

# **2014 Environmental Quality Incentive Program Proposal**

## **For the Carlsbad Field Office Carlsbad SWCD**

### **Introduction:**

Field Office Setting: The Carlsbad Soil and Water Conservation District was established under New Mexico state law in 1945. Carlsbad, New Mexico lies along the Pecos River on the northeastern fringe of the Chihuahuan Desert. The Carlsbad Field Office boundaries extend into the southern portion of Eddy County, the eastern edge of Otero County, and over into parts of Chaves County. Winter temperatures are cool, and summer temperatures are extremely hot. The grazing lands found in within the district boundaries are primarily warm seasonal grasslands. While there is some winter rain precipitation, most occurs during the summer months. Most of the area receives less than ten inches of rainfall yearly making irrigation very essential to the area's farming community. The Carlsbad SWCD is in a semi-arid region consisting of federal, private, and state grazing lands, and cropland predominately along the Pecos River with very few irrigation systems outside the valley. Crops and animal production are the main agricultural products in the area. Primary crops are alfalfa, cotton, and small grains. The animal products are primarily beef with very few ranchers still raising sheep and goat.

### **Local Work Group:**

The LWG meeting was held on August 28, 2013 at Carlsbad Soil & Water Conservation District 3219 S. Canal Street in Carlsbad, New Mexico and was called to order at 10:00 AM. 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 Carlsbad SWCD, Bureau of Land Management, Farm Service Agency, NM Cooperative Extension Service, US Forest Service, and Carlsbad Irrigation District.

### **Priority Resource Concerns:**

#### **Grazing Lands resource concerns:**

**Soil – Sheet, Rill, and wind erosion**

**Water Quantity – Rangeland hydrologic cycle**

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

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

#### **Irrigated Land resource concerns:**

**Soil – Organic matter depletion**

**Water Quantity – Inefficient use of irrigation system**

**Plant Condition – Undesirable plant productivity and health**

**Water Quality – Excessive salts in surface and ground waters**

**Non-Industrial Private Forest Land resource concerns:  
Water Quantity - Rangeland hydrologic cycle,  
Plant Condition – Wildfire hazard, excessive biomass accumulation  
Animal- Habitat degradation**

**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, with \$20,000 being set aside for a proposed watershed. The Local Work Group also designated that the Single Practice Cap should remain at \$50,000.00 for the Grazing Lands as well as for the Irrigated Cropland.

**Cost Share Rate Factor:**

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.

**Ranking Criteria:**

The LWG concurred that the national ranking tool be adopted and accepted. State issues will be incorporated into the ranking tool. The Group recommended a small change to the ranking criteria. If this is a producer's first application they would like for it to reflect the same amount of points as when an applicant had a prior year contract that was satisfactorily operated and maintained.

**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 group proposed one watershed initiative for FY 2014 (see attachment)

**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.

**Attachments:**

Watershed proposal.