

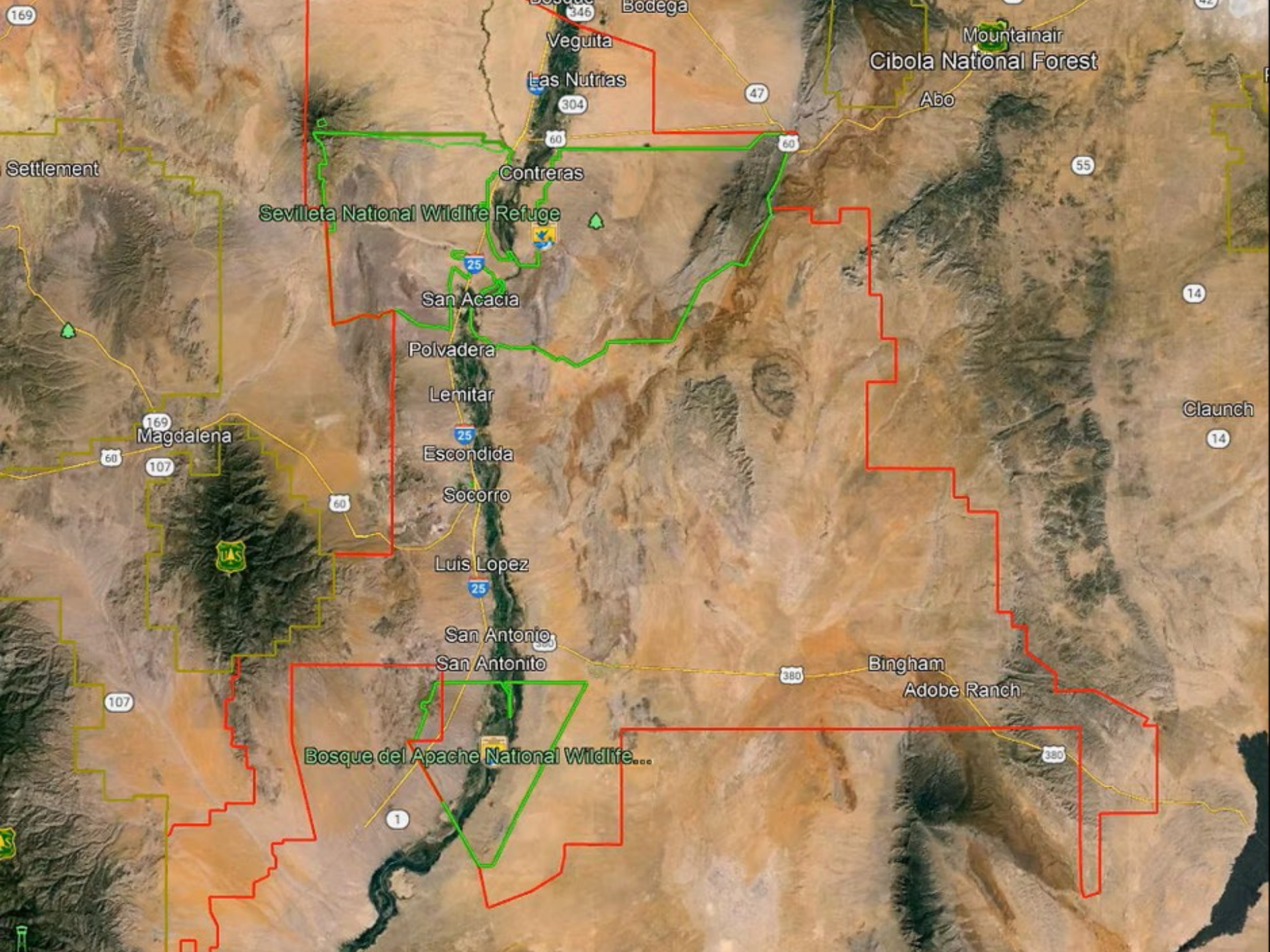
An aerial photograph showing a wide, muddy-brown river (the Middle Rio Grande) meandering through a dense, green riparian forest. The river flows from the upper left towards the lower right. The surrounding landscape is filled with various types of trees and shrubs, creating a textured green canopy. On the left side of the image, a paved road and a dirt path run parallel to the river. The overall scene depicts a natural, undisturbed river ecosystem.

Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District

***Conservation Strategies for the
Middle Rio Grande***

SWCDs

- **SWCDs were a product of the dust bowl, encouraging cooperation between government and private landowners to better care for the land. The first SWCD was formed in 1937.**
- **SWCDs are uniquely positioned to expend state funds on private lands when the expenditure serves a “public purpose” such as wildfire mitigation, watershed protection or erosion control.**



169

Bodega

Mountainair
Cibola National Forest

Settlement

Veguita
Las Nutrias
304
60

47

Abo

55

Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge

Contreras

San Acacia

Polvadera

Lemitar

169
Magdalena

60

107

60

Escondida

Socorro

Luis Lopez

San Antonio

San Antonito

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife...

