

Report to New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Districts

*New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Programs and Resources
Division*

MSC APR, P.O. Box 30005, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003-8005

Phone: 575- 646-2642

Fax: 575-646-1540

<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/apr/soil-and-water-districts.html>

February 2024

January	Reorganize district board: Elect chairman, vice chair, and secretary-treasurer
January	Report to SWCC name, address, and phone number of all board members and indicate chair, vice chair, and secretary-treasurer positions
January	Conduct district board mid-year budget review
January	Ensure the proper bonding policy is in place
January 31 st	2 nd quarterly budget report is due to DFA-LGD (cc: SWCC region commissioner and NMDA)
January 31 st	WQ&C grant 2nd quarter report due to SWCC
January 31 st	SWCC \$3 million funding quarter report due to SWCC
April	Pass annual mill levy rate resolution and submit to the SWCC for approval.
April 7th	2023 Water Quality & Conservation Grant proposals due
April 30	WQ&C grant 3rd quarterly report and budget due to SWCC and NMDA Specialist
April 30	3rd quarterly budget report due to DFA-LGD (cc: SWCC, SWCC Region Commissioner, and NMDA Specialist)
April	Pass annual mill levy rate resolution and submit to the SWCC for approval.

OMA Notification Requirements

Remember that if you have to hold a district board meeting at a date, time or location that deviates from the information you advertised in your Open Meetings Act resolution, you must advertise it accordingly. Here are the guidelines:

Regular Meeting – 10 Days Prior

Special Meeting – 3 Days Prior

Emergency Meeting – 24 Hours Prior

1. Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund Webinar

NMDA will be holding a webinar for NMDA's Legacy Funding regarding the Land of Enchantment Fund on February 5th at 9:30 am, via Zoom. This funding is specifically for New

Mexico's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) along with NM Watershed Districts overseen by SWCDs. This funding does not apply to individual applicants. The webinar will cover all the information included in the attached LOE document, additional information on budget considerations, guidelines and considerations, submission of proposals, the review, selection, and notification process, and requirements for project implementation.

Meeting Topic: From NMDA: Land of Enchantment funding opportunity for New Mexico's SWCDs and watershed districts (WDs)

Meeting Time: Feb 5, 2024 09:30 AM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/83983314138>

Or join meeting with the following methods

Phone one-tap

Phone one-tap: US: [+12532050468](tel:+12532050468),[83983314138#](tel:+12532158782) or [+12532158782](tel:+12532158782),[83983314138#](tel:+12532158782)

Join by Telephone

For higher quality, dial a number based on your current location.

Dial:

US : +1 253 205 0468 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 444 9171 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 719 359 4580 or +1 309 205 3325 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 360 209 5623 or +1 386 347 5053 or +1 507 473 4847 or +1 564 217 2000 or +1 646 931 3860 or +1 689 278 1000 or +1 929 205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 305 224 1968

Meeting ID: 839 8331 4138

Please make sure to review the LOE document, attached to the monthly report, in depth, and have any questions prepared for the February 5th training.

Please contact your SWCD specialist with any questions.

2. NM Land of Enchantment Work Session Zoom Opportunities

For those SWCDs that are interested in applying for NM's Land of Enchantment Funding, there will be a Zoom work session to ask questions and work on your project ideas. Please see the attached agenda with the dates and times of the work sessions and zoom links below.

Region I work session: March 11

<https://nmsu.zoom.us/join/83983314138>

Region II work session: March 12

https://nmsu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkduyorTkoG9NoM_xRMrAmzrqb49_SqRHa

Region III work session: March 13

https://nmsu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkcuypzgpHtAnoK7rNs9NvTeDFZ_zNEVw

Region IV work session: March 19

<https://nmsu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqd-6vrzkrHt0GJXHr-Uj9yBtE-Vem4pNa>

Region V work session: March 20

https://nmsu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0ldemspzkrHNObrUx_oNeRQHUEPA_WJG1

Region VI work session: March 21

https://nmsu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAqcuugrzkuG9SyiMbiZrF-2D_aWzVa6z_M

3. 2024 Water Quality & Conservation Grant

The New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) annually receive a legislative appropriation from the State of New Mexico to be used for special projects relating to water quality and conservation. These funds are awarded by the SWCC through the Water Quality and Conservation (WQ&C) Grant Program. The goal of the grant program is to promote the health of New Mexico's watersheds and conserve the water resources they produce. A limited number of projects addressing one or more of the following areas will be funded over the next fiscal year:

1. Watershed Improvement/Management
2. Irrigation Efficiency
3. Riparian Restoration
4. Natural Resource Information and Education
5. Ground Water Protection/Conservation
6. Noxious Weeds

The RFP for the WQ&C grant will be sent out to all SWCDs the beginning of February. All proposals are due **Friday, April 5th by 5:00 pm**. The proposal needs to be in **Microsoft Word formatted** version and emailed to: swcc@nmda.nmsu.edu. Faxed copies will not be accepted.

