

# 2014 Environmental Quality Incentive Program Proposal

## For the Gallup Field Office

**Introduction:** The Gallup NRCS Field Office is located in Gallup, New Mexico. The office serves the McKinley Soil and Water Conservation District which covers land located in McKinley and Cibola counties. The area includes private land as well as tribal land located within the Navajo and Zuni Reservations. The majority of the land is used as grazed range for livestock production. There are irrigation land users in the Ramah Valley including Ramah Village farmers and Zuni tribal farmers.

**Local Work Group:** A meeting of the local work group was called by the McKinley SWCD in Gallup, NM on September 6, 2013. Various entities representing the diverse interest of the area were invited to attend. This included tribal offices for the Navajo Nation and Zuni Tribe as well as state and federal agencies involved with the lands in McKinley County. The LWG meeting was attended by members of the SWCD, McKinley County, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Forest Service and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.

**Priority Resource Concerns:** Consensus was reached by the Local Work Group to keep Grazing Lands (Rangeland) as the number one priority, with erosion, water quality and quantity, plant productivity, forage quality, and inadequate stock water as the main concerns. Irrigated and Dryland Croplands as the second priority with water quantity and quality, plant condition, mainly productivity, and sheet rill erosion, as the main concerns. Forest-Woodland as the third priority, with water quantity and quality, plant health and vigor, wildlife hazard, and wildlife population's imbalance, as the main concerns. Grazed forests will be covered under Grazing lands.

It was agreed by the LWG members that these three categories will capture most of the resource concerns within the SWCD and field office service area and will apply to both Tribal and Non-Tribal lands.

**Funding Considerations:** The LWG recommends that the funds be allocated as follows: 30% Cropland (Irrigated/Dryland), 50% Range and 20% Forestry.

**Cost Share Rate Factor:** The cost-share rate factor for the most commonly used practices in the payment schedule is expected to be 75% and 90%.

The LWG has decided to cap all practices at \$40,000. Prescribed Grazing will be offered as an incentive practice.

**Ranking Criteria:** No changes were recommended for the 2014 ranking tool.

Applicants will be categorized into High, Medium or Low according to the attached screening criteria. (See Attachment 1)

In the instance of a tiebreaker, applicants with the highest tracking number, will rank above those with lower tracking numbers.

**Watershed Initiative:** The LWG has decided not to opt into any of the optional incentives for FY 2014.

**Small Acreage Initiative:** The LWG has decided not to opt into any of the optional incentives for FY 2014.