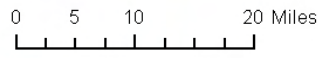
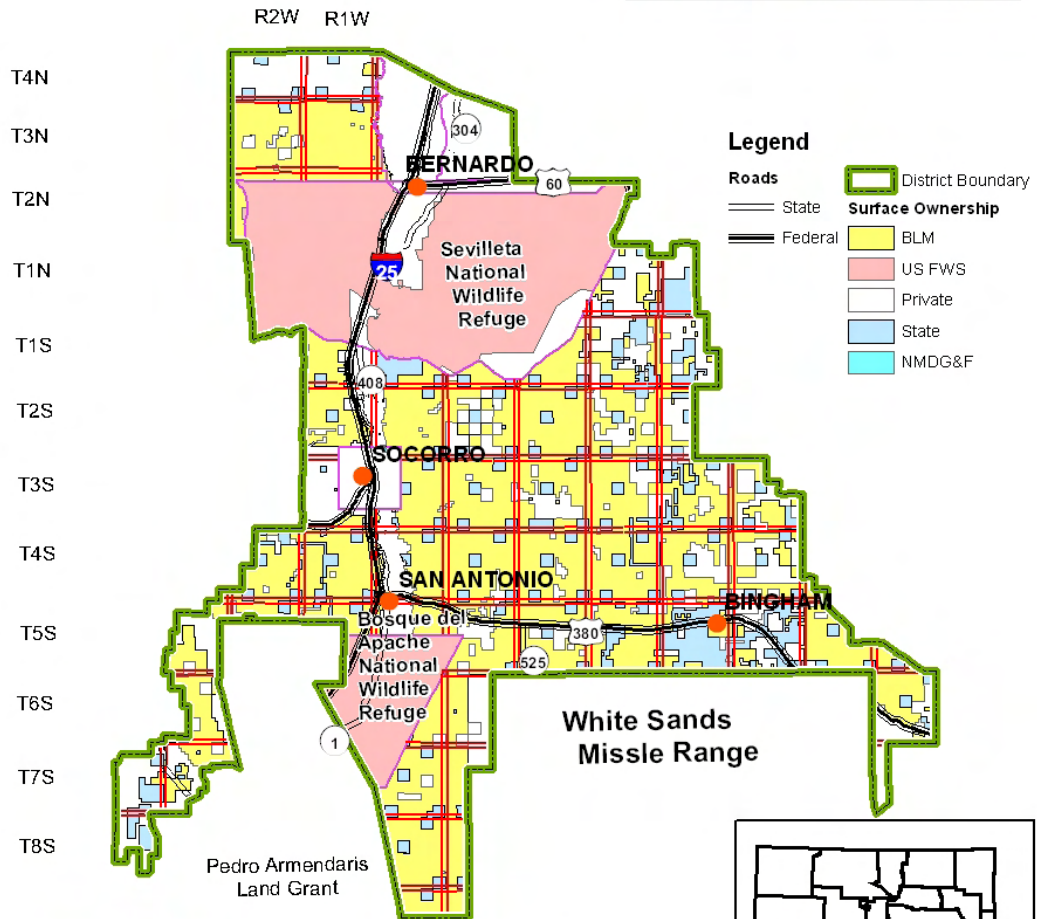


SOCORRO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



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Socorro SWCD Annual Report – FY 2011

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Socorro SWCD Board Members:

**Richard Ritter, Chairman
Dr. Mark Person, Vice-chairman
Chris Lopez, Secretary/Treasurer
Gordon "Corky" Herkenhoff, Supervisor
Eddy Harris, Supervisor**

Staff:

**Nyleen Troxel Stowe, Director of Special Projects, Noxious Weed Coordinator, Lower
Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project Manager
Will Kolbensschlag, Range Technician, Noxious Weed Specialist
Belle Rehder, Educational Coordinator, Administrative Assistant**

WATER CONSERVATION:

The Socorro Soil & Water Conservation District's Cost Share Program remains the top priority this fiscal year. It is designed to assist landowners implement water conservation measures on their farms, ranches, and urban residences. The following is a summary of the available programs and the combined benefits of the District's multifaceted program.

- Socorro SWCD Cost Share Program-This year \$21,910.29 was spent on cost share with cooperators on the following conservation projects. Ten land leveling projects moving 13,896 cubic yards of dirt; installation of two livestock wells; soil sampling on three tracts of farmland; installation of twelve drip irrigation systems; replacement of three old toilets with low-flow toilets and one old showerhead replaced with a new water conserving showerhead.
- Conservation Technical Assistance with numerous other individuals resulted in many practices being applied on the agricultural land within our District.

The application of resource management systems in conjunction with the benefits of this versatile program has resulted in significant water and soil savings in the Socorro SWCD this fiscal year. Other benefits derived from the application of these conservation practices include improved water quality in the irrigated valley as well as the grazing lands in the District, improved wildlife habitat, improved watershed health and an overall improvement in the quality of life for the residents in our area. The soil analysis program is implemented with help from our Cooperative Extension Office and our Extension Agent, Mr. Tom Dean. He advises cooperators on the proper fertilizer and crop rotation to improve the soil quality. The drip irrigation cost share program and the low flow water device replacement program offer our urban cooperators an opportunity to implement water savings.



Laser leveling and survey equipment

Drip irrigation valve manifold



PROJECTS:

The Socorro SWCD completed its two year Partners for Fish and Wildlife Project with Mr. Holmes on his conservation easement property in Pueblito, NM. This year, another one hundred Rio Grande cottonwood poles were planted in February 2011; one hundred Emory's baccharis, one hundred 'Bighorn' Skunkbush, one hundred fifty Desert false indigo; one hundred Squathorm, two hundred Stretchberry and ten Chokecherry shrubs were planted in November 2010 and four hundred ten pounds of native grass seed was planted just prior to a monsoon storm in July of 2010. In May of 2011, drip irrigation was successfully installed to irrigate over one hundred trees and shrubs from a stock tank using a solar panel and a twelve volt pump.



Grass seeding July 2010
Holmes property

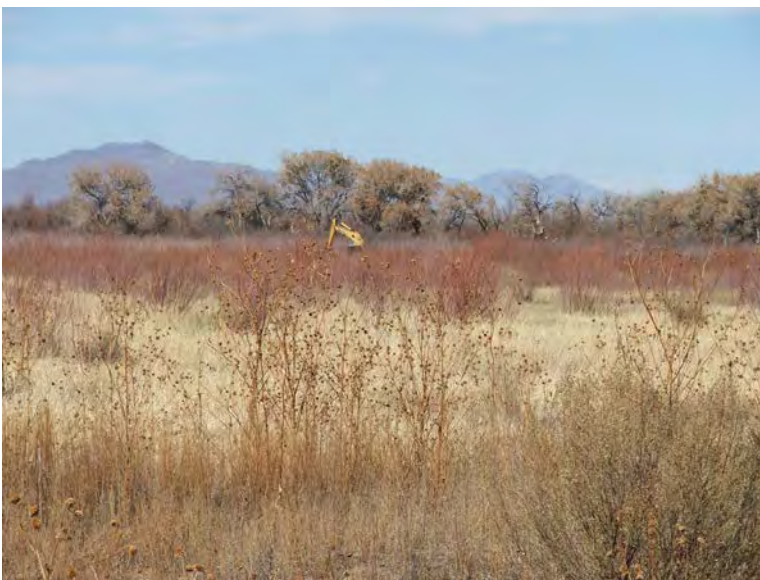
Drip irrigation line
May 2011
Holmes property





Stock tank with wildlife escape ramp. Water is pumped up to fill stock tank, then feeds drip irrigation tubing to water native shrub and tree plantings.

This year, the Socorro SWCD received \$25,000 in Bingaman funds for restoration work. This was spent extracting dead standing Salt cedar along a sand lens on the Mandeville/Pack project. This was piled for burning at a later date. In February 2011, one hundred twenty Gooding's black willow and forty Rio Grande cottonwood poles were planted. Then in May 2011, three hundred shrubs including one hundred Desert false indigo and fifty each of Skunkbush sumac, Emory's baccharis, Squawthorn, and Stretchberry were planted on the sand lens. This area has regenerated naturally with Four-wing saltbush and Wolfberry. We also purchased and planted three hundred and ninety-five pounds of Four-wing saltbush, Winter fat, Antelope bitterbush, Sideoats grama, Buffalograss, Indian ricegrass, and Sand dropseed.



Extraction of Salt cedar on Mandeville/Pack tract fall, 2010

Gooding's black willow
pole planting on
Mandeville/Pack tract
February 2011



The Socorro SWCD received \$36,549 in Capital Outlay funding for Planning, Designing and Implementing Restoration along the Rio Grande. This year we worked with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish at the Ladd S. Gordon Refuge Complex in Bernardo, NM. We had one hundred and one acres of Salt cedar resprouts extracted and laid on the ground. The Refuge staff has been using a mulcher attachment to their tractor to mulch the extracted material. This area has a nice stand of Salt grass. This area is also within an area along the Rio Grande Bosque that has been prone to regular wildfires. Two months after finishing the extracting, a wildfire burned on the east side of the Rio Grande across from this tract. In May of 2011, we purchased four hundred and fifteen pounds of Indian ricegrass, Western wheatgrass and Sand dropseed to reseed in this area and adjacent areas. This seed was planted in July of 2011 prior to a monsoon rain storm.



NMDGF Ladd S Gordon
Refuge Complex tract with
Salt cedar re-sprouts
extracted pre-wildfire
December 2010

Seeding native grasses at
NMDGF tract July 2011



The staff of the Socorro SWCD harvested five hundred and sixty Rio Grande cottonwood poles at Bosque del Apache and planted for twelve landowners within the District. This is done at no cost to the landowner. The Socorro SWCD uses their Bobcat E35 with an eight foot fully flighted auger to drill the holes to the water table to plant the poles.



Jon Erz, biologist with
Sevilleta NWR stands
next to Belle Rehder,
Educational Coordinator,
Socorro SWCD,
auguring a hole for
coyote willow pole
planting in February
2011.

In January of 2011, the Socorro SWCD hosted *Surface Water Interactions 2011 Fieldtrip*. The objective of this fieldtrip was to focus on communicating and understanding present and future dilemmas, scenarios and solutions within the Bosque, drains, Low Flow Conveyance Channel and the farms and ranches of the Socorro SWCD region. Productive and effective stakeholder dialog in water management of agricultural lands, drain and infrastructure addressed the multiple challenges faced and looked toward problem solving for future water needs.



January 11, 2011 Surface Water Interactions Fieldtrip

EDUCATION:

The Socorro SWCD hosted the Rolling River Water Trailer at *Kids, Cows, and More* held at the Socorro County Fairgrounds on April 21, 2011, where over 500 students in the District learned about local watersheds and conservation of natural resources. The Socorro SWCD worked with the Socorro County Extension Office to sponsor this event.



Kids, Cows and More at Socorro Fairgrounds April 21, 2011

The Socorro SWCD hosted an informational booth at the Socorro County Fair to inform the general public about programs including Cost Share assistance for irrigation improvements, brush control, soil testing, noxious weeds, drip irrigation, low flow water device installation, Salt cedar control, monitoring, re-vegetation and restoration on September 3 and 4, 2010.



Will Kolbenschlager at Socorro County Fair Socorro SWCD booth

The Socorro SWCD provided technical and educational support to Cottonwood Valley Charter School during the *Dia de Rio* on October 5, 2010. Water quality information and hands-on chemical sampling engaged 4th and 5th graders as they learned about the local Rio Grande watershed.



Students from Cottonwood Valley Charter School taking water samples for chemical analysis on the Rio Grande.

The Socorro SWCD coordinated Bosque Conservation Day for 5th graders within the Socorro School System on October 14, 2010 held at the Socorro Nature Area. The Socorro SWCD also had the Noxious Weed Scavenger Hunt at Bosque Conservation Day. We assisted over 130 5th graders with native and weed plant identification.



Bosque Conservation Day, Socorro Nature Area, October 14, 2010

The Socorro SWCD provided soil stewardship materials for over 1,059 students and 59 teachers of K-5th grades in the District (Parkview Elementary, Zimmerly Elementary, San Antonio Elementary, Midway Elementary, Cottonwood Charter School, and La Promesa Elementary School). Belle Rehder, Educational Coordinator with the Socorro SWCD also started the Poster Contest this year for Stewardship Week and awarded prizes to four Zimmerly Elementary students and one Socorro High School student. They will go on to the Statewide Contest.



Student plant and soil activities during Soil Stewardship Week, April 24-May 1, 2011.



Belle Rehder, Educational Coordinator with Stewardship Week Poster Contest winners and their teacher at Zimmerly Elementary School.

Belle also held a nature program at the Socorro Public Library on June 21, 2011 for elementary school children. Over 25 children and parents attended this reading and hands-on activity event.

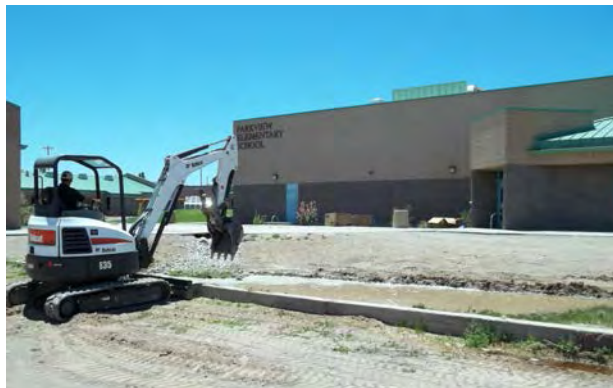


Belle Rehder, Educational Coordinator, at Socorro Public Library.

On August 11, 2011 the Socorro SWCD assisted in native tree plantings at the Socorro Nature Area with local volunteers. The Socorro SWCD augured the holes for the plantings.

The Socorro SWCD continued assisting Parkview Elementary School with its outdoor classroom. We extracted a few more non-native re-sprouts and sprayed the noxious weeds during the summer while school was not in session. The school has installed the river system to capture their roof drainage water, the gazebo and vegetable growing boxes. The Socorro SWCD used their mini-excavator to clean out the wetland and create a shallow end for frogs and reptiles.

Bobcat excavating work at Parkview Elementary School.



NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL:

In fiscal year 2011, the Socorro SWCD continued its campaign against the noxious weed and tree species that are invading our environment. Through a combination of mechanical and chemical controls, we once again made significant progress towards this goal.

In addition to our mechanical removal, we continue to use herbicide as a tool for controlling weeds. This year we sprayed weeds for six private landowners totaling 35 acres, 10 acres of Salt cedar, spiny cocklebur and Silverleaf nightshade for the BLM, and 24 acres of Salt cedar re-sprouts on New Mexico Department of Game & Fish land that borders some of our private property restoration tracts.



Bobcat E35 Mini Excavator removing Salt cedar & planting Black willows



The Socorro SWCD was once again inspected by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture Pesticide Compliance Division and passed the inspection with no issues.



A dirt tank on BLM land.



Russian knapweed infestation on private land

FISCAL YEAR 2011 BUDGET:

Item	Amount
Income:	
State funding	9,153
Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project	199,663
Mil levy	144,285
Grant Income	49,891
Loan repayment	9,286
Total:	412,278
Expenditures:	
Lower Rio Grande Salt Cedar Control Project	175,242
Staff	150,490
Cost share program	21,910
Office supplies, postage, meetings, dues, telephone, travel	33,913
Auto	8,841
Conservation activities	3,192
Loan repayment to ISC	8,018
Total:	401,606