

2011 Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Local Work Group Summary for the Raton Field Office

Introduction:

The Raton Field office includes all of Colfax County in Northeastern New Mexico. It is bordered by Colorado on the north, Union County on the east, Harding and Mora Counties on the south, and Taos County on the west. It consists of 2,414,080 acres. The Field Office ranges from the crest of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the west with the highest point being Mt. Baldy, 12,441 feet, to the high plains portion of the county at 5,800 feet. The south portion of the county is generally undulating plains while the northwest portion is composed of mountains, high mountain valleys and mesas. Rangeland occupies 73% of the Field Office area and is devoted mainly to beef cattle production and wildlife enterprises. Approximately 2% is irrigated cropland and hay land. Most of the available agricultural irrigation is from surface water. Less than 1% is dry cropland, mostly in CRP. Approximately 25% is privately owned grazed timberland.

Local Work Group:

The Local Work Group (LWG) Meeting was held on September 9, 2010 at the Raton Post Office Conference Room. The Local Work Group consisted of, Howard Wilcox, FSA; Alice Moore, Rob Seward, Colfax Soil and Water Conservation District; Alfred Chavez, NM State Engineer's office in Cimarron; Boe Lopez, Colfax County Extension Service; Ernie Lopez, NM State Forestry; Julia Stafford, Kirk Davis, C/S Cattle Co.; Sean Lewis East Area Range Conservationist, NRCS; Margaret Gigante, Randy Velasquez Raton Field Office, NRCS.

Priority Resource Concerns:

The LWG has agreed to address the following resource concerns in the FY 2011 EQIP program:

1. Plant Condition - Plant Health/ Noxious and Invasive Weeds
2. Water Quantity - Irrigation Water Management
3. Forest Thinning - plant health/ tree density

Funding Considerations:

The initial percent of allocation for land uses in Raton Field Office will be:

- Grazing land – 50%,
- Irrigated land – 40%,
- Non-Industrial Private Forest land – 10%.

These percentages are established as a "general rule" and not hard lines. Local minimum environmental points will be established for each ranking for the different land uses to ensure positive environmental benefits are achieved for applications to be considered.

Pest Management (595) will be utilized for the control of NM Class A & B weeds. A payment for Prescribed Grazing (528a) will be offered at \$ 0.63 per acre. A cost cap of \$2,000 will be set for this practice. Note- These rates will be adjusted to the closest rate in the established East Area Payment Schedule.

Cost Share Rate Factor:

The LWG for Colfax County recommends a cost share rate factor of 75% for all structural practices in the payment schedule for the East Area. We request to add rock and wire to grade stabilization structures to cost list.

Please refer to the FY 2011 EQIP cost list for final practice payment rates.

Ranking Criteria:

Ranking criteria worksheets for Grazing Lands, Irrigated Crop/Hay Land, and Non-Industrial Private Forest Land will be developed utilizing the National, State, and Local issues. These worksheets are basically the same as used for FY 10 with a few changes. These will be used to rank applications to promote agricultural production and environmental benefits. In the event of a tie, certain portions of each ranking will determine application funded. For Grazing Lands, the applicant with the highest ranking score on the management portion of local issues will be funded. For Irrigated Cropland, the applicant with the highest irrigation efficiency increase in the FIRS section will be funded. For NIPF, the applicant treating highest percentage of eligible forest land will be funded.

The ranking criteria worksheets for each land use are attached.

Please refer to the ranking criteria links for specific information.

Watershed Initiative:

The watershed initiative will not be implemented in Colfax County for the 2011 EQIP Program.

Small Acreage Initiative:

The Small Acreage Initiative will not be implemented in Colfax County for the 2011 EQIP Program.