

New Mexico

ANNUAL REPORT - 2013



J. Xavier Montoya
New Mexico
State Conservationist

Who We Are:

For nearly 80 years the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of New Mexico has been on the front line of helping the state's agricultural producers improve and protect the natural resources on their farm-, ranch-, forest- and wetlands. We work one-on-one in close partnership with ag producers; Native American Tribes, Pueblos and Nations; Soil and Water Conservation Districts, local and state governments, and other federal agencies to maintain healthy and productive working landscapes in New Mexico.

NRCS assists landowners with conservation planning and implementation by explaining the significance of how natural resources are interconnected - each relying on the other in having healthy soil. NRCS responds to a broad array of resource concerns such as soil, water, air, plants, animal, energy and human issues (SWAPA+EH) on America's private, state and Tribal lands. While farmers and ranchers will always be our primary focus, NRCS also provides technical assistance to city planners, watershed groups, local, state and tribal governments, educators as well as civic organizations.

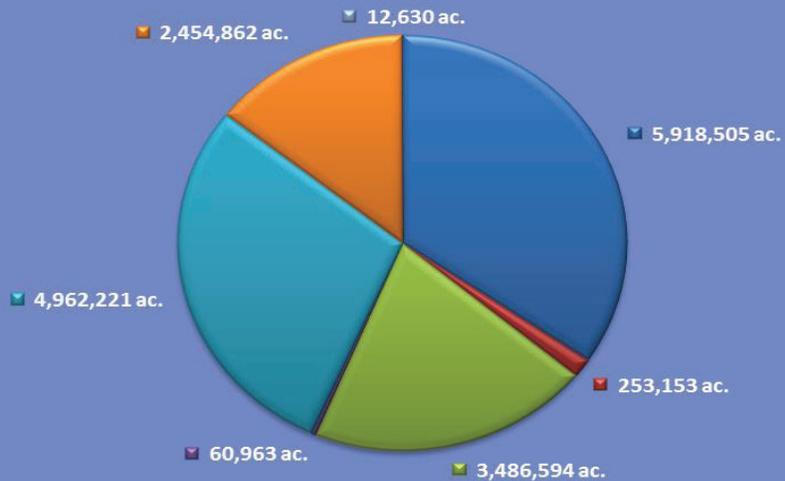
This Annual Report showcases what we accomplished in 2013 as well as how successfully NRCS New Mexico implemented the 2008 Farm Bill to reach out to all eligible Farm Bill program recipients.

Approximately 49 percent of the entire 2008 Farm assistance in New Mexico was provided to Historically Underserved groups such as Small Acreage/Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, Limited Resource Producers and Socially Disadvantaged Producers (such as Hispanic, American Indian and Women agricultural producers).

We take pride in what we have accomplished and will continue to provide sound and credible scientific and technical assistance to our customers.

Conservation Applied and Acres Benefitted

- Conservation Planning Completed
- Improvement to Water Quality
- Grazing Land Conservation
- Forest Land Conservation
- Improvement to Cropland
- Irrigation Improvement
- Improvement of Fish and Wildlife Habitat



Top Seven Conservation Practices Across New Mexico

Number	Practice	Projects	Number of Acres	Financial Assistance
1	Irrigation System, Sprinkler	31	2,198	\$1,011,960
2	Irrigation Water Conveyance (Pipeline and concrete ditch lining)	83	89,774	\$890,415
3	Brush Management	92	17,002	\$975,910
4	Livestock Pipeline	97	537,092 feet	\$925,829
5	Fence	79	678,502 feet	\$678,502
6	Watering Facilities (troughs & tanks)	136	n/a	\$402,913
7	Structure for Water Control	74	n/a	\$209,819

“Helping People Help the Land”



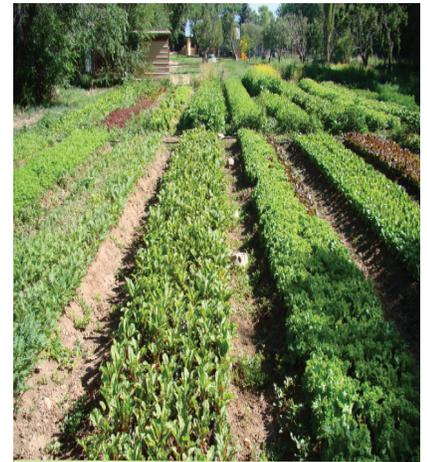
Soil water Air plants
animals Energy humans

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

working lands/stewardship programs ·····

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers through contract agreements that can be up to ten years in length. These contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns on private, state and Tribal agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.