See attached RFP.

4. NMDA's Healthy Soil Program grants: Apply online February 23-April 26; sign up to attend March 5 webinars

FOR FY25 INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT PROJECTS: NMDA encourages farmers, ranchers, and other land managers interested in applying for Healthy Soil Program grants to complete conservation planning with NRCS by the deadline of March 22, 2024 at 5 p.m. Mountain Time. The resulting documentation must inform the project for which the Individual Applicant seeks funding from NMDA's Healthy Soil Program. Check out the

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document and follow the step-by-step application instructions on our Individual Applicant-specific website:

<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-individual-applicants.html>

Register here to attend the March 5, 2024 (5:30 to 7 p.m.) outreach webinar for Individual Applicants and their Project Sponsors (SWCDs and tribal governments):

<http://tinyurl.com/3n9r4nnj>. NMDA will walk through the application and supplemental documents, as well as answer related questions.

FOR FY25 ELIGIBLE ENTITY PROJECTS: NMDA encourages SWCDs and other Eligible Entities to continue developing the soil health-improvement projects they want to implement within their jurisdiction. Check out the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document and follow the step-by-step application instructions on our Eligible Entity-specific website: <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/hsp/requirements-for-eligible-entities.html>

Register here to attend the March 5, 2024 (1:30 to 3 p.m.) outreach webinar for Eligible Entities: <http://tinyurl.com/2f6u7vrj>. NMDA will walk through the application and supplemental documents, as well as answer related questions.

Stay informed about NMDA's Healthy Soil Program by subscribing to **our weekly Healthy Soil Program e-newsletter** using the form at the bottom of the program's website:

<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program.html>.

5. SWCD Zoning

Districts who might be considering zoning their SWCD, please see the relevant section of the District Act, linked below. If you have any questions, please contact your SWCD specialist.

73-20-39. Election of supervisors; district zones.

In adopting and publishing rules for the election of supervisors and the registration of district voters, the commission may, to ensure proper representation of district voters and to facilitate district functions, provide for the geographic zoning of a district. The commission shall provide for the proper and equitable representation for each faction geographically zoned in the district. If a district is divided, or if two or more districts are consolidated, the commission shall provide for the geographic zoning of the resulting district or districts within thirty days after the secretary of state issues the certificate of organization for each new district.

History: 1953 Comp., § 45-5-54, enacted by Laws 1965, ch. 137, § 13; 1973, ch. 324, § 8; 1977, ch. 254, § 69; [2003, ch. 88, § 12](#).

ANNOTATIONS

The 2003 amendment, effective June 20, 2003, deleted "district" from the section heading; substituted "publishing" for "promulgating" near the beginning of the section, deleted "district" following "election of" near the beginning of the section and substituted "voters" for "landowners" near the middle of the section.

Election of soil and water conservation district's board of supervisors must comply with principle of "one person, one vote". — Where petitioner filed a petition for writ of mandamus in the district court objecting to the adoption of geographic voting zones with significantly unequal population for the election of the Dona Ana County Soil and Water Conservation District's board of supervisors, arguing that the voting zones, as drawn, violated the United States Constitution's "one person, one vote" requirement, diluting the voting power of petitioner and the other residents of the zone that includes the City of Las Cruces, and where the district court found that the soil and water conservation commission's approval of the voting zones was not authorized by the legislature, was inconsistent with the commission's statutory duty under [73-20-39](#) NMSA 1978 of the New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation District Act to ensure proper and equitable representation of district voters, and was in violation of the "one person, one vote" mandate of the United States Constitution, the district court did not err in granting the petition for writ of mandamus, because the inequality in population of the zones conflicted with both [73-20-39](#) NMSA 1978 and with the equal protection clause of the United States Constitution. *Price v. N.M. Soil & Water Conservation Comm'n*, [2023-NMCA-011](#).

Am. Jur. 2d, A.L.R. and C.J.S. references. — 94 C.J.S. Waters § 320.

6. NMDA Livestock Scale Inspection

Consumer Services is responsible for the annual inspection and testing of commercial livestock scales used in the state of New Mexico. The Livestock Scale Inspection Program is by request basis only. Livestock scale inspection requests are accepted annually during the months of January through March and are inspected between April 1 and December 31 of the current year. Fees will be assessed to scale inspection requests received after the deadline date.

In order to improve our efficiency, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture Standards and Consumer Services Division (SCS) has launched the [Routine Livestock Scale Inspection Program](#). The program will apply to livestock scale owners who consistently request SCS's annual livestock inspection service.

The online livestock scale request form below is *only* for livestock scale owners who opted out of the Routine Livestock Scale Inspection Program. If you are part of the Routine Livestock Scale Inspection Program, please *do not* fill out the form below.

For more information please call (575) 646-1616 or email livestockscale@nmda.nmsu.edu

Inspection requests must be made January 1 through March 31 of the current inspection year.

7. NMDA accepting specialty crop grant proposals

More than \$500,000 in funding is available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and the New Mexico Department of Agriculture. February 14th is the grant proposal deadline.

The USDA established the grant program to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, which are defined by the USDA as “fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops.”

For more information, please visit: <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/new-release/2023/over-500000-in-funding-available-to-new-mexicans-through-usda-specialty-crop-block-grant-program.html>

The items below might be of interest to SWCDs. These items were retrieved from various sources outside of NMDA.

8. Multiple Restoration / Prevention / Resiliency Funding Opportunities for New Mexico only from BLM

BLM currently has many funding opportunities available. Tribes, Local Governments, and State Agencies (and others) can take advantage of a number of zero match (no cost share = 100% federal funding) opportunities from the BLM, the Inflation Reduction Act, and BIL.

- Rangeland Resource Management (\$50k to \$1 million): <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/351752>
- Invasive and Noxious Plant Management Program (\$40k to \$1 million): <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/351753>
- Plant Conservation and Restoration Management (\$100k to \$500k): <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/351750>
- Fuels Management and Community Fire Assistance Program (\$100k to \$1 million): <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/351754>
- Aquatic Resource Management (\$10k to \$750k): <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/351280>
- Wildlife Program (\$10k to \$135k): <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/351283>
- Recreation and Visitor Services Program (\$10k to \$50k): <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/351281>
- Cultural and Paleontology Resource Management (\$10k to \$100k): <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/351282>

- Environmental Quality Protection Program to remediate and reclaim abandoned hard rock mines, and manage air quality (\$100k to \$500k): <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/351738>
- Good Neighbor Authority for States, Counties, and Tribes, to plan and implement forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration projects (\$100k to \$1 million): <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/351755>

Except for the Good Neighbor opportunity (due May 1), all applications are due submitted via Grants.gov by March 27.

For more information on the above grants, contact: anna.naruta-moya@dfa.nm.gov.

9. Environment Department issues Request for Information to develop Strategic Water Supply

The New Mexico Department has released a Request for Information (RFI) related to the strategic water supply.

The RFI is the first step in developing the strategic water supply. During this phase, NMED is seeking technical and economic information from individuals, businesses, academia, government agencies, and other stakeholders related to the sourcing, treatment, delivery, storage, and industrial uses of brackish water and produced water. The RFI closes on March 31, 2024. This summer, the state will publish a request for proposals and project-specific concept papers. NMED anticipates announcing the request for proposal and project-specific concept papers in summer 2024, with submissions due in fall 2024.

There will be two virtual group meetings for individuals and organizations to participate in and share information related to RFI. The meetings will be identical in format and content presented. These meetings will be held virtually at the following times:

- Virtual Meeting 1:
Friday, February 27, 2024, 5 pm – 7 pm MST
- Virtual Meeting 2:
Tuesday, March 1, 2024, 10 am – 12 pm MST

Please register for these meetings at the following link:
<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsCO2ppjktHe4Qn13z28eOv0leQMhHJco#/registration>

For more information, please see the attached press release and visit:
<https://www.env.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024-01-19-Strategic-Water-Supply-RFI-Final.pdf>

10. National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting

NACD's 78th Annual Meeting will be held February 10-14, 2024. The Annual meeting will be held in San Diego, CA. For more information or to view the agenda and to register visit: <https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting/>.

11. Western Pecan Growers Association 2024 Conference & Trade Show

The Western Pecan Growers Association will hold its 58th Annual Conference & Trade Show, March 3rd to the 5th, at the Las Cruces Convention Center.

For more information, or to register, please visit: <https://westernpecan.org/>.

12. 2023 Land and Water Summit

The Land and Water Summit will take place March 7-8, 2024 at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque. *For the agenda and registration, please visit:* www.landandwatersummitnm.org.

The 2024 Land and Water Summit will feature speakers who share their expertise on upgrading, retooling, adapting, and innovating systems to safeguard land and water resources.

13. New Guide Highlights USDA and FEMA Disaster Assistance Programs for Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire Recovery

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offer a variety of recovery programs to help farmers, ranchers, communities and businesses that have been hard hit by wildfire. To better assist those affected by the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire and subsequent flooding, USDA and FEMA, in collaboration with the State of New Mexico, have published a new resource guide, [Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Disaster Assistance At-A-Glance](#).

