

Report to New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Districts
New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Programs and Resources Division
<https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/apr/soil-and-water-districts.html>

November 2025

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

November 4 th	SWCD Supervisor Elections-statewide
Nov to Dec	Adopt Open Meetings Act Resolution to cover upcoming calendar year (cc: NMDA)
December 1 st	Agreed Upon Procedure Report (AUP) or Certification forms due to the NM State Auditor's Office

1.Special Fall RFP for NMDA Noxious Weed Management Grant now open

The special Fall RFP for the NMDA Noxious Weed Management Grant is now open, with up to \$60,000 available for projects that prevent, control, or eradicate state-listed noxious weeds. Eligible applicants include local governments, tribes, acequias, land grants-mercedes, CWMA groups, nonprofits, and other entities, with applications due by November 12, 2025, at noon (MT). Full details and documents are available on the NMDA Noxious Weeds Program webpage.

2. SWCDs: Apply for the \$160,000 with NMDA for Capacity Building

Please see NMDA's attached guidelines and proposal instructions for the SWCD FY26-28 Capacity Building Funding Opportunity. There is also a budget template that NMDA suggests (rather than requires) SWCDs use.

NMDA will accept proposals for this round of capacity building funding from July 15, 2025 to July 15, 2026 (12 months). Once NMDA has approved a proposal and the necessary paperwork is completed, funded activities can begin.

Please email the completed proposal and budget to your SWCD Specialist and pdepner@nmda.nmsu.edu. **If you have questions about this funding opportunity or require assistance, please contact your SWCD Specialist.**

3. NMDA's Healthy Soil Program: Important updates

The NMDA Healthy Soil Program Team is actively monitoring the current status of the federal government shutdown. NMDA will continue to provide applicants and eligible entities who can serve as project sponsors with the most up to date information as it relates to conservation planning with NM NRCS for the FY27 Healthy Soil Program application period. NMDA's HSP Team strives to make the program available to all applicants. The HSP Team is currently developing alternative to ensure program access.

In light of this, NMDA is encouraging individual applicants such as farmers, ranchers and other land managers to contact their project sponsor as soon as possible and let them know that they are planning to apply for the Healthy Soil Program FY27 grants. Individual Applicants are asked to provide their prospective project sponsor with their contact information as well as the location of the project. Once this information is provided, we ask that SWCD's or pueblos, tribes or nations provide that information to NMDA's HSP Team. This information will allow NMDA to determine if additional assistance may be necessary to provide conservation planning for individual applicants.

In order to have the most up to date information on NMDA's Healthy Soil Program, SWCD's and other eligible entities as well as farmers, ranchers and other land managers are encouraged to subscribe to the weekly HSP email newsletter. The HSP weekly email includes updates from NMDA's Healthy Soil Program team. Subscribing is simple: Send an email to hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu with the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject line.

FY26 Healthy Soil Program REMINDERS:

- October 31 marked the end of the first quarter for FY26 grants. First quarter reports, including pre-project soil test and assessment data, must be emailed to NMDA on or before Nov. 30.
- **All projects must be invoiced for reimbursement at least *quarterly*.** This requirement aims to help all parties keep pace with the paperwork during the nearly 15-month grant term.

Bottom Line: If an HSP applicant cannot get NRCS conservation planning and comes to you for assistance, please pass on their contact information and the location of the project to NMDA's HSP Team (hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu).

We remind SWCD's that if you have any questions about the Healthy Soil Program please feel free to email those questions to the HSP Team at hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu

4. Agricultural Workforce Development Program opened June 16

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) Agricultural Workforce Development (AWD) Program grant application period opens June 16, 2025, and will continue until funds are fully allocated or by March 31, 2026, whichever comes first. Internships must be completed by May 30, 2026.

NMDA's AWD Program offers incentives to the state's agricultural businesses to hire interns. The AWD Program is intended to provide hands-on educational opportunities for students aspiring to careers in agriculture, as well as young or beginning farmers and ranchers.

NMDA will reimburse qualified agricultural businesses up to 50 percent of the actual cost of hiring a qualified intern, not to exceed \$15,000 per internship. An agricultural business may request funding to hire as many as three interns per calendar year. Each intern must be provided with **at least one hundred thirty (130) hours** of work experience, not exceeding one (1) year in duration per intern.

Agricultural business operators, please read the [Agricultural Workforce Development FAQs](https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/agricultural-workforce-development-faqs.html) carefully before submitting an application at: <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/agricultural-workforce-development-faqs.html>

Please note:

- NMDA will *not* match agricultural businesses with potential interns.
- Agricultural businesses must identify an intern prior to applying for funding.
- Interns must be 18 years or older by the start of the internship.
- Immediate family members of the agricultural business are NOT eligible to participate.
- Participating agricultural businesses must pay minimum wage (or higher) to each intern, as well as carry workers' compensation insurance for each intern.

For more information, please visit: <https://nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/agricultural-workforce-development.html>

5. NMDA Grant Contact Emails

If your SWCD has an FY26 project with an NMDA grant or program, please submit invoices, requests, and reports with the **grant or program name to the email addresses below. For FY26 HSP projects, please also include the project number.**

- **Capital Outlay:** Patricia Depner at pdepner@nmda.nmsu.edu and Gabriela Hernandez at ghernandez@nmda.nmsu.edu
- **Healthy Soil Program:** HSP@nmda.nmsu.edu
- **District Opportunities grant (formerly known as the Land of Enchantment Fund Grant):** LOE@nmda.nmsu.edu
- **Noxious Weeds Management Grant:** weeds@nmda.nmsu.edu
- **Water Quality & Conservation Grant:** SWCC@nmda.nmsu.edu
- **\$160,000 SWCD Capacity Building Funding Opportunity:** Patricia Depner at pdepner@nmda.nmsu.edu; for questions about applying for the funding, contact your Specialist.

As a reminder, **submissions of invoices directly to NMSU will delay reimbursement.** Although the invoices will be addressed to NMSU Accounts Payable, **all invoices must be**

submitted to NMDA for review and payment processing. If you are unsure which email to submit invoices to, please contact NMDA at 575-646-2642.

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

6. NMACD Items of Interest

1. New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference (NMIFC)- Register NOW!

IMPORTANT: Pre-registration closes on October 27th.

The NMIFC offers special districts a unique opportunity to learn about infrastructure financing options relevant to their operations, network with other government leaders, and access resources that can benefit their communities. To learn more and register for the conference, visit our website: <https://www.nmifc.com>

Your Council of Government (COG) can support conference attendance through capacity building funds to help cover registration and travel costs. For funding inquiries, they should contact:

Pascual Maestas

Email: pascual@nmarc.org

Phone: 505-715-5284

2. *250 of you attended the 79th NMACD Annual Meeting! It was packed full of great information!*

1. Contact information for presenters:

a. **Office of the State Auditor:** Manuel Luna (505) 394-1600 Manuel.Luna@osa.nm.gov

a. **Cyber Security:** Raja Sambandam

a. **Capacity Building Grants:** Your SWCD NMDA Specialist

a. **Council of Governments:** See below (from the conference, the presenter was Priscilla Lucero)