Organic Vegetable Farm in Nambe

Congressional District	Contracts	Contracted Acres	Obligation Amount
1	27	198,799	\$1,060,515
2	244	1,760,309	\$12,844,575
3	273	542,732	\$9,016,724
Total	544	2,501,309	\$22,921,754

Lesser Prairie Chicken

EQIP Initiative	Contracts	Obligations	Payments	Contract Acres
	6	\$1,104,274	\$79,820	110,126



Lesser Prairie Chicken

Certified Organic

EQIP Initiative	Contracts	Obligations	Payments	Contract Acres
	7	\$71,160	\$42,672	622

Seasonal High Tunnel-Hoop Houses

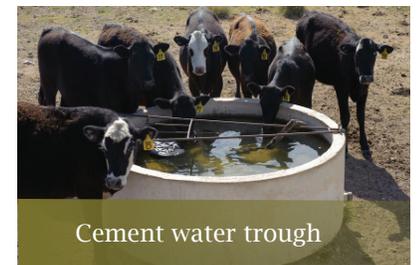
EQIP Initiative	Contracts	Obligations	Payments	Contract Acres
	24	\$176,617	\$60,447	69

Burned Lands Initiative

FY 2013	EQIP Contracts	EQIP Obligated	WHIP Contracts	WHIP Obligated	Total Contracts	Total Obligated
	14	\$538,235	4	\$23,147	18	\$561,382

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

CSP is a voluntary conservation program that provides incentives to agricultural producers to maintain, enhance, and manage existing conservation practices. CSP is used only on Tribal and private agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest land. The program provides equitable access to all producers, regardless of operation size, crops produced or geographic location.



Cement water trough

Congressional District	Contracts	Contracted Acres	Obligation Amount
1	15	107,472	\$908,077
2	91	696,207	\$6,353,438
3	43	187,362	\$1,992,980
Total	149	991,041	\$9,254,495

Estimated Range of Annual Payments	Cropland	\$12 to \$22 per acre
	Non-Industrial Private Forest Land	\$6 to \$12 per acre
	Pastureland	\$7 to \$14 per acre
	Rangeland	\$5 to \$10 per acre

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

working lands/stewardship programs ·····

WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVES PROGRAM

WHIP is a voluntary conservation program for landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat on private agricultural land, non-industrial private forest land, and Tribal land. WHIP agreements between NRCS and the participant generally last from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed.



Southwest Willow Flycatcher

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (FY 2012)

Congressional District	Contracts	Contracted Acres	Obligation Amount
1	0	0	\$0
2	8	8,324	\$297,098
3	3	13,983	\$251,240
Total	11	22,307	\$548,338

WHIP Initiative	Contracts	Obligations	Payments	Contract Acres
	4	\$55,223	\$18,906	125.0

working lands/stewardship initiatives ·····

Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative

Restore New Mexico is an ambitious partnership initiative to restore New Mexico's grasslands, woodlands and riparian areas to a healthy and productive condition. Since the program began in 2005, millions of acres have greatly benefitted from cooperative partnership to restore impaired wildlife habitat and grazing land in southern and eastern New Mexico. Through this partnership initiative New Mexico has seen the return of healthy native grasslands, better wildlife habitat, and grazing land on a broad scale.

2005 to Present

Restore New Mexico	Congressional District	Contracts	Contract Acres	Obligations
	2	16	6,293	\$766,279
	3	60	1,751,673	\$4,352,952
	Total	76	1,757,966	\$5,119,231

Acequias

In FY 2013 NRCS deployed the first ever sign up of the EQIP Acequia Initiative. Through the initiative four contracts were approved obligating \$220,000.



In addition to the EQIP Acequia Initiative NRCS conducted construction and certification checkouts on four Acequia projects totaling \$135,600.

