



# Upper Chama Soil & Water Conservation District

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## 2020-2021 Annual Report of Accomplishments

### GOVERNING BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

<p>Norman Vigil – Chair Agapito Candelaria – Vice Chair Horace Leyba – Secretary/Treasurer Eloy Olivas- Member Paul Cordova – Member</p>
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### MISSION

The Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District promotes stewardship of natural resources by providing leadership, education, technical and cost-sharing assistance to landowners/users with the district.

STAFF	BOARD MEETINGS
<p>Rebecca (Becky) Martinez, Office Manager</p> <p>Kenny Baca, Program Manager</p>	<p>Regular Meetings every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 3:00 pm</p> <p>Location: District Office in Tierra Amarilla, NM</p>

## Program Summary

### Cost-Share Programs

- The District continues to cost-share in the amount of \$10,000 towards the Northern New Mexico Cooperative Weed Management Area program. The program offers technical, financial and educational assistance in addressing the Invasive weed resource concern. Equipment and cost share Assistance is offered to the landowners in order to address **Invasive Weed Management.**
- The District continues to cost-share with landowners for **Water Development Improvements and Erosion Control.** The District has an equipment/implement rental program for all landowners in the District. The landowner provides seed, fuel and general daily maintenance of equipment/implements. The District provides the equipment to the landowners for 3 days with a maintenance fee and deposit fee of \$50.00 to \$300.00 which is refundable once equipment is returned. This year over **30** landowners utilized the equipment.
- The District continues to provide **Water Management Funding for Acequia Infrastructure Repairs.** Each request is reviewed and funding is determined according to need. Acequia projects must be a group governed by a board and must contribute in-kind or monetary cost-share. Acequias are also encouraged to apply for funding through NMACD Statewide Acequia RCPP, ISC construction program and NRCS.
- Acequia program guidelines were developed and provided to applicants.

### Grants

- The District applied and obtained the FY21 Outdoor Equity grant from the New Mexico Department of Economic Division. The District Manager served as the program director for the Conservation Writing Workshop in partnership with Carmen Taylor the writing coach. Students aged 8-17 were guided in creating a feature article that is about their local conservation issues. Students were connected to local land stewards and other natural resource managers in order to obtain firsthand information. Feature articles were then submitted and published in the Chama Valley Times.

### Partnerships

- The District is in partnership with River Source in order to provide natural resource and educational opportunities for our local youth.
- Partnership with East Rio Arriba SWCD continues for the NNMCWMA program. The District is responsible for the chairmanship and the ERASWCD is the fiscal agent. It is the District's desire to keep this partnership active and positive in order to address the needs of all landowners with noxious weeds. Both Noxious Weeds Coordinators work together to make public the program. Over 300 acres were addressed this year. The program was once again approved for a grant this year.
- The District maintains a Memorandum of Agreement with NRCS. The major assistance available from the District is technical information furnished by NRCS. Mr. David Griego, District Conservationist reports at our monthly regular meetings. NRCS staff work closely with the District to help landowners.

- The District also continues partnerships with the Chama Peak Land Alliance. The District has worked closely with this partnership to identify priority areas for treatment with funding received for private landowners and public land lessees to implement on ground conservation practices on forest, range, and irrigated lands in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado (Rio Chama/San Juan RCPP). The District was involved with initiating the NM Acequia Rehabilitation RCPP in the amount of \$3.25 million. As a multi-partner the District's role was outreach to encourage and initiate Acequias interested in applying for financial funding and technical assistance. Applications were accepted at the District Office. Two applications were funded within the District and construction initiated in the spring of 2021 with completion anticipated for the fall of 2021.
- The District has been actively involved with the Carson National Forest in developing the 10 year forest revision plan.
- The District has commenced a program development relationship with the Río Arriba County Extension Office, sharing ideas impacting our mutual constituents.
- The District has set the stage on collaborative dialogue with our newly appointed Río Arriba County Manager.

### **Fire Prevention**

- The District applied for a 2018 Hazardous Fuel Reduction Grant, was awarded \$250,000 and served as the fiscal agent. The thinning was completed at the end of the fiscal year treating 110 acres. The District with the help of Mr. Joe Carrillo, Timber Management Officer, New Mexico State Forestry, and Chama District will continue to apply for these Grants.

### **Education and Outreach**

- District Chair, Norman Vigil and Mr. Eloy Olivas continue to attend all CWMA Meetings throughout the fiscal year. Upper Chama SWCD chairs the CWMA and ERASWCD is the fiscal agent.
- In order to educate District children of the importance of the District's activities education books on soil and water conservation management were distributed to children in grades k-6<sup>th</sup>.
- District Chair, Norman Vigil continues to attend and provide input at the Carson National Forest Plan Revision Meeting.
- The District Supervisors attended the Rio Chama Congresso and District Manager was a presenter and assisted with the meeting agenda.

***"It is impossible to have a healthy and sound society without a proper respect for the soil."***

**-Peter Maurin**

### **Training**

- Norman Vigil and Paul Cordova attended the online training for new supervisors on June 11, 2021.

## **Personnel**

- A contract district manager was hired for one year as planned. However, upon budget constraints the board opted to hire a part-time program manager for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.
- The board employed a contract business manager this past fiscal year and has opted to change roles and responsibility as well as title to Office Manager.
- A personnel policy handbook was amended and adopted to fit the current staffing needs.