a. **NM Workforce Solutions (Agricultural Workforce):**

a. Heather Stone, Program Coordinator (505) 526-4569 Heather.Stone@dws.nm.gov

- a. **NM District Attorney:** Norman Wheeler (6th Judicial District)
- a. (575) 388-1941 Nwheeler@da.state.nm.us
- a. **SWCD Presentations:**
 - i. **Colfax SWCD**, Andy Yates: (505) 604-1251 andyyates40@gmail.com
 - i. **Chaves SWCD**, Jennifer Pierce:
 - i. (575) 755-7923 chavesswcd@gmail.com
 - i. **SW Quay SWCD**, Lyannae Abarca and Jovani Armendariz, (575) 309-3357 lynnae.abarca@swquayswcd.org
 - i. **Carrizozo SWCD**, Fernando Najera:
 - i. (575) 648-2941 x101 zozoswcd@tularosa.net
- a. **Department of Finance Admin** (ICIP and state funding):
 - a. Michael Gilmore, Rural /Frontier Equity Ombud (505) 623-1082 michael.gilmore@dfa.nm.gov
 - a. Hallie Brown, Deputy Director, IPDD (505) 500-9355 hallie.brown@dfa.nm.gov
- a. **Healy Groundwater Monitoring Network:**
 - a. Dr. Monica Rakovan, Program Manager (575)835-5884 Monica.Rakovan@nmt.edu
 - a. Laila Sturgis, Aquifer Mapping Program Manager (575) 835-5327 Laila.Sturgis@nmt.edu
- a. **Responsibilities and Authorities of SWCD:** Debbie Hughes

3. There was much discussion about the Council of Governments and how they can support SWCDs. Below is a list of the COGS and which SWCD each is associated with. Please reach out to them and see what services they offer in your area:

COG District

SWCD

1- North West COG

San Juan
McKinley

	Lava
2-North Central NM Economic Development District	SF-Pojoaque East Rio Arriba, Upper Chama Taos Colfax Tierra Y Montes Western Mora, Mora-Wagon Mound Cuba
3-Mid Region COG	Ciudad Cornado Central Tri-County, East Torrance, Claunh-Pinto Valencia
4-Eastern Plains COG	Guadalupe De Baca Central Curry Canadian River, Southwest Quay Roosevelt, Border Mesa, Ute Creek Northeastern
5-South West COG	Hildalgo Deming Grant Quemado, Salado, San Franscisco
6-South East NM Economic Development District	Upper Hondo, Carrizozo Chaves, Hagerman -Dexter, Otero Penasco, Carlsbad, Central Valley Lea
7-South Central COG	Socorro

Sierra, Caballo
Dona
Ana

7. Comments due Nov. 10: Department of Interior proposes to rescind Public Lands Rule

Published by DOI Sept. 10 at <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-proposes-rescind-public-lands-rule-restoring-balanced-multiple-use>; excerpted by NMDA

The Department of the Interior is proposing to rescind the Bureau of Land Management’s Public Lands Rule, aligning with Secretary Doug Burgum’s commitment to restoring balance in federal land management by prioritizing multiple-use access, empowering local decision-making and supporting responsible energy development, ranching, grazing, timber production and recreation across America’s public lands.

The 2024 Public Lands Rule, formally known as the Conservation and Landscape Health Rule, made conservation (i.e., no use) an official use of public lands, putting it on the same level as BLM’s other uses of public lands. The previous administration had treated conservation as “no use,” meaning the land was to be left idle rather than authorizing legitimate uses of the land like grazing, energy development or recreation. However, stakeholders, including the energy industry, recreational users and agricultural producers, across the country expressed deep concern that the rule created regulatory uncertainty, reduced access to lands, and undermined the long-standing multiple-use mandate of the BLM as established by Congress. Now, the BLM proposes to rescind this rule in full.

The Public Lands Rule exceeded the BLM’s statutory authority by placing an outsized priority on conservation or no-use at the expense of multiple-use access, threatening to curtail grazing, energy development, recreation and other traditional land uses. Many rural communities depend on public lands for livelihoods tied to agriculture, mining and energy production. Rescinding the rule restores BLM to its legal mandate and protects these economic drivers from restrictive land-use policies. The people who depend on public lands for their livelihoods have every incentive to conserve them and have been doing so for generations—no new rule was needed to force what is already a way of life.

By proposing to roll back the Public Lands Rule, Interior is committed to no longer sidelining local voices by returning more authority back to states, counties and tribes who are directly impacted by the management of public lands. Additionally, rescinding the rule eliminates uncertainty for industry stakeholders concerning potential litigation risks and permitting delays. Consistent with Secretary’s Order 3418, “[Unleashing American Energy](#),” the rescission of the Public Lands Rule will eliminate unnecessary barriers to energy development and support the multiple-use mandate of the BLM by not prioritizing conservation over all other uses.

