

Socorro SWCD
Annual Report – FY 2018

Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District
103 Francisco de Avondo
Socorro, NM 87801
(575) 838-0078

Socorro SWCD Board Members:

Richard Ritter, Chairman
Eddy Harris, Vice-chairman
Chris Lopez, Secretary/Treasurer
Gordon "Corky" Herkenhoff, Supervisor
Jose "Lencho" Vega, Supervisor
Brian Durkin, Supervisor

Staff:

Nyleen Troxel Stowe, Director of Special Projects, Program Manager
Will Kolbensschlag, Range Technician, Noxious Weed Specialist

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

The Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District's Cost Share Program remains the top priority of the fiscal year. It is designed to assist landowners in implementing water conservation measures on their farms, ranches, and residences. The following is a summary of the available programs and the combined benefits of the District's multifaceted programs:

This year \$29,867.60 was reimbursed to landowners for installing beneficial agricultural and residential conservation projects.

Agricultural Projects:

Agriculture is perennially the most active segment of our cost share program. This year we assisted landowners with five land leveling projects moving 11,126 cubic yards of dirt on 68 acres; installation of 810 feet of eighteen inch irrigation pipeline benefitting 25 acres; replacement and upgrade of two irrigation turnouts benefitting 20 acres; one livestock well solar panel conversion benefitting 640 acres; and one drip irrigation upgrade on a 9 acre vineyard.



Residential Projects:

We assisted one landowner with the installation of a 2,500 gallon rainwater harvesting systems consisting of one rain barrel; one low flow toilet replacement; and two residential drip irrigation system installations.



Conservation Technical Assistance with numerous other individuals resulted in many practices being applied on the agricultural land within our district. The application of resource management systems in conjunction with the benefits of this versatile program has resulted in significant water and soil savings in the Socorro SWCD. Other benefits derived from the application of these conservation practices include improved water quality in the irrigated valley as well as the grazing lands in the district, improved wildlife habitat, improved watershed health and an overall improvement in the quality of life for the residents in our area. Our programs for drip irrigation, low flow water devices and rain harvesting barrels have expanded our cost share to reach more urban residents and have a greater overall impact on our community.

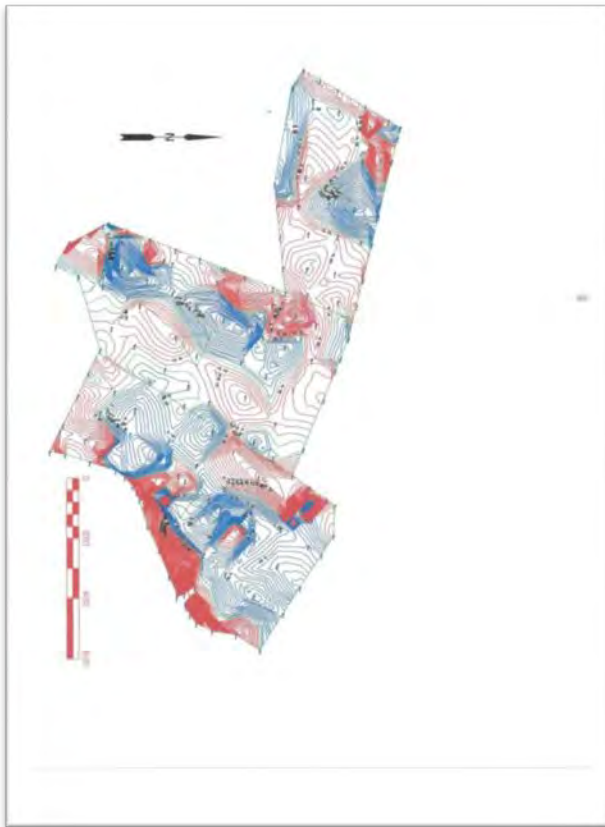
RIO GRANDE RESTORATION FUNDING

This year the Socorro SWCD used its recurring treatment and restoration funding to contract with San Jose Farms, LLC (contractor) to remove twenty-six acres of Salt cedar at the Gonzales property in Contreras, NM. San Jose Farms LLC began by using a large excavator to remove the trees and the root balls and put them into piles for burning. Following this, they used a bulldozer with a brush rake attachment to gather the remaining material into piles for further burning. After the material was burned, the contractor used various pieces of equipment to smooth out the property in preparation for an elevation survey and laser leveling.

This property adjoins the La Joya Acequia and the landowner intends to return it to the productive agricultural land that his family has farmed for generations. Remaining funds will be used to purchase native grass seed that is tolerant of the soil in its current condition (Inland salt grass, vine mesquite, alkali sacaton, etc.).



Piles of Salt cedar being burned.



Gonzales large field--contour map.

