

Salt Cedar Experience

Recovery of Arroyo de la Cejita Triangle Ranch Roy, New Mexico



The Arroyo de la Cejita ran water until the drought of the 1950s, and from then on it has been intermittent depending on the weather. In 2001 the present ranch owners, Harry and Lindit Hopson, approached the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service district conservationist, Mike Delano, in Roy, New Mexico about their salt cedar problem. The riparian area was put into an NRCS Conservation Reserve Program, and through the Ute Creek Soil and Water Conservation District 66 acres of salt cedar were treated. In 2003, the driest year on the ranch since 1956, the Hopsons were surprised to see water flowing once again in the creek bed. NRCS has investigated the site and preliminary findings show removal of the salt cedar as the reason for the recovery of the creek.

Although the owners of the Triangle Ranch do not remember when the salt cedars appeared on their place, they do remember the salt cedars on the Arroyo de la Cejita in the sixties when they picnicked and played in the area with their children. From the period of 1966 to the present, the salt cedar infestation changed from small scattered trees no bigger than three inches in diameter to thick impenetrable thickets of mature trees 24 – 36 inches in diameter.

6200 Jefferson NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Voice 505-761-4400
FAX 505-761-4462

NRCS

www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov

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