8. 2025 Jornada Symposium – November 13 – Postponed

Emailed by USDA; retrieved by NMDA on October 29

The Jornada Symposium will be postponed until spring due to the continuing government shutdown. As the Symposium is managed by USDA Agricultural Research Service employees in a USDA facility, we are unable to perform these duties during the shutdown. As of this morning, it does not look like the government will reopen in time for us to prepare for a November 13th event, or even if the government will reopen by that time.

We will send a new RSVP link once we identify a suitable spring date.

If you have any questions about the webinar - please feel free to reach out to Caiti Steele caiti@nmsu.edu.

9. Nov. 18-21 in Las Cruces: Agricultural Preparedness Training

Published in attached PDF; retrieved by NMDA on September 3, 2025

You are invited to attend an **Agricultural Preparedness Training** hosted by the [Southwest Border Food Protection and Emergency Preparedness Center](#) November 18-21, in Las Cruces, NM.

This training is designed for law enforcement, federal agents, first responders, veterinarians, NM Livestock Board inspectors, Extension personnel, agricultural educators, and producers. It will cover essential strategies for preventing and responding to emergencies in the agriculture and food sectors.

The training is supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which means there is **no registration cost for participants**. Travel assistance can also be requested to ensure individuals can attend without financial barriers.

[Click here to register by November 4, 2025](#)

For questions, contact Marshal Wilson mwilson@nmda.nmsu.edu.

10. SW New Mexico ranch project wins BLM's 2025 Rangeland Innovations Award

Published by the Public Lands Council at <https://publiclandscouncil.org/news/details/44091/blm-announces-2025-rangeland-stewardship-and-innovations-award-winners>; excerpted by NMDA

At the Public Lands Council (PLC) Annual Meeting [in mid-September], the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced winners of the 2025 Rangeland Stewardship and Rangeland Innovation awards to recognize exemplary management and outstanding accomplishments in restoring and maintaining the health of public rangelands.

The 2025 Rangeland Innovations Award – Collaborative Team Category winner is the Massey Ranch Precision Ranching and Virtual Fencing Project of Animas, N.M., nominated by the Las Cruces District Office, BLM New Mexico.

This project represents a significant advancement in sustainable agriculture and conservation practices, particularly focusing on the enhancement of rangeland stewardship, native plants,

and wildlife habitat. It is a collaboration with the Massey family of Massey Ranch, New Mexico State University's Jornada Experimental Range, Dr. Santiago Utsumi with NMSU's Department of Animal and Range Science, Bat Conservation International, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Sierra Water and Soil Conservation District, and the BLM's Abandoned Mine Lands Program and Las Cruces District Office.

The project applies emerging technologies to manage grazing while minimizing environmental impact to public lands. Ranchers use virtual fencing to direct livestock movement more effectively and target grazing to promote pasture recovery and enhance native vegetation. The project uses a custom real-time overview dashboard with remote and local sensor systems to monitor livestock, water, and weather across 30,000 acres of arid rangeland in southwest New Mexico.

11. DFA NM Match Fund

Published at link below; retrieved by NMDA on July 22, 2025

The New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration invites state agencies, tribal governments, counties, municipalities, and political subdivisions to apply for the New Mexico Match Fund. See policy for full list of eligible entities.

The Match Fund provides a unique opportunity to leverage once-in-a-generation federal funding for infrastructure, research, economic development, the energy transition, and other critical projects that will benefit New Mexico.

FY26 Funding Available:

- **\$50 Million for Matching Grants**
- **\$4M for Project Implementation**
- **\$17.5M for Federal Compliance Offset**

Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis, first-come, first-served. DFA reviews complete applications and makes determinations within 20 business days.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.nmdfa.state.nm.us/nmmatchfund/>