As a side note, the survey equipment that the Socorro SWCD uses to survey and design land leveling, irrigation pipeline, concrete ditch, livestock pipeline projects with was purchased using a SWCC grant.



Seep willow shrubs purchased for restoration.



Golden currant purchased for restoration.

Shrubs were purchased for understory and border planting on our restoration sites. They are currently being kept in our outdoor greenhouse cages. These shrubs will be planted in the fall once we have cooler temperatures to ensure the best rate of survival. The Buffalo grass seed purchased was broadcast planted once we started getting regular monsoon rain.

Item	Cost
Extraction/piling/burning of 26 acres	\$25,950.00
Native grass seed-200 lbs	\$1,517.86
Seep willow and Golden currant shrubs-430	\$4,312.14
Total:	\$31,780.00

Following is a summary of the acreage that we done to date using this funding.

Tract and Practices	Acreage	Funding Year	Funding Amount
Thomas tract, Whitaker tract, Lawrence tract/extraction and mulching	17.17 acres	FY 2008	\$42,000
NM Department of Game & Fish Extraction and mulching.	26 acres	FY 2009	\$42,000
Valdez tract, Pepplar tract Root plowing/raking into burn piles	73.1 acres	FY 2010	\$38,558
NM Department of Game and Fish-Ladd S Gordon Refuge Extraction, piling, seeding	102 acres	FY 2011	\$36,549
Carangelo tract Root plowing/raking followed with reveg planting Herkenhoff tract-Paddle scraping	119.1 acres	FY 2012	\$34,720
Bourne/Babcock tract Extraction and piling, grass seeding	23 acres	FY 2013	\$34,720
Armijo tract Extraction/windrowing	51.8 acres	FY 2014	\$34,720
Bruton tract Root plowing/raking Armijo/Gonzales and Bourne/Babcock tracts Fencing and Noxious weed treatment	101 acres	FY 2015	\$34,625
Gonzales tract Root plowing/raking Shrub purchase for follow up plantings	31.2 acres	FY 2016	34,417.25
Dean tracts Extraction/root plow and raking into piles for burning	35 acres	FY 2017	\$31,375
BLM (Rhodes) tract Bulldoze above ground vegetation	3.625 acres (10 acres total)	FY 2017	\$725
Rudy Gonzales tract	26 acres	FY 2018	\$31,780

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION GRANT FUNDING

The Socorro SWCD purchased a small hydraulic auger, brand name Little Beaver. It is a small earth drill that is easy for one person to maneuver and operate. It is equipped with a Honda engine, a four foot long, six inch diameter auger bit and an eighteen inch extension. This machine allows us to do restoration plantings in wetlands and softer soil areas where the Bobcat E35 mini-excavator is not usable due to weight or access issues.

The first project that the Socorro SWCD used this piece of equipment on was the Armendaris Ranch re-vegetation. We planted NM olive under the canopies of the Rio Grande cottonwood trees in an area near the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. The NM olive plants were grown in the Socorro SWCD greenhouse which was also a SWCC grant project.



The Little Beaver at the Socorro SWCD office.

Item	Grant Cost
Hydraulic auger setup-Little Beaver	\$3,929.25

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL

The Socorro SWCD continues its partnership with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to treat and control noxious weed species in Socorro and Catron counties. Due to the dry winter and lack of moisture with spring, the weed season began late and well into the summer. Priorities for Fiscal Year 2018 were the Socorro Nature Area, Fort Craig, Box Canyon, and El Camino Real trailheads, as well as a large, nasty infestation of Spiny Cocklebur on district rangeland. Salt cedar bug activity on various BLM retention dams and associated arroyos was also monitored. This spring, Range Technician Will Kolbenschlag attended a BLM training on noxious weed mapping. By using the Arc Collector app on his cell phone, Will is able to map and then upload noxious weed infestations, treatments and monitoring data that is available for anyone to see. This has assisted BLM in meeting its requirements for funding from the Washington DC office.



The Socorro Nature Area Trail



Treated Salt cedar surrounding a retention dam.



Fort Craig trail that was treated for Russian thistle, Puncture Vine, Kochia and Silverleaf nightshade.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

The Socorro SWCD staff had a booth at the Socorro County Fair over Labor Day Weekend, September 1-2, 2017. The cost share program for agricultural practices and for urban water conservations projects, as well as technical assistance is promoted at this event.



FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET:

Item	Amount
Income:	
State funding	49,350
Mil levy	155,189
Grant Income	81,930
Total:	286,469
Expenditures:	
Staff	131,302
Cost share program	30,068
Audit	2,473
Office supplies, postage, meetings, dues, telephone, travel, trainings, rent, utilities	32,344
Auto	11,608
Grant expenditures	35,697
Loan repayment to ISC	1,604
Total:	245,096