

Demonstrations Bring Conservation to Land Sites Throughout the State Carry Message

Riparian restoration interest continues to grow among NRCS cooperators in New Mexico. As of March 1, more than 20 USDA Service Centers have requested either plants or information from the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center (LLPMC). Since 1987, the LLPMC has offered 100 free riparian plants annually to any NRCS field office in New Mexico for demonstration plantings. In addition this year, the LLPMC had available over 2000 plants of about ten species of montane plants.

In Aztec, Allan Maez, the district conservationist at the Aztec Service Center, received 100 plant material units which included narrowleaf cottonwood, silver leaf buffaloberry, wax currant, crack willow and aspen. These plants will be installed on the banks of the San Juan River at Farmington's new Nature Center. The environmental group, River Reach, will do the planting. Both salt cedar and Russian olive have been removed from the site and will be replaced with these natives.

In Espanola, Thomas Gonzales, the district conservationist of the Espanola Service Center received 20 cottonwoods and

10 skunkbush sumac. The 20 cottonwoods were provided to a land owner on the Rio Grande of the Rinconada community. This individual will plant these natives where he has previously removed Russian olive and salt cedar from his property. He has had previous success with the 20 cottonwood poles he established on his property the year before. The 20 skunkbush sumac were received by another cooperator with property on the Rio Chama. The plants were installed to stabilize the tow of a diversion dam. Also, this individual planted 50 cottonwood pole cuttings using the methodology outlined in the NRCS brochure "The Pole Cutting Solution" which can be obtained on the NRCS state web page.

In Carrizozo, Dick Shaw and Hollis Fuchs of the Carrizozo Area Office received 80 plant material units of various species including littleleaf mock orange, quaking aspen, silver buffalo berry, desert willow and cinquefoil.

"Water is a huge issue locally with regular acute shortages and bans on outside watering," said Hollis Fuchs. "Customers, landscapers and nurseries are constantly

looking for non-invasive natives of beauty that are water wise."

Shaw and Fuchs have strategically distributed these plants for plantings where they will receive high visibility. Planting locations include: Carrizozo schools, Carrizozo Village Hall, and the new USDA Service Center. The LLPMC Staff believes that his plant material distribution is a very important part of their program in that it is one more facet that keeps their program active with NRCS field offices. Additionally, it initiates volunteer applied conservation practices that may not have happened if the plant materials were not available.



Demonstration in Carrizozo of plant materials from the NRCS Plant Materials Center in Los Lunas.