority

species such as the southwestern willow flycatcher and the white-faced ibis.

Project Overview

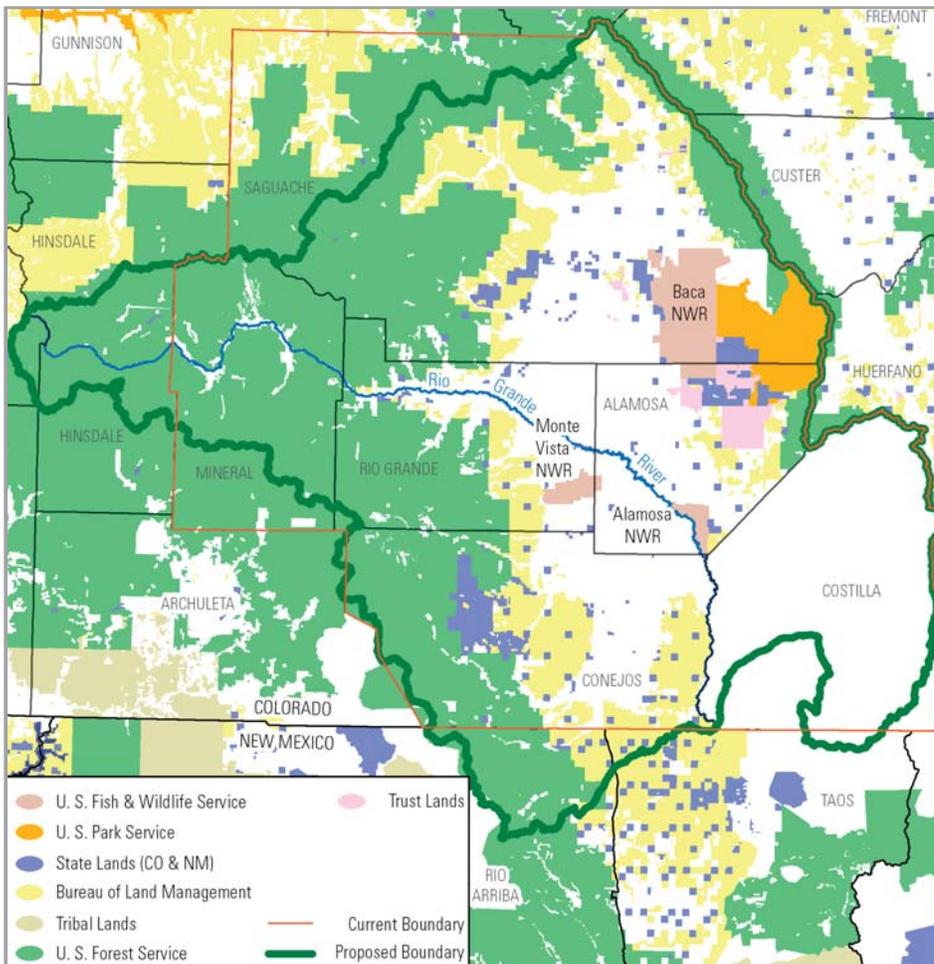
The San Luis Valley has outstanding resource values that many people are already working hard to protect. We want to contribute to, and complement, these existing and successful efforts. The project area lies within the Rio Grande watershed and encompasses over 4,869,373 acres in portions of Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache counties in south-central Colorado and Rio Arriba and Taos counties in northern New Mexico.

The proposal will primarily use conservation easements to protect wildlife habitat and maintain wildlife pathways (corridors) between protected blocks of habitat on public and private conservation lands. This connectivity will likely be an increasingly important variable in safeguarding fish and wildlife resources from negative impacts associated with a changing climate.

Within the entire project area, the Service proposes to conserve about 430,000 acres, mostly in conservation easements from willing sellers. There could be some lands purchased in fee title where it is appropriate.

Refuge Complex Planning

In March 2011, we began discussing our intent to combine the land protec-



The San Luis Valley Conservation Area lies within the Rio Grande watershed.

tion planning effort with the development of the comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) for Alamosa, Monte Vista, and Baca National Wildlife Refuges. Because the CCP process will take several years to complete, we are splitting off the land protection planning effort to take advantage earlier opportunities to work with partners. Conservation easements would be largely funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a federal program which provides funds and grants for land acquisition and protection.

Next Steps

We want to hear your ideas or concerns regarding this project. Are there other resources that we should consider in the planning project? What tools can citizens and organizations bring to the table?

We anticipate having a draft document for your review by May 2012. We also encourage you to share your ideas and concerns with us in letters, emails, and phone calls to the contacts listed below. The Service will use your input to further develop this environmental assessment and land protection plan.

The Service is distributing this fact sheet to generate interest in the planning process and to collect ideas and thoughts about the proposed conservation area from the public, State and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and other partners.

At the same time we are continuing in our efforts to develop a CCP for Alamosa, Monte Vista, and Baca National Wildlife Refuges.

Contacts

Mike Blenden, Project Leader

San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex
9383 El Ranch Lane
Alamosa, CO 81101

719/589 4021 (phone)

Website: www.fws.gov/alamosa/planning

Mike Dixon, Planning Team Leader

Division of Refuge Planning
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 25486, DFC
Denver, CO 80225

303/236 8132 (phone)

Email comments to:
SLVrefugesplanning@fws.gov

2012 Project Timeline



San Luis Valley Conservation Area

P.O. Box 25486

Denver, CO 80225-0486

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED