



Socorro SWCD
Annual Report - FY 2002

Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District

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John Carangelo, Chairman

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Virginia Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer

Ernest Cordova, Supervisor

Rafael Carrillo, Supervisor

Rob Bowman, Supervisor

Ed Harris, Supervisor (7/01 thru 12/01)

Leo Lovato, Supervisor (1/02 thru current)

Staff:

Nyleen Troxel Stowe, Program Manager & Noxious Weed Coordinator

Stu McFarland, Range Technician & Noxious Weed Specialist

The Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District's Conservation Works Program continues to expand. It has been 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 Irrigation Works Loan Program-This program is funded by money borrowed from the ISC and continues to grow. One loan was made this year. The loan was for \$25,000 to install 1,010 feet of 21" irrigation pipeline, 380 feet of 12" irrigation pipeline and 2,572 feet of concrete ditch.
- Socorro SWCD Cost Share Program-This year, \$16,443.31 was funded for cooperators to move 20,467 cubic yards of soil for land leveling benefiting 60 acres; installation of 50 field ditch turnouts; installation of 200 feet of concrete ditch; installation of 1,162 feet of livestock pipeline; and treatment of 46 acres of brush.
- Urban Conservation Program-This program is part of the Socorro SWCD cost share program. One urban drip system was installed. Six more have been funded and are in various stages of installation.
- EQIP-This USDA program is being widely utilized by cooperators in the District. Practices applied this fiscal year include brush control, concrete ditch, irrigation pipeline, and dairy waste management.
- Conservation Technical Assistance with numerous other individuals resulting in numerous other practices being applied on the agricultural land within our District.

The application of resource management systems in conjunction with the combined benefits of this multifaceted program has resulted in substantial water and 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, and an overall improvement in the quality of life for all of the residents in our area.

The District gave one grant for a drip irrigation system to the La Joya community Center. The grant totaled \$300. The drip system waters the newly landscaped area around the Center.

The Socorro SWCD also finished revising their Long-Range Plan. This has been published and distributed to the cooperators and other interested parties within our District.

The Socorro SWCD successfully negotiated a contract for completion of the Socorro/Sierra Regional Water Plan. The second half of this plan will concentrate on developing alternatives such as water conservation practices, vegetation control, etc. The NM State Legislature through the Interstate Stream Commission, funds this contract. Completion of the plan will be in FY 2003.

The Socorro SWCD has joined several Environmental groups (Rio Grande Restoration, Sierra Club, Amigos Bravos, and NM Public Interest Research Group) as well as the MRGCD Assessment Payers Association to protest the City of Albuquerque's San Juan Chama Drinking Water Project proposal before the Office of the State Engineer. The Socorro SWCD feels that if the City of Albuquerque is allowed to divert 103,000 acre-ft of water from the Rio Grande, to which they only have rights to 47,000 acre-ft of water, it will cause a severe decrease in native Rio Grande water, a severe decrease in water quality, and will prove very detrimental to the Bosque within the City limits of Albuquerque. The Socorro SWCD has spent numerous hours working with these environmental groups developing trust and a working relationship.

The District hosted a Food, Land, & People training for the Socorro Public School System Teachers in August. The Socorro SWCD Board purchased seven FLP manuals for the teachers that attended the training. The Socorro SWCD helped put on Bosque Days, and Sevilleta/La Joya Open House. The District provided soil stewardship materials for all the K-5 grades in Socorro County including the new Cottonwood Charter School. The District also sponsored two savings bonds for science fair projects on conservation at the Sarracino Middle School Science Fair, and two savings bonds for Socorro County residents for the Junior Duck Stamp program at Bosque del Apache.

The following programs were funded through the Socorro SWCD by Federal grants:

The Socorro SWCD's Noxious Weed Program continues to grow. Socorro County has now been entirely mapped for the presence of noxious weeds. Species found to date include Perennial pepperweed, Russian knapweed, Camelthorn, Bull thistle, Malta starthistle, Yellow toadflax, Hoary cress, and Parrotfeather. The Socorro SWCD has developed and adopted a Noxious Weed Eradication Assistance Program. The Socorro SWCD will be treating the presence of noxious weeds on private land free of charge to cooperators that apply for the program. The Socorro SWCD has hired a new Range Technician/Noxious Weed Specialist. The Range Technician has begun creating an herbarium and meeting with private landowners to identify noxious weed species on their land. The Program Manager attended National Invasive weed Awareness Week III in Washington DC, representing Socorro SWCD, the Socorro County Noxious Weed Management Area, and the NM Noxious Weed Program. Maps were displayed in DC. A map is attached showing infestation in Socorro County for 2001. Our noxious weed program is funded by grants from the Bureau of Land Management, US Fish & Wildlife Service-National Wildlife Refuge System, and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation.

The Socorro SWCD continues to manage the demonstration project on alfalfa using drip irrigation. This past year, 26.4 acre-inches per acre of water was applied to the alfalfa through the drip system. This was 5 inches less than the previous year, as the system was down quite a bit due to leaks caused by gophers. However, production of the alfalfa remained unchanged. Capsicum was injected into the system to try to inhibit damage by the gophers. This was completely unsuccessful. Treatment was then initiated to for the gopher dens and tunnels. This has greatly helped maintain the system. We are beginning to see pressure increases in the system. This usually signifies orifices that are becoming clogged. We continue to monitor this. This project is funded by a grant from the Bureau of Reclamation.

The Socorro SWCD was also the fiscal agent for a Salt cedar removal project, funded by the US Fish and Wildlife Service-Bosque Initiative. This project was

performed on land owned by New Mexico Tech. They used their heavy equipment training class to do the initial treatment-bull dozing of Salt cedar. Three arroyos were selected to have the Salt cedar removed and NM Tech bulldozed the Salt cedar. Then we contracted to have the arroyos root plowed and root raked to remove the root systems of the Salt cedar. During the monsoons of 2001, after this treatment, water ran in the three arroyos to the Rio Grande. The final portion of this grant will be used to purchase herbicide for NM Tech to retreat any resprouts of the Salt cedar.



The Program Manager donated her time to administer these projects.

FY 2002

Item	Amount
Income	
Grants	38,370.68
State funding	9,820.82
Mill levy	68,803.15
Valve/PVC sales	8,434.49
Miscellaneous	1,110.56
Total	126,539.70
Expenditures	
BOR grant, Fuel break grant	20,557.55
Program manager	33,933.50
Noxious weed specialist	11,086.65
Cost share program	16,552.56
Office supplies, postage, meetings, dues, telephone, travel	16,231.69
Equipment	9,215.44
Auto	3,324.62
Conservation activities	13,162.77
Total	124,064.78