



Socorro SWCD Annual Report – FY 2005

Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District
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Shawn Cain, Supervisor
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Staff:

**Nyleen Troxel Stowe, Director of Special Projects, Program Manager & Noxious Weed
Coordinator**
Brian Mertz, Range Management Specialist
Ryan McLin, Monitoring Specialist

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 \$21,992 was funded for cooperators to move 15,588 cubic yards of soil for land leveling benefiting 70 acres; installation of 495 linear feet of concrete ditch benefiting 28 acres; installation of 400 feet of 18" irrigation pipeline with ten 14" alfalfa valves benefiting 10 acres; installation of 445 feet of 15" irrigation pipeline with ten 12" alfalfa valves benefiting 10 acres; 74 acres of light brush control benefiting 500 acres; replacement of 68 leaky turnouts benefiting 20 acres; and two drip irrigation system rehabilitations replacing 33,600 feet of drip tubing and 16,800 emitters benefiting 9 acres.
- EQIP-This USDA program is being widely utilized by cooperators in the District. Eleven Conservation Plans for EQIP were signed this year with practices of land leveling, concrete lined ditch, irrigation pipeline, livestock pipeline, water storage, and brush management totaling approximately \$575,000 in work. Also, two WHIP Conservation Plans were signed this year for brush management, tree/shrub establishment, installation of a pond, and upland wildlife management (8 bat houses). The Socorro SWCD has also submitted a Letter of Intent to the Water Trust Board for \$1,000,000 in funding to have a \$2,000,000 Concrete Lined Ditch Cost Share Program with cooperators that are ready at this point in time to install this practice.
- Conservation Technical Assistance with numerous other individuals resulting 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 more accurately.

The application of resource management systems in conjunction with the combined benefits of this multifaceted program has resulted in an estimated savings of 15,000 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 watersheds 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 hosted the Rolling Rivers Water Trailer at the Socorro Water Festival for 4th graders. The District 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 District also sponsored two savings bonds for two students' individual science fair projects held at the Sarracino Middle School Science Fair. The project titles were Can Nano-Technology Be Used to Remediate Produced Water and Can Produced Water Be Used for Irrigation: Part 2.

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 \$633,333.34 for treatment, monitoring, and rehabilitation work. The LRGSCCP set aside \$225,000 for aerial Salt cedar control, \$175,000 for cut stump control, \$90,000 for monitoring, and \$143,333 for rehabilitation on previously treated land. 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 2,345.69 acres of Salt cedar were treated aerially. The State of New Mexico funding was used for treatment on private land, Sevilleta NWR and at Elephant Butte Reservoir. The Bureau of Land Management funded this project in the amount of \$150,000 for 824 acres on BLM, private, and Sevilleta NWR land. The Sevilleta NWR received a grant for \$25,000 and purchased a bulldozer from BLM for use by the Socorro SWCD in Socorro County for rehabilitation as a cost share match for the aerial treatment funded by the State. The US Fish & Wildlife Service Regional Office funded this project in the amount of \$31,500 for treatment of 80 acres of Salt cedar with the herbicide Habitat at Maxwell NWR, 100 acres of Salt cedar with the herbicide Arsenal at Bosque del Apache, and 7 acres of the aquatic weed Parrot feather in one of their drainage ditches with the herbicide Habitat. This treatment of Parrot feather on their drainage ditch was the first aerial application of Habitat over water in the state of New Mexico. The Bureau of Reclamation funded the project in the amount of \$18,200 for another 100 acres of treatment at Elephant Butte Reservoir. The state funding was also used to treat 45 acres by cut stump within the city limits of T or C.

The Socorro SWCD website – www.socorrowswcd.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. One infestation of African Rue has now been treated twice and the landowner is continuing herbicide treatment. The Socorro Main ditch was the focus this year for treatment for Perennial pepperweed. In October, several infestations of Russian knapweed were treated with the herbicide Plateau.

The Socorro SWCD continues to support the NM State Forestry-Socorro Division Office's Youth Conservation Corp. during the summer of 2004. The Socorro SWCD Range Technician supervised the YCC for one week. The YCC hand grubbed the noxious weed Camelthorn. The YCC also removed the slash from this treatment. Their help in our noxious weed control program was greatly appreciated.

The Socorro SWCD lost one of our partners, John P. Taylor, Senior Biologist with Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge on September 27, 2004. John's work on Salt cedar management and restoration continues in many ways. John through the strength of his wife, son and daughter gave several final gifts by organ donation. Nyleen Troxel-Stowe, Socorro SWCD Director of Special Projects, received one of John's kidneys and his pancreas in a successful transplant operation on September 29, 2004 at Fairview Transplant Center, University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

FY 2005

Item	Amount
Income:	
Grants	49,482.50
State funding	9,286.12
Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project	833,033.34
Mill levy	122,833.06
Valve/PVC sales	10,241.32
Miscellaneous	14,082.18
Total:	1,066,125.72
Expenditures:	
Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project	721,346.96
Program manager	47,000.06
Range Technician	33,865.83
Cost share program	21,991.81
Office supplies, postage, meetings, dues, telephone, travel	64,453.50
Auto	9,122.74
Conservation activities	13,475.57
Total:	858,886.25