



United States Department of Agriculture



New Mexico State Technical Committee Meeting

4/9/2025

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

Agenda

Welcome/Introductions- Kenneth

State Conservationist- Xavier Montoya

Programs- NRCS Programs Staff

- 1. Intro to State Tech Committee/IRA- Kenneth**
- 2. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)- Maggie Gnann**
 - 1. National Agreement for Organic Specialists- Kristina Peterson**
- 3. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)- Martin Meairs**
- 4. Payment Schedule- Athena Cholas**
- 5. Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)- Athena Cholas**
- 6. Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)- David Griego**

Lunch- 11:30

Resource Technology Updates- Art Ariaz and RTS Staff

- Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool/Conservation Desktop- Ana Gomes**

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)- Kris Graham Chavez

Engineering Updates- Elias Gnann

Partner Updates

- Farm Service Agency**
- Effects of shade balls on wildlife- Roosevelt SWCD**
- Other Partners**

Questions

Responsibilities of the STC

- Provide information, analysis, recommendations to USDA on conservation priorities and criteria for natural resources conservation activities and programs, including application and funding
- Identify emerging natural resource concerns and program needs
- Recommend conservation practice standards and specifications
- Recommend State and national program policy based on resource data

Responsibilities (Cont)

- Review activities of the local working groups to ensure State priorities are being addressed locally
- Make recommendations to the State Conservationist on requests and recommendations from local working groups
- Assist NRCS with public outreach and information efforts and identify educational and producers' training needs

Recommendations Due Later in FY

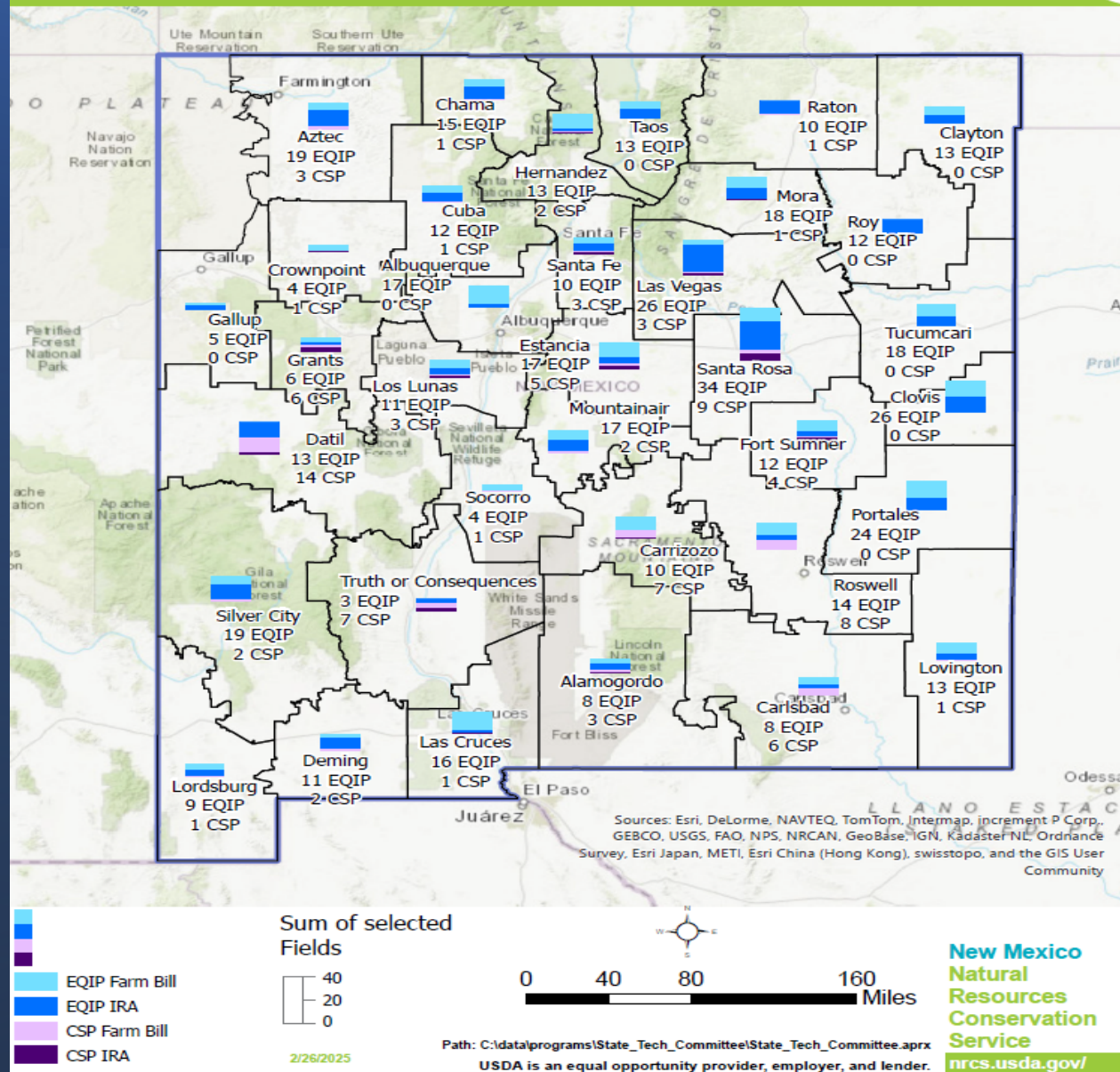


United States Department of Agriculture

2024 Recap

NRCS - New Mexico

2024 Number of Contracts Obligated per Service Center





United States Department of Agriculture

2025 To Date

FY 25- So Far

- EQIP/CSP rankings complete, preapprovals
- 15 EWP Projects
- Received additional funds for ACEP
- DRP, VERA
- Travel Freeze
- Continue Implementing Projects
 - HPCC Conservation Restoration Plan
 - EWP Acequias
- IRA
 - Funds for existing contracts
 - Funds for new obligations- Frozen

FY 25 Program Deadlines

Program/Initiative	Application Deadline	Ranking	80% Obligation
EQIP Classic	November 8, 2024	March 14, 2025	May 30, 2025
EQIP CIC	November 8, 2024	March 14, 2025	May 30, 2025
EQIP IRA*	TBA	TBA	TBA
CSP IRA*	TBA	TBA	TBA
CSP Classic	February 7, 2025	February 28, 2025	May 30, 2025
2025 CSP Renewals	May 3, 2024**	TBA	TBA
CSP- GCI-1	TBA**	TBA**	TBA**
ACEP	November 8, 2024	December 13	May 30, 2025
ACEP IRA	TBA	TBA	TBA
CIG			

* EQIP IRA and CSP IRA will be ACTNow, Second Sign up may be announced if needed

** NHQ Established Deadline



United States Department of Agriculture

Questions?

Email recommendations to
Kenneth.branch@usda.gov
david.griego@usda.gov
athena.cholas@usda.gov
martin.meairs@usda.gov
maggie.gnann@usda.gov

Provide Recommendations by TBA

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Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

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Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Overview

- EQIP provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers and forest landowners to address natural resource concerns, such as:
 - Improved water and air quality
 - Conserved ground and surface water
 - Increased soil health
 - Reduced soil erosion and sedimentation
 - Improved or created wildlife habitat
 - Mitigation against drought and increasing weather volatility.
 - SWAPA+E (Soil, Water, Air, Plants, Animals, Energy)
- NRCS works one-on-one with producers to develop a conservation plan that outlines conservation practices and activities to help solve on-farm resource issues.
- EQIP is a voluntary program, and the intention of the program is to help producers make conservation work for them.

