

# Setting Restoration Priorities on a Watershed Scale

Gus Holm, Cimarron Watershed Alliance  
and Vermejo Park Ranch

*Gus Holm is the General Manager at Vermejo Park Ranch and the President of the Cimarron Watershed Alliance. Vermejo Park Ranch a 585,000-acre Ranch in northeast New Mexico encompassing six ecoregions from short-grass prairie to alpine tundra owned by Turner Enterprises Inc. The operation encompasses fishing, hunting, nature tourism, a sustainable forestry operation, bison production, coal bed natural gas development, and endangered species restoration. Gus is responsible for managing this diverse operation and supporting the TEI mission “To manage Turner Lands in an economically sustainable and ecologically sensitive manner while promoting the conservation of native species.”*



*The Cimarron Watershed Alliance (CWA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the health of our local watershed along the Cimarron River. The Cimarron Watershed Alliance (CWA) was formed in 2001 to provide local input on water quality issues in the Cimarron Watershed in northeastern New Mexico. Most recently the CWA has completed a Watershed Based Plan that incorporates 671,144 acres and 28 sixth level HUC’s, is actively working on Stream Restoration on Ponil Creek under an EPA 319 Grant, and has just started work on a Wetlands Action Plan in the Moreno Valley Headwaters of the Cimarron River.*

*Gus graduated from Fort Lewis College with a BS in Geology in 1991. He began working at Vermejo Park Ranch in 2001 in the Natural Resources Division, which focused on managing its diverse ecosystem, and was promoted to General Manager in 2014. Gus has been active in stream restoration since 2002 when he first started attending Quivira stream workshops with Bill Zeedyk. In 2009 he began the Dave Rosgen PhD series for stream restoration and completed the classes in 2012 with River Restoration and Natural Channel Design. Currently Gus is involved with riparian restoration projects on the Vermejo River and Ponil Creek.*



Figure 1. Introduction.

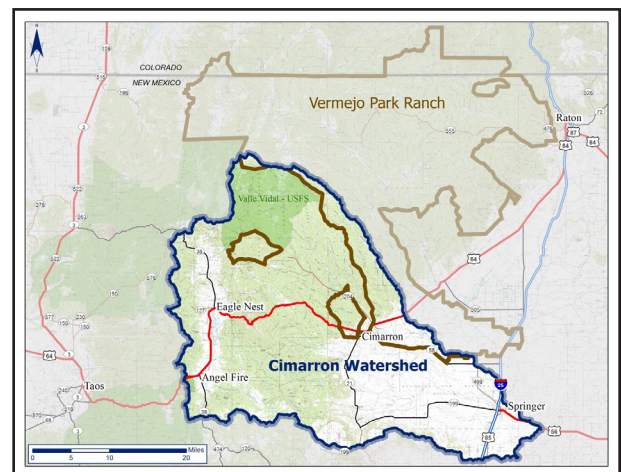


Figure 2. Cimarron Watershed.

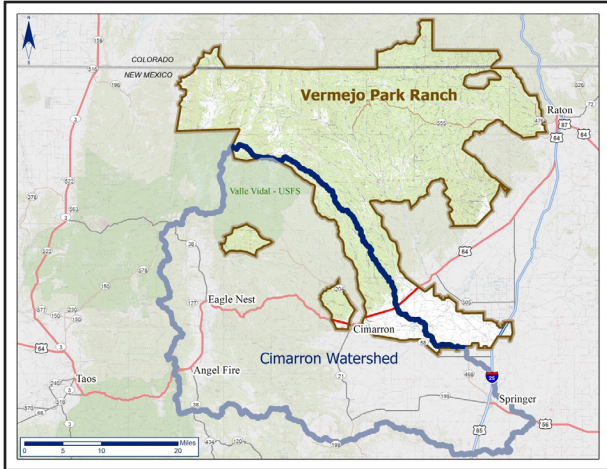


Figure 3. Vermejo Park Ranch area map.

- Watershed Based Plan completed in December 2012, prepared by Joanne Hilton, P.G. in cooperation with the CWA and the Quivira Coalition
- Encompasses 671,144 acres and 28 - 6 Level HUCs
- Follow up to the CWA's Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) from 2003
- Incorporates input from a wide based stakeholder group including ranchers, local businesses, community members, and representatives from County, State and Federal agencies
- Primary focus of the WBP is to address the root causes of impairment that affect the designated uses of water within the watershed

Figure 4. Cimarron Watershed Alliance Watershed Based Plan (WBP).