1

380

Bingham

Adobe Ranch

380

14

Claunch

14

- Socorro SWCD's Primary Water Conservation Programs:
 - Agricultural cost share program
 - Salt cedar removal program

Agricultural Cost Share Program

- Reimburses farmers and ranchers up to \$6,000 for conservation minded improvements.
- Examples of eligible practices:
 - Laser land leveling
 - Concrete Ditch Installation
 - Irrigation Pipeline Installation
 - Livestock wells and pipeline
 - Brush management

Concrete Ditches can prevent up to 50% water loss due to seepage, depending on soil type.



Irrigation Pipelines
prevent seepage &
evaporation, saving up to
60% of irrigation water.



Salt Cedar Removal

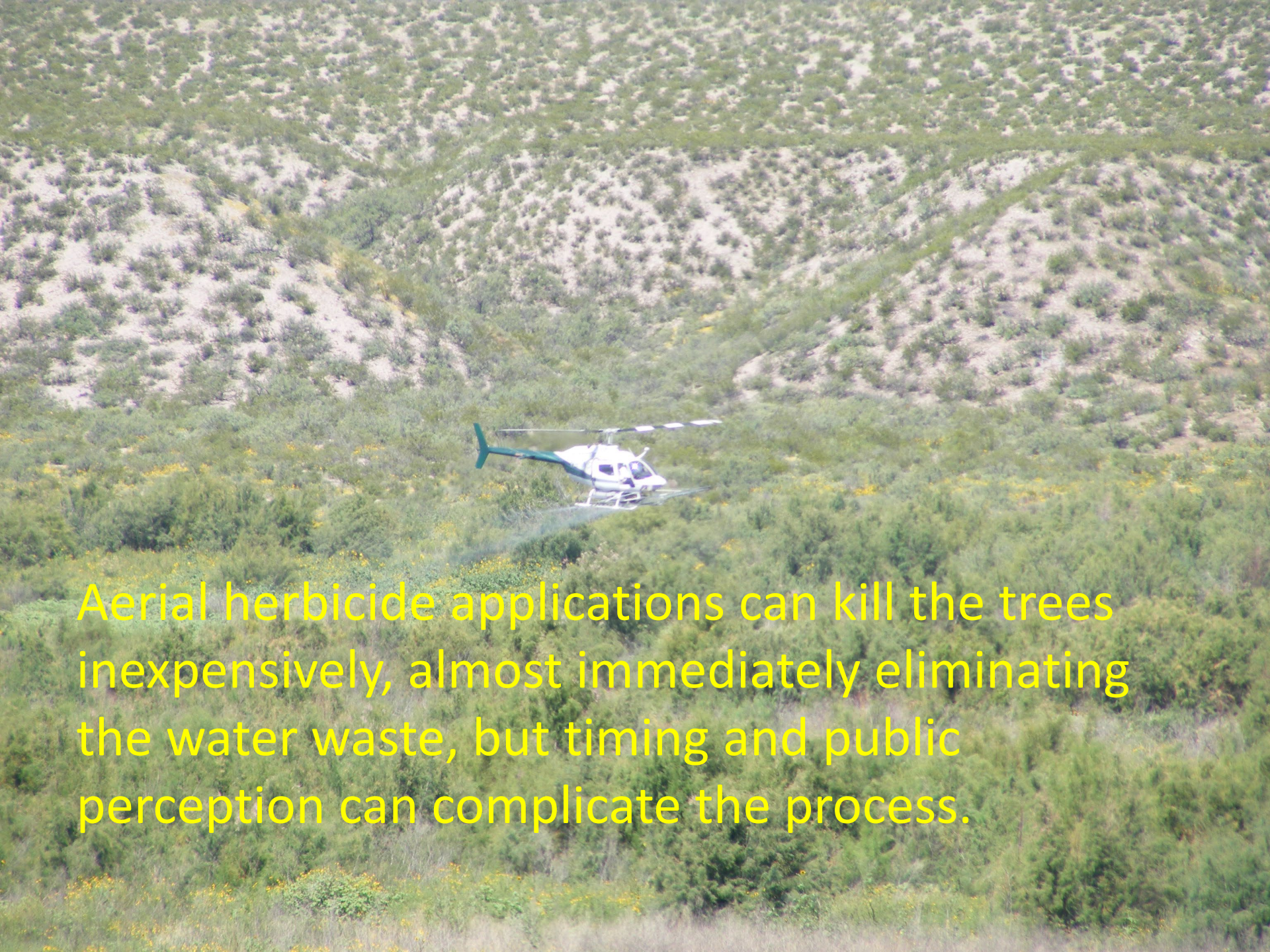
- Large scale removal is contracted with state funding when available. First come, first served program.
- There is no cost to the landowner for this program.

Salt Cedar Removal

- One acre of mature Salt Cedar can waste up to one acre foot of water per year.
- We don't have an accurate inventory of Salt Cedar in our district, but it numbers in the tens of thousands of acres.
- Theoretically, every acre of Salt Cedar removed is another acre foot of water in Elephant Butte, helping to meet our compact obligations.

Mechanical Removal



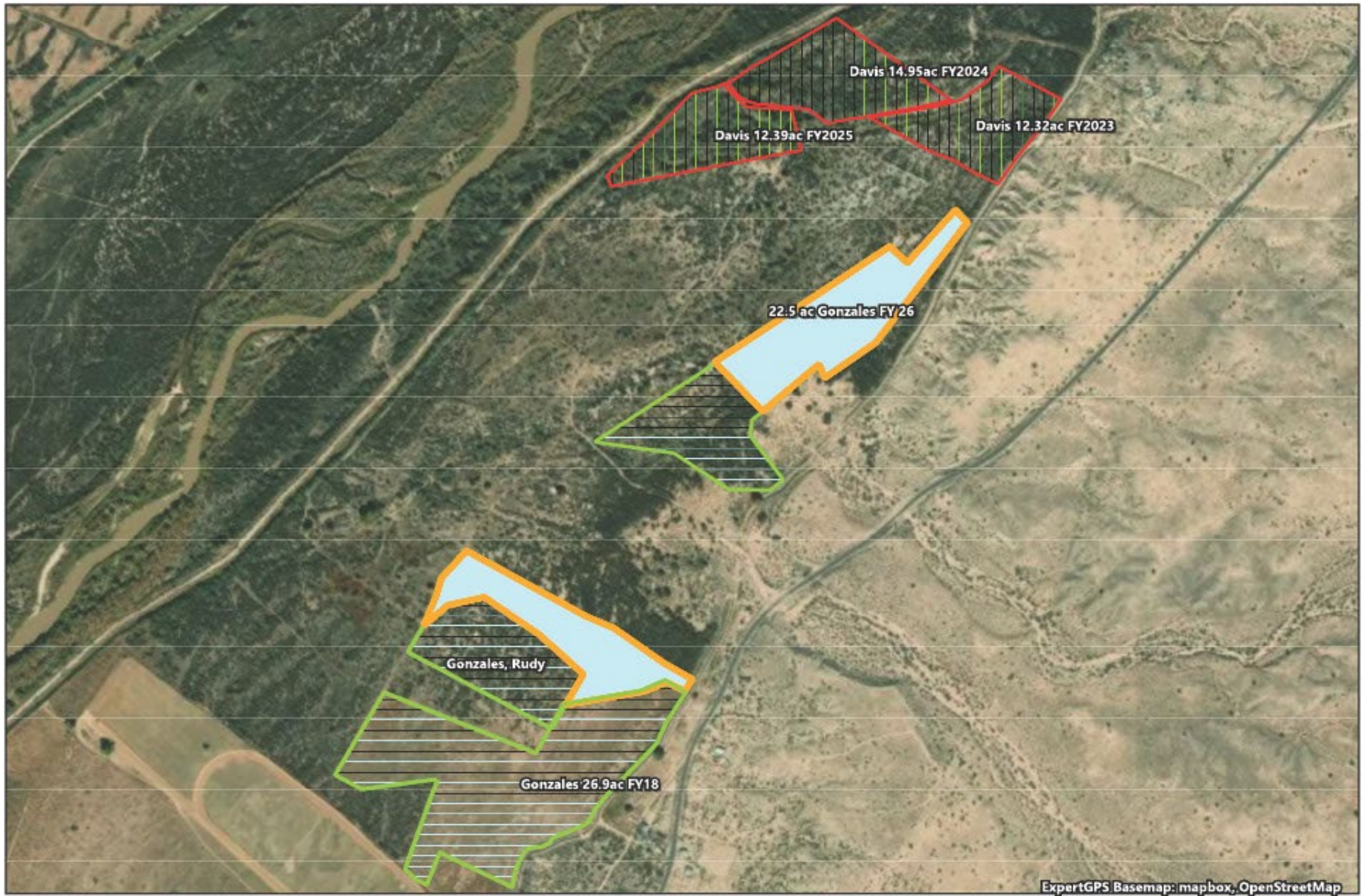


Aerial herbicide applications can kill the trees inexpensively, almost immediately eliminating the water waste, but timing and public perception can complicate the process.

Restoration

- Typically contracted but also performed by Socorro SWCD staff & volunteers.
- Land is either restored to native habitat or becomes farmland.





ExpertGPS

Contreras, New Mexico Habitat Restoration

500 0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500 3000 3500 4000 4500 5000 5500 ft

Scale: 1 : 11520.





Summary

- We can't do anything about the supply of water, conservation is the only option.
- Our efforts must be focused on conserving the water that enters the Middle Rio Grande in order to deliver 43% to Elephant Butte to meet compact obligations.
- Texas WILL sue us again if our debt reaches 200,000 acre feet.
- The federal government is now actively supporting New Mexico purchasing and permanently retiring water rights, following the supreme court decision in May 2026 (closing farms).
- The Socorro SWCD is ready to accept any and all funding to put conservation practices on the ground *quickly*. We can put funding to immediate use or use it to leverage state & federal grants.

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