NRCS assisted 33 Acequias, throughout the state, on planning, surveys and design for irrigation systems and water delivery improvements. NRCS also provided support to another 11 Acequias or Community Ditchers to assist in decision making for future improvements. NRCS provided outreach to more than 60 Acequias and community ditches state wide.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

easements ·····

Program	Description	Money Obligated	Contract Acres	Contracts
WRP	The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. NRCS provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts.	\$926,000	180	4
GRP	The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program that helps landowners and operators restore and protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands, while maintaining the areas as grazing lands.	\$1.4 million	25,000	4
FRPP	The Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farmland and rangeland in agricultural uses. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.	\$850,000	15,000	2



WRP Blue Hole Restoration Project

ENGINEERING

NRCS is currently in the planning stages and making upgrades of Dam Rehabilitation for the Santa Cruz Site #1

The design for Hatch Valley Site #6 is underway

Hazard Classification of NRCS Assisted Large Dams in New Mexico:

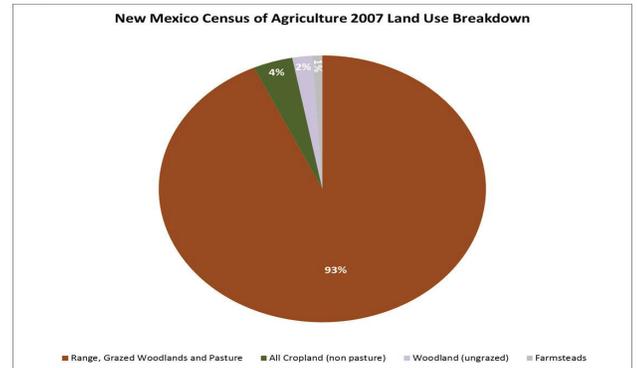
High Hazard	Low Hazard	Significant Hazard
34	47	20

SOILS

Unlock the Secrets in the Soil

Soil is a living and life-giving substance, without which we would perish. As world population and food production demands rise, keeping our soil healthy and productive is of paramount importance. So much so that we believe improving the health of our Nation's soil is one of the most important endeavors of our time.

New Mexico is focusing more attention on soil health by educating customers and the public on positive impacts productive soils have on rangelands, croplands, and woodlands.



EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM (EWP)

EWP

2011

- * Track Fire - Colfax County received \$539,000 in EWP Financial Assistance (FA).
- * White Fire - Lincoln County was provided with Technical Assistance only (TA).
- * Mayhill Fire - Otero County was provided with TA only.
- * Los Conchas Fire - some in Los Alamos, Rio Arriba and Sandoval Counties. These counties received EWP FA and TA.

2012

- * Little Bear Fire - Lincoln County received TA and \$820,000 in FA.
- * Whitewater-Baldy Complex Fire - Catron County received TA and \$500,00 in EWP FA.

2013

- * Tres Lagunas Fire - San Miguel and Santa Fe Counties received EWP TA and the New Mexico Burned Lands Initiative assistance.
- * Silver Fire - Grant and Sierra Counties received EWP TA and the New Mexico Burned Lands Initiative assistance.
- * September brought unusually heavy rains that resulted in flooding many communities throughout NM. Damaging floods occurred in many parts of the state: Socorro, Grant, Catron, Rio Arriba, Guadalupe and Chaves counties, to name a few. NRCS provided TA in most of these locations and worked with local sponsors in several instances to make EWP funds requests. The financial assistance is still pending availability of funds.

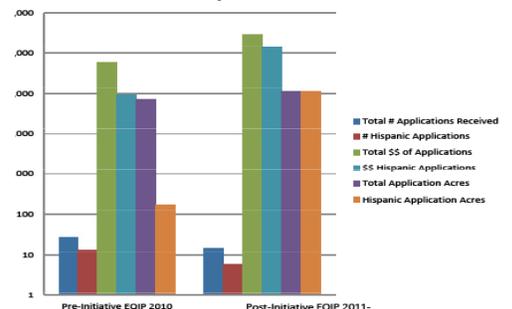
CONSERVATION PLANNING INITIATIVE (CPI)

CPI

The 2008 Farm Bill served as the catalyst for the USDA to launch a concerted effort to encourage minority and Under Represented farmers and ranchers to participate in USDA programs. One of the most successful outcomes was the Conservation Planning Initiative Workshop conducted in southern New Mexico. The Anthony, New Mexico meeting included agricultural producers from northern Mexico.

