# Project Year-End Summary Report

Title of Project: Hands-On Wetland Restoration Education in the Lower Embudo Valley*

*Location changed to Santuario Nuevo Conservation Easement in El Salto, New Mexico

*Begin answering in the shaded box right beside or below each question and it will expand to accommodate as you type. Use up to a total of two and a half pages for questions 1-8. More detailed presentations, a final report, articles or posters are welcome separately* (See final instructions at the end of this form.)*

1. Organization name or Individual who received the grant: Rivers & Birds, Inc

2. Amount of Grant: $ 2,000

4. Was additional outside funding obtained? (check box that applies) Yes ☐ No ☑
Other funding source(s) if you checked "yes."

5. Briefly, how was the grant money from the Carter Conservation Fund used? The grant money was used to pay for the transportation of students, print original Rivers & Birds native plant coloring books for each student, and to purchase native wildflower and grass seeds.

6. Write an abstract or summary of the activities performed and the progress that was made this year on your project. (Save any conclusions, lessons learned, and benefits achieved for the final sections, 7&8.)

This fall we took five 3rd grade classes on full day excursions to learn about native plants and participate in riparian habitat restoration. Due to unforeseen complications at the Lower Embudo Valley restoration site, we were forced to change locations and offer the program at a private conservation easement with westland ponds and a riparian corridor in El Salto, New Mexico. Students learned about the difference between native and invasive plant species and participated in a seeding activity to revegetate bare spots on the banks of the Arroyo Seco creek with native grasses and wildflowers. Through games, coloring book exercises, and the hands-on seeding activity, students learned about the importance of native plants, the ways in which humans and wildlife depend on them, and how to positively influence local ecosystems through native plant stewardship.

7. How does your project further a Native Plant Society mission area, namely: *plant or ecological education; conservation/restoration of native plants and/or their habitats; adds to botanical research; promotes appropriate use of native plants to conserve water, land and/or wildlife.*

Our project principally furthers the Native Plant Society mission area of plant or ecological education. By providing full-day outdoor educational field trips we were able to engage

students in meaningful and memorable learning experiences and send them home with original Rivers & Birds native plant coloring books to extend their learning beyond the bounds of the fieldtrip. During the day students were immersed in a beautiful riparian environment, learned about the existing native plant species at the site and got to seed new ones! Planting seeds was an entirely new experience for most of the students, who learned how and why it is important to plant native seeds and revegetate bare soil to support healthy riparian habitat. Students also learned about the difference between native and invasive plants and why native plants are essential for functioning ecosystems. This project boosted native plant knowledge and ecological awareness among 3rd grade students from across Taos County.

8. Any other conclusions, lessons learned, benefits to you, the community or the environment hopefully result from your work as assisted by this grant.

This work not only provided native plant education for young Taoseños, it also contributes to the restoration of native grasses and wildflowers on denuded stream banks, enhancing riparian habitat, with benefits to biodiversity and watershed health in El Salto, as well as in communities downstream.

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**Final Instructions**

**Please send your completed form as a PDF email attachment to cartergrantapps@gmail.com by November 1, 2026.**

* *To remain in good standing for any future funding from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, we ask that you educate our membership more fully in some way. This could be an article (250 words minimum, at least 1 high resolution illustration or photo) for our newsletter,* ***or*** *a paper or electronic copy or link to a published article connected with the past year's work,* ***or*** *by making an educational and visual presentation to one of our chapters. Contact information for our 7 area chapters is found on our website at www.npsnm.org under the Chapters tab.*

*What are your intentions in this regard?*

We have already delivered a visual presentation to the Taos chapter, and would also be happy to submit an article for the newsletter.

This year end report is submitted by Gwendolyn Pieper

My typed name is equal to my handwritten signature in testifying to the accuracy and truth of this report to the best of my knowledge today.

eMail address gwendolyn.pieper@riversandbirds.org

Date 10/29/26

*Please contact us again at cartergrantapps@gmail.com if you have any questions or alternate suggestions.*