

# ANNUAL CONSERVATION PLAN



## Taos Soil and Water Conservation District FY 2014-2015



*2014 Celestino Romero Conservation Education Camp*

# **Contents**

|                                     | <b>Page</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Part I</b> Introduction          | <b>2</b>    |
| <b>Part II</b> Geographic Areas     | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>Part III</b> Resource Priorities | <b>4</b>    |
| <b>Part IV</b> Budget               | <b>7</b>    |
| <b>Part V</b> Conservation Team     | <b>8</b>    |

## **Part I - Introduction**

**Organization:** Taos Soil & Water Conservation District is a governmental subdivision of the state of New Mexico and was organized in 1941 under state law (Chapter 73, Article 20).

**We Serve:** The Citizens and Landowners of Taos County.

**Mission:** To promote the wise use of land, water and natural resources.

In order to accomplish this mission, the District gathers available technical, financial and educational resources and focuses or coordinates them so that they meet the needs of the local populace. Taos SWCD is committed to a productive and sustainable environment for present and future generations.

The District consists of all lands within Taos County excluding the incorporated area of the Town of Taos. This corresponds to an area equal to 2,257 square miles or 1.4 million acres. Approximately 550,723 of which are deeded lands while 733,325 acres fall under Federal management. Some 97,144 acres are managed by the State of NM and 62,288 acres are of Tribal jurisdiction, respectively.

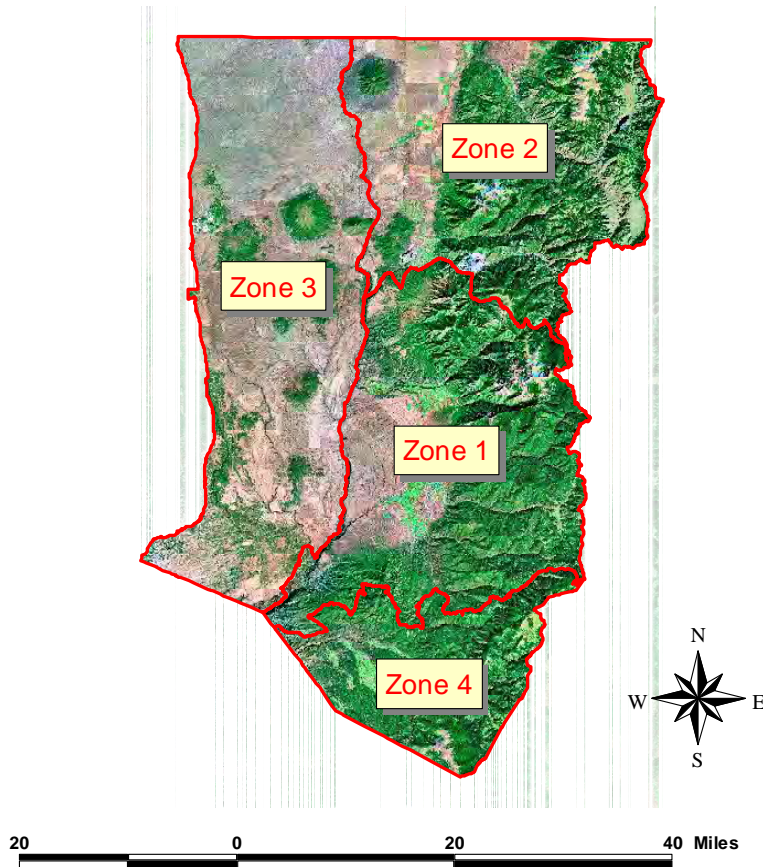
The current District governing body is composed of a board of five Supervisors. Five Members of this board are elected biennially in even numbered years. Elected supervisors serve staggered 4-year terms. Additionally, two more members may be appointed by the NM Soil and Water Commission. Appointed supervisors serve 1-year terms.

The Taos SWCD office is located in the Juan I. Gonzales Agriculture Center at 202 Chamisa Road in Taos, NM. Regular office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. excluding observed legal holidays. The District telephone number is 575-751-0584.

Regular District board meetings take place on the third Wednesday of each month at the Juan I. Gonzales Agriculture Center conference room. The meetings begin at 9:00 a.m.

## Part II - Geographic Areas

### Taos Soil & Water Conservation District Boundary



**Zone 1** Central Taos County - The communities of Taos, El Prado, Arroyo Hondo, Ranchos de Taos, Arroyo Seco, San Cristobal, Pilar and surrounding areas.

**Zone 2** Northern Taos County - The communities of Questa, Cerro, Costilla, Amalia, Red River and surrounding areas.

**Zone 3** Western Taos County - The communities of Carson, Tres Piedras, Ojo Caliente and surrounding areas.

**Zone 4** Southern Taos County - The communities of Penasco, Vadito, Chamisal, and surrounding areas.

## **Part III - Resource Priorities**

(All should be initiated or accomplished by June 30, 2015)

### **Acequia Conservation**

#### GOALS:

- Continue to complete a minimum of 35 to 40 Acequia projects per year.
- Hire additional technical staff for Acequia Program.
- Continue to analyze Acequia Program and recommend improvements. Create a satisfaction survey for participants.
- Begin to implement project design strategies that minimize impacts on wildlife and the environment.
- Prioritize, fund and complete larger acequia projects that benefit more landowners
- Study alternatives utilizing partners, to keep agricultural lands viable.

#### TEAM:

District Staff, District Board, NRCS, Acequia Design Consultant, Taos Public Schools.

### **Conservation Education**

#### GOALS:

- Continue to implement Celestino Romero CEP including annual conservation camp and compile yearly report that summarizes events.
- Continue to promote Science Fair, Envirothon and Food, Land & People programs for Taos County schools.