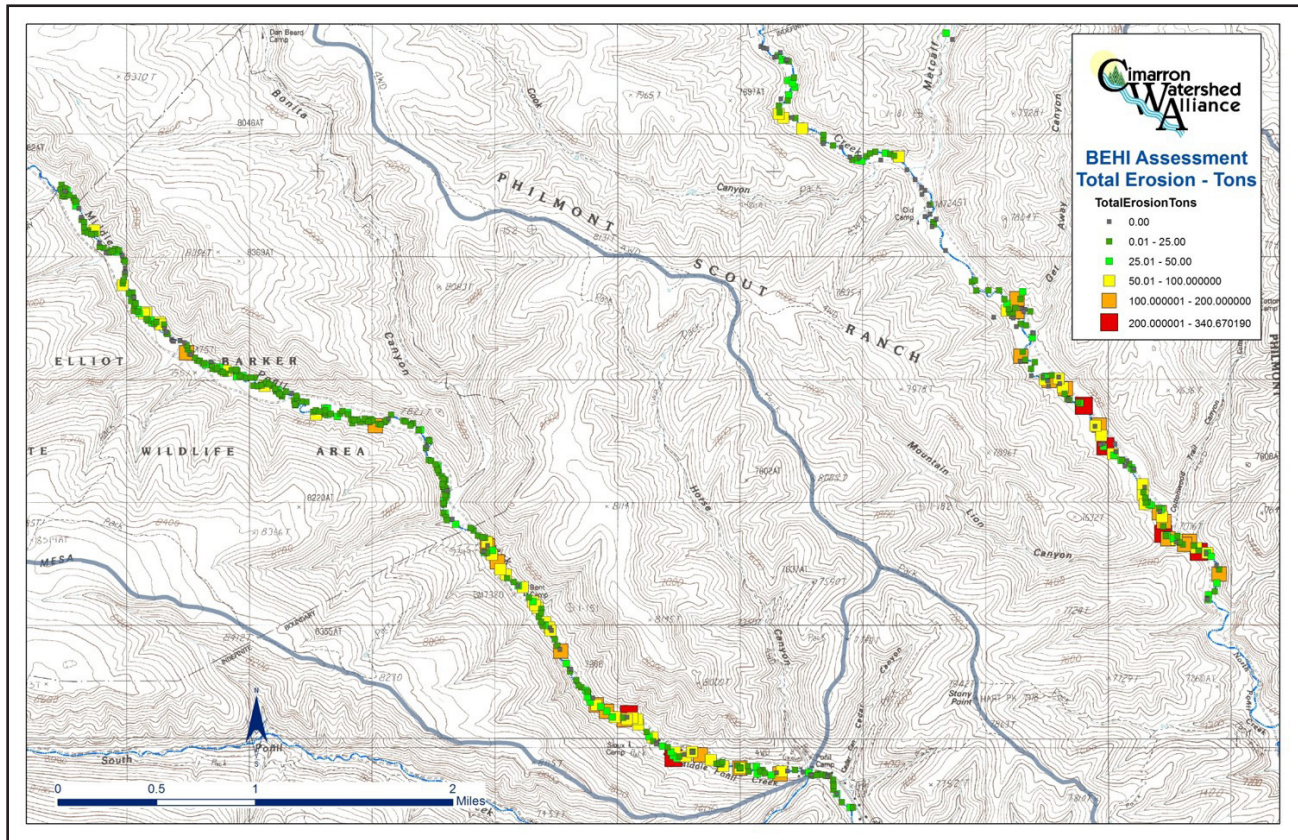


Figure 5. Watershed assessment of river stability and sediment supply (WARSSS).

