

Annual Report of Activities
for Grant Soil & Water Conservation District
Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)

Grant Income:

- Grant SWCD received \$205,612 from federal and state grant funding.

Grant Activities:

- Grant SWCD acts as fiscal agent for money awarded to the Gila Basin Irrigation Commission (GBIC) by the Interstate Stream Commission for an agricultural water conservation and environmental improvement project. GBIC plans to improve water delivery to the respective ditches and minimize environmental impact from frequent repairs to earthen diversion dams by replacing them with a permanent structure(s). Phase I is limited to the design and engineering for the project. Grant SWCD expended \$67,553 for the fiscal year. The final design has been completed and approved. RFP/contract documents and construction specifications were completed. An RFP was conducted and cancelled due to all of the cost proposals far exceeding the budget available for construction. It is expected that additional funding sources will be needed in order to construct the diversion. If these sources are obtained, the RFP may be re-issued.
- Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Thinning Project: Grant SWCD signed a grant agreement with NM State Forestry to complete hazardous fuels reduction projects in Grant County. Grant monies allocated for thinning and treatment for private landowners is \$188,000. This project is designed to decrease the wildfire risk on critical pieces of private property within at-risk areas of Grant County.
- Grant SWCD acts as fiscal agent for the Upper Burro Cienaga Watershed Restoration Project Part 2. This project aims to restore riparian and wetland habitats throughout the Upper Burro Cienaga Watershed by planting riparian shrub and tree buffers on approximately 100 acres and by treating undesirable invasive native and non-native species and state listed noxious plant species within the headwaters of the Burro Cienaga Watershed. This project was selected for continued funding by the Office of Natural Resources Trustee as a result of a settlement received for groundwater resource damages resulting from the release of hazardous substances from the FMI mine facilities. This is a two-year grant funded for \$99,857. Project work for this fiscal year consisted of the following: Juniper removal from riparian areas and herbicide treatment of re-sprouting stumps; herbicide treatment of snakeweed; and installation of trail cameras for effectiveness monitoring. Grant SWCD expended \$30,400 for the fiscal year. (Project photos attached.)
- Grant SWCD, in collaboration with the Nature Conservancy, continues project work for an awarded CFRP grant focusing on building collaborative capacity for forest restoration on the Gila National Forest. This project's purpose is to promote a healthy watershed and reduce the threat of large, high-intensity wildfires, insect infestation, and disease. A central component of this project is to improve communication and joint problem solving with local contractors. Grant SWCD expended \$79,809 for the fiscal year. Acres treated this fiscal year were 69. All thinning work has been completed. A final report will be completed to close out this project. (Project photos attached.)
- Grant SWCD completed project work for the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts. This project's goal was to implement a project identified by BLM for the restoration of public rangelands. In the previous fiscal year, approximately 198 acres were thinned in the jurisdiction of BLM land and a small amount of private land located near the community of Pinos Altos. This fiscal year's work consisted of spreading approximately 500 lbs of native grass and forbs seed in certain project areas to help re-establish native species. Funds for this project came from BLM's Restore New Mexico Initiative. Grant SWCD expended \$21,092 for the fiscal year. This project is complete.