EQIP FY25 General Funding Pools

- National Pools:
 - National Water Quality (NWQI)
 - Animas River- Tucker Canyon, Estes Arroyo, Flora Vista
 - WaterSMART: (Funding length varies between 4 to 5 years depending on approved proposal)
 - Bloomfield Irrigation District- Final year (Year 4 of 4)
 - Fort Sumner Irrigation District- (Year 4 of 5)
 - Arch Hurley Conservancy District- Final year (Year 5 of 5)
 - Carlsbad Irrigation District- Final year (Year 5 of 5)
 - Elephant Butte Irrigation District- Final year (Year 5 of 5)
 - Guadalupe Soil and Water Conservation District- Final year (Year 5 of 5)
 - Middle Rio Grande Conservation District. – Final year (Year 5 of 5)
 - The Pueblo of Zia- (Year 1 of 5)
- WaterSMART webpage for quick bio of each project:
 - <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-watersmart/priority-areas#newmexico>



EQIP FY25 National Funding Pools Continued

- High Tunnel
- Organic
 - National Organic Initiative (NOI)
 - Organic Transition Initiative (OTI)
- Urban
- Western Drought
- Energy
- Source Water - Priority areas in Team 3, 6, 9, 11
- Conservation Incentive Contracts (CIC)

EQIP FY25 State Pools

- The 2018 Farm Bill requires specific targets for financial assistance (FA):
 - 50% to livestock- related conservation practices,
 - 10% to wildlife-related conservation practices,
 - 5% to beginning farmers and ranchers (BFR),
 - 5% to socially disadvantage farmers and ranchers (SD).
- To reach these goals, New Mexico created specific state pools:
 - Wildlife
 - BFR High Tunnel
 - BFR Forested
 - SD Forested
 - State AFO (Animal Feeding Operation)

EQIP FY25 State Pools Continued

- Water Management Entity Pools (Irrigation Districts, Aquifer Recovery, and Acequia Pools)
- Water Management Entities (WMEs) are defined as a state irrigation district, ground water management district, acequia, land grant-merced, or similar entity that has jurisdiction or responsibilities related to water delivery or management on eligible lands.
- WMEs can enter into a EQIP contract if all the following criteria is met:
 - WME is a public or semi-public agency or organization
 - The purpose of the WME is to assist private agricultural producers with managing water distribution or conservation systems
 - The water conservation or irrigation practices support a water conservation project that will effectively conserve water, provide fish and wildlife habitat, or provide drought-related environmental mitigation.

EQIP FY25 State Pools Continued

- CPAs, DIAs, CEMAs Pool
- CPA = Conservation Planning Activates
- DIA = Design and Implementation Activities
- CEMA= Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activities
- CPAs, DIAs and CEMAs are a financial assistance opportunity for participants to hire Technical Service Producers (TPS) or Qualified Individuals to work through the planning, design, and monitoring stages of NRCS's 9 steps of planning.
- New Mexico needs more Technical Service Providers!



EQIP FY25 State Pools Continued

- CPA 102- Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)
- CPA 106- Forest Management Plan
- CPA 110- Grazing Management Plan
- CPA 116- Soil Health Management Plan
- CPA 138- Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition
- DIA 101- CNMP Design and Implementation
- DIA 120- Agricultural Energy Design
- DIA 157- Nutrient Management Design
- DIA 159- Grazing Management Design
- CEMA 216- Soil Health Testing
- CEMA 217- Soil and Source Testing for Nutrient Management

This is not the entire list. There are many more.

EQIP FY25 State Pools Continued

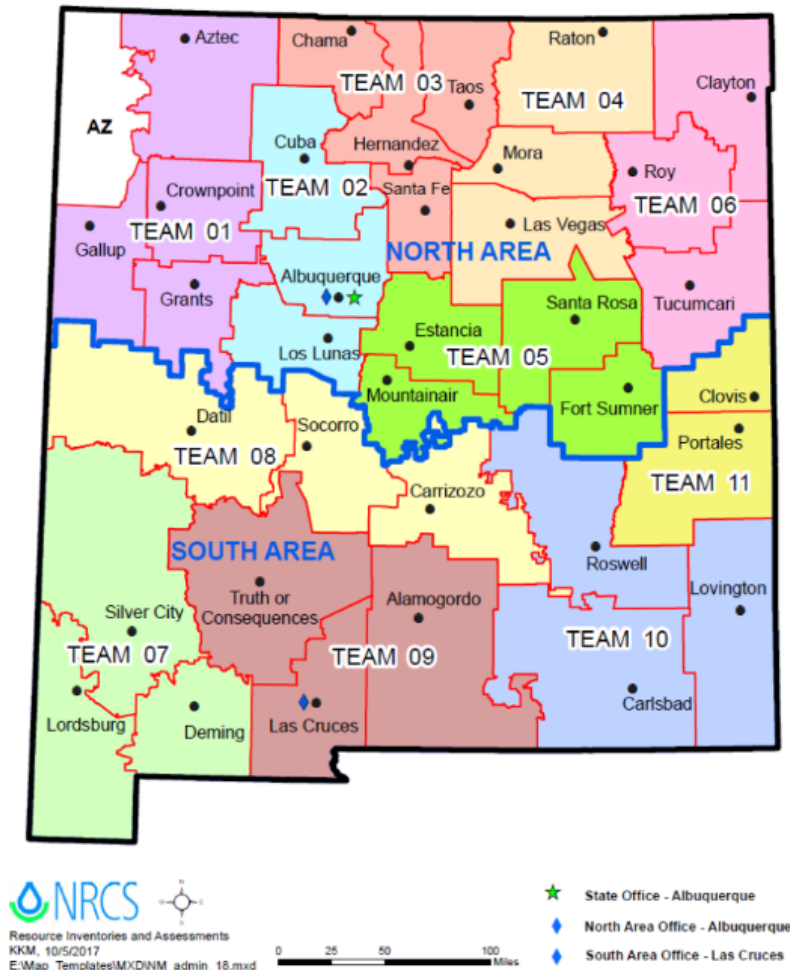
- <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-environmental-quality-incentives/eqip-cpas-dias-and-cemas>
- <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/technical-assistance/technical-service-providers>
- New Mexico and AZ NRCS TSP Coordinator:
 - Dan Bloedel
 - Daniel.bloedel@usda.gov
 - Office Phone Number: 505-761-4448

EQIP FY25 Area Pools

- To further our reach to Historically Underserved Participants Area Pools were created to focus on:
- BFR Crop/Pasture
- BFR Grazed Range
- SD Crop/Pasture
- SD Grazed Range
- Tribal Forest
- Tribal Grazed Range
- Tribal Irrigated Crop

EQIP FY25 Local Pools

- There are 35 NRCS Service Centers located across the state that are broken up in 11 teams and 2 areas.
- To ensure funds are spent the best way possible, the district conservationist of each team holds a local working group meeting to hear the public's recommendations.
- Allocations per team are determined based on land uses within their teams from the US Ag Census.



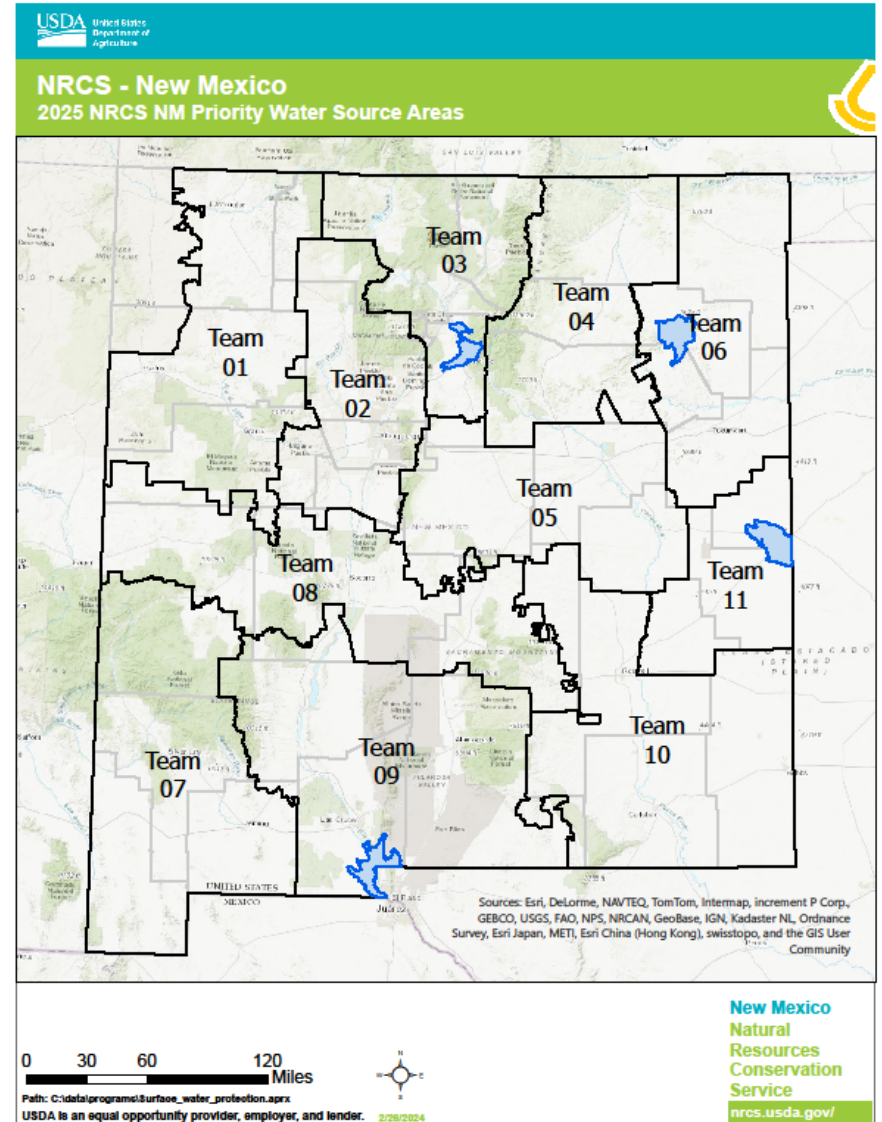
EQIP FY25 Local Pools Continued

- Each of the 11 Teams have between 3-5 ranking pools that are focused on specific land uses:
 - Irrigated Crop
 - Dry Crop
 - Range
 - Forest
 - Animal Feeding Operations (AFO)s
 - Irrigated Pasture or Pasture

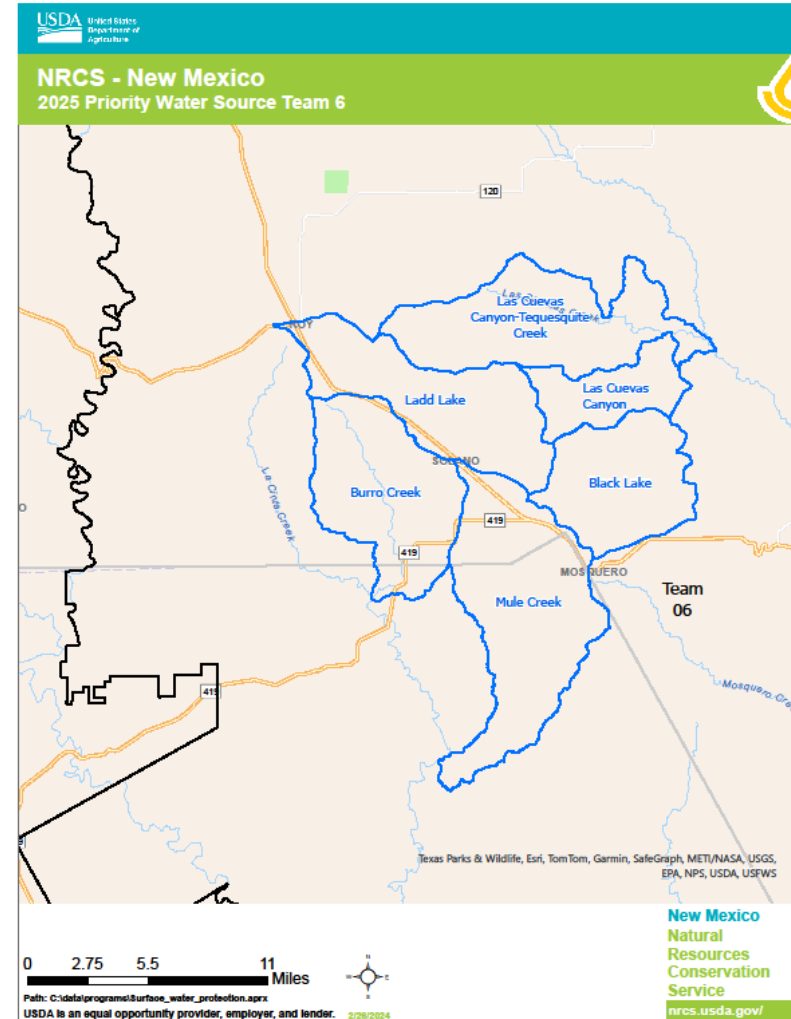
- 78 Fund Pools in EQIP General alone.

Source Water Protection Watersheds FY2025:

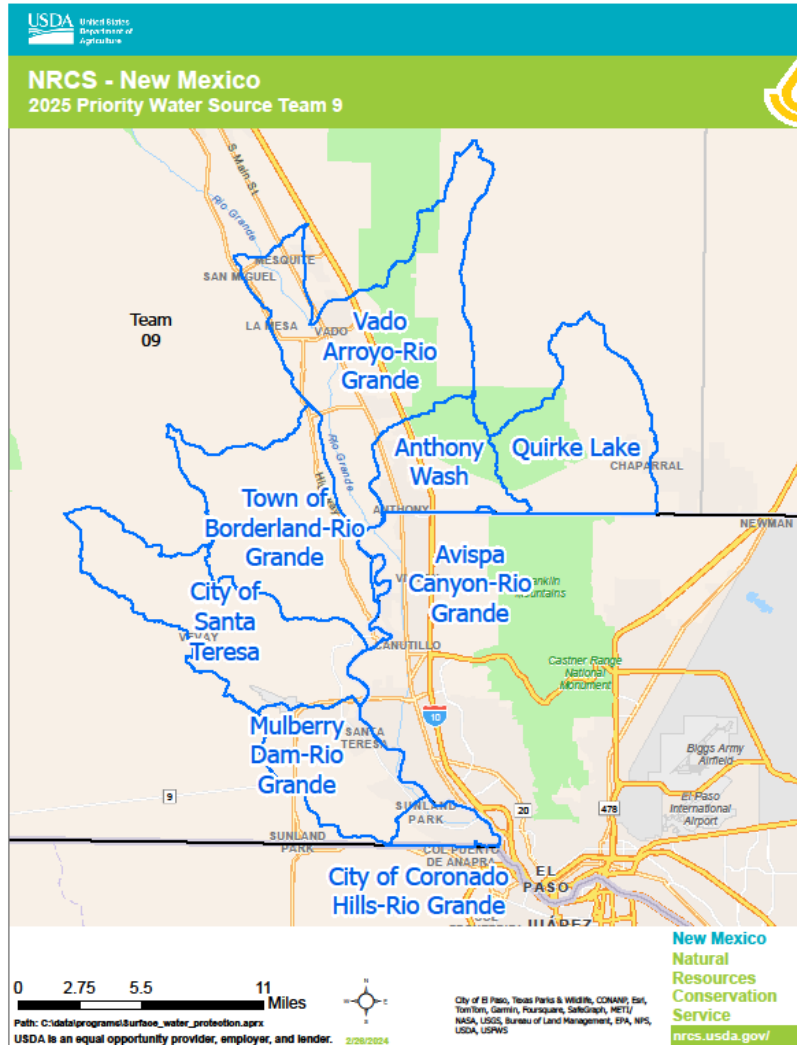
- Source Water Protection is focused on protecting sources of drinking water by identifying practices that have a significant water quality or water quantity benefit and implementing those practices in high priority areas.
- FY25, Four different areas, located in Team 3, 6, 9 and 11.



