

2014 Environmental Quality Incentive Program Proposal

For the Carlsbad Field Office Central Valley & Peñasco SWCDs

Introduction:

Service Center Setting: The Artesia Service Center is located in southeastern New Mexico along the Pecos River. The field office work area encompasses the north half of Eddy County and the southern end of Chaves County. The area has a long history of farming and ranching. There are approximately 35,000 acres of irrigated cropland located in the Central Valley SWCD. Rangeland makes up the remainder of the work area and includes the Peñasco SWCD.

The work area is in the northern limits of the Chihuahuan Desert. The climate is mild and dry with an annual rainfall of 10-12 inches on the eastern part of the area and 14-16 inches on the western edge of the work area.

Irrigation is very essential to the farming community in the area. Water for irrigation is pumped from artesian wells; some of which are deep, while others are shallow. Very little water is derived from the Pecos River for irrigation in the area. Crops grown historically have been alfalfa and cotton. The Dairy Industry moved into the area 14-16 years ago. With the beginning of the dairy industry also brought in crops such as corn silage and small grain for green chop. Chile and Pecans are also grown in the area. The rangeland resource found in the work area is warm seasonal grassland. The area supports both sheep and cattle.

Local Work Group:

The LWG meeting was held on September 3, 2013 at the Central Valley and Peñasco SWCD office located at 3105 W. Main, Artesia, NM and was called to order at 1:30 PM. Invitations were sent out to federal, state, and local agencies. The meeting was also announced through local media and fliers throughout the community. The LWG is comprised of board members and staff from both SWCDs.

Priority Resource Concerns:

Grazing Lands resource concerns:

Soil – Sheet, Rill, and wind erosion, compaction

Plant Condition- Undesirable plant productivity and health, excessive plant pressure,

Wildfire hazard, excessive biomass accumulation

Animals – Inadequate livestock water, habitat degradation, and inadequate feed and forage

Energy – Equipment and Facilities

Irrigated Land resource concerns:

Water Quantity – Inefficient use of irrigation system

Plant Condition – Undesirable plant productivity and health

Water Quality – Excessive salts in surface and ground waters
Air Quality-Emissions of Particulate Matter (PM) and PM Precursors
Energy – Equipment and Facilities

Funding Considerations:

The previous year's funding codes are continuing to be sufficient for the area, as well as the percentage distributions. The LWG's consensus of opinion was to continue to use the previous year's funding codes without changing the percentage allocations distributed to the various codes. The 2013 percentage allocations per funding code categories are continuing to be as stated: 50% Grazing lands and 50% irrigated cropland. The Local Work Group also designated that the Single Practice Cap should remain at \$60,000.00 for the Grazing Lands as well as for the Irrigated Cropland except for Center Pivots which should remain at a cost cap of \$75,000 per practice (442).

Cost Share Rate and Eligible Practices:

The Local Work Group recommended that cost share rates be moved to the recommended 75%, although it is understood that we are now following a regional payment schedule. LWG recommended adding Net Wire diversions to payment schedule.

Ranking Criteria:

The LWG concurred that the national ranking tool be adopted and accepted. State issues will be incorporated into the ranking tool. Local Area issues were reviewed and adopted as written in previous year ranking criteria.

Low, Medium, and High Priorities

The Local Work Group agreed that High Priority applications would be those that rank in the top one third of the total points available on the local input to the National Ranking Process. Medium Priority would be the applicants in the middle one third of total local points available, and the Low Priority would be the applicants which rank in the bottom one third of total local points available.

Tie Breakers

The LWG also reviewed their established procedure for eliminating ties between producers. The tie-breaking procedure has not changed from the one determined last year. The procedure is listed as follows: For grazing lands, the producer whose Range Land Health score displays the most potential for benefits would break the tie. For irrigation, the producer whose FIRS score displays the most potential for benefits would break the tie.

Watershed Initiative:

The Watershed Initiative was discussed, and the concurrence of the Local Work Group was that they did not recommend making a proposal under this initiative for FY 2014.

Small Acreage Initiative:

The Small Acreage Initiative was discussed, and the concurrence of the Local Work Group was that they did not recommend making a proposal under this initiative for FY 2014.