

# Santa Fe-Pojoaque Soil & Water Conservation District

## Scope of Work and Accomplishments – FY2024

### **Mission of the Santa Fe-Pojoaque Soil and Water Conservation District:**

To provide leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve natural resources within the District.

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### INFORMATION/EDUCATION



Area education events and work parties

Provided technical assistance to cooperators (landowners, farmers and ranchers) within the District to develop, coordinate and implement soil and water conservation programs, practices and demonstrations.

Partnered with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Santa Fe and Rio Arriba Counties, Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition, Santa Fe Conservation Trust, Railyard Park Conservancy and others to provide educational services and sponsor community education events and projects promoting forest thinning, wildfire mitigation, noxious weed control, land restoration, and soil and water conservation in the District.

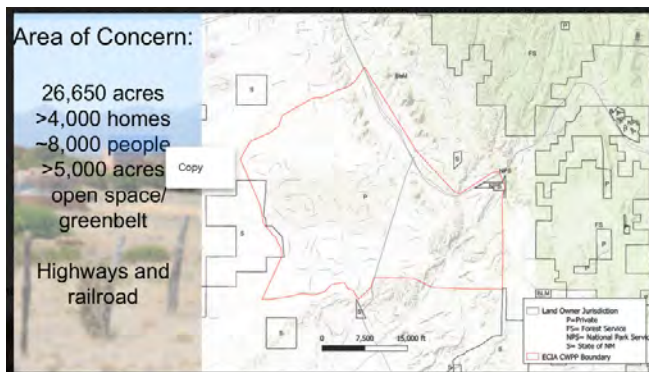
Sponsored attendance of District youth at educational camps, conferences and events.

Published educational and informational articles in local print and online media.

## COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS



Healthy Soil Program Projects – Chimayó, Santa Fe County



New SF-PSWCD/ECIA partnership will develop a CWPP for the greater Eldorado Area

Coordinated with Santa Fe County Public Works and Land Use Departments to promote environmentally efficient soil and water conservation practices through the planning process. Conducted subdivision reviews as part of the County approval process when requested, as required by state law.

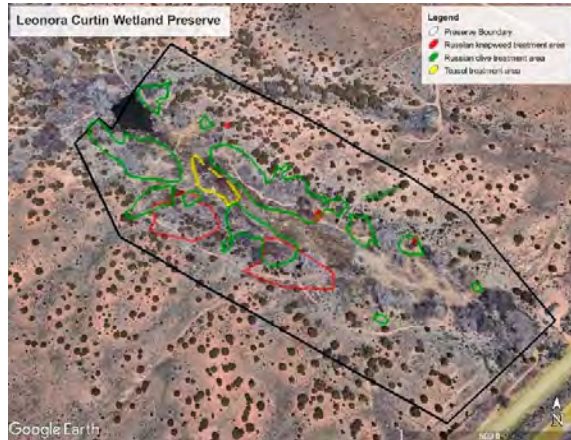
Participated actively in the Santa Fe County Water Policy Advisory Committee, with District Supervisor Shann Stringer serving as the Committee’s current chair.

Entered new partnership with Santa Fe County to serve as fiscal agent for a NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program Grant, which will complete \$350,005 in restoration work on Rio en Medio properties damaged by post-wildfire floods.

Provided oversight for four successful District recipients of NMDA’s Healthy Soil Program. Grantees included Santa Fe Railyard Park Conservancy, Chimayó Cultural Preservation Association, Reyah Sunshine Farm and Hearts Abloom, with a total of \$40,470 in grant dollars put to work directly on the land in Santa Fe County. Sponsored six new Healthy Soil Program grant applications for FY2025, and applied for a direct grant to assist local landowners in improving soil health.

Formed a new partnership with Eldorado Community Improvement Association, serving as fiscal agent for development of a (CWPP) for the greater Eldorado area.

## COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS, CONTINUED



Ongoing invasive weed management at Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve



Rio en Medio – post-fire flood damage, soon to be repaired thanks to new SF-PSWCD/County partnership



This new agricultural conservation easement (a SF-PSWCD/Santa Fe Conservation Trust partnership) will preserve viewsheds for visitors to Santa Fe County's popular open-space trails in Nambé in perpetuity.

Formed a new partnership with Santa Fe Conservation Trust to secure a Natural Heritage Conservation Act grant to purchase a conservation easement on 65-139 acres of significant agricultural land in Nambé. Will co-hold easement with the Conservation Trust.

Partnered with East Rio Arriba, Taos, and Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation Districts on a collaborative noxious weed management grant, bringing \$200,000 into the four-district area. The partnership is actively seeking additional funding to continue this important work.

Participated in monthly meetings of the Santa Cruz Watershed Group, a diverse, multi-agency, community-based initiative working to preserve watershed resources and improve the health and safety of the Rio Santa Cruz watershed. District Supervisor Shann Stringer appointed to Watershed Group's Technical Advisory Board.

Partnered with the Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve and the Institute for Applied Ecology on water conservation efforts targeting noxious weeds; actively seeking additional funding to continue this important work.

