



## **Socorro SWCD Annual Report – FY 2006**

**Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District**  
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### **Socorro SWCD Board Members:**

**John Carangelo, Chairman**  
**Larry Whitefield, Vice-Chairman**  
**Virginia Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer**  
**Terry Gonzales, Supervisor (7/05 – 1/06)**  
**Rafael Carrillo, Supervisor (12/98 – 5/06)**  
**Rob Bowman, Supervisor**  
**Corky Herkenhoff, Supervisor**  
**Robert Shannon, Supervisor (3/06 – current)**  
**Keith Banks (6/06 – current)**

### **Staff:**

**Nyleen Troxel Stowe, Director of Special Projects, Program Manager, Noxious Weed  
Coordinator, Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project Manager**  
**Will Kolbensschlag, Range Technician**  
**Maggie Buck, Program Assistant and Monitoring Specialist**  
**Stacy Kuykendall, Monitoring Specialist 8/05 – 2/06)**

The Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District's Conservation Program is the top priority again this fiscal year. It is designed to compliment and enhance existing USDA programs that are available to Socorro SWCD cooperators throughout the District. The following is a summary of the available programs and the combined benefits of the District and USDA's multifaceted program.

- Socorro SWCD Cost Share Program-This year \$22,139 was funded for cooperators to move 22,917 cubic yards of soil for land leveling benefiting 96.3 acres; installation of 532 feet of 15" irrigation pipeline benefiting 38 acres; installation of 730 feet of 12" irrigation pipeline benefiting 9.8 acres; installation of 310 feet of 10" irrigation pipeline benefiting 1 acre; installation of 7 check gates benefiting 74.6 acres; installation of 8 turnouts benefiting 7 acres; installation of 1 diversion dam with a 3000 gal. watering facility benefiting 8,960 acres; 112.6 acres of medium brush control benefiting 1,700 acres; 1 agricultural drip irrigation system supplying water to 6 stations and 257 trees/shrubs benefiting 1.5 acres for a nursery that provides native vegetation to residents of the Socorro district; and 3 urban drip irrigation systems supplying water to 196 trees/shrubs and 866 sq. ft. of planting beds.
- EQIP-This USDA program is being widely utilized by cooperators in the District. Summary of practices installed this fiscal year under EQIP contracts are listed below:
  - 8316 feet of concrete lined ditch
  - 4044 feet of irrigation pipeline
  - 93 acres were Land Leveled
  - 34 structures for water control (check gates and turnouts)
  - 202 acres of brush control
  - 4 waste storage facilities and 4 pond liner

Ten Conservation Plans for EQIP were signed this year totaling approximately \$530,000 in work.

- Conservation Technical Assistance with numerous other individuals resulted in many practices being applied on the agricultural land within our District. We are asking each cooperator to sign a Socorro SWCD Cooperative Agreement and to get a Farm and Tract Number from FSA so that a Conservation Plan may be written for them and the Conservation Technical Assistance can be tracked accurately by NRCS.

The application of resource management systems in conjunction with the combined benefits of this multifaceted program has resulted in an estimated savings of 12,000 acre-inches of water and substantial soil savings in the Socorro SWCD this fiscal year. Other benefits derived from the application of these conservation systems 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.

The Socorro SWCD developed a Brush Management Cost Share Program. With this program, the Socorro SWCD provides the herbicide Velpar and the cooperator provides

the labor to apply the herbicide on nuisance brush species such as juniper. The Socorro SWCD gave out ten gallons of Velpar for juniper control this fiscal year.

The Socorro SWCD hosted the Rolling Rivers Water Trailer at the Bosque Conservation Day in October 2005 held at the Socorro Nature Area and the La Joya/Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Open House. The District hosted an informational booth at the Socorro County Fair to inform the general public about their programs including Cost Share assistance for irrigation improvements, brush control, soil testing, noxious weeds, Salt cedar control, monitoring, revegetation and restoration. The District provided soil stewardship materials for the K-5<sup>th</sup> grades in Socorro (Parkview Elementary, Zimmerly Elementary, San Antonio Elementary, Midway Elementary, La Promisa Elementary and Cottonwood Charter School).

