



Socorro SWCD Annual Report – FY 2008

**Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District
103 Francisco de Avondo
Socorro, NM 87801
(505) 838-0078
(505) 838-0978 (fax)
Email: socorroswcd@qwestoffice.net**

Socorro SWCD Board Members:

**Larry Whitefield, Chairman
Rob Bowman, Vice-chairman
Virginia Johnson, Secretary/Treasurer
Richard Ritter, Supervisor
Corky Herkenhoff, Supervisor
Robert Shannon, Supervisor
Eddy Harris, Supervisor**

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, Noxious Weed Specialist
Jane Farmer, GIS Specialist, Administrative Assistant**

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

- Socorro SWCD Cost Share Program-This year \$38,586.69 was funded to assist cooperators in moving 37,932 cubic yards of soil for land leveling benefiting 136 acres; installation of 438 feet of 1" livestock pipeline for 9 acres; installation of 6,620 feet of livestock pipeline with a 500 gallon water storage tank; 9 drip irrigation systems installed with 1,392 drippers; 4 soil test analyses; and replacement of 4 standard toilets with low-flow toilets.
- 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 this fiscal year. 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. The soil analysis program is implemented with help from our Cooperative Extension Office and our Extension Agent, Mr. Tom Dean. He advises cooperators on the proper fertilizer and crop rotation to improve the soil quality. The drip irrigation cost share program and the low flow water device replacement program offer our urban water conservation cooperators an opportunity to implement water savings.

The Socorro SWCD hosted the Rolling River Water Trailer at Kids, Kows, and More held at the Socorro County Fairgrounds. The Salado SWCD staff helped with Kids, Kows, and More as many students from the Salado SWCD area attended this event. The Socorro SWCD worked with the Socorro County Extension Office to host and sponsor this event. The Socorro SWCD also had the Rolling River Water Trailer at the Zimmerly Water Festival in May. The fourth and fifth grade students learned about water conservation, soil conservation, noxious weeds, farm crops, and flooding. The Socorro SWCD 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, drip irrigation, low flow water device installation, Salt cedar control, monitoring, revegetation and restoration. The Socorro SWCD provided soil stewardship materials for the K-5th grades in Socorro (Parkview Elementary, Zimmerly Elementary, San Antonio Elementary, Midway Elementary, and Cottonwood Charter School). The Socorro SWCD also had a weed identification contest at the Bosque Conservation day held at the Socorro Nature Area. The students had to gather as many weeds as they could and identify them using the *Troublesome Weeds of New Mexico* by Mark Renz and Frank Sholedice and published by NM State University.

The Socorro SWCD continued project management for the Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project. The project received \$69,347.50 in legislative funding through NM State

University under the oversight of NM Department of Agriculture and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. This funded the extraction and mulching of 9.1 acres of Salt cedar south of Las Cruces; mulching and cut stump of 8.5 acres of Salt cedar at Mims Pond in Truth or Consequences and 21.87 acres of extraction and mulching of Salt cedar on a tract in Bosquecito. Boss Reclamation, LLC was the contractor for this work. The work at Mims pond was changed from extraction and mulching to mulching/cut stump with herbicide application as the tract was too wet for the equipment to do the work. Boss Reclamation, LLC then subcontracted with Conservation Services, LLC to use a smaller mulcher and crew for cut stump work. This work was very successful.

The Socorro SWCD received \$294,000 in funding from NM Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Division from the Land, Wildlife and Clean Energy Act to remove Salt cedar, conduct soil surveys, to install fencing, and restore native vegetation. This work was completed on five tracts of land. The landowners entered into a conservation easement program with the Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust. Three of the tracts of land are in Pueblito and the other two are in Bosquecito. A total of 83.72 acres of Salt cedar was extracted and mulched. A total of 24,373 feet of 4-strand barbed wire fence was installed to prevent grazing on these five tracts of land. A thorough soil survey was done on 166 acres to aid in the restoration of native vegetation on these tracts. Pole planting and native riparian species planting will occur in FY 2009.



