



2008 **New Mexico Annual Report**

USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service

(505)761-4400

Quick Facts



NRCS Expenditures and Effects

Based on an IMPLAN (Input Output) analysis, the major FY2009 NRCS expenditures and their effects (as of February 2009) are as follows:

	Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total	Jobs
Financial Assistance					
Total EQIP, CSP, and WHIP*	\$16,836,000	\$7,913,000	\$6,007,000	\$30,757,000	446
Technical Assistance					
Total**	\$16,078,000	\$2,898,000	\$3,474,000	\$22,449,000	346
				Total Jobs	792

*Excludes EWP (currently) \$5M, easement programs, and rehabilitation for which budgets change dramatically during the year based on applications and events, although spending in these programs can approach an additional \$10M.

**Direct effect of employment expenditures appears lower than program expenditures due to estimated taxation of 30%. Excludes EWP and reimbursables of \$2,898,844

Sequestering Carbon

Forests and rangelands can both play a constructive role in sequestering atmospheric carbon, for both trees and grass convert atmospheric carbon into soil organic matter in addition to above ground biomass.

Stored carbon is easily lost when soil and biomass are disturbed. Where our natural lands are intact, it is important to keep them healthy. Vigorous healthy trees and grasses will sequester more carbon for many years.

Rehabilitation in forests that are overstocked, homogeneous across too many acres, or encroaching on natural grasslands is one way to increase carbon storage and create more stable ecosystems that are less likely to suffer insect or disease infestations or catastrophic wildfires. To maximize the sequestration of carbon on managed rangelands three management items are critical - first, prescribed grazing that entails appropriate stocking rates; second, rotation of stock; and third, a drought plan that normally emans reducing stock in a timely manner when necessary.

Fire is a natural component of our forests and grasslands. While natural lightening-started fires release some carbon into the air, it is not as drastic as what is released in today's large catastrophic wildfires. These fires destroy millions of acres of biomass and create drastic soil erosion that releases carbon stored in the soil.

Carbon sequestration, like so many natural phenomena, works best when natural resources are managed using sound science. This is a core value of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service where more information is available at www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA FARM BILL AND OTHER PROGRAMS

The conservation programs authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill helped to provide the support needed to reduce the gap between the level of environmental quality the general public demands and the level of environmental quality farmers and ranchers can provide.

FY-08 Expenditures by Congressional District			
Congressional District	1	2	3
Totals	\$ 2,048,244	\$ 13,153,055	\$ 10,591,852

FY-08 Expenditures by Program by Congressional District				
Congressional District	1	2	3	Total
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	A voluntary program that provides technical, educational, and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their land in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.			
	\$ 1,261,455	\$ 9,944,747	\$ 9,357,610	\$ 20,563,812
Federal/Private Cooperative Conservation	Part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program that is voluntary and facilitates conservation on an entire ranching operation where parts of the rangeland are federally owned.			
		\$ 1,434,912		\$ 1,434,912
Ground & Surface Water Conservation	A voluntary program that helps conserve water. An example is the Ogallala Aquifer area.			
	\$ 54,260	\$ 793,965	\$ 118,731	\$ 966,956
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	A voluntary program that encourages creation of high quality wildlife habitat that support wildlife populations of national, state, Tribal, and local significance.			
	\$ 42,017	\$ 308,824	\$ 274,824	\$ 625,665
Wetlands Reserve Program	A voluntary land retirement program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private lands.			
	\$ 182,347		\$ 68,200	\$ 250,547
Conservation Security Program	A voluntary stewardship program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources.			
	\$ 10,765	\$ 574,907	\$ 772,487	\$ 1,358,159
Farm & Ranchland Protection Program	A voluntary program that helps landowners keep their productive land in agriculture through conservation easements limiting conversion of property to non-agricultural uses.			
	\$ 497,400			\$ 497,400
Watershed Rehabilitation	A voluntary program that offers assistance to local sponsors in evaluating and updating as necessary dams constructed with certain types of federal assistance.			
		\$ 95,700		\$ 95,700

