

# COLORADO RIVER DELTA RESTORATION PROJECT



Shaping the Future of the West

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## Laguna Grande Restoration Area

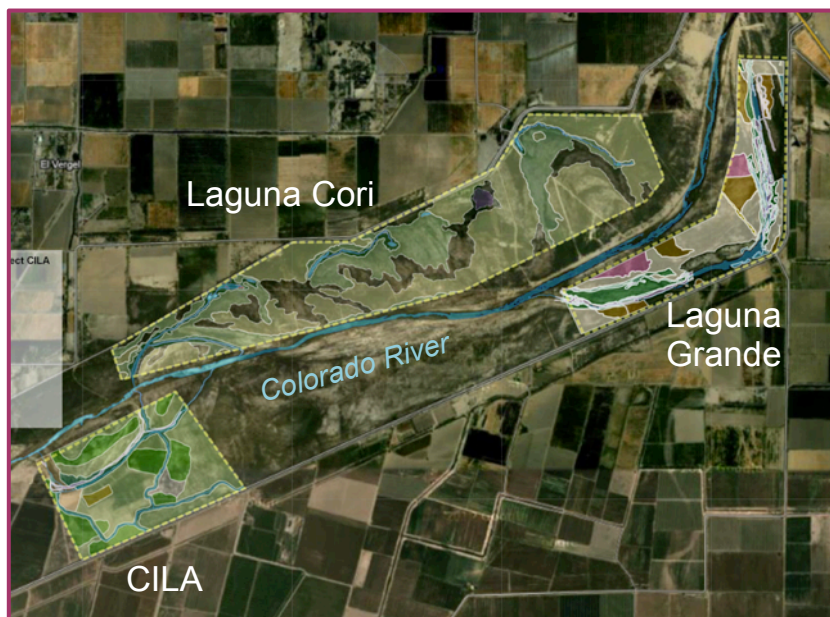
*The Laguna Grande Restoration Area is located in the heart of the Colorado River riparian corridor in Mexico. Sonoran Institute and partner Pronatura Noroeste began restoration in the site in 2006, and to date have restored over 150 acres of riparian habitat. The restoration area is now the largest and most dense stand of native riparian habitat along the river in Mexico. Our long-term restoration goal for the area is to create a 1200-acre nature preserve for the benefit of communities, economies, and wildlife in the Colorado River Delta.*

**Laguna Grande Background:** The Colorado River riparian corridor in Mexico is a 70-mile long stretch of remnant riparian habitat that still survives on groundwater and the drastically reduced flows of the Colorado River. In 2008, the Sonoran Institute and Pronatura Noroeste secured a total of 1200 acres within the riparian corridor dedicated to restoration through a land concession agreement with the Mexican government.

Research on the hydrology, topography, soil, and existing vegetation types has shown that the area has great potential for restoration. Furthermore, restoration pilot projects located within the concession area have had very positive impacts on the habitat, wildlife, and the local communities in the region. (See page 2 for projects.)



Map showing location of Laguna Grande Restoration Area within the Colorado River Delta



Laguna Grande Restoration Area is made up of 3 concession polygons totaling 1200 acres.

### Laguna Grande Land Concessions:

The Laguna Grande Restoration Area is made up of three distinct land concession polygons that lie in close proximity to one another along the river: CILA, Laguna Grande, and Laguna Cori. Initial restoration efforts began in the Laguna Grande polygon, which is where the restoration area gets its name. Over the past two years however, efforts have significantly expanded in the CILA polygon.

| Restoration Polygon | Total Acres | Acres Restored |
|---------------------|-------------|----------------|
| CILA                | 270         | 50             |
| Laguna Grande       | 680         | 100            |
| Laguna Cori         | 250         | 0              |
| Total Area          | 1200        | 150            |



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### Laguna Grande Restoration Projects:

Sonoran Institute began scaling up restoration efforts in the CILA polygon with the implementation of three key restoration projects in 2011-2012.

- 1) **CILA riparian restoration project:** In collaboration with Pronatura, 40 acres of cottonwood-willow and mesquite habitat were restored in 2011-12. This larger-scale project allowed us to streamline our native tree production methods and develop ecological monitoring protocols.
- 2) **BOR hydroseeding demonstration project:** To research alternative revegetation techniques, a 5-acre demonstration site of cottonwood and willow habitat was established by hydroseeding native tree seed. Pending funding, we plan to use the hydroseeding technique in a 30-acre area in 2014.
- 3) **Community Park Project:** A 5-acre community recreation area was restored with native habitat in 2012, and park infrastructure will be installed in the site in 2013. This project has gained significant support from local communities for our restoration efforts in the region.



Top: Aerial view of restoration sites in CILA polygon.  
Bottom left: Sonoran Institute hydroseeds native tree seeds in site.  
Bottom right: Community members explore community park.



| RESTORATION PHASE | IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE | # OF ACRES (active restoration) | # OF ACRES (passive restoration) |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Phase I           | 2013                    | 35                              | 0                                |
| Phase II          | 2014                    | 54                              | 230                              |
| Phase III         | 2015-2016               | 250                             | 120                              |
| Phase IV          | 2017                    | 69                              | 0                                |

Top: Restored riparian habitat at Laguna Grande Restoration Area.  
Bottom: Laguna Grande restoration phases over 5-year term of Minute 319.  
Project Funders and Partners: Alas del Delta, BOR, CILA, CONAGUA, CONANP, Geosystems Analysis, Hunter Industries, Modulo de Riego 22, NFWF, NH3, Pronatura Noroeste, SEMARNAT, SJV, UABC.

**Laguna Grande and Minute 319:** The Sonoran Institute and Pronatura's on-the-ground restoration projects in Laguna Grande have demonstrated the feasibility and success of restoration in the region. This was essential in laying the foundation for Minute 319, a 5-year long agreement signed in November 2012 between the U.S. and Mexico. For the first time in history, the agreement will dedicate water to the river in Mexico and expand restoration efforts in the Delta.

The majority of restoration activities under Minute 319 will take place in the Laguna Grande Restoration Area. Sonoran Institute and partners plan to restore 750 acres in the site over the 5-year term of the agreement. To ensure the long-term management and continued environmental and social benefits of the Laguna Grande Restoration Area, we will promote the establishment of a 1200-acre nature preserve.

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