From:	Rich Schrader
To:	FS-Northern NM Riparian and Aquatic Watershed Restoration
Subject:	River Source Inc. comments on Riparian and Wetland Restoration EA
Date:	Saturday, May 30, 2020 10:18:42 PM
Attachments:	image.png image.png

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the environmental assessment (EA) for northern New Mexico Riparian, Aquatic and Wetland Restoration projects. The interests of River Source Inc. span from youth and community education, economic development, and designing, implementing and documenting the long-term watershed resilience that is so needed in northern New Mexico.

The EA will support critical work that is necessary for watershed resilience that River Source is strongly committed to seeing implemented. The riparian and wetland projects that are envisioned in Alternative B include several best practices that River Source would like to support with youth crews and community volunteers in the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo mountains. We have experience building beaver dam analogues (p. 17), installing riparian pole planting, fencing, constructing regenerative water harvesting/erosion control structures for uplands and floodplains. Our mission commits us engaging youth and community leaders in demonstrating and implementing these practices.

The EA describes a very important strategy regarding process vs form projects (p. 19) to prioritize restoring processes that create habitat instead of the “form-based” projects that only enhance conditions is very commendable. Restoring the cultural knowledge and connection of community members to the forest is a process-based approach that is not emphasized enough in the EA. The long-term success of all of the projects will need long-term involvement and positive engagement of adjacent forest-dependent communities. River Source is also practiced and deeply committed to community-based practices that aims to build “green teams” with young adults supported by local elders to utilize riparian and wetland restoration techniques and tools. We suggest that community-based engagement and education is mentioned with more emphasis and details in the final version.

On a technical basis, the EA excellently describes several approaches for indicator species, quantitative targets for data that is easily collected by volunteers, and using best practices for reconnecting floodplains, improving water quality and prioritizing wildlife habitat improvements. River Source has extensive ecological monitoring experience and cutting-edge tools for crowdsourcing quality-assured data and providing impactful data visualization tools on the web. Georeferenced photography such as the NASA-sponsored PicturePost project (https://picturepost.ou.edu/) and aquatic invertebrate sampling and analysis (https://youtu.be/u6KmZmcQjbI) are examples of our resources including

techniques that harness power of community science.

We look forward to supporting the implementation of the projects described in the EA. Thank you for considering my comments.

Best regards,

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