Source Water Protection Watersheds



Source Water Protection Watersheds



Source Water Protection Watersheds Practices

- 313- Waste Storage Facility
- 316- Animal Mortality
- 317- Composting Facility
- 329- Residue and Tillage Management, No Till
- 340- Cover Crop
- 359- Waste Treatment Lagoon
- 360- Water Facility Closure
- 362- Diversion
- 366- Anaerobic Digester
- 367- Roofs and Covers
- 386- Field Border
- 391- Riparian Forest Buffer
- 393- Filter Strip
- 395- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management
- 410- Grade Stabilization Structure
- 422- Hedgerow Planting
- 449- Irrigation Water Management.
- 511- Forage Harvest Management
- 528- Prescribed Grazing
- 590- Nutrient Management
- 595- Pest Management Conservation System
- 620- Underground outlet
- 629- Waste Treatment
- 632- Waste Separation Facility
- 633- Waste Recycling
- 634- Waste Transfer
- 635- Vegetated Treatment Area.
- 384- Woody Residue Treatment*
- 412- Grassed Waterway*
- 550- Range Planting*
- 643- Restoration of Range Planting*
- 666- Forest Stand Improvement.*
- * 5 new practices added for FY2025 from
STC recommendations. Went from 27
practices to 32 practices

Request # 1

- Looking for STC recommendations on new Source Water Protection Areas for FY2026.
 - New Mexico Rural Water Association and the State Forestry Department have already provided NRCS recommendations.- Thank you!
- Do the Source Water Practices need to change?
 - Are these practices under utilized?
 - Are there other practices we should be focusing on?

National Water Quality Initiative

- NWQI was established in FY2012 as an initiative delivered jointly with state quality agencies and the Environmental Protection Agency to address agricultural sources of water pollution (nutrients, sediment, and pathogens) in priority watersheds.
 - All states must participate with at least three priority 12-digit HUC watersheds. The watersheds can either be in the planning or implementation phase.
- FY2025:
 - Animas River (Implementation Phase- Meaning FA funds provided to obligate contracts)
 - Flora Vista - 140801041005
 - Estes Arroyo- 140801041004
 - Tucker Canyon- 140801041003
 - Rio Grande (Planning Phase- Meaning a watershed plan needs to be developed with TA funds.)
 - Alameda Arroyo- 130301020608
 - Anthony Wash- 130301020803

Request # 2

- Obligation has declined through the years for Tucker Canyon and Estes Arroyo. We are recommending to National that these two watersheds are removed for FY2026.
- Participation in Flora Vista has also decreased, but we are able to obligate one contract this year. We will keep this watershed for FY2026 but will look at potentially removing the watershed for FY2027.
- We are looking for recommendations for new implementation watersheds, or planning watersheds.
 - Potentially looking at Upper Tijeras Creek Watershed, based off New Mexico Rural Water Association and the State Forestry Department recommendations for source water.



High Priority Practices

- “High Priority Practices” are eligible for increased payments for conservation practices that:
 - Are underutilized
 - Address specific cause of ground or surface water impairment related to excessive nutrients
 - Address the conservation of water and declining aquifers and mitigate drought
 - Meet other environmental priorities and priority resource concerns identified in habitat or other area restoration plans
 - Are geographically targeted to address a resource concern in a specific watershed.
- “High Priority Practices” can overlap with the Source Water practices, but for High Priority Practices we are limited to 10.

High Priority Practices

FY2025: We had 10 High Priority Practices

- 329-Residue and Tillage Management, No Till
- 338-Prescribed Buring
- 340-Cover Crop
- 345-Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till
- 362-Diversion
- 410-Grade Stabilization Structure
- 420-Wildlife Habitat Planting
- 590-Nutrient Management
- 645-Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- 64- Structures for Wildlife.

- Request #3
 - Do these 10 practices need to change? Are there any other practices that have high potential for conservation benefit but are underutilized?

Allocations

- Fiscal Year 2025:
 - EQIP General: \$23,880,145.00
 - EQIP IRA \$41,173,369.00. Obligation of IRA Funds are currently paused.
 - Total: \$65,053,514.00

- Fiscal Year 2024:
 - EQIP General: \$24,226,924
 - EQIP IRA: \$30,619,000
 - Total: \$54,845,924

- Fiscal Year 2023:
 - EQIP General: \$23,742,000
 - EQIP IRA: \$4,851,452.97
 - Total: \$28,593,452.97

- Fiscal Year 2022:
 - EQIP General: \$26,320,085.08

- Fiscal Year 2021:
 - EQIP General: \$27,644,095.64

- Fiscal Year 2020:
 - EQIP General: \$20,880,044.69



Application Statistics

- FY25: 1,231 applications (IRA & General)
- FY24: 1,220 applications (IRA & General)
 - More than twice the number of applications from FY23.
- FY23: 608 applications (IRA & General)
- FY22: 662 applications (only General)
- FY21: 533 applications (only General)
- FY20: 537 applications (only General)



Contract Obligation Statistics:

- FY2024:
 - EQIP General: 220 contracts, EQIP IRA: 260 contracts
 - Total: 480 contracts

- FY2023:
 - EQIP General: 291 contracts, EQIP IRA 62
 - 353 contracts obligated

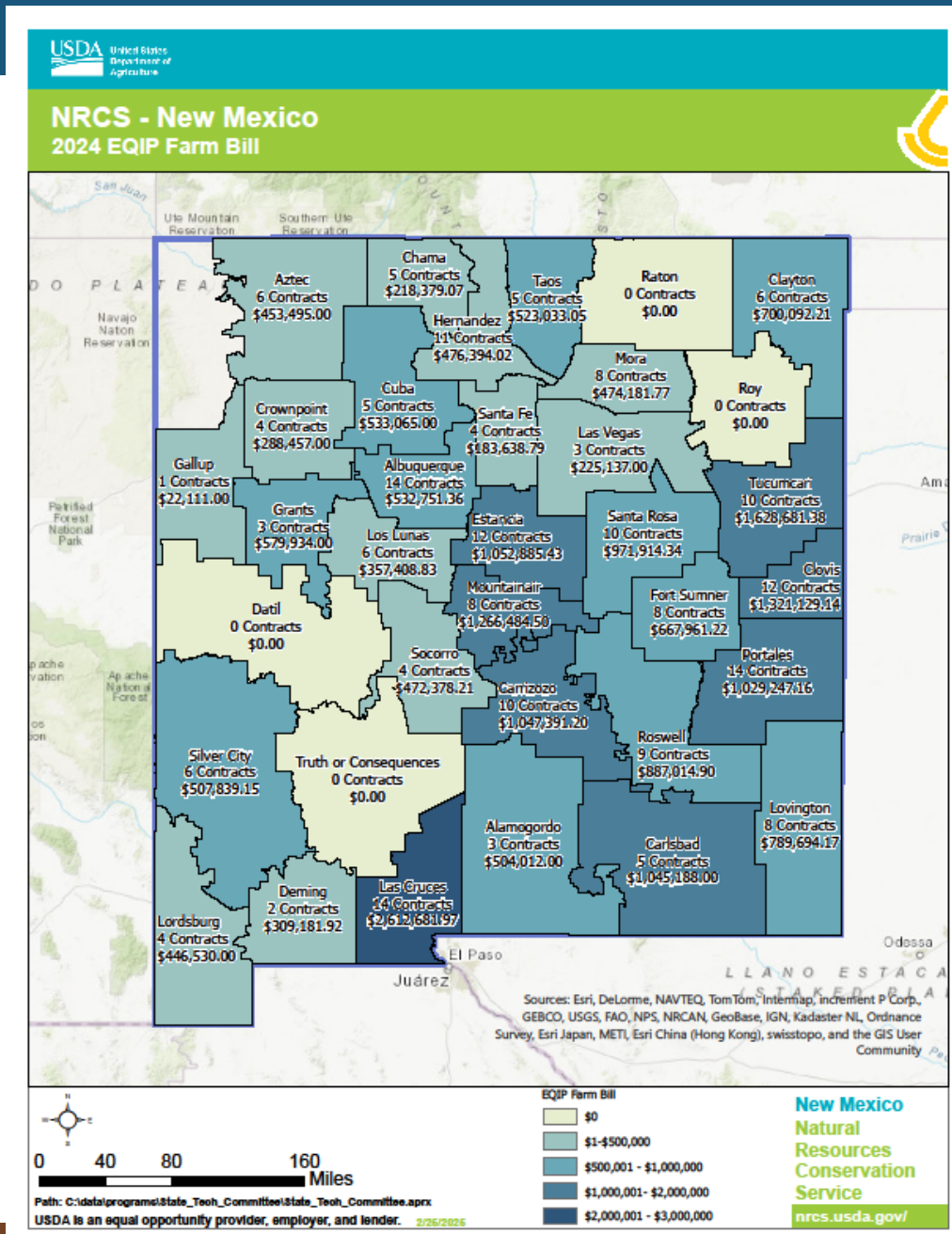
- FY2022: 333 contracts obligated

- FY2021: 307 contracts obligated

- FY2020: 289 contracts obligated

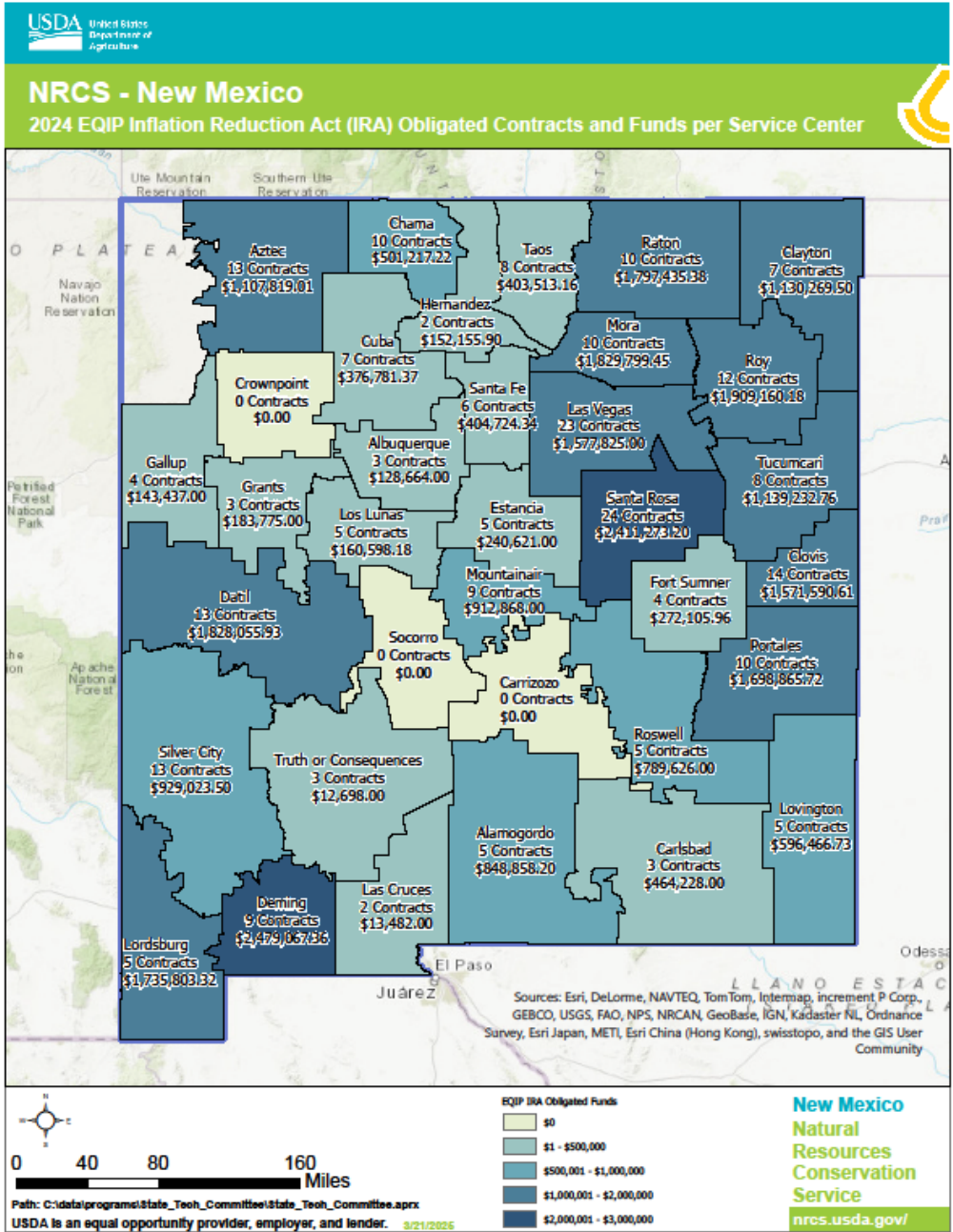
EQIP 2024 Farm Bill

Contract Map



EQIP 2024 IRA

Contract Map:



Top 5 EQIP Practices in New Mexico for FY2024:

Farm Bill:

- Sprinkler System (442)- \$4,266,012
- Brush Management (314)- \$3,120,387
- Watering Facility (614)- \$2,257,864
- Irrigation Pipeline (430)- \$1,924,719
- Fence (382)- \$1,470,656

Inflation Reduction Act:

- Brush Management (314)- \$8,255,398
- Prescribed Grazing (528)- \$3,367,927
- Sprinkler System (442)- \$3,072,467
- Range Planting (550)- \$2,372,738
- Fence (382)- \$1,942,682

- NRCS Financial Assistance Program Practices Data webpage. Open to the public.
- <https://www.farmers.gov/data/financial-assistance-practices>

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Regional Organic Specialists: An expanded agreement with NRCS



Who are we?



The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) support for organic farms and their conservation needs is part of the Organic Transition Initiative (OTI).

NRCS is expanding their 14 year-long partnership with Oregon Tilth to establish six Organic Specialists who hold joint positions with NRCS and organic partners, including:

Oregon Tilth, Marbleseed, California Certified Organic Farmers Foundation (CCOF), Organic Agronomy Training Service (OATS), and the Organic Trade Association (OTA).



West Region

Katrina Hunter

Based in Santa Cruz, CA

California Certified Organic Farmers
Foundation (CCOF)



West Region



Kristina Peterson

Based in Portland, OR
Oregon Tilth (OTCO)



What is our goal?

The Organic Specialist agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will increase conservation planning and implementation on organic and transitioning-to-organic farms to address resource concerns.

Why are we here?

- According to the [2021 Agricultural Statistics Service \(ASS\) Organic Survey](#), there was a loss in organic acreage of 10.9% relative to 2019, driven by pasture and rangeland.
- In 2022, USDA announced \$300 million for the Organic Transition Initiative which includes programs by RMA, NRCS, and AMS.
- In 2023, USDA NRCS created the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Organic Transition Initiative which resulted in 112 program contracts for 15,700 acres.



What are our overall objectives?

- 
- Developing knowledge within NRCS about organic systems and their unique needs.
 - Instilling comfort and confidence in NRCS staff working with organic farmers.
 - Supporting the certification of more Technical Service Providers (TSPs) to work with organic farmers.
- 





What are our overall objectives?

- 
- Building more relationships between the organic community and NRCS.
 - Building awareness within the organic community regarding opportunities for support from NRCS programs.
- 





What are some specific activities we are working on?



At least 24 training sessions provided each year throughout the the country driven by NRCS state and staff requests:

- Working Effectively with Organic Producers (WEWOP)
 - ICPS 823: Organic Management
 - CPA 138/DIA 140 and the Organic System Plan (OSP)
 - Technical Service Providers (TSPs) - host regional TSP trainings and conduct outreach to prospective TSPs
 - Organic pest, nutrient, livestock, and pasture management
- 



What are some specific activities we are working on?

- Ensure that every state has a designated NRCS Organic Champion. Regional networks will be developed by organic specialists for Organic Champions to provide training and resources needed to successfully achieve their goals, and create a forum for sharing challenges, opportunities, and feedback.

What are some specific activities we are working on?

- Work on Implementation Requirements (IRs) and guides that are critical to organic production.
- Develop resources on ICPS 823.
- Distribute research materials from Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) and university contacts to NRCS.



What are some specific activities we are working on?



Coordination and outreach with Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP).

- Mentorship Program - connects producers transitioning with experienced organic producers who serve as mentors.
 - Technical Assistance - workshops, field days, events, educational resources, advising.
 - Community Building - organize conferences, workshops, field days, events.
 - Workforce Training and Development - targeted training and education for organic workforce.
- 





What are some specific activities we are working on?

- 
- Provide bi-weekly national organic office hours for NRCS staff.
 - Seek out opportunities for NRCS to have a presence at organic conferences and host workshops for organic and transitioning-to-organic producers.
 - Conduct outreach to State Technical Advisory Committees and help facilitate organic representation on these committees.
- 



New Mexico Organic Acreage

- Total Organic Acreage: 32,189 acres (includes, non-field, pasture and rangeland (6,897), and total field crops) Source: Table A2-[Organic Situation Report](#), 2023 Argus-reported organic harvested acreage by state)
- According to 2021 data from [OFRF](#) (Organic Farming Research Foundation), there are 93 organic operations with top organic commodities of milk, cattle, and field corn worth \$101 million in sales. Organic dairy sales alone were \$66 million.
- New Mexico's organic market grew 44% from 2019 to 2021 and is expected to grow another 28% by 2029
- A recent search of the Organic Integrity Database, revealed 94 operations and 41,500 certified organic acres.



Questions?

- 
- Have a question about working with organic producers or organic regulations?
 - Interested in getting involved in organic conferences, workshops, or events?
 - Interested in conducting outreach to organic producers or helping organic producers make connections with NRCS?

Contact us!



Kristina Peterson
kristina.peterson@usda.gov

Katrina Hunter
katrina.hunter@usda.gov





United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Stewardship Program

STC Meeting 4/9/2025

Martin Meairs
Martin.Meairs@usda.gov



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Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers technical and financial assistance to help agricultural and forest producers take their conservation efforts to the next level.
- Provides funding for maintaining and improving existing conservation systems and practices and adopting additional conservation activities.
- 5 year contracts with yearly payments
- Minimum Payments for FY25 CSP Classic are \$4,000 per year



CSP Ranking Pools

- Agland (range, crop and pasture)
- Agland - Beginning Farmer/Rancher
- Agland - Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher
- Agland-Organic
- Non-Industrial Private Forestland (NIPF)
- NIPF - Beginning Farmer/Rancher
- NIPF - Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher
- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) – CSP
 - Agland
 - NIPF

At Minimum 5% of funds required to be allotted to SD and BFR Applicants



Updates for CSP-IRA FY25



- All funding for FY-25 CSP IRA Classic is on hold





FY 25 Classic CSP

- Total Applications Received - 150
- Selected for funding – 47
- Beginning Farmer Rancher (BFR) - 6
- Socially Disadvantaged (SD) – 19

FY 24 Classic CSP

- Total Applications Received - 146
- Selected for funding – 62
- Beginning Farmer Rancher (BFR) - 13
- Socially Disadvantaged (SD) – 12

FY24 Classic CSP IRA

- Selected for funding –32
- SD – 14
- BFR - 6



FY25 CSP Allocated Dollars



Classic CSP Allocation - \$7,475,149

- Agland General - \$4,487,599 – 26 Applications Selected
- Agland BFR – \$440,075 – 3 Applications Selected
 - Additional BFR Funded in Agland General- \$458,150 – 5 Applications Selected
- Agland SD – \$1,883,571– 11 Applications Selected
 - Additional SD Funded in Agland General - \$445,000– 3 Applications Selected
- NIPF General - \$321,304 – 5 Applications Selected
- NIPF SD - \$342,600 –2 Contract Funded
 - Additional SD Funded in NIPF General - \$52,000 – 3 Applications Selected



FY25 CSP Renewal Contracts

FY25 CSP Renewal Obligations

- Total Funds Spent - \$3,674,851 – 15 Contracts
- Agland General - \$2,220,762 – 6 Contracts
- Agland SD – \$1,206,309 – 7 Contracts
- Agland BFR - \$247,780 – 2 Contracts

FY25 IRA-CSP Renewal Obligations

- Total Funds Spent - \$3,883,836 – 15 Contracts
- Agland General - \$1,391,457 – 8 Contracts
- Agland SD – \$2,292,379 – 6 Contracts
- Agland BFR - \$200,000 – 1 Contracts

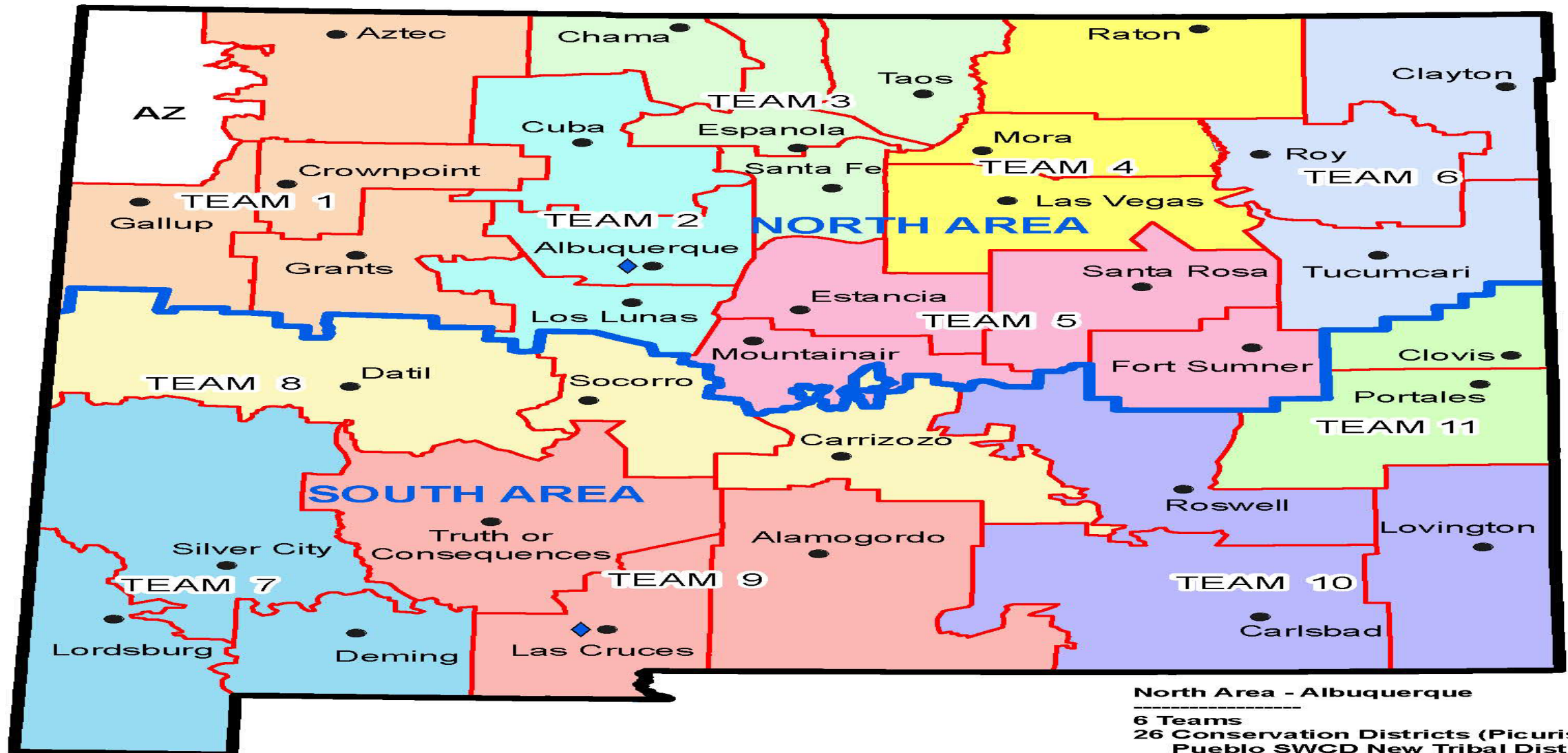


FY 2024 Funding Spent

- **FY24 Classic CSP - \$11,159,256 = 62 Contracts**
- **FY24 Classic CSP-IRA - \$6,720,905 = 32 Contracts**
- **FY 24 Renewal CSP - \$380,365 – 3 Contracts**
- **FY24 Renewal CSP-IRA- \$1,739,305 – 1 Contract**



NRCS - New Mexico Administrative Areas



North Area - Albuquerque

6 Teams

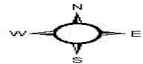
26 Conservation Districts (Picuris
Pueblo SWCD New Tribal District)
23 Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos

South Area - Las Cruces

5 Teams

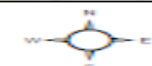
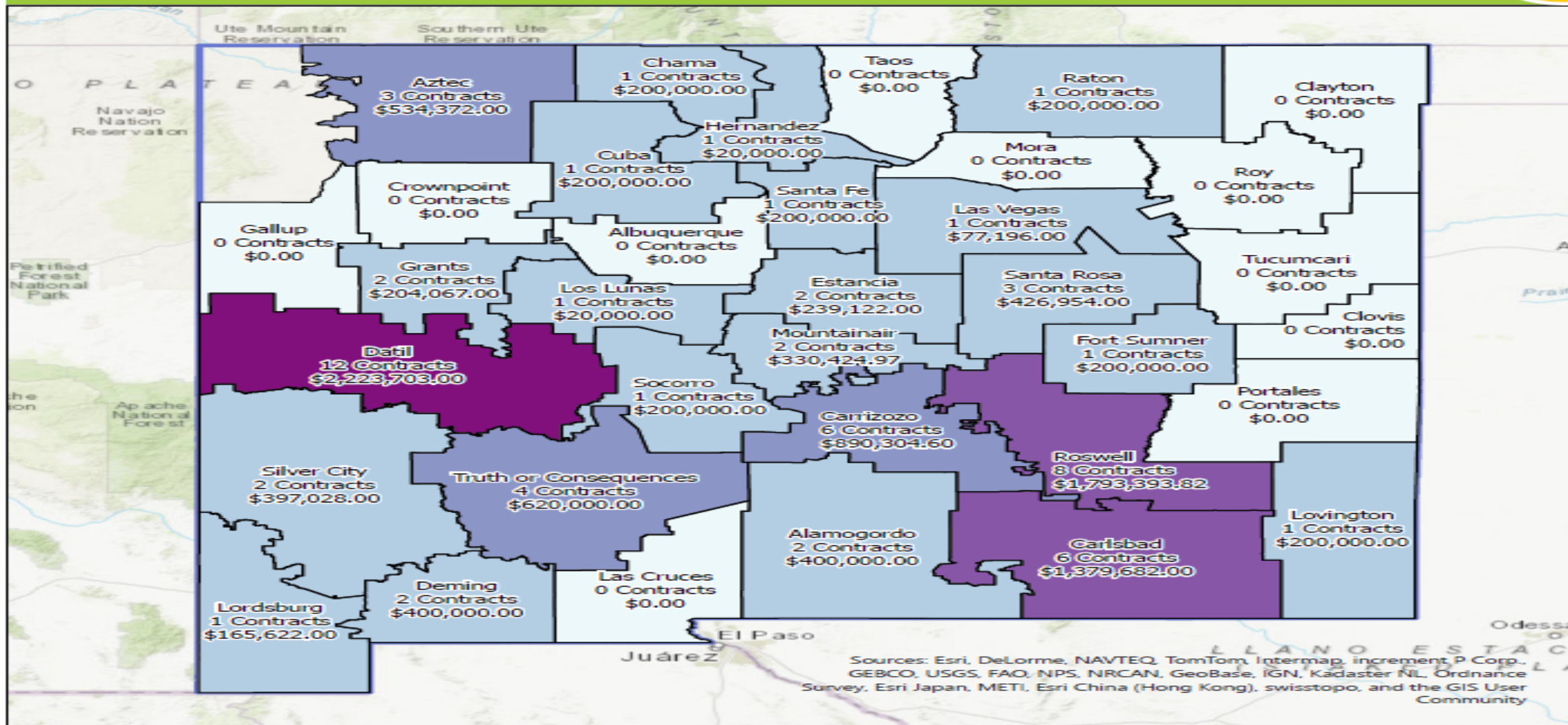
22 Conservation Districts

2 Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos



NRCS - New Mexico

2024 CSP Farm Bill Obligated Contracts and Funds per Service Center

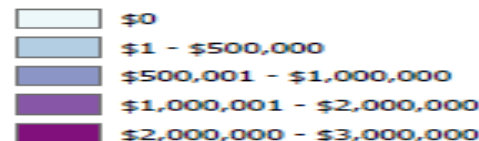


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CSP Farm Bill

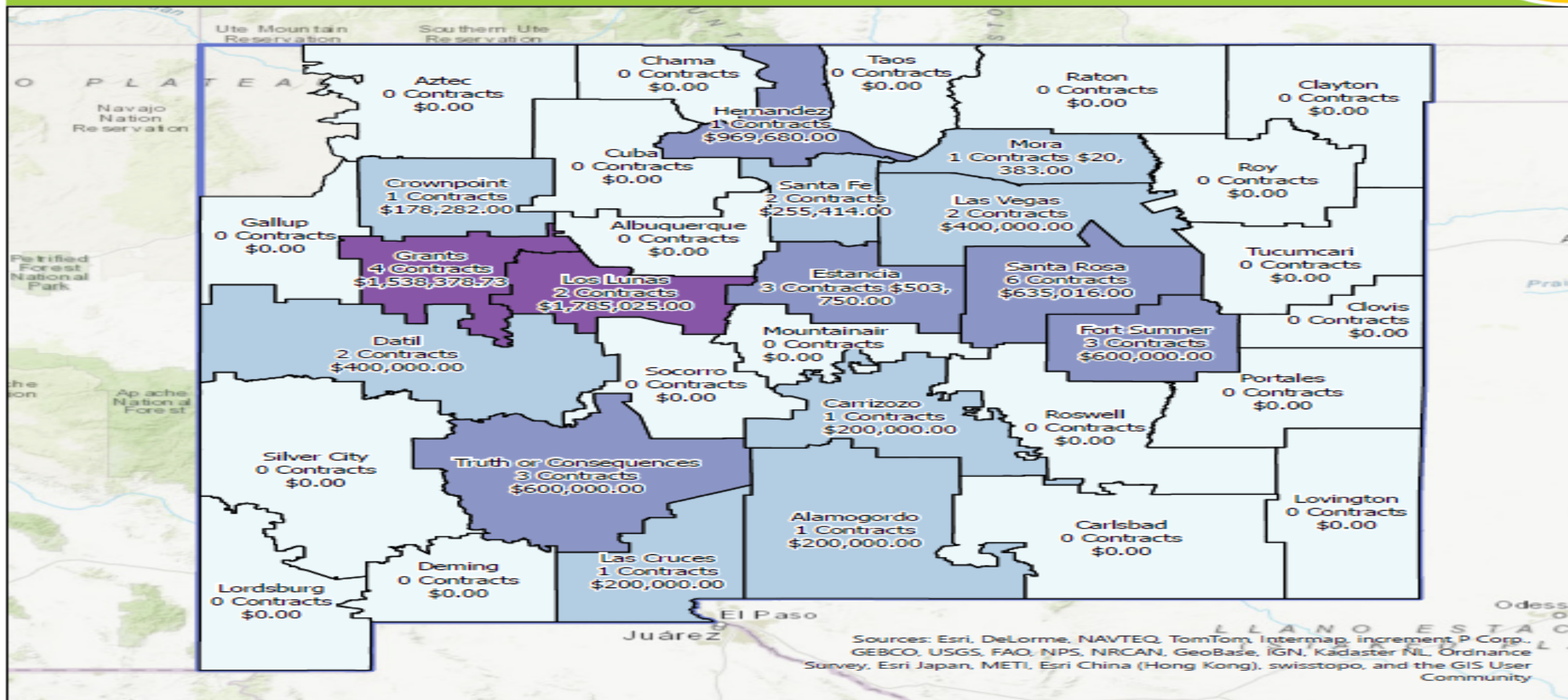


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NRCS - New Mexico

2024 CSP Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Obligated Contracts and Funds per Service Center



0 40 80 160 Miles

Path: C:\data\programs\State_Tech_Committee\State_Tech_Committee.aprx
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CSP IRA Funds

	\$0
	\$1 - \$500,000
	\$500,001 - \$1,000,000
	\$1,000,001 - \$2,000,000
	\$2,000,001 - \$3,000,000

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Resource Priorities



New Mexico Priority Resource Concern Categories	
Agland	Non-Industrial Private Forestland
Wind and Water Erosion	Wind and Water Erosion
Concentrated Erosion	Concentrated Erosion
Degraded Plant Condition	Degraded Plant Condition
Pest Pressure	Pest Pressure
Livestock Production Limitation	Livestock Production Limitation
Terrestrial Habitat	Terrestrial Habitat
Source Water Depletion	Inefficient Energy Use
Soil Quality Limitations	Fire Management

- Other Resource Concern Categories that are not listed as State Priority Resource Concern
 - Air quality emissions, Aquatic habitat, Field pesticide loss, Salt losses to water, Storage and handling of pollutants, Weather resilience
- Ranking considers the number of priority resource concern categories met and addressed.



Ranking Weights By Resource Concern Categories

Categories			
Category	Min %	Default %	Max %
Air quality emissions	0	1	30
Aquatic habitat	0	1	30
Concentrated erosion	0	7	30
Degraded plant condition	0	15	30
Field pesticide loss	0	4	30
Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss	0	5	30
Fire management	0	1	30
Inefficient energy use	0	2	30
Livestock production limitation	0	10	30
Pest pressure	0	5	30
Salt losses to water	0	2	30
Soil quality limitations	0	10	30
Source water depletion	0	10	30
Storage and handling of pollutants	0	1	30
Terrestrial habitat	0	13	30



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Ranking Question Focus



- Forest
 - Reduce threat of wildfire
 - Reduce pest damage
- Agland
 - Will activities be implemented to increase or benefit soil health
 - Cover Crop/Crop Rotations
 - Will activities be implemented to address water quality degradation
- **CSP-IRA**
- How many core Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Mitigation Activity(ies) will be implemented in the application





United States Department of Agriculture



QUESTIONS



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Payment Schedules

- The goal for FY2026 is to reduce the options that are similar. This may mean that a practice scenario may be used in a wide range of situations.
- New activities and payment scenarios will be limited.
- Instead of more, try to do better with what we have.

New Mexico Counties with Locality and Cost of Living Adjustments

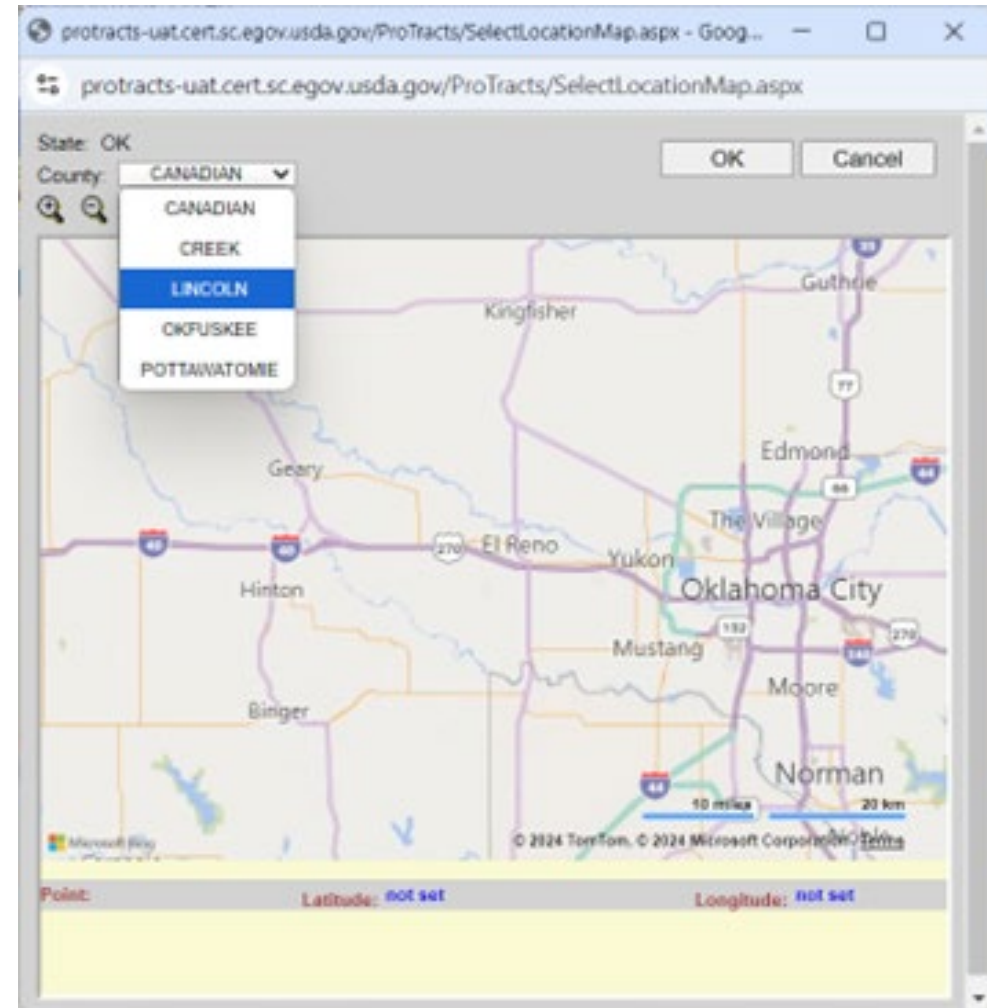
Albuquerque-Santa Fe-Las Vegas, NM

PLACE NAME	FIPS
Bernalillo County, NM	35001
Cibola County, NM	35006
Los Alamos County, NM	35028
McKinley County, NM	35031
Rio Arriba County, NM	35039
San Miguel County, NM	35047
Sandoval County, NM	35043
Santa Fe County, NM	35049
Torrance County, NM	35057
Valencia County, NM	35061

These 10 counties have payments that are about 1% higher than the rest of the state.

Where is the County Association Determined?

- The county cost list associated with an application is determined in the location screen in Protracts.
- NRCS user selects the county from the pulldown. The counties that show up are limited to what is allowed for that user.
- The application will be associated with the county selected in this drop down. Once the county is selected it can't be changed.





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Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

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Vision of ACEP

- Protect agricultural use and future viability of farming enterprises.
- Limit non-agricultural use of the land.
- Protect grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring and conserving eligible land.
- Provide support for state, local and private farm and ranch land protection efforts.

Challenges of ACEP

- Some landowners think the easement value is too low.
- The cost of appraisals is high.
- When landowner is an entity, such as a corporation, all members and shareholders must complete USDA farm records.
- NRCS allows little to no flexibility in future boundary changes.