This is a quick reference guide to available USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and FEMA disaster assistance programs. The reference guide briefly describes each program, including funding limits, application process and agencies involved.

[Full news release \(Web\)](#)

[Full news release \(PDF\)](#)

14. OpenET Conference February 27-28, at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya

The OpenET Consortium is excited to bring together the OpenET user community to showcase successes across diverse applications, foster collaboration and shared learning, and continue building a community of practice. Together, we can accelerate the advancement of the science, applications, and usability of OpenET data to support solutions that address critical water management challenges.

The conference aims to:

- 1) Highlight successful applications and promote cross-geography and cross-sector learning on a range of applications and best practices;
- 2) Bring together the OpenET user community with the OpenET Science and Technical Teams to foster shared learning, innovation, and collaboration;
- 3) Strengthen a community of practice that can continue to advance the science, applications, and usability of OpenET data; and,
- 4) Provide opportunities for feedback to the OpenET team regarding user data needs and requirements, and to identify technical and scientific priorities for future improvements to the OpenET system.

The OpenET Applications Conference will feature sessions covering agricultural water management, water accounting and budgeting, water use measurement and reporting, forest and rangeland management, as well as workshops and trainings.

There are no registration fees to attend the conference, and breakfast and lunch will be provided on Tuesday and Wednesday. Attendees are responsible for travel and lodging costs, as well as meals outside of those provided.

For more information or to register, please visit: <https://www.eventcreate.com/e/openet-applications-conference>.

15. USDA Requests Public Input on Reporting for Foreign Agriculture Land Holdings

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is requesting public input – due by February 16, 2024 – on how foreign filers report agricultural land holdings in the United States. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is proposing to update the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act Report form so that reporting can include data on long-term lessees, data to assess the impacts of foreign investment on agricultural producers and rural communities, and to gather geospatial information. For more information, visit the website below:

https://www.fsa.usda.gov/news-room/news-releases/2023/usda-requests-public-input-on-reporting-for-foreign-agriculture-land-holdings?utm_campaign=121523afida&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

16. NM Mexico Forestry Division Spring 2024 Conservation Seedling Sale

Ordering for seedlings from the NM Forestry Division Conservation seedling program for Spring 2024 begins December 4, 2023, and orders will be accepted through April 19, 2024. Distribution of seedlings begins March 11, 2023, and ends on April 26, 2024.

You may order on-line at: <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/seedlings/>. The cost of seedlings is \$90.00 per 49 small container seedlings, \$64.00 per 50 bareroot seedlings. Also available: Rocky Mountain juniper available in 16 cubic inch containers for \$57.00 per 20 seedlings and Prairie Sky poplar available in 40 cubic inch containers for \$90.00 per 20 seedlings.

Please note there is a \$5.00 handling fee per order and for each lot of seedlings ordered that are shipped UPS there is a \$20.00 shipping fee.

17. Certified Burn Manager Training from New Mexico Forest Division now available online

New Mexico Forestry Division's free Certified Burn Manager Training online nine-element training is now live and available on our Canvas platform at <https://nmforestryrx.instructure.com/login/canvas>. You also can find the link to this training on the New Mexico Forestry Division website at <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/prescribed-burning/>. This training is one of the key elements to becoming a certified burn manager and one or all elements of the nine-element training are mandatory to be a certified burn manager whether seeking pile burn certification or broadcast burn certification. All users will need to create an account on the Canvas platform in order successfully enroll into the nine-element training whether you are seeking pile burn certification or broadcast burn certification. This training is self-paced, and all interested are highly encouraged to enroll. If you encounter any technical or content issues, please contact coordinator Brian Filip at Brian.Filip@emnrd.nm.gov or by cell phone (505) 470-2210. New Mexico Forestry Division highly encourages you to spread this information to all individuals interested in participating in the Certified Manager Program.

18. NM Fire Information: Stay Informed about Fires & Post-Fire Recovery Efforts

New Mexico Fire Information (<https://nmfireinfo.com/information/>) is an interagency effort by federal and state agencies in New Mexico to provide timely, accurate, fire and restriction information for the entire state. The agencies that support the site are the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, State of New Mexico, and U.S. Forest Service. The site is updated as often as new information is available from the Southwest Coordination Center, individual forests, national parks, state lands, tribal lands and BLM offices. The aim is to provide one website where the best available information and links related to wildfire and restrictions can be accessed.

19. Assistance Programs posted on NMDA's Website

NMDA has compiled a list of all state and federal assistance programs available. Please look over these assistance programs and feel free to pass along any of this information that might be beneficial to individuals or groups within your SWCD.

Please visit: <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/assistance-programs.html>