



Socorro SWCD  
Annual Report – FY 2019

Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District  
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Socorro SWCD Board Members:

Eddy Harris, Chairman  
Chris Lopez, Vice-chairman  
Brian Durkin, Secretary/Treasurer  
Jose "Lencho" Vega, Supervisor  
James Sanchez, Supervisor

Staff:

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

## SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

The Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District's Cost Share Program is 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 \$45,137.60 was reimbursed to landowners for installing beneficial agricultural and residential conservation projects.

### Agricultural Projects:

Agriculture is the most active segment of our cost share program. This year we assisted landowners with thirteen land leveling projects moving 57,140 cubic yards of dirt on 220 acres; installation of 2,788 lineal feet of concrete ditch lining servicing 52 acres, installation of 660 feet of fifteen inch irrigation pipeline benefitting 8 acres; replacement of ten tailpipes that were leaking; drilling of one livestock well-seventy-five foot depth servicing eight acres for small livestock; and one livestock well solar panel conversion benefitting 2,000 acres.



Laser leveled field.

Residential Projects:

We assisted one landowner with the installation of three low flow toilets and three low flow showerheads and the installation of nine rainwater harvesting barrels for two landowners.



### San Antonio Flooding:

On July 16, 2018, San Antonio, New Mexico was flooded from a large storm event that caused a large amount of water, vegetation and trash to come out of the Walnut Creek Arroyo. Many acres of farmland were covered in sediment, vegetation and material from homes in San Antonio that were flooded. Several concrete ditches were completely covered with the sediment that washed in. These landowners had to dig to find the ditches and then clear them out. All of these landowners had thousands of cubic yards of dirt and debris to remove from their fields. They then re-leveled the farmland and re-planted. The Socorro SWCD surveyed 210 acres of flooded farmland and submitted this survey data to the Socorro Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for emergency funding. This acreage was surveyed in addition to our regular Cost Share Program. This information allowed the FSA and NRCS to fund additional flooded farmland projects.







This is the north side of the railroad crossing in San Antonio after the flood.

## RIO GRANDE RESTORATION FUNDING

This year the Socorro SWCD used its recurring treatment and restoration funding to contract with Lopez Farms to have the Salt cedar on the Tafoya tract and the Chavez tract root plowed/raked/piled and then burned. Three quotes were received and ranked based upon the categories listed in the Request for Quote. Lopez Farms was selected to complete the work. The contractor began root plowing/raking/piling, followed by burning on the Chavez tract on November 6, 2018. This tract was eight acres. The contractor then moved up to the Tafoya tract. This tract was 27.5 acres.



Contractor pushing above ground brush over to prior to root plowing/raking.



Salt cedar piles being burned. The water pumper truck can be seen in the background.



Clearing and burning work is underway in this picture. Native trees are left in place.





Root plowing.



A large, completed area following root plowing in 2 directions.



Post treatment: Turkeys on the Tafoya tract.

We also used Noxious Weed funding from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to have 28 acres of BLM root plow/raked/piled. The BLM firecrews will burn the Salt cedar slash piles. This acreage was completed for the cost of \$11,900.



Following is a summary of the acreage that has been completed to date using the Socorro SWCD Riparian Restoration Funding from the New Mexico State Legislature.

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, Pepllar 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	\$25,500
Chavez and Tafoya tracts	35.5 acres	FY 2019	\$31,780



## NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL

This year the Socorro SWCD continued its long standing partnership with the BLM by treating noxious weeds on public land, on both recreation and rangeland sites. Keeping the recreation sites weed free and attractive to the public users of the land is a key component of our partnership. There is an expectation that trails, benches, and other public areas should be kept weed free, both as an aesthetic and to prevent wildlife such as rattlesnakes hiding amongst them. This includes the Socorro Nature Area, Box Canyon, Ft. Craig, and the Datil Well Campground. Equally as important is the treatment on range land. This year, a wet winter encouraged plenty of early season weed growth. The priority area to tackle is Taylor Canyon which has a nasty weed infestation of Spiny cocklebur in retention dams, and of course the ever-present Salt cedar, which does not seem to be controlled by Diorhabda Elongota at all, unfortunately. Salt cedar spraying will resume this year, a job that has been on hold for the past two years while being evaluated for efficacy of the bug. This year begins a special project. It is a unique twenty-eight acre piece of BLM land that connects the rangeland to the Rio Grande. The Salt cedar, Russian olive and Siberian elm was cleared from the land in FY 2019. Staff are currently removing resprouts, and will begin re-vegetation efforts with native pole plantings this winter.



Spiny cocklebur-Taylor Canyon area.





Retention dam of BLM land infested with Spiny cocklebur.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH:**

The Socorro SWCD staff had a booth at the Socorro County Fair over Labor Day Weekend, August 31 - September 1, 2018. The cost share program for agricultural practices and for urban water conservations projects, as well as technical assistance is promoted at this event.

The Socorro SWCD also assisted San Antonio Elementary School with another planting project for Arbor Day (April 26, 2019). The holes for the trees and shrubs were dug using the Socorro SWCD's Bobcat mini-excavator.



The Socorro SWCD staff presented at two San Antonio Flooding Community meetings to offer their Cost Share Program to agricultural producers.

The Socorro SWCD also helped sponsor the NM Envirothon, the State 4H/FFA Competition and the Women in Agriculture Conference with monetary donations.

**FISCAL YEAR 2019 BUDGET:**

Item	Amount
Income:	
State funding	45,875
Mil levy	157,182
Grant Income	78,938
Sale of Fixed Assets	17,118
ISC Loan Re-payment	1,745
Total:	300,858
Expenditures:	
Staff	132,222
Cost share program	45,338
Audit	2,481
Office supplies, postage, meetings, dues, telephone, travel, trainings, rent, utilities, equipment repair	37,404
Auto	4,660
Grant expenditures	43,675
Capitol Purchase-new truck	29,972
Loan repayment to ISC	1,604
Total:	297,356