Conservation Technical Assistance



NRCS provides data, information, or technical expertise that helps people collect and analyze information to identify natural resource problems and opportunities, clarify their objectives, and formulate and evaluate alternatives. *Conservation plans* reflect a customer's decisions about the management of natural resources for a specific area - which may be a farm or ranch operating unit, a group of units, a community, or a landscape feature such as a watershed. *Technical consultations and planning assistance* provide professional advice that helps customers make decisions about natural resource management.



3rd Congressional District

When Mike Reardon took over the operations of the family ranch near Wagon Mound, like so many others, he saw beauty in the greenery of the many pinons and junipers that covered the countryside in his area. Wanting the best for the bit of paradise he now managed, he began work with the Mora Field Office for the Natural Resources Conservation Service and set out on a voyage of discovery.

Reardon's journey ultimately led him to an understanding about how fire is an essential ingredient in brush management, and that the ranch had in years past hosted a bountiful prairie that supported large herds of deer, turkeys, and other wildlife.

His love for the land made Mike Reardon roll up his sleeves and begin the process of grassland restoration, and the return of fire to the equation of his environment.





Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)



The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides technical, educational, and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their land in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. It promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals, and supports activities that are carried out according to an environmental quality incentives program plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer.

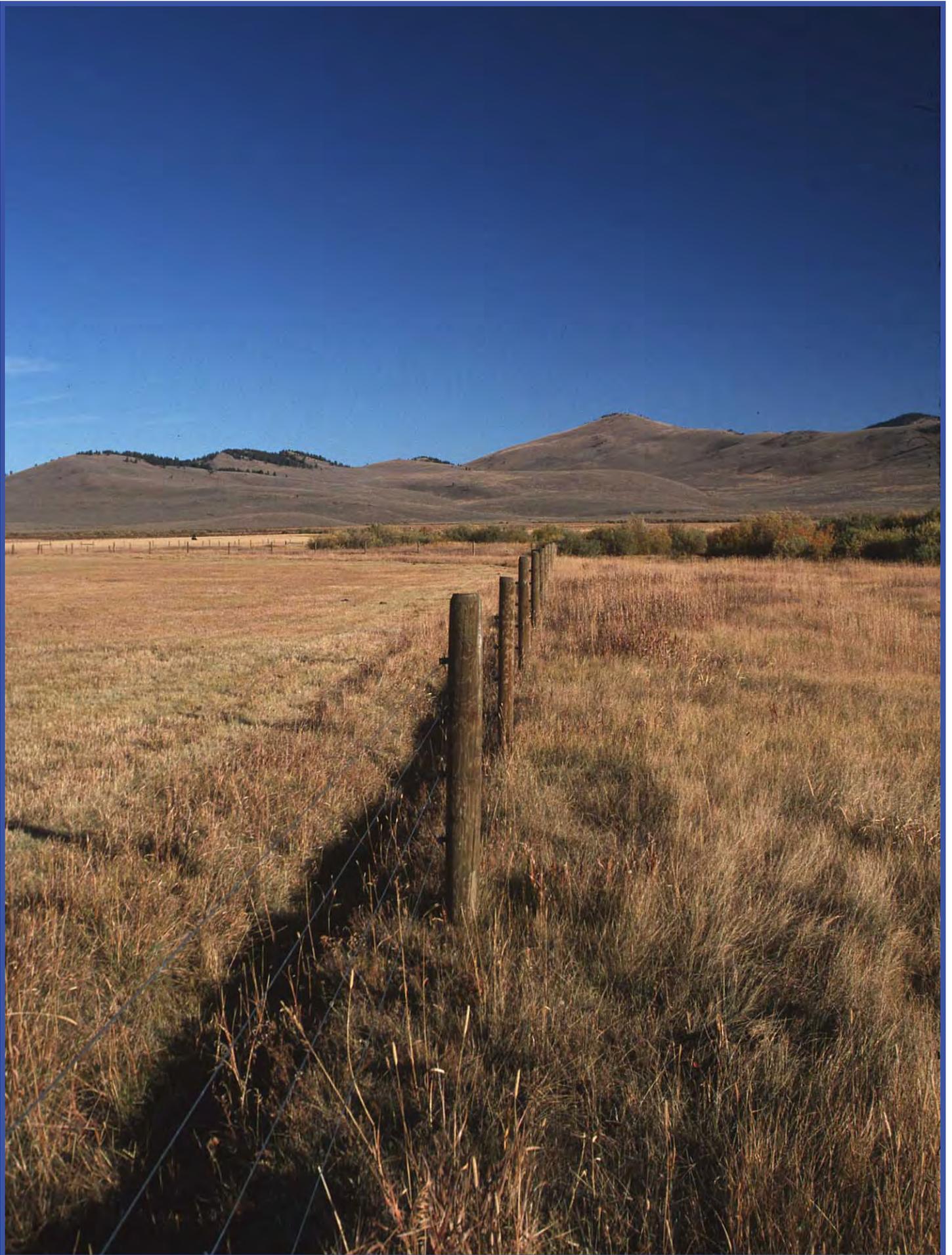


2nd Congressional District



EQIP enables farmers and ranchers, like Cash and Kansas Massey who run a Black Angus operation in the bootheel of New Mexico, to make conservation improvements with an advantageous cost-share rate. The Masseys have been able to install pipelines, fences, and troughs with the program without which they could not have launched the registered Angus operation they manage today. As a consequence, they will be offering their eighth annual yearling production bull sale this spring.

“When we bought this place it had one windmill. Today it has nine miles of pipeline and rotational grazing utilized over the ranch. We couldn’t have done anything if it hadn’t been for EQIP.” Kansas Massey



Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)



The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. Program priorities for fiscal year 2008 were:

- Promote the restoration of declining or important native wildlife habitats.
- Protect, restore, develop, or enhance wildlife habitat of at-risk species.
- Reduce the impacts of invasive species on wildlife habitats.
- Protect, restore, develop, or enhance declining or important aquatic wildlife species' habitats.