#### TEAM:

Education Consultant, Local Teachers, Agency Partners, District Staff, District Board, NRCS.

### **Water Program**

#### GOALS:

- Complete Des Montes Uranium Study.
- Continue to monitor well water levels in Sunshine Valley and expand to other areas of Taos County.
- Partner with Taos County and other entities to fund Deep Water Well Drilling Report.
- Participate in Taos County Regional Water Plan.

TEAM: Uranium Study Coordinator, UNM Students, NM Bureau of Geology, District Board, Water Program Consultant, Office of State Engineer, Taos County, Town of Taos.

### **Vegetative Management**

GOALS:

- Continue to utilize County Extension Agent for District cooperator field visits.
- Formulate noxious & invasive weed education program.
- Plan for noxious & invasive weed workshop in summer 2015.
- Implement vegetative management program guidelines.
- Continue to explore Fertilizer cost-share program and possible reprinting of weed identification guide.

TEAM: Taos County Extension Agent, Vegetative Management Consultant, BLM.

### **Urban Development & Planning**

GOALS:

- Continue to review subdivisions for Taos County.
- Work with Town of Taos to address conservation issues.
- Continue to work with County Assessor, legislators, landowners and committee members regarding Ag valuation classifications and property tax issues.
- Look into Forest Service easement taxes.
- Establish procedures and fees for reviewing landowner plans **as set forth in Taos County's current Land Use Regulations.**

TEAM: District Manager, Taos County Planning Department, Town of Taos, Taos County Assessor, US Forest Service

### **Animal Damage**

GOALS:

- Continue to provide Animal Damage services to Taos County residents.

TEAM: Animal Damage Consultant, Administrative Assistant, District Chairman.

## **Rangeland Conservation**

### GOALS:

- Work with Town of Taos and Taos County to develop local ordinances aimed at preventing dust bowl and excessive weed situations.
- Encourage NRCS to develop and distribute Rangeland restoration publication.
- Develop wind erosion study.
- Conduct Range Restoration tour.

TEAM: District staff, District Board, NRCS, Taos County.

## **Fire Prevention/Watershed Thinning**

### GOALS:

- Encourage Firewise as a community planning tool.
- Continue to provide increased community fire planning and collaboration with other entities.
- Continue to assist Taos County in proper implementation and planning of future Taos area NFL grants.
- Increase Fire Prevention Program Budget.
- Participate in the Rio Grande Water Fund.
- Participate in Carson National Forest Plan Revision.

TEAM: Fire Prevention Consultant, Neighborhood Organizations, Taos County, NM State Forestry, US Forest Service, District Staff, District Board.

## **Stream Restoration**

### GOALS:

- Conduct Stream Restoration Tour & Workshop with other entities and cooperators.
- Assess success rate of natural channel design projects and continue to seek out additional qualified stream restoration consultants.
- Train District staff in natural channel design methods.

TEAM: District Staff, District Board, NRCS, NM Environment Department, US Army Corps of Engineers, Stream Restoration Consultant.

## **Organizational Development**

### GOALS:

- Have every board member and staff attend at least 1 State, Regional or National SWCD meeting.
- Hire Architect and Project Manager for Taos SWCD conservation complex.
- Review and update District policies and procedures as needed.
- Recruit additional Taos SWCD Board members.
- Participate in Supervisor Certification Program.
- Develop long range plan.
- Develop land use conservation plan.
- Maintain cooperating agency status with BLM on Rio Grande del Norte National Monument management plan.
- Update and maintain Taos SWCD website.
- Create and disseminate Conservation Information news releases and publish District Newsletter 4 times per year.
- Include non-discrimination statements on all public information.

TEAM: District Board, District Staff, NM Licensed Architect, Experienced Project Manager, Additional District Staff Members, NMACD, BLM, Website Consultant.

## **Part IV - Budget**

|                       |    |           |
|-----------------------|----|-----------|
| Programs & Cost-share | \$ | 594,496   |
| Contract Labor        | \$ | 224,000   |
| Salaries              | \$ | 360,000   |
| Capital Outlay        | \$ | 315,946   |
| Administration        | \$ | 172,500   |
| Education & Outreach  | \$ | 36,000    |
| Total                 | \$ | 1,702,942 |



## **Part V – The Conservation Team**

### **District Supervisors:**

|            |                  |                     |
|------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Zone 1:    | Vacant           |                     |
| Zone 2:    | Maureen Johnson  | Chairman            |
| Zone 3:    | Anthony Benson   | Secretary/Treasurer |
| Zone 4:    | Andrew Martinez  | Member              |
| At Large:  | Stephen Trujillo | Vice Chair          |
| Appointed: | Mary Lane Leslie | Member              |
| Appointed: | Vacant           |                     |

### **District Employees:**

|                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Peter Vigil        | District Manager           |
| Charlotte Martinez | Administrative Assistant   |
| Matthew Valerio    | Survey & Design Technician |
| Tanya Duncan       | Managerial Assistant       |
| Javier Martinez    | Field Technician           |

### **Consultants & Partners**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Acequia            | Coca-Ruiz Consultants<br>Private Engineering Firms<br>Taos Valley Acequia Assn. |
| Animal Damage      | Max Martinez  |
| Education          | Lopez Enterprises   |
| Fire Prevention    | Jefferson Natural Resources   |
| Vegetation         | Tony Valdez NMSU  |
| Water Quality      | Ron Gervason<br>William Stone   |
| Stream Restoration | Rangeland Hands   |

### **NRCS**

|                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Art Arias        | Resource Conservationist     |
| Vernon Mirabal   | Soil Conservation Technician |
| Melissa Martinez | Farm Bill Specialist         |