



Las Acequias de Placitas Ciruela Lateral Project

ANNUAL REPORT FY21

(July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)

MISSION STATEMENT

**To conserve, protect and enhance our soil,
water and agriculture and to prevent
floodwater and sediment damage**

VISION STATEMENT

**To be the “eyes on the ground” to protect our
natural resources**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Lynn Montgomery, Chair

Alfred Baca, Vice-Chair

Orlando Lucero, Secretary-Treasurer

Charles Torres, Supervisor

Kathleen Groody, Supervisor

Patricia Bolton, Associate Supervisor

**Mary Catherine Baca, Associate Supervisor
and Webmaster**

Susan Harrelson, Associate Supervisor

STAFF

Carolyn Kennedy, *District Manager*

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CORONADO SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL REPORT-FY21

Two things stood out this year. One was the Covid Pandemic. As we muddled through the year with Zoom meetings and a lot less activity, we managed to stay involved in things. The virus is unpredictable so we don't know if this will continue. The mega-drought we are experiencing is very foreboding. It is likely it will continue so we must remain flexible in our planning and policies into the future.

DISTRICT FINANCIALS

Coronado SWCD met all its financial obligations, requirements, and deadlines. District Manager Kennedy and Secretary-Treasurer Orlando Lucero kept the books together. At the beginning of FY21 the District had a cash balance of \$19,996; during the year it received \$232,008 and spent \$223,156, including capital outlay. During FY21, Coronado expended nearly all of the remainder of a 2019 capital outlay grant of 200,000. It will undergo an AUP Tier 3 review for that grant in FY22.

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

There were no elections this year.

At its Annual meeting on December 17, 2020, Mr. Montgomery, Chair; Mr. Baca, Vice Chair; and Mr. Lucero, Secretary-Treasurer, were re-elected by acclamation. Associate Supervisors, Patricia Bolton, Mary Catherine Baca and Susan Harrelson were reappointed for another year.

MEETINGS

The District held 12 regular meetings during FY21. All of these were held virtually. There were two special meetings to approve resolutions.

PIEDRA LISA DAM

The Piedra Lisa Flood Control Dam is co-sponsored by the District (which owns the easement to the Dam property), the Town of Bernalillo and Sandoval County, which share maintenance and emergency response responsibilities. Coronado operates the dam. NRCS provides engineers and other assistance and the Office of the State Engineer Dam Safety Bureau conducts inspections and provides advice.

There were no significant events during FY21.

SOIL

Supervisor Montgomery and District Manager Kennedy became NM Soil Health Champions, a network of the NM Healthy Soil Group and the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Coronado has to wait to reapply for its erosion control project on the Placitas Open Space. We hope to continue, utilizing the soil health principles of the new Healthy Soil Act.

Soil Health has become a major issue in New Mexico. Coronado supported the passage of the Healthy Soil Act at the legislature. Monies were appropriated for regenerative and educational projects. Coronado, as eligible entity, is overseeing two Healthy Soil projects that were funded for FY21.



BLM BUFFALO TRACT, PLACITAS

WATER

When it comes down to it, water is part of everything Coronado does. How we take care of the water determines our future. Coronado takes water issues seriously and its supervisors and staff are members of public and private water organizations. This year's snowpack was disappointing. It was determined we are in the throes of a megadrought that started 20 years ago and promises to continue into the future. Coronado is starting to plan to meet the challenges we face.

Mr. Baca assists the MRG Conservancy District in maintaining its ditches and is active in flood control issues impacting Algodones. Ms. Kennedy is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly, now the MRG Water Advocates, and a commissioner on Las Acequias de Placitas Board, serving as Treasurer. Mr. Montgomery is Coronado's delegate to the Sandia Collaborative, represents Coronado on the board of the MRG Water Advocates, is Coronado's delegate to the Rio Grande Water Fund, and is the alternate delegate to the Congreso de las Acequias of the NM Acequia Association for the Las Huertas Acequia Region. He is a member of the RAID Alliance of the NMED, which evaluates and awards grants to clear waste tires and for recycling projects. Kathleen Groody is a board member of the community water system in Sile. She has a 25-acre alfalfa farm there. She helped form a group, "New Mexico Cannabis Justice Project," in conjunction with members of NM Rural Water Association and the NM Acequia Association, which promotes protections for small communities from loss of community water to unscrupulous large cannabis outfits. She sent written comments and made verbal comments during the public hearings for the Cannabis Control Division's regulatory framework and licensing requirements for adult use cannabis on June 29, 2021. Mr. Lucero is involved in local aquifer protection and still farms and maintains an orchard.

