

2014 Environmental Quality Incentive Program Proposal 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, New Mexico State Forestry, Town of Taos, Taos County, and Taos Soil and Water Conservation District. The LWG meeting was held on September 9, 2013 at 10:00 am at the Juan I. Gonzales Agricultural Center. Agencies present were Taos SWCD, Taos County Extension, and NM State Forestry.

Priority Resource Concerns and Funding Considerations

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

1. **Soil Erosion**
 - Classic Gully Erosion
 - Stream bank Erosion
 - Sheet & Rill
 - Wind Erosion
 - Irrigation Induced
2. **Soil Condition**
 - Organic Matter Depletion
 - Rangeland Site Stability
 - Compaction
3. **Water Quantity**
 - Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land
 - Rangeland Hydrologic Cycle
 - Aquifer Overdraft
 - Excessive Runoff, Flooding, or Ponding

4. **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
5. **Air Quality**
 - Reduced Visibility
 - Particulate matter less than 1.0 micrometers in diameter
 - Particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter
6. **Plant Condition**
 - Noxious and Invasive Plants
 - Productivity, Health and Vigor
 - Wildfire Hazard
 - Forage Quality and Palatability
7. **Domestic Animals**
 - Inadequate Stock Water
 - Inadequate Quantities of Quality Feed and Forage
8. **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 to continue to keep funds in this category for incoming applicants.

- Non-Industrialized Private Forest Land 20%
- Rangeland 40%
- Irrigated Land 40%

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.

Ranking Criteria

The ranking criterion is not changing from 2013.

Small Acreage Initiative

The LWG has decided to continue implementing the Small Acreage Initiative for FY 2013. 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.