



Upper Chama Soil & Water Conservation District
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2021-2022 Annual Report of Accomplishments



GOVERNING BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Norman Vigil – Chairman
Agapito Candelaria – Vice Chairman
Horace Leyba – Secretary/Treasurer
Eloy Olivas – Supervisor
Paul Cordova – Supervisor

MISSION

The Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District promotes stewardship of natural resources by providing leadership, education, technical and cost-sharing assistance to landowners/users with the district.

STAFF

Rebecca (Becky) Martinez, Office Manager
Kenneth Baca, Program Manager

BOARD MEETINGS

Regular Meetings every 2nd Tuesday of the month at 3:00 pm
Location: District Office in Tierra Amarilla, NM

Program Summary

Cost-Share Programs

- The District continued to cost-share in the amount of \$15,000 towards the Northern New Mexico Cooperative Weed Management Area program. The program offers technical, financial and educational assistance in addressing the Invasive weed resource concern. Equipment and cost share assistance is offered to the landowners in order to address ***Invasive Weed Management***.
- The District participated in a CWMA Joint Meeting on March 17, 2022 with East Rio Arriba SWCD. This meeting was to expand the partnership opportunities that are being impacted by invasive and noxious species. An invitation was extended to BLM, NMDOT, Rio Arriba County, Pueblos and neighboring Conservation Districts.
- The District's CWMA accomplishments are as follows. Acres sprayed were: 41.5 acres (October 2021), 7 landowners and 112 acres (June 2022), 4 landowners. The weeds sprayed were Chicory, Chicory Hoary Crest, Thistle Chicory, Thistle and Russian Knapweed. The landowners were from the areas of Canjilon, Cebolla, Tierra Amarilla, Ensenada and Chama.
- The District continued to cost-share with landowners for ***Water Development Improvements and Erosion Control***. The District has an equipment/implement rental program for all landowners. The landowner provides seed, fuel and general daily maintenance of equipment/implements. The District provides the equipment to the landowners for 3 days with a maintenance fee and deposit fee which is refundable once equipment is returned. This year over 30 landowners utilized the equipment.
- The District continued to provide ***Water Management Funding for Acequia Infrastructure Repairs***. Each request is reviewed and funding is determined according to need. Acequia projects must be a group governed by a board and must contribute in-kind or monetary cost-share. Acequias are also encouraged to apply for funding through NMACD Statewide Acequia RCPP, ISC construction program and NRCS. Individual projects are also considered on irrigation needs. The individual may use the funds provided for materials or technical assistance.
- The District developed and provided Acequia program guidelines to applicants.
- The District provided monetary assistance from our Conservation Projects (Acequias) fund to landowner Medardo Sanchez and to the Acequia de la Plaza Blanca.

Grants

- The District applied for a 2021 Hazardous Fuel Reduction Grant, was awarded \$250,000 and served as the fiscal agent.
- The District applied for and submitted on March 28, 2022 applications for the FY 2022 WUI (Wildland Urban Interface) and FY 2022 NFL (Hazardous Forest Fuel Treatments on Non-Federal Lands) grants.
- The District was the fiscal agent for the FY22 Outdoor Recreation/Outdoor Equity Fund grant (\$20,000) from the New Mexico Department of Economic Division. Claudia Reynoso and Carmen Taylor served as the program directors for the summer 2022 Conservation Writing Workshop. They selected 6 high school students interested in Conservation & Land Stewardship, and participated in an internship at Catspaw Ranch. Students spent 5 days at the ranch learning about and applying monitoring techniques associated with water quality, soil quality, and wildlife management. In the end, students had data and observations that they analyzed and presented on Thursday, July 14.

- The District concluded the Healthy Soils Grant in November 2021 for landowner Joysree Aubrey.

Partnerships

- Partnership with East Rio Arriba SWCD continues for the NNMCWMA program. The District is responsible for the chairmanship and the ERASWCD is the fiscal agent. It is the District's desire to keep this partnership active and positive in order to address the needs of all landowners with noxious weeds. Both Noxious Weeds Coordinators work together to make public the program. Over 300 acres were addressed this year. The program was once again approved for a grant this year.
- The District participated in a CWMA Joint Meeting on March 17, 2022 with East Rio Arriba SWCD. This meeting was to address the expanding problem and increase partnership opportunities. An invitation was extended to BLM, NMDOT, Rio Arriba County, Pueblos and neighboring Conservation Districts. Both SWCD's have jointly implemented a noxious weed program for numerous years.
- The District maintains a Memorandum of Agreement with NRCS. The major assistance available from the District is technical information furnished by NRCS. Mr. David Griego, District Conservationist reports at our monthly regular meetings.
- The District continues partnerships with the Chama Peak Land Alliance. The District has worked closely with this partnership to identify priority areas for forest treatment. CPLA and the District have developed a program to provide firewood to seniors and needy families in the Chama Valley. The joint effort has provided over 50 cords this past year.
- The partnership with ERASWCD and numerous other agencies, non-profit and organizations continue to provide funding for private landowners and public land leases to implement on ground conservation practices on forest, range, and irrigated lands in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado through the Rio Chama/San Juan RCPP. The District was involved with initiating the NM Acequia Rehabilitation RCPP in the amount of \$3.25 million. As a multi-partner the District's role was outreach to encourage and initiate Acequias interested in applying for financial funding and technical assistance. Applications were accepted at the District Office. Two applications were funded within the District and construction initiated in the spring of 2021 with completion anticipated for the fall of 2022.
- The District has been actively involved with the Carson National Forest in developing the 10 year forest revision plan.
- The District has set the stage on collaborative dialogue with our newly appointed Río Arriba County Manager.
- Vice Chairman Agapito Candelaria met with David Griego (NRCS) and Teddy Abeyta (landowner), FSA and NRCS collaboration on a conservation plan for Mr. Abeyta.
- Vice Chairman Agapito Candelaria represented our District and partnered with the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant. On January 12, 2022 a feasibility study was conducted for economic development purposes which could benefit our district. Participants were Eric Vigil – Associate Enterprise Director USDA, Ray Melton – Business & Cooperative Programs Director, and Kathy Barrett – Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Coordinator.
- The District paid dues to NMACD and NACD during the FY 21-22.

Fire Prevention

- The District applied for a 2021 Hazardous Fuel Reduction Grant, was awarded \$250,000 and served as the fiscal agent. The thinning was completed at the end of the fiscal year

treating 110 acres. The District, with the help of Mr. Joe Carrillo, Timber Management Officer, New Mexico State Forestry, and Chama District will continue to apply for these Grants.

- The District applied for and submitted on March 28, 2022 applications for the FY 2022 WUI (Wildland Urban Interface) and FY 2022 NFL (Hazardous Forest Fuel Treatments on Non-Federal Lands) grants.

Education and Outreach

- District Chairman, Norman Vigil and Supervisor, Mr. Eloy Olivas attended all CWMA meetings throughout the fiscal year. Upper Chama SWCD chairs the CWMA and ERASWCD is the fiscal agent.
- District Chairman, Norman Vigil attended and provided input at the Carson National Forest Plan Revision Meeting.
- Chairman Norman Vigil and Secretary/Treasurer Horace Leyba attended the monthly NMACD meetings throughout the fiscal year.
- NMACD Vice Chairman, Horace Leyba, attended NMACD Region II meetings throughout the fiscal year.
- Secretary/Treasurer Horace Leyba attended the NMDA meeting held March 31.
- Chairman Norman Vigil attended the Cebolla Nutrias Watershed Group Celebration on September 29, 2021 4-6pm. A celebration of 2 newly funded projects: Rio Nutrias Watershed Based Plan Implementation Phase II project to implement Best Management Practices on the Rio Nutrias and the New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Act funding to complete private lands tree thinning in the Cebolla Nutrias watershed.
- Chairman Norman Vigil and Vice Chairman Agapito Candelaria met with the NM State Forestry on Friday, October 8th to review the WUI and NFL grant applications as they relate to our land use plan and plan of operation for an approximate amount of \$600K.
- The District provided a monetary donation to the Envirothon.
- The District rented office space to Kathy McKim, Coordinating Wildlife Biologist for Pheasants Forever.
- In conjunction with Chama Peak Land Alliance (CPLA), the District sponsored a Firewood for Seniors program in which seniors throughout our District were provided with free loads of wood.
- Chairman Norman Vigil and Vice Chairman Agapito Candelaria attended a meeting with Senator Leo Jaramillo and Representative Susanna Herrera for our Capital Outlay.
- Vice Chairman Agapito Candelaria participated on the Farm & Ranch Show on our local radio station on April 20, 2022 at 11 am to discuss the Upper Chama SWCD.
- Chairman Norman Vigil and Vice Chairman Agapito Candelaria attended the Rio Chama Congresso on April 29 at the Rural Event Center in Abiquiu; a presentation was made.
- The District recognized and invited one of our landowners who has recently received Cooperator of the Year from NMACD and is actively involved in the Soil Stewardship program to attend our meetings.
- The District was a sponsor at the 2022 Rio Arriba County Fair held in August.

Training

- Program Manager Kenneth Baca and Business Manager Becky Martinez attended the Grant Applications Workshop with Joe Carrillo, NM State Forestry on March 9, 2022.
- Chairman Norman Vigil and Vice Chairman Agapito Candelaria attended the Rio Chama Congresso on April 29 at the Rural Event Center in Abiquiu. They made a presentation

on our forest thinning projects and the collaborative efforts with NM State Forestry, Rio Chama Watershed Group, Chama Peak Land Alliance, Trout Unlimited and San Juan Rio Chama Watershed group.

- Chairman Norman Vigil participated in the 2-3-2 USDA collaborative group (Colorado and New Mexico) in the executive group meetings and working group meetings throughout the year on a monthly basis.
- The District was a key partner in the RCPP implementation in both Colorado and New Mexico providing input throughout the year.
- Chairman, Norman Vigil, attended and participated in the forest revision plan for the Carson National Forest as a cooperating agency.
- Chairman, Norman Vigil, participated in the virtual meetings for the San Juan Rio Chama Watershed group.
- Chairman, Norman Vigil, attended and participated in the Rio Chama Watershed group virtual and on site meeting.

Personnel

- The District has a part-time program manager who is responsible for the Noxious Weed Program and equipment rentals.
- The District has a part-time business manager who is responsible for all reports due to DFA, SWCC, and NMDA.