Because of the overriding need for strategic planning for the future in the face of this dwindling resource, Coronado Supervisors and the District Manager attended numerous meetings and conferences concerning water issues. Coronado is taking part in the 50-year State Water Plan through the NM Interstate Stream Commission. Coronado is a partner in the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District's Drought Contingency Plan update and is taking part in the Bureau of Reclamation's Middle Rio Grande Basin Study.

FORESTS

Coronado is a member of the Sandia Collaborative, a group of agencies and citizen organizations that advise the Sandia Ranger District and the Cibola National Forest. It is a good forum for sharing and furthering Coronado's issues concerning the Forest and healing our Wilderness.

FIRE

Fortunately, there were no significant fire events in the District during the past fiscal year.

Coronado is advocating for treating parts of the Sandia Wilderness to improve fire resilience and prevent a catastrophe from destroying the watershed. We now can do that through the Sandia Collaborative, which can develop consensus for proposals.

ACEQUIAS

Acequias, even though they are few and small, are an important element for Coronado SWCD. They keep small upland agriculture alive and preserve an ancient culture still thriving in Northern NM.

The three historic Placitas Acequias now have complete plans funded from previous capital outlay grants to restore four acequia reservoirs, which makes them "shovel ready". The acequias, at a meeting hosted by Coronado in FY20, chose the Las Huertas Community Ditch as the first reservoir to be restored. We contracted with INTERA Inc. to help with the ITB process and monitor the reservoir improvement project in the Cibola National Forest. Apple Mountain Constructors won the bid and the project has been completed.

Coronado received and completed a Water Quality & Conservation grant from the Soil and Water Conservation Commission during FY 21. This grant was for Phase 1 of improvements to a Las Acequias de Placitas acequia lateral. Also during FY21, Coronado's proposal for Phase 2 of improvements to the lateral was granted, and the project will be completed during FY22.

PUBLICITY

Apr. 2021 Sandoval Signpost article, "El Lago de la Tierra-New Mexico's largest reservoir", by Lynn Montgomery.

PARTNERS

Cibola National Forest

Coronado has an MOU with the Cibola National Forest as a Cooperating Agency.

Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance

This is a group of contiguous SWCDs for conceiving, building, and realizing watershed projects through state and federal funds. Coronado is supporting an initiative to restore the San Pedro Creek Watershed.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Coronado has executed an MOA with the NRCS and the NM Dept. of Agriculture to protect, restore and enhance the productivity of agricultural lands within the District.

NM Association of Conservation Districts

Coronado is a member and attends its regional and annual meetings. Mr. Montgomery is Vice-Chair of Region I and attended all the Board meetings.

NM Watershed and Dam Owners Association

Coronado is a member. The NMWDOC holds annual workshops in the Spring and features presentations concerning the state of New Mexico's Dams. The 2021 Spring Workshop was canceled because of COVID-19.

Rio Grande Water Fund

Coronado is a signatory of this grand effort to treat the watersheds of the Rio Grande Basin and beyond.

Rio Grande Basin Study

The District has signed an MOA with The Bureau of Reclamation to take part in this initiative, which will study the Rio Grande Basin in New Mexico. It will ascertain current and future water supply in the Basin, taking climate change into account, and come up with scenarios for the future. The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District is co-leading the Study, which will be used as a basis for water resource management.

Rio Puerco Management Committee

Due to new bureaucratic regulatory requirements of the Department of Interior, this excellent organization has disbanded. Efforts to start it up again are in the works.

Sandia Collaborative

Coronado is a member of the Sandia Collaborative Council. The Collaborative, composed of a number of agencies and private groups, works with the Cibola National Forest on its plan updates and other matters of interest.

CONCLUSION

As society struggles to find its footing, Coronado can play an important role by getting people more involved in our natural resources. We are starting to spend more time outdoors. Everyone who can, should be planting gardens and restoring our soil. It will serve us well, no matter what happens.