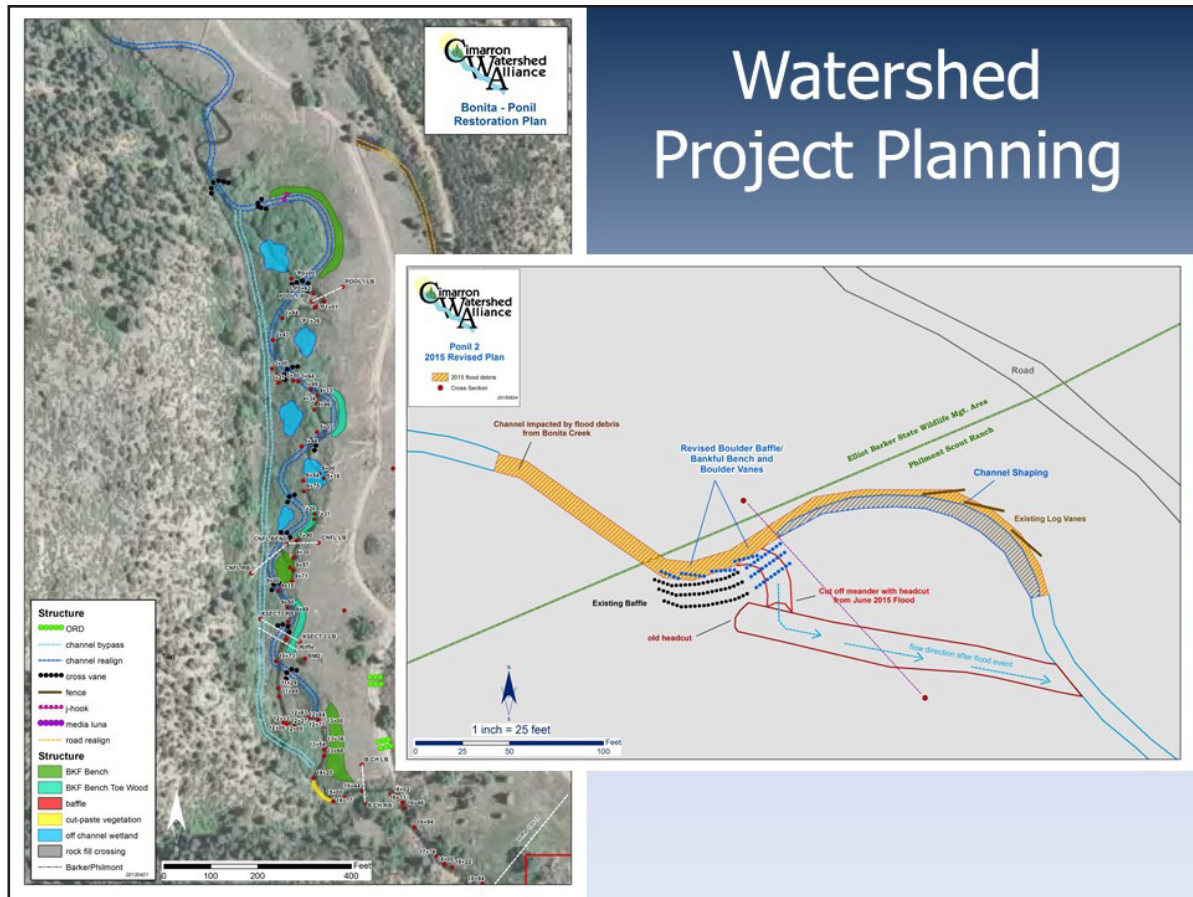


Figure 6. Watershed project planning.

## Vermejo Park Ranch Riparian Restoration Initiative

- Developed by VPR in 2009 with the goal of restoring impacted riparian systems.
- Priorities Established
  - Focus on cold water fisheries to support native species (i.e. Rio Grande cutthroat trout)
  - Protect existing wetlands
  - Restore riparian biodiversity
  - Address riparian impacts from roads

Figure 7. Vermejo Park Ranch Riparian Restoration Initiative.

