

2011 Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Local Work Group Summary for the Taos Field Office

Introduction

The Taos NRCS Field Office is located in the town of Taos, NM. Taos is the county seat of Taos County. The Taos Field Office serves the Taos Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) which shares the same boundary as Taos County. The land uses within Taos SWCD consist of irrigated lands, rangeland, and forest land. Alfalfa hay, alfalfa-grass mix hay, pasture for livestock, and small grains are all produced on irrigated lands. Rangelands and forest lands are used for livestock grazing with the primary type of livestock being beef cattle. All lands throughout the Taos SWCD provide food and cover for various types of wildlife including deer, elk, quail, and some blue grouse.

Local Work Group

The Local Work Group (LWG) meeting included representatives from the Farm Service Agency, United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, New Mexico State Forestry, Town of Taos, Taos County, and Taos Soil and Water Conservation District. The LWG meeting was held on September 13, 2010 at 10:00 am at the Juan I. Gonzales Agricultural Center. New attendees present this year were representatives from Rocky Mountain Youth Corp and the Taos Valley Acequia Association.

Priority Resource Concerns and Funding Considerations

The LWG discussed the priority concerns and listed the priorities within each category as follows:

Soil Erosion

- Classic Gully Erosion
- Streambank Erosion
- Sheet & Rill
- Wind Erosion
- Irrigation Induced

Soil Condition

- Organic Matter Depletion
- Rangeland Site Stability
- Compaction

Water Quantity

- Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land
- Rangeland Hydrologic Cycle

- Aquifer Overdraft
- Excessive Runoff, Flooding or Ponding

Water Quality

- Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater
- Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water
- Excessive Salinity in Groundwater
- Excessive Salinity in Surface Water
- Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water

Air Quality

- Reduced Visibility
- Particulate matter less than 1.0 micrometers in diameter
- Particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter

Plant Condition

- Noxious and Invasive Plants
- Productivity, Health and Vigor
- Wildfire Hazard
- Forage Quality and Palatability

Domestic Animals

- Inadequate Stock Water
- Inadequate Quantities of Quality Feed and Forage

Fish and Wildlife

- Inadequate Food, Shelter, and Water
- Inadequate Space
- Habitat Fragmentation

The LWG expressed a strong concern with Forest Health in Taos SWCD and wants more conservation plans and practices installed on private forest lands. Private forest lands have been given 10% of the field office allocation in the past. With that in mind the following funding percentages are proposed for the Taos Field Office.

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| • Non-Industrialized Private Forest Land | 20% |
| • Rangeland | 30% |
| • Irrigated Land | 40% |
| • Small Acreage Initiative | 10% |

No practice caps were recommended for the upcoming fiscal year.

Cost Share Rate Factor

A lower cost share rate is not recommended by the LWG.

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

Ranking Criteria

The same ranking criteria used in FY 2010 for rangeland and irrigated lands will be used in FY 2011.

Please refer to the ranking criteria links for specific information.

Watershed Initiative

The LWG has decided not to set aside funds for a Local Watershed Initiative for FY 2011.

Small Acreage Initiative

The LWG has decided to implement the Small Acreage Initiative for FY 2011. The field office will set aside 10% of its initial allocation for the Small Acreage Initiative. The initiative will cover the entire Taos F.O. The maximum acreage allowed will be 15 acres for irrigated land applicants and 200 acres for rangeland and forest land applicants. The household income requirement will be set at no more than \$60,000 of annual income reported to the IRS.