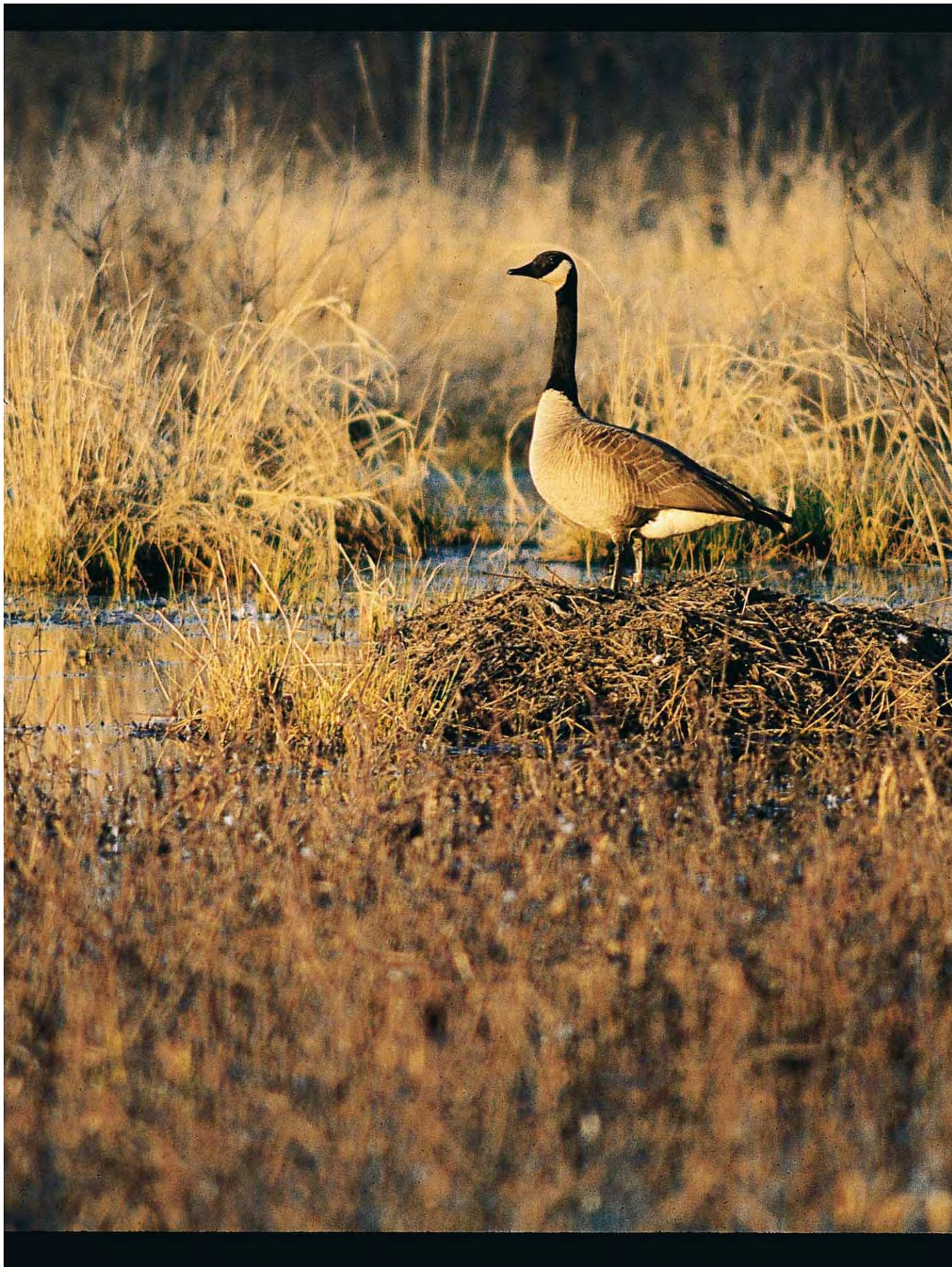


3rd Congressional District

Frank Blackmer, from the Aztec area, being a progressive conservationist, is turning river bottom into wildlife habitat on his successful farm. The conservation measures that he has incorporated into his operation include soil sampling, land planing so his fields are level and make the most efficient use of irrigation water, and riparian restoration to develop river bottom for wildlife. He is removing salt cedar and Russian olive, and planting diverse native shrubs and trees that provide wildlife with food and shelter. Geese already inhabit the area, and turkeys are intermittent visitors.



NRCS is participating with Blackmer on brush removal and planting of diverse native shrubs and trees through its Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).



Other Farm Bill Programs



The conservation provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill build on gains made by farmers and ranchers through previous programs, simplify existing efforts, and create new programs to address high priority environmental goals. Some of the several provisions are:

- Agricultural Water Enhancement Program
- Conservation Innovation Grants
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program
- Grassland Reserve Program
- Wetlands Reserve Program
- Conservation Stewardship Program



1st Congressional District

In the fall of 2008 the Corrales Farmland Preservation Committee succeeded in culminating work for the acquisition of a portion of the historic Gonzales family lands with the assistance of the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program. These lands had been part of the Town of Alameda Land Grant that dates back to 1710 and is a portion of a larger tract of land that has remained in the Gonzales family for centuries - and continuously farmed since 1712. The Village of Corrales has a vision for their community that values mixed land uses and a willingness to act to ensure agriculture maintains a place in this mix.



It is with partners like NRCS that the Village of Corrales is able to realize its vision and succeed in its locally-led conservation efforts.



Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)



NRCS administers the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program, which responds to emergencies created by natural disasters. The EWP Program is a recovery effort aimed at relieving imminent hazards to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms, and other natural occurrences. Threats that the EWP Program addresses include, but are not limited to:

- debris-clogged stream channels,
- undermined and unstable streambanks,
- jeopardized water control structures and public infrastructures, and
- damaged sites stripped of protective vegetation by fire or drought.

Trigo Fire - 2008
Big Springs Fire - 2008
South Tularosa Fire - 2008
Ruidoso Flood - 2008

Total 2008 Technical Assistance
Obligated \$512,419
Total 2008 Financial Assistance
Obligated \$4,871,738



1st Congressional District 2nd Congressional District

Major wildfires began in the Manzano Mountains April 15, 2008 with the Trigo Fire that burned 21 square miles and 59 homes, followed by the Big Springs Fire that was also devastating. These fires created imminent hazards to life and property.

The work of the NRCS EWP team began on April 23 and continued throughout the summer. Their work addressed aftermath threats by protecting homes, cabins, bridges, roads, acequia, and other features.

Fires and floods in the Sacramento Mountains also received major EWP work in 2008.

Randy Simmons, a Manzano camp manager, became a firm believer after rains following the Trigo Fire generated the largest creek flows adjacent to camp cabins he had seen there.



Soil Survey



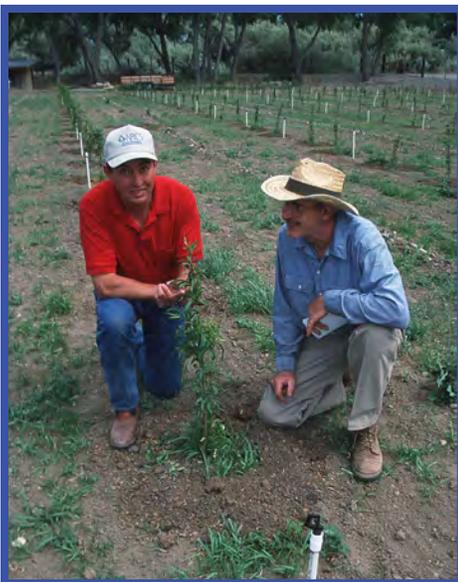
Soil surveys provide an orderly, on-the-ground, scientific inventory of soil resources that includes maps showing the locations and extent of soils, data about the physical and chemical properties of those soils, and information derived from that data about potentialities and problems of use on each kind of soil. This is done in sufficient detail to meet all reasonable needs for farmers, agricultural technicians, community planners, engineers, and scientists in planning for specific land areas.

NRCS provides the soil surveys for the privately owned lands of the nation.