The Socorro SWCD continued project management for the Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project for FY 2004. The New Mexico State Legislature funded this project in the amount of \$200,000 for treatment, monitoring, and rehabilitation work. The LRGSCCP set aside \$21,318 for aerial Salt cedar control; \$120,000 for extraction/mulching control; \$4,000 for basal bark treatment; \$55,000 for monitoring staff and range tech staff for resprout treatment and \$60,000 for Dr. Salim Bawazir's evapotranspiration study at Elephant Butte Reservoir for the installation of new tower components for monitor both treated and untreated acreage. The Socorro SWCD also received funding from the Bureau of Land Management in the amount of \$40,000 for aerial treatment on the Tularosa Watershed; \$55,000 from Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge for aerial treatment on the Rio Salado; and \$17,940.78 from Claunch Pinto SWCD for treatment along the Abo Watershed. The contract for aerial application was awarded to North Star Helicopters, Inc. Nyleen Troxel Stowe, Project Manager worked with Mr. Robert Ewing Jr., the GIS specialist with North Star Helicopters, Inc. to ensure that treatment would be avoided within the ¼-mile radius buffer zone of the Southwestern willow flycatcher nesting sites and territories again this year. The US Fish & Wildlife Service provided this data for the Rio Grande and for the Rio Salado. ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute Inc.) shape files were loaded into the on-board Trimble GPS (Global Positioning System) unit in the helicopter for this project. When the helicopter flew into the area that was designated to spray, the GPS unit would allow the helicopter's spray pump to be turned on within the designated treatment boundaries only. This helped assure us that the application would not be turned on over the Southwestern willow flycatcher areas. A total of 631 acres of Salt cedar were treated aerially. The State of New Mexico funding was used for aerial treatment on 124 acres of private land, 13 acres treated by basal bark herbicide application and 57.1 acres of extraction, mulching, and cut stump treatment, of which 19.5 acres were completed before April 15, 2006. The Bureau of Land Management funded this project in the amount of \$40,000 for 214 acres on BLM land. The Sevilleta NWR received funding in the amount of \$55,000 for 314 acres of Salt cedar on their land along the Rio Salado. The Socorro SWCD also received \$100,000 in funds secured by Senator Bingaman for Restoration on treated Salt cedar acreage. This money came through the USDA-NRCS to NM Association of Conservation Districts. We are using \$75,000 to have the Mandeville tract root plowed and raked. This acreage burned in a human caused wildfire in April 2005. It had only 18 months with the herbicide treatment so it began resprouting. We are having 341 acres treated at this time.

The Socorro SWCD website – [www.socorrosxcd.com](http://www.socorrosxcd.com) is updated on a regular basis. All District program information and forms are on line in PDF format-such as the Cost Share Application, Brush Management Cost Share Application, Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project Plan, Socorro/Sierra Regional Water Plan fact sheets, the Socorro SWCD Long-Range Plan, the Socorro SWCD annual reports, the Noxious Weed Treatment form, and the 2004 NMACD Directory.

A quarterly newsletter is sent to all of our cooperators. It comes out in January, April, July, and October. We offer new program information, water conservation tips, website information, etc. in this newsletter.

The Socorro SWCDs Noxious Weed Program continues to treat noxious weeds on the canals within our County and on private land. The Socorro SWCD hired a new Range Technician, Will Kolbensschlag in August 2005. Will received his Public Applicator's license in September 2005. He has treated 2.35 acres of Salt cedar by foliar herbicide application. He has also treated 11.15 acres of Salt cedar by cut stump (chainsaw followed with Garlon herbicide application to the stump). He has treated 4.6 acres of Salt cedar with Tahoe 3a by basal bark application. He has also treated 4 acres of Russian knapweed with the herbicide Plateau and 30.6 acres of Perennial pepperweed with the herbicide Glyphomate 41. This acreage has been on private land, the New Mexico Game and Fish Department Ladd S. Gordon Refuge Complex-La Joya unit, and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District's ditch system.



Perennial pepperweed at La Joya refuge  
In April 2006



Dead Perennial pepperweed at La Joya  
in May 2006

The Socorro SWCD moved Maggie Buck from the position of Farm Bill Specialist to Program Assistant/Monitoring Specialist. She started this new position on March 28, 2006. She is in charge of the Socorro SWCD cost share program and loan program. She is helping write the conservation plans for the Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project and she is monitoring 22 transects on 15 properties under Salt cedar control-aerial, extraction, and cut stump.

The Socorro SWCD lost another partner, Debra Davies, Deputy Refuge Manager with Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge on May 26, 2006. Deb was Acting Refuge Manager from January 2006 when then Manager, Jim Savery retired. Deb was very enthusiastic about Natural Resource Conservation. She began her career with the Natural Resources Conservation Service as a soil conservationist in Pojoaque, NM.

The Socorro SWCD lost one of our Board Members, Rafael Carrillo May 3, 2006 to cancer. Rafael was retired from the Albuquerque Public School System. He served as a Socorro SWCD Board member from December 1998 until the time he passed away. He served on several subcommittees for the Socorro SWCD including personnel and budget. Rafael was very supportive of the Socorro SWCD's projects and took great interest in learning about new natural resource issues. He will be greatly missed by this Board.

FY 2006

Item	Amount
Income:	
State funding	9,943.84
Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project	407,746.15
Mill levy	94,365.48
Valve/PVC sales	1,133.00
Noxious Weed Funding	50,385.00
Miscellaneous	14,082.18
Loan repayment	6,577.42
Total:	584,233.07
Expenditures:	
Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project	243,168.79
Program manager	47,445.59
Range Technician	28,246.77
Program Assistant/Monitoring Specialist	22,529.63
Cost share program	22,139.71
Office supplies, postage, meetings, dues, telephone, travel	42,514.13
Auto	9,617.33
Conservation activities	3,874.44
Loan repayment to ISC	11,225.76
Total:	430,762.15