Issued RFP for defensible-space thinning contractors to begin work on landowner projects reducing wildfire risk in Santa Fe County's WUI as part of a three-year, \$250,000 grant secured from NM State Forestry.

## SANTA CRUZ DAM SITE 1



Continued the design phase for a new, major flood-control structure that will replace the 60-year-old Santa Cruz Dam Site 1 and provide improved protection from flooding to more than 2,022 households in living in the inundation zone below the dam. This dam rehabilitation is a top priority for the NM Dam Safety Bureau. The district continues to do maintenance on Site 1 as necessary—including recent excavation of both drainage towers, plus restoration and maintenance of the dam access road—and is stepping up its community awareness efforts as the design phase concludes and the construction phase nears. A community informational meeting was held at Rio Arriba County’s Arboleda Community Center on January 24, 2024, with approximately 100 area residents and government officials in attendance.

Secured \$260,000 in State Capital Outlay funding for the upcoming construction phase, and continued work to secure the remaining needed funding from other sources including the Water Trust Board, State of New Mexico, and the federal government.

There are Disaster Resolutions for both Santa Fe County and Rio Arriba County regarding the potential danger of flood-control dam failure for Santa Cruz Site 1, and the need for funding assistance.

SANTA CRUZ DAMS – INSPECTIONS, OPERATIONS  
AND MAINTENANCE



Operated, maintained, and conducted an annual inspection on seven flood control dams throughout the Santa Cruz River valley. These dams provide essential protection from flooding for residential areas, farmlands, acequias, County and State roads, schools and other property. County Emergency Managers are encouraged to attend the annual inspection.

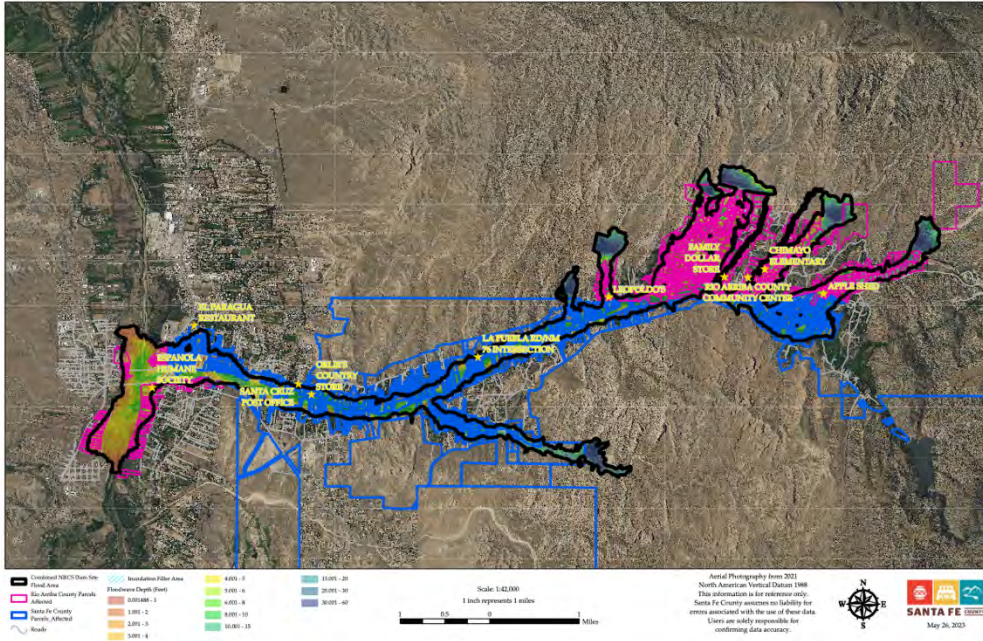
Working to ensure all Sites have Emergency Action Plans, and partnering with County emergency managers on regular emergency tabletop exercises and drills.

Completed installation of 1,893 feet of guardrail on three dams to help restrict illegal off-highway-vehicle (OHV) traffic on sensitive dam embankments. Coordinated with BLM on the project and secured over \$80,000 in special funding and donations from NM Department of Game & Fish, BNSF Railroad, the NM Soil & Water Commission, and the State Legislature to complete this critical work and protect Santa Fe and Rio Arriba County residents against a dam breach.

Issued RFP for contractors to complete a \$80,000 restoration of areas eroded by prohibited OHV use on dams, with work to begin in Summer 2024.

Successfully entered Dam Site 6 in the federal Dam Rehabilitation Program, ensuring planning costs will be paid in full by USDA/NRCS.

# ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – POTENTIAL SANTA CRUZ RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT



Searchable online map of combined inundation zones – six SF-PSWCD Santa Cruz flood-control dams

Partnered with the Santa Fe County GIS Department and the Rio Arriba County Assessor’s office to create a searchable map of the combined inundation zones for all seven flood-control dams in the Santa Cruz River corridor. The map will be available to area residents as they consider the benefits of forming a Watershed District, with separate taxing authority, to help maintain the dams and protect life, land and property in the watershed. Formation of such a District would provide a new, sustainable funding stream for ongoing operations and maintenance of these crucial dam structures— funding which is required by the U.S. government to secure federal funding and partnership for future dam rehabilitations, starting with Dam Site 1.