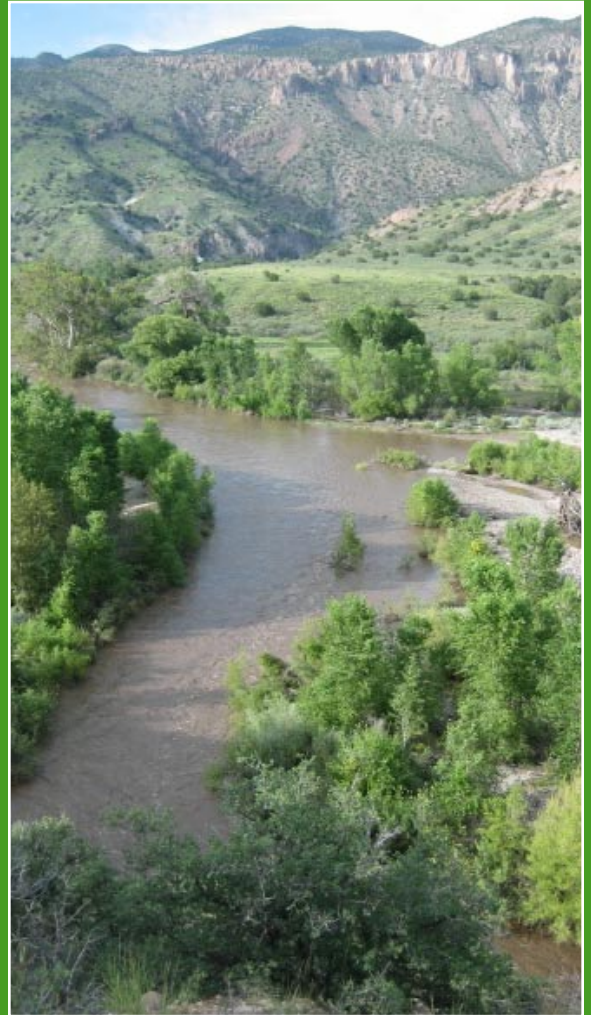




The Lichty Center, owned and operated by The Nature Conservancy in New Mexico

lichty ecological research center





The Lichty Ecological Research Center
is a project of
The Nature Conservancy in New Mexico

Contact for more information:

Martha Schumann
Southwest NM Field Representative
mschumann@tnc.org
505-538-9700 (office)
505-590-2594 (cell)

or

The Nature Conservancy
Lichty Ecological Research Center
P.O. Box 1603
Silver City, NM 88062

Cover Photo: The Gila River as it emerges from the Mogollon Mountains in the Gila Wilderness into the Cliff-Gila valley.



Ella Mutchnick explores aquatic life in the Mimbres River.



Left: Dr. Acuna and Dr. Uehlinger download data from a piezometer.
 Top right: Surveying bat populations along the Gila River.
 Bottom right: Bird-banding to estimate avian productivity and survivorship.

research

Scientists, instructors, and students working at the Lichy Center are encouraged to work closely with TNC staff in New Mexico to design research projects that can be applied to conservation, such as the restoration of rivers, streams and watershed, the restoration of natural fire regimes, and the recovery of threatened or endangered species.

Recent research has included:

- Effects of flood pulses on ecosystem processes
- Effects of groundwater fluctuations on riparian forests
- Fluvial geomorphology surveys of the Gila river
- Habitat use and population dynamics of the southwestern willow flycatcher
- Survey of salt cedar (tamarisk) along the Gila River
- Assessing and predicting burn severity in the Gila Wilderness
- Monitoring avian productivity and survivorship

setting

The Gila River and Mimbres River rank among the most diverse in New Mexico. The Gila River is among the last free-flowing rivers in New Mexico and the Southwest. It sustains a remarkable diversity of flora and fauna that includes the densest population of non-colonial breeding birds in the United States and some of the best examples of riparian forest in the Southwest. Because of their diversity and intact community structure, protection of these systems is a top priority for the New Mexico Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

In spite of their biological significance, the Gila and Mimbres watersheds have not been well studied. Critical information regarding target species demographics and ecological function is limited yet needed to support conservation efforts. The Nature Conservancy established the Lichy Ecological Research Center in the Gila Valley specifically to support research that will build an understanding of these two river systems and their watersheds.



New Mexico Game & Fish biologists sample fish populations in the Mimbres River.

mission

The Lichty Center supports research, and gatherings that align with The Nature Conservancy's conservation objectives.

As a field station, the Lichty Center houses researchers and provides office and laboratory space for scientific work. Researchers who use the Gila River Farm and Lichty Center enter into agreements with TNC to share their study objectives, data and results. Proposals from researchers are evaluated by Conservancy staff to determine whether the projects are compatible with Conservancy objectives.

The Lichty Center hosts gatherings of scientists or policy makers that are compatible with the conservation mission of TNC. The facility may be used for environmental education programs, depending on whether they support educational partnerships with local schools and groups, and how much time and resources they require of TNC staff. Educational programs that are linked to long-term monitoring are encouraged.

The Lichty Center also makes maps, books, data, and reports available for researchers, policy makers, and environmental educators to use on site.



Dr. Teresa Tibbetts, a post-doc at the University of Wyoming, sketches a sampling design.

facilities

The Lichty Center offers housing, an office, Internet service, a small laboratory, and a meeting room. Housing consists of three bedrooms (6 beds), three bathrooms, and a kitchen. The laboratory includes a dissecting scope, a drying oven, a scale and hydrological monitoring equipment



Ellen Soles, Donna Stevens and Dr. Teresa Tibbetts conduct field work in the floodplain at the Gila River Farm.

location

The Lichty Center is located approximately 35 miles west of Silver City, in the Cliff-Gila Valley of southwestern New Mexico. It is located on TNC's 80-acre Gila River Farm along the Gila River downstream from where the river emerges from the Mogollon Mountains in the Gila Wilderness.

Directions: Take Hwy. 180 approximately 30 miles west of Silver City. Drive past the turn-off on Hwy. 211 towards Gila. Take the second turn for Hwy. 211 in Cliff. After about a mile on 211, go left (north) on Hwy. 293 and drive to mile marker 4. Take a right immediately after the mile marker sign, turning into the driveway with a small sign that says "Gila River Farm".