



# Southwest Rivers Headwaters Fund

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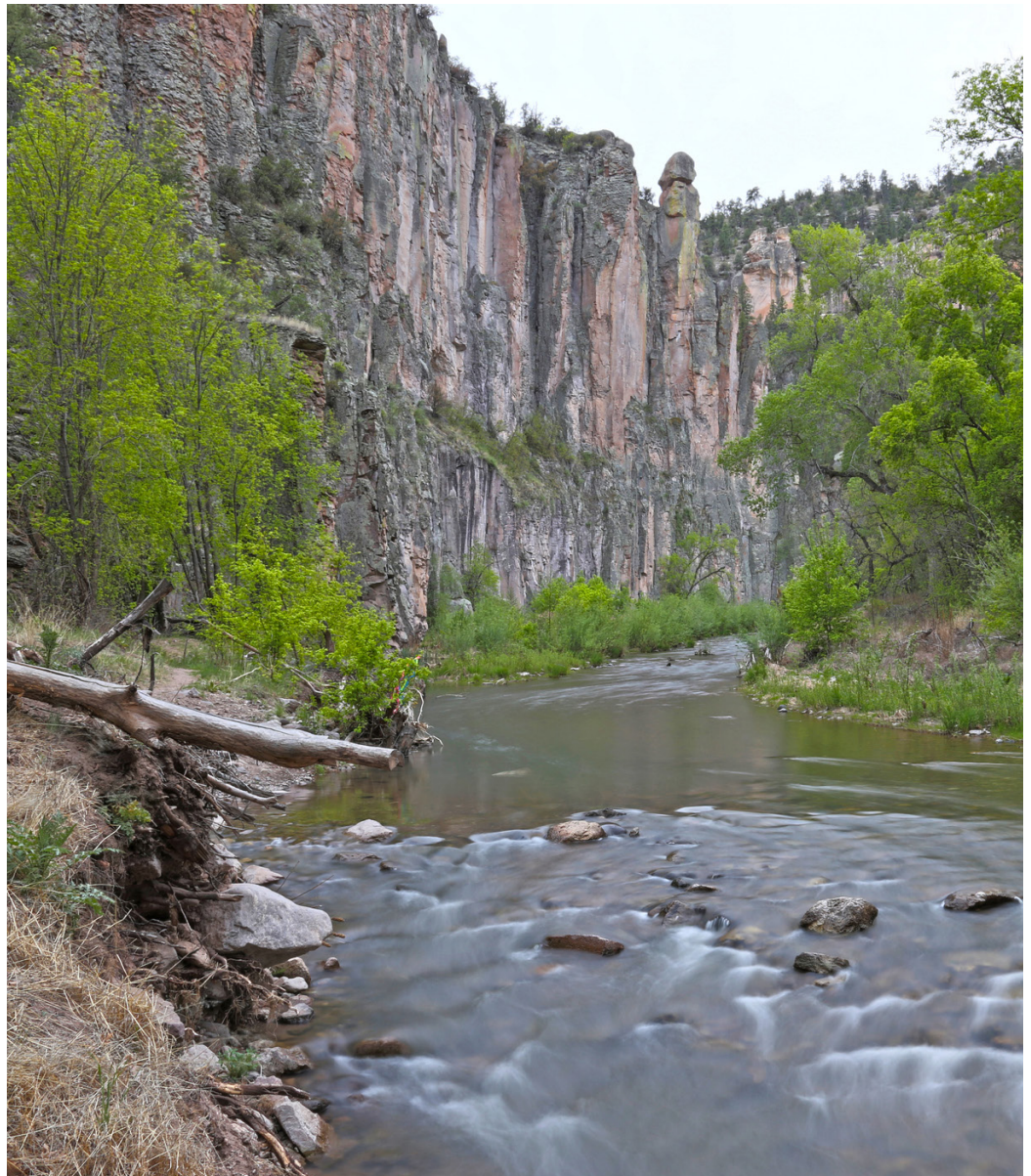
- Trinchera Blanca Foundation
- Walton Family Foundation
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management

## ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 6,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$7.4 billion.

Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

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Middle fork of the Gila River in the Gila National Forest

## BACKGROUND

The Southwest Rivers Headwaters Fund is dedicated to restoring, protecting, and enhancing aquatic and riparian species and their habitats in the headwaters of the Rio Grande and Colorado River watersheds. The fund was launched in 2019 to support projects that produce measurable outcomes for species of conservation concern in the riparian corridors of the headwaters region of the Rio Grande. In subsequent years, the fund expanded to include a focal area in the Gila River watershed, and later adopted a geographic priority for all tributaries and headwaters of the Colorado River.

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North American beaver

In three years, the Southwest Rivers Headwaters Fund has invested a total of \$2.1 million in 15 projects leveraging \$2.6 million in matching contributions to generate a total on-the-ground conservation impact of more than \$4.7 million. These projects benefit unique southwestern riparian species like Rio Grande cutthroat trout, North American beaver and Chiricahua leopard frog by addressing the leading factors in aquatic and riparian species decline such as loss of natural processes and habitat, environmental change, and invasive species. Maintaining healthy headwater streams can help replenish water upstream and provide security for water users, fish, and wildlife downstream.

The Southwest Rivers Headwaters Fund is a partnership with the Trinchera Blanca Foundation, Walton Family Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Implementation partners include community watershed groups, nonprofit organizations, state wildlife agencies in New Mexico and Colorado, tribes and federal agencies.

#### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of the Southwest Rivers Headwaters Fund include:

- Implement process-based wetland, riparian and instream habitat restoration and enhancement through restoration of natural fluvial process that increase floodplain connectivity, dynamic channel processes and recruitment of native riparian vegetation.
- Increase water availability for species and their habitats and/or remove barriers to flow.
- Reintroduce and translocate priority aquatic species to stream reaches with improved habitat and protection from invasive species.

The fund's investments are targeted to riparian corridors of the headwaters of the Colorado River and Rio Grande. The Rio Grande focal area includes the main stem and headwater tributaries of the Rio Grande in Colorado and northern New Mexico, as well as the headwaters of the Rio Chama, Jemez River, and Rio Puerco. Priority watersheds of the Colorado River include all tributaries and headwaters of the Colorado River in Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. Complementary projects on Colorado's Western Slope are funded through NFWF's RESTORE Colorado Program. These focal areas include geography identified as greatest risk and prioritized in NFWF's Southwest Rivers Business Plan.