NRCS led the multi-agency effort that provided many of the participants with the opportunity to learn more about the importance of soil health. Attendees learned how to develop Conservation Plans. NRCS also hosted CPI workshops in Chama, Carrizozo and Los Lunas. These meetings were well attended by minorities and Under-Represented farmers.

Comparison of Total & Hispanic Applications Received, Dollar Values & Acreages, Pre- and Post- Conservation Planning Initiative, Dona Ana County, New Mexico





Reaching out to everyone

NRCS New Mexico fully understands the need to help every eligible farmer and rancher. We have been there for agricultural producers for nearly 80 years and will be here to help generations to come.

2008 Farm Bill Investments to Historically Underserved (HU), Socially Disadvantaged (SD) Farmers and Ranchers in New Mexico

(Note: These data are specific to the assistance provided to HU agricultural producers in New Mexico during the 5-year lifespan of the 2008 Farm Bill.)

Notes	AWEP	CSP	EQIP	WHIP
	31 Contracts	192 Contracts	1282 contracts	70
	\$1,956,640	\$30,287,364	\$39,336,673	\$1,449,639
All contracts including non-HU				
	47 Contracts	545 Contracts	2523 Contracts	121 Contracts
TOTALS	\$3,513,824	\$69,405,545	\$95,235,293	\$3,109,548

TOTAL HU Assistance	1,575 Contracts	\$73,030,317	4,457,456 acres
All Contracts including HU	3,235	\$171,230,500	15,651,755 acres

* *HU Clients comprised 49% of all contracts issued from the 2008 Farm Bill*

* *HU contracts comprised 43% of all funding issued from the 2008 Farm Bill*



One-on-One Help

Soil Conservationist Technician Jean Foster, with the NRCS Albuquerque District office, works with a member of the Santo Domingo Pueblo during an inspection of the recently completed irrigation upgrade project at the Santo Domingo Pueblo.

StrikeForce Helps Santo Domingo Pueblo

NRCS Helps Build Efficient Irrigation System

Just off the Rio Grande River sits Santo Domingo Pueblo, a community in New Mexico surrounded by a sea of green -- fields of alfalfa, oats and Sudan grass and small gardens to grow fresh vegetables.

But the community has been at risk of drying out. Over the past few years, New Mexico has struggled through one of our nation's worst droughts. Little rain and a dwindling river have threatened many of the pueblo's fields and gardens.

"Many of the fields were in fallow because there wasn't enough water because of the shortage," said Jonathan Garcia, Water Resources Manager for the Pueblo. After partnering with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, pueblo residents found a way to grow more using less water, keeping their fields and gardens healthy.

The tribe received financial assistance from NRCS through USDA's StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity. The national initiative addresses high-priority funding and technical assistance needs in rural communities in 16 states, including New Mexico, with a special emphasis on historically underserved communities and producers in counties with persistent poverty.

Pueblo residents worked with NRCS to save water by improving soil health through conservation practices such as rotating crops and planting cover crops. Healthy soil retains more moisture, allowing for less water to be applied during irrigation. They also installed an efficient underground water irrigation system to replace some of the aging earthen irrigation ditches to 50 fields that stretched across more than 200 acres.

"The water efficiency improvements have helped out tremendously and everyone in the 200 plus acres is able to plant this season using the same amount of water as before," Garcia said. The new watering system and conservation practices have made all the difference. The once-parched fields of the pueblo are flourishing — a notable feat even in non-drought years. And now fields that used to take two days to irrigate can be watered in just four hours.

"The pueblo is applying science to the field hand-in-hand with their traditional methods, and it's working," said Jean Foster, an NRCS New Mexico soil conservation technician who worked extensively on the project. Much of the work through StrikeForce focuses on encouraging efficient use of water in agricultural operations. "We're now studying another area just south of our village to consider putting in a similar irrigation system for about 300 more acres," said Garcia.

"On a scale of 1 to 10, the project's success has been an 11." StrikeForce is creating conservation opportunities in rural communities and tribes across the nation.