

Bosque Restoration moves forward

by Joan Mier

The Middle Rio Grande Bosque restoration projects are moving ahead smoothly, according to Fritz Blake, project manager. A series of three public meetings was held in August to gain input from the public about what they perceived as problem areas and what they wanted to see improved.

“There were many similarities in the information we gathered at all three meetings,” Blake said. “They want to see the bosque cleaned up. They want to see the elimination of non-native species, improved public access to the bosque, and an increase in the health of the ecosystem.”

Project delivery team members are compiling the information gathered at the meeting and will use it to determine the direction the feasibility study should take, Blake said.

There are three restoration projects to revitalize the Rio Grande bosque from approximately the North Diversion Channel to the South Diversion Channel in Albuquerque. The first project, the Albuquerque Bio-Park Aquatic Restoration project, is currently in the feasibility stage. The study will analyze ways to improve the water quality for fish habitat in Tingley Ponds and develop wetland areas within the bosque near Tingley Beach. The study will be completed in March 2003 and construction should begin in the fall of 2003, Blake said.

The second project, called the Bosque Revitalization at Route 66, will help restore the bosque in the area of Albuquerque’s Biological Park. That project is also in the feasibility phase and the study should be



Photo by Joan Mier

The jetty jacks being removed were originally installed in the 1930’s as anti-erosion posts.



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Dale Gronewold, with Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez, delivers remarks at a press conference held Aug. 14 near Central and Rio Grande Ave. in Albuquerque. The Corps was managing the removal of more than 400 jetty jacks in the area that are no longer necessary. They will be replaced by about 700 native plants to improve the ecosystem.

completed in August 2003. The study will determine the advisability of adding some passive recreation to part of this area. If it is deemed advantageous to bosque restoration, construction could begin in late 2003 or early 2004.

The reconnaissance study for the third project, the Middle Rio Grande project, was completed and approved last July. The feasibility study will begin in March 2003 after a cost sharing agreement is signed between the Corps and the local sponsor, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. That study should take two to three years to complete and construction will probably be spread out over a 10-year period, Blake said.

“We don’t plan to reinvent the wheel in these studies,” Blake said. “We will use existing data and studies that have been done in order to save time and avoid redundancy in the planning process.”

Through ecosystem restoration, Albuquerque’s Rio Grande Bosque has the potential to be a totally unique river environment in the middle of the city’s urban center, Blake said.

“The bosque is a cultural cornerstone of New Mexico, and these projects will provide exceptional educational and recreational opportunities for New Mexico citizens,” he said.