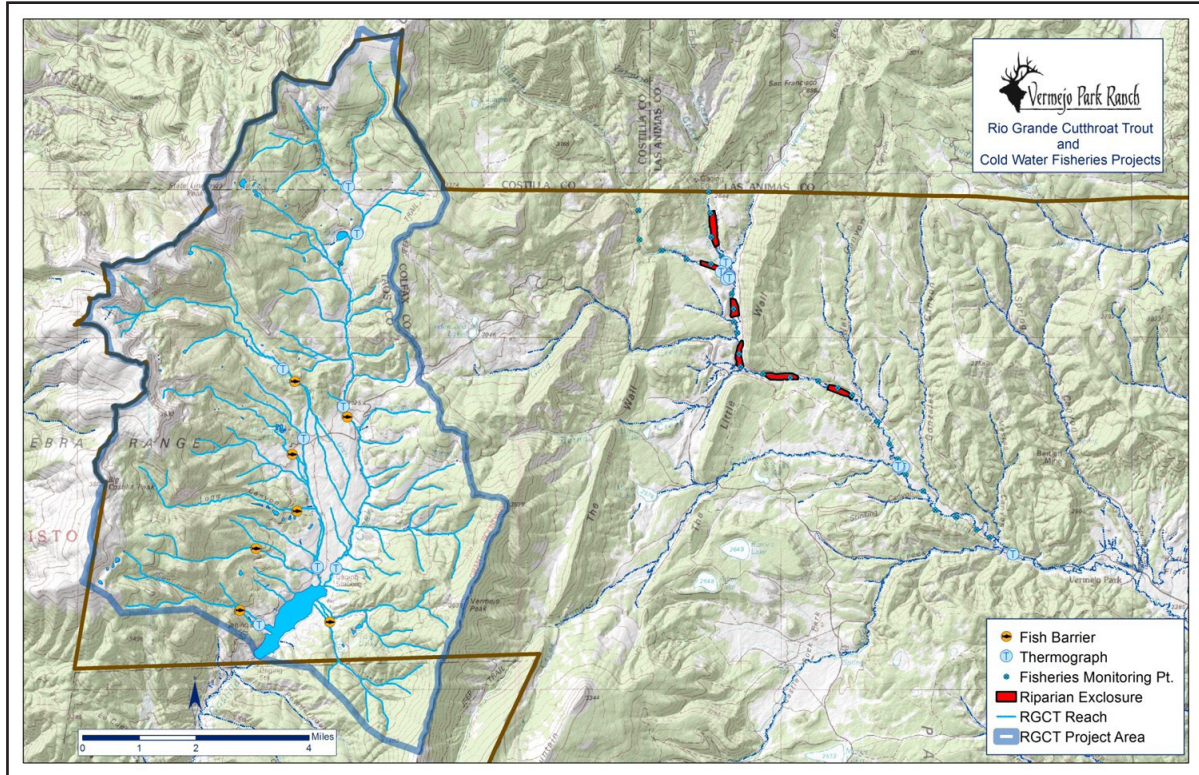


Figure 8. Vermejo Park Ranch coldwater fisheries.

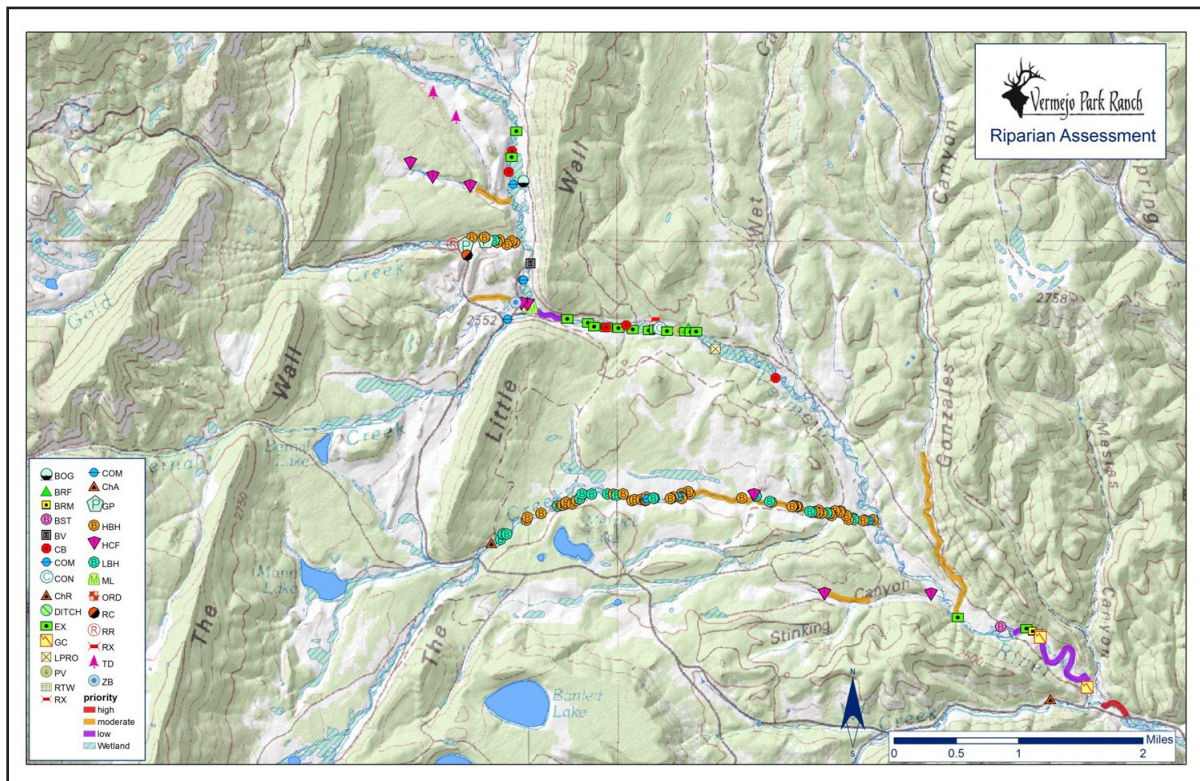


Figure 9. Riparian survey and wetlands inventory.