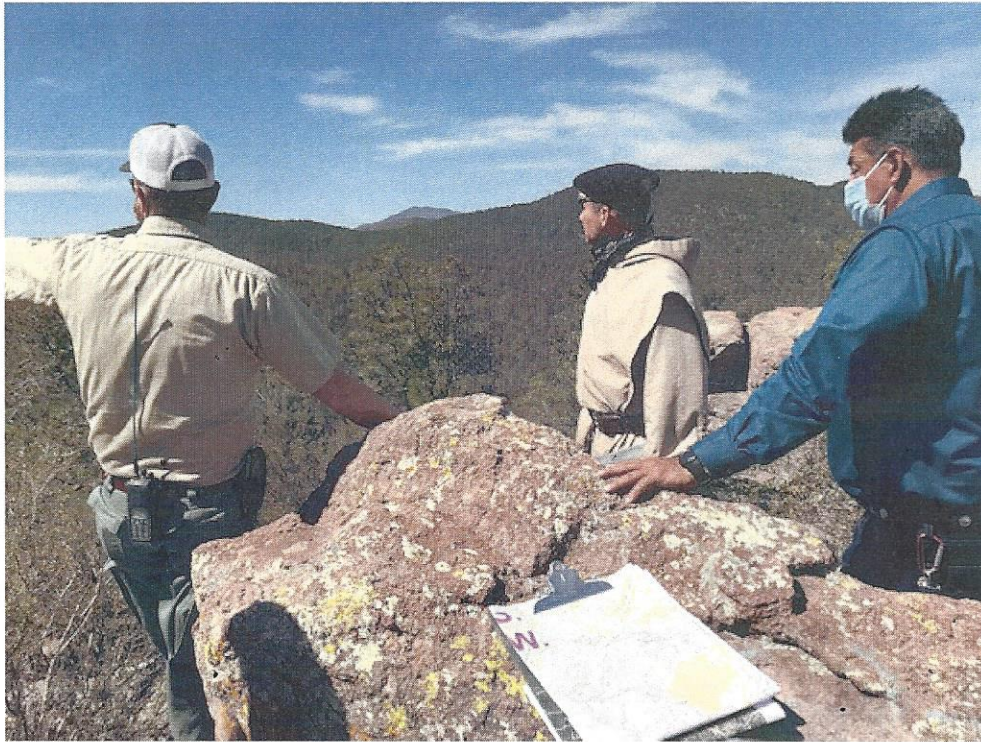
Board Members: Ty Bays ▪ Dusty Hunt ▪ David McCauley ▪ Niel McDonald ▪ John Merino ▪ Johnny Reed ▪ Alex Thal,
Project Manager: Rebecca Benavidez

- Grant SWCD completed project work for the NM Soil and Water Conservation Commission's Water Quality and Conservation Grant Program. This project continued work started by the Gila River Floodplain Restoration Project from previous years. The project's goal was to treat 35 acres of re-sprouts of Russian olive and to remove Russian olive trees on an adjacent landowner's property in the Cliff-Gila Valley. The total grant amount awarded was \$15,519. Grant SWCD expended \$7,416 for the fiscal year. This project is complete.
- Grant SWCD, in collaboration with Jornada RC&D, was awarded a CFRP grant. The Mulberry Forest Restoration and Fuelwood Gathering Project was funded for \$343,763. This project proposes to implement hazardous fuels reduction and provide fuelwood to the public. Project work has not yet started.

Other Activities:

- Grant SWCD is a member and a participant in meetings of the NM CAP Entity.
- Grant SWCD is a member and participant in the Southwestern NM Cooperative Weed Management Area.
- Grant SWCD is a member of the Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments, National Association of Conservation Districts, New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts, and the Jornada Resource Conservation & Development Council.
- Grant SWCD is an active participant in the NM Acequia Commission Meetings representing the Mimbres Valley.
- Grant SWCD works closely with the Gila National Forest in cooperative conservation practices within Gila National Forest Lands in NM.
- Grant SWCD analyzes and comments on Mexican wolf issues.
- Grant SWCD continues to provide comments to various stakeholders and NM State Legislators in opposition to the Wild and Scenic proposed legislation.
- Grant SWCD provides administration services to the Upper Gila Valley Arroyos Watershed District.
- Grant SWCD represents intergovernmental coordination in the Gila National Forest Plan Revision Process.
- Grant SWCD helped sponsor FFA and 4-H contests in an effort to increase program participation for FFA and 4-H, to encourage students to seek a long-term career in the Range Science areas, and to increase awareness for protecting, restoring, enhancing, and promoting the wise use of natural resources. This effort is organized by the Southwest Quay SWCD.
- Grant SWCD worked collaboratively with the USFS and NRCS in their development of a grant application for funding through the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership.
- Grant SWCD submitted a grant application to the Bureau of Reclamation for a WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program project. The proposal developed was for the formation and development of a Bear Creek Watershed Association and restoration plan.

PROJECT PHOTOS:



CFRP PROJECT: Field trip with the Silver City Ranger District, looking at the Bear Creek Watershed and initial outreach related to prescribed fire (2021).



CFRP PROJECT: Field trip to one of the project sites to discuss thinning prescription. Agencies represented: USFS, Center for Biological Diversity and NM State Forestry



Upper Burro Cienaga Watershed Restoration Project Part 2. Cut and treated large alligator juniper stump.



Upper Burro Cienaga Watershed Restoration Project Part 2. Cut alligator juniper stump and firewood.



Upper Burro Cienaga Watershed Restoration Project Part 2. Rebuilt spillway on earthen watershed structure.



Upper Burro Cienaga Watershed Restoration Project Part 2. Tractor and auger drill hole for deep pole planting.