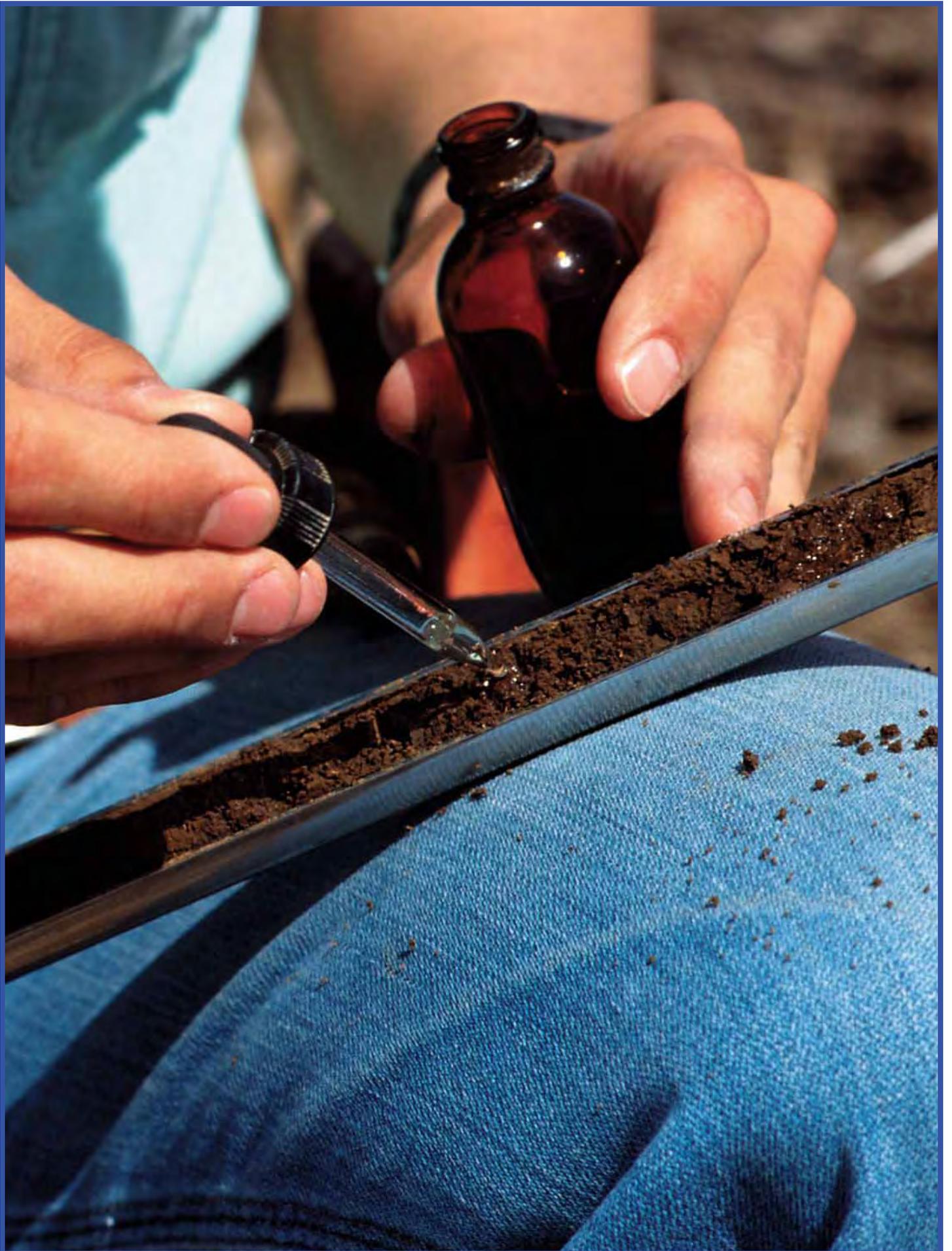
1st Congressional District

Albuquerque is built on certain areas that have collapsible soils. Collapsible soils are created when an alluvial fan is first deposited. The sand and clay particles may be loosely fused together, and when wet the bonding of the soil particles breaks down and the soils will collapse - creating visible fractures or depressions. The results of collapsible soils can be seen in sink holes in local streets and parking lots, and visible cracks in building foundations and walls of houses. The City of Albuquerque recently contacted the soil scientists of NRCS to do an onsite investigation of an area where there would be new housing development. Given the evidence identified, NRCS New Mexico was able to provide the City with sound information that the City's planners could use in carrying out their responsibilities.



“One of the most powerful tools to deliver soils information to farmers, ranchers, conservationists, and homeowners is the Web Soil Survey which is on the Internet.”