The Socorro SWCD received Capitol Outlay funding in the amount of \$42,000 to work on the east side of the Rio Grande. A total of 20.17 acres was extracted and mulched with this funding. This funding allowed for completion of work on one of the tracts that was partially funded with the Land, Wildlife and Clean Energy funding. Fifteen hundred feet of fence was installed with this funding also.

The Socorro SWCD signed a JPA with NM State Forestry, NMEMNRD, for a \$65,000 Severance tax funded project to extract and mulch 32.8 acres of Salt cedar on a tract of land in Pueblito owned and managed by the NM Department of Game and Fish. The Socorro SWCD signed a Memo of Understanding with NMDGF to do this work. The NMDGF completed an archeological survey of the land, received clearance from the State Historic Preservation Office and then the Socorro SWCD contracted to have this work done. This tract of land was in between two other tracts of land that had the Salt cedar extracted and mulched with the Land, Wildlife and Clean Energy funding received.



The Socorro SWCD also received funding from the Bureau of Land Management-Rio Puerco, Socorro, and Las Cruces Field Offices, US Fish and Wildlife Service-Partners for Fish and Wildlife Grant with Sierra SWCD, and Holloman Air Force Base in the amount of \$516,698.92 for aerial helicopter herbicide application to Salt cedar on 1,947 acres.

The 536 acres on Holloman was postponed by one year in FY 2009 due to an unpredicted full base closure.

The Socorro SWCD has almost used all of the FY 2006 funding for revegetation received from the legislature. This has been used to mulch previously treated Salt cedar to help with native grass establishment. The Socorro SWCD continues to work with NMACD using Bingaman funds for restoration. These funds have been used for mulching previously treated Salt cedar, fencing, pole plantings, and native riparian plant establishment. A total of 1,125 cottonwood and black willow poles were planted in February 2008. Transplants are scheduled to be planted in October 2008. The Socorro SWCD also assisted the Save Our Bosque Task Force with the harvesting and planting of 5,000 Gooding's black willow and Coyote willow poles on one tract of land in the Bosquecito area for the re-establishment of native Southwestern willow flycatcher habitat.

The Socorro SWCD assisted Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge and the volunteer group, Amigos de la Sevilleta, plant another 2,000 Gooding's black willows in February 2008. The Socorro SWCD also went under contract with Hydra Aquatic, Inc. to have 6,000 Gooding's black willows grown for delivery in January 2010 for planting.

The Socorro SWCD completed the installation of the Outdoor classroom on Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. A slab was poured with handicap unloading zone, a group shelter was erected, a sidewalk leading to a pond with curb stop at end of sidewalk was poured, Salt cedar was removed with a dozer, and a volunteer girl scout made a kiosk with materials donated by Raks Building Supply. This was dedicated as the John J. Carangelo Children in Nature Outdoor Classroom on October 13, 2007 during the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Open House festivities.



The Socorro SWCD moved into a new office in April 2008. It is located just west of the Chevron station with the carwash on California Street at the north end of town, 103 Francisco de Avondo. We have been busy upgrading the building and landscaping.



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 staff treated 1 acre of Siberian elm, 1.25 acres of Russian olive, 2 acres of Tree of Heaven, 3 acres of Russian thistle, 3.7 acres of Russian knapweed, 4 acres of Silver leaf nightshade, 5.75 acres of Perennial pepperweed, and 67.45 acres of Salt cedar.

FY 2008

Item	Amount
Income:	
State funding	10,979
Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project	887,772
Mill levy	62,606
Sevilleta Restoration Grant	12,345
Miscellaneous	390,152
Loan repayment	5,814
Total:	1,366,668
Expenditures:	
Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project	552,248
Program manager	63,919
Range Technician	43,017
Program Assistant/GIS Specialist	3,826
Cost share program	38,556
Office supplies, postage, meetings, dues, telephone, travel	81,785
Auto	11,635
Conservation activities	331,061
Loan repayment to ISC	7,438
Total:	1,133,405