Observation Points

We have set up several observation points along the Perea Nature Trail, with highlights noted below.

#1. This area contains mostly alkali sacaton (Sporobolus airoides), a grass that is plentiful where the soil is clayey and alkaline. It provides important food ("forage") for livestock during both the cool season and the warm season, depending on the amount of rain and snow that falls.

#2. Russian olive (Elaeagnus angustifolia) is native to southern Europe and western Asia, but was brought to the U.S. from Russia. Its fruit provides food for birds during spring and winter.

#3. Pale wolfberry (Lycium pallidum) is used by livestock, birds and other animals for food. Its pea-sized red berries are eaten off the bush by Southwest American Indians.

#4. "Piping" happens when soils with a high salt (sodium) content literally melt, leaving holes. Runoff water dissolves the salt and the soil is eroded away.

#5. Saltcedar (Tamarix ramosissima) is a shrub native to the Mediterranean area that was brought to the U.S. in the early 1800s and soon spread throughout the Southwest. It is now considered a noxious weed species.

#6. Black greasewood or chico bush (Sarcobatus vermiculatus) grows only where the soils are very alkaline. The leaves and seeds are eaten by wildlife and livestock.

#7. One-seed juniper (Juniperus monosperma) is usually associated with piñon pine. It usually has several stems, shreddy bark and copper-colored berries (rarely bluish). Wildlife eat the berries.

#8. Galleta grass (Hilaria jamesii) is a short, warm-season, "rhizomatous" plant (with underground stems). It is an excellent soil-binding and erosion-control species.

#9. Indian ricegrass (Oryzopsis hymenoides) is a medium-sized, cool-season bunchgrass. It likes sandy soils and is very tasty to livestock and wildlife.

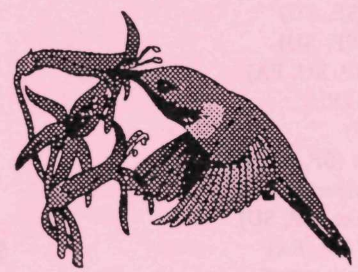
#10. Purple sage or broom dalea (Psorothamnus scoparius) is a shrub with dark blue flowers and broom-like stems. It is very drought resistant and a good sand binder.

#11. The Fremont cottonwood (Populus fremontii), like all cottonwoods, bears male and female flowers on separate trees. Mature seeds of the female flower clusters ("catkins") are covered with white "cotton," which gives the tree its name.

Location:

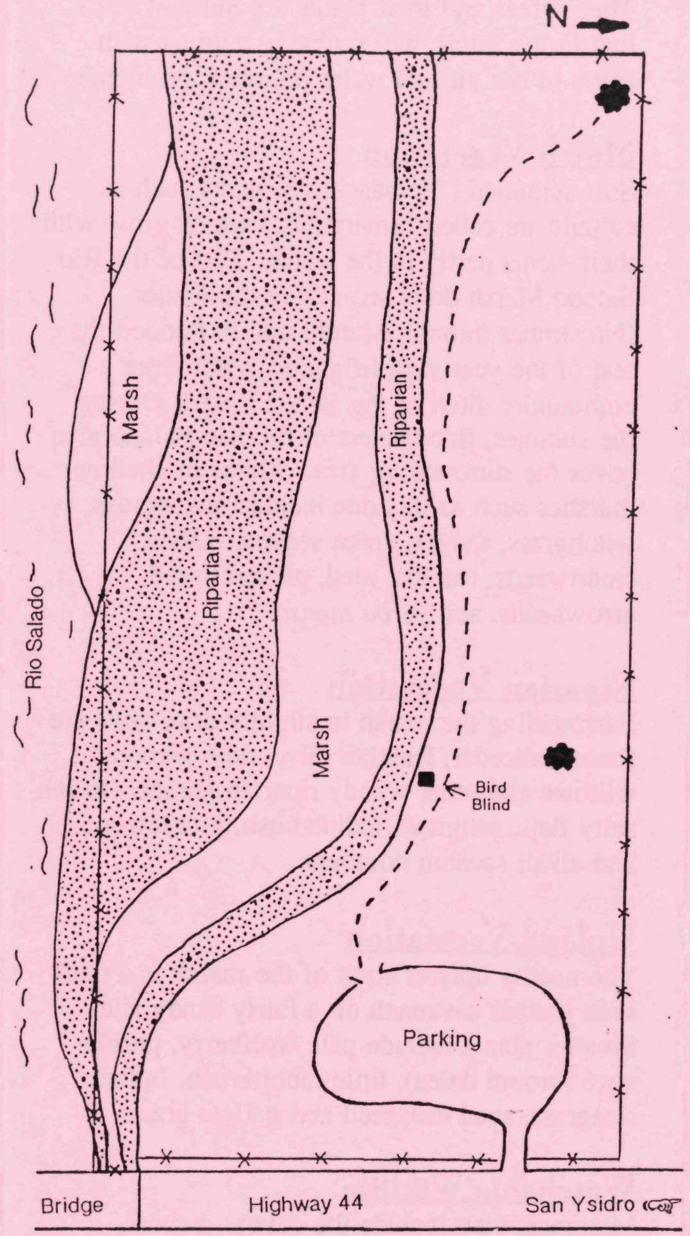
Located in San Ysidro, New Mexico, on Highway 44, at the Rio Salado Bridge.

The trail is .4 miles one way. It takes approximately 25 minutes for a round-trip visit.



Please remember to
"LEAVE NO TRACE"
of your visit to unique Public Lands

THANK YOU!



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PEREA NATURE TRAIL

PEREA NATURE TRAIL

Introduction

Riparian-wetland areas occupy a unique position in the landscape and life of the Western United States. They are a great deal more important than we might expect, given their relatively small acreage (less than 2 percent of the land in New Mexico).

Riparian-wetland ecosystems are areas near rivers, lakes or springs that are important islands of environmental diversity. Lying within much larger, drier and higher ("upland") ecosystems, these small areas attract greater numbers and more use by wildlife and livestock than their size would suggest. In terms of the total volume of plants they support, they are generally more productive than the nearby uplands. They also add to the supply of groundwater, reduce the effects of flooding and remove pollutants.

Wetlands have a water table at, near or above the land surface. They are waterlogged for a long enough period to support "hydric" soils (with a higher level of the element hydrogen and less oxygen) and "hydrophytic" vegetation (those plants that grow well in very wet soil). Plants in wetlands are especially good at producing oxygen.

Wetlands are so productive because they can catch large amounts of the sun's energy and store it as chemical energy, and they recycle much of the energy they produce on their own. These areas and their plants are nutrient traps that in the future will probably help us with some of our air and water pollution problems.

Marsh Vegetation

Soft-stemmed ("herbaceous") plants such as cattails are called "emergents," which grow with their stems partly in the water. Part of the Rio Salado Marsh dries out during the winter (November through March) and is flooded the rest of the year with irrigation water from a community ditch of the Jemez River. During the summer, floodwaters of the Rio Salado also cover the surrounding area. Plants of shallow marshes such as this one include arrowgrass, witchgrass, sedges, spike sedges, rushes, smartweeds, cattails, reed, pickerelweed, arrowheads, and *yerba mansa.*

Riparian Vegetation

Surrounding the marsh in slightly drier sites are found saltcedar, Russian olive, cottonwood, willows and other woody riparian shrubs. In the salty flats, saltgrass, iodine bush, greasewood and alkali sacaton dominate.

Upland Vegetation

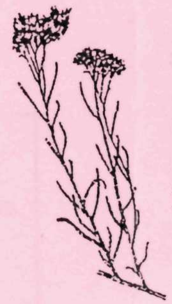
The nearby upland north of the marsh is a one-seed juniper savannah on a fairly sandy site. Smaller plants include pale wolfberry, purple sage (broom dalea), little rabbitbrush, Indian ricegrass, sand dropseed and galleta grass.

Watchable Wildlife

Mammals may include the coyote, bobcat, raccoon, striped skunk, cottontail, black-tailed jackrabbit, rock squirrel, desert shrew, banner-tailed kangaroo rat, Western harvest mouse, deermouse, white-footed deer mouse, Northern grasshopper mouse, white-throated woodrat and meadow vole. During the summer the following bats may be found in the area: little brown myotis, long-eared myotis, fringed myotis, long-legged myotis, small-footed myotis, Western pipstrelle and big brown bat.

Birds (seasonally) may include those shown in the following list. Raptors are listed separately.

Brewer's blackbird (SU)
redwing blackbird (SP, SU)
yellow-headed blackbird (SU)
Western bluebird (SP, SU, FA)
lazuli bunting (SP, SU)
yellow-breasted chat (SP, SU)
brown-headed cowbird (SU)
American crow (YL)
mourning dove (SP, FA)
mallard duck (SU)
house finch (SP, FA)
Northern flicker (YL)
willow flycatcher (SP, FA)
blue grosbeak (SP, SU)
black-chinned hummingbird (SU)
broad-tailed hummingbird (SU)
rufous hummingbird (SU)
scrub jay (YL)
killdeer (SU)
Western kingbird (SP, SU)
belted kingfisher (SU)
Western meadowlark (YL)
mockingbird (SP, SU)
common nighthawk (SU)
Northern oriole (SP, FA)
short-eared owl (W)
black phoebe (SP, SU)
Say's phoebe (SP, SU)
Virginia rail (SP, SU, FA)
common raven (YL)
roadrunner (SU)
American robin (SP, SU, FA)
Wilson's sandpiper (SP, FA)
loggerhead shrike (SP, SU)
common snipe (SP, FA)
savannah sparrow (SP, FA)
song sparrow (SP, FA)
European starling (SP, SU)
cliff swallow (SU)
violet-green swallow (SU)
white-throated swift (SP, FA)
summer tanager (SP, SU)
rufous-sided towhee (SP, FA)
MacGillivray's warbler (SP, SU)



orange-crowned warbler (SP, FA)
yellow warbler (SP, FA)
Western wood-peewee (SP, SU)
marsh wren (SP, SU)
common yellowthroat (SP, SU)

Northern harrier (YL)
Cooper's hawk (W)
kestrel (YL)
great horned owl (YL)
short-eared owl (W)
turkey vulture (SU)

Seasons: SP (Spring), SU (Summer), FA (Fall), YL (yearlong)

Reptiles that may occur in the area are:

collared lizard
Eastern fence lizard
lesser earless lizard
roundtail horned lizard
side-blotched lizard
tree lizard
checkered whiptail
little striped whiptail
New Mexico whiptail
plateau striped whiptail
Great Plains skink
many-lined skink
black-headed garter snake
Western garter snake
prairie rattlesnake
Western diamondback rattlesnake
coachwhip snake
glossy snake
gopher snake
desert striped whipsnake

Amphibians include:

Northern leopard frog
tiger salamander
Great Plains toad
New Mexico spadefoot toad
plains spadefoot toad
red spotted toad
Woodhouse's toad