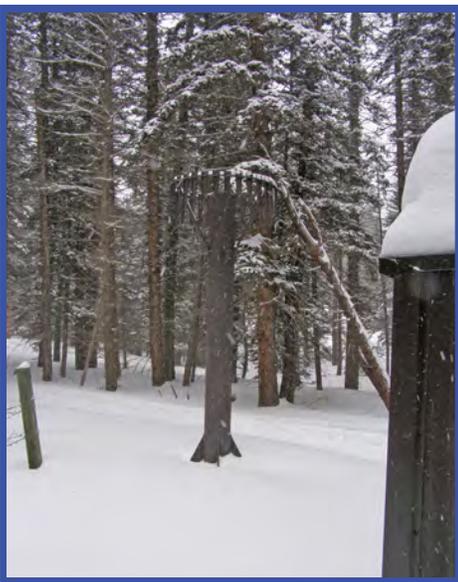
Ken Scheffe, NRCS state soil scientist



Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecasting



The Snow Survey Program provides winter snowpack and stream flow forecasts for water users in New Mexico including reservoir managers, irrigation groups, Tribes and Pueblos, and municipalities. The winter snowpack contributes 50 to 75 percent of the flow in our streams and rivers with melting snow. Snow surveyors from NRCS conduct monthly readings of snowpack depth and density at 45 locations throughout mountainous areas of the state from December through April. Included in these sites are 21 SNOTEL (snow telemetry) automated stations which report both climate and snowpack conditions to the NRCS National Water and Climate Center in Portland, Oregon using meteor burst radio transmission technology.



NRCS New Mexico has eight employees certified as snow surveyors to conduct field inventories; and two hydrologic technicians who coordinate activities, develop and publish monthly forecasts and news releases, and maintain the SNOTEL stations. They participate in drought forecasting and mitigation in cooperation with other state and federal agencies. Basin Outlook Reports are released by NRCS New Mexico early each month from January through May. The reports include data and forecasts on the snowpack, reservoir storage, and anticipated water supply (stream flows) based upon the depth, density, water content, and aerial extent of the winter snowpack.

The SNOTEL system can report numerous climate and snowpack conditions including precipitation, temperature, depth of snow, humidity, and wind speed.



Resource Conservation & Development



The NRCS Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program is designed to foster the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources. It supports improved economic activity, and seeks to enhance the environment and standard of living within its council areas. Current program objectives focus on improving quality of life through natural resources conservation and community development leading to sustainable communities, prudent development, and management and conservation of natural resources. RC&D areas are locally sponsored areas designated by the Secretary of Agriculture for RC&D technical and financial assistance program funds.



Congressional District	RC&D Funds	Leveraged Funds
1	\$ 35,340	\$ 4,308
2	\$ 471,200	\$ 3,824,162
3	\$ 437,864	\$ 1,372,396
NM Total	\$942,400	\$ 5,204,900



3rd Congressional District

The HUB RC&D Council was approached by the Ojo Encino Ranchers Committee on the Navajo reservation about securing financial and technical assistance to improve solid waste management in Ojo Encino and possibly other surrounding communities such as Torreon, Counselor, and Pueblo Pintado. A project proposal was accepted by the HUB RC&D which then offered staff time and a small monetary donation to help plan and design a trash collection facility.

At present, there are no nearby trash disposal facilities for approximately 2,000 Navajo tribal members living in several outlying communities. The HUB RC&D is helping to change that.



Los Lunas Plant Materials Center



The purpose of the Plant Material Centers program is to provide native plants that can help solve natural resource problems. Beneficial uses for which plant material may be developed include biomass production, carbon sequestration, erosion reduction, riparian restoration, and other special conservation treatment needs. Scientists at the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center seek plants that show promise for meeting identified conservation needs and test their performance. After species are proven, they are released to the private sector for commercial production.



The NRCS Los Lunas Plant Materials Center, ever in search of more riparian restoration choices, sought to propagate vine mesquite, a riparian grass that cattle and wildlife love to graze and which can be used to control erosion in waterways and small gullies. Using their broad knowledge about the production of native plants, the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center has been able to unlock the key to production of vine mesquite; and, in doing so, is bringing into the field of conservation another choice in riparian restoration and erosion control.

The potential for conservation uses of vine mesquite had not been realized in the past because the methods for production management were unknown.





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