

2014 Environmental Quality Incentive Program Proposal

Carrizozo, NM Field Office

INTRODUCTION:

The Carrizozo Field Office is located in the western and southern portions of Lincoln County and the eastern portion of Socorro County in south-central New Mexico. The field office area is comprised primarily of native grazing lands that are open grasslands on the rolling plains, and juniper-pinion savannah on the toe slopes and valleys of the Capitan, Jicarilla, and White Mountains. The mountain slopes are covered with Ponderosa pine and mixed conifer primarily on Lincoln National Forest lands, Approximately 4,500 acres is irrigated pasture and orchards adjacent to the Hondo, Ruidoso and Bonito Rivers. The majority of the agricultural land use in Lincoln County is cow/calf ranches.

LOCAL WORK GROUP:

The Carrizozo Field Office Local Work Group meeting was held in the Upper Hondo SWCD conference room on August 28, 2013. The LWG is comprised of board members from both the Upper Hondo and the Carrizozo SWCD's. Other members of the LWG included Farm Service Agency representative, NM State Land Office, NM State Forestry, BLM, USFS, Lincoln County and twelve local producers. A meeting agenda was handed out to all participants of the meeting. The agenda discussed the priority resource concerns, the total FY 2013 EQIP dollars allocated to the field office, allocation of funds within the field office, payment rates and ranking process. The Local Work Group completed the review and recommendations of the information for the Carrizozo Field Office EQIP program.

PRIORITY RESOURCE CONCERNS:

- Soil Condition - Rangeland Site Stability
- Water Quantity – Rangeland Hydrologic Cycle
- Air Quality – Undesirable air movement
- Plant Condition – Productivity Health and Vigor
 - Noxious and invasive plants
- Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Food/water
- Domestic Animals – Inadequate quantities and quality of food and forage/water
- Soil Erosion – wind/water (Sheet and Rill)

FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS:

The LWG recommended that the FY2014 dollar allocation within the field office to be 90% to the grazing land resource concerns (ranches) and 10% to the water resource concerns (farms) addressing resource concerns in the Hondo Valley. Discretion was given to the DC to adjust funds as needed if there was not sufficient participation in one area.

A \$50,000 per practice cap was recommended, with discretion given to the District Conservationist to up this limit if allocations exceeded demands.

COST SHARE RATES FACTOR:

No changes were recommended continue using regional payment schedule for FY 2014. The Payment schedule is being compiled by the NRCS State Office with adjustments to the FY 2013 costs.

RANKING CRITERIA:

No changes were recommended, with the same resource concerns as last year. Use with the same points that are currently used. The recommendation was to use Rangeland Health for ranches and FURS for farms if a tie were to occur.

WATERSHED INITIATIVE: The LWG is proposing two Watersheds Initiatives for funding one in each SWCD, the Salado Creek Watershed in the Upper Hondo SWCD and the Gallo Canyon in the Carrizozo SWCD. Attached is the FY 2014 EQIP Watershed Initiative Proposal attachment #3.

SMALL ACREAGE INITIATIVE: No recommendation was made on this issue, because of the Limited Resource Producer and Beginning Farmer or Rancher programs available.

ATTACHMENTS: #3 Watershed Proposal

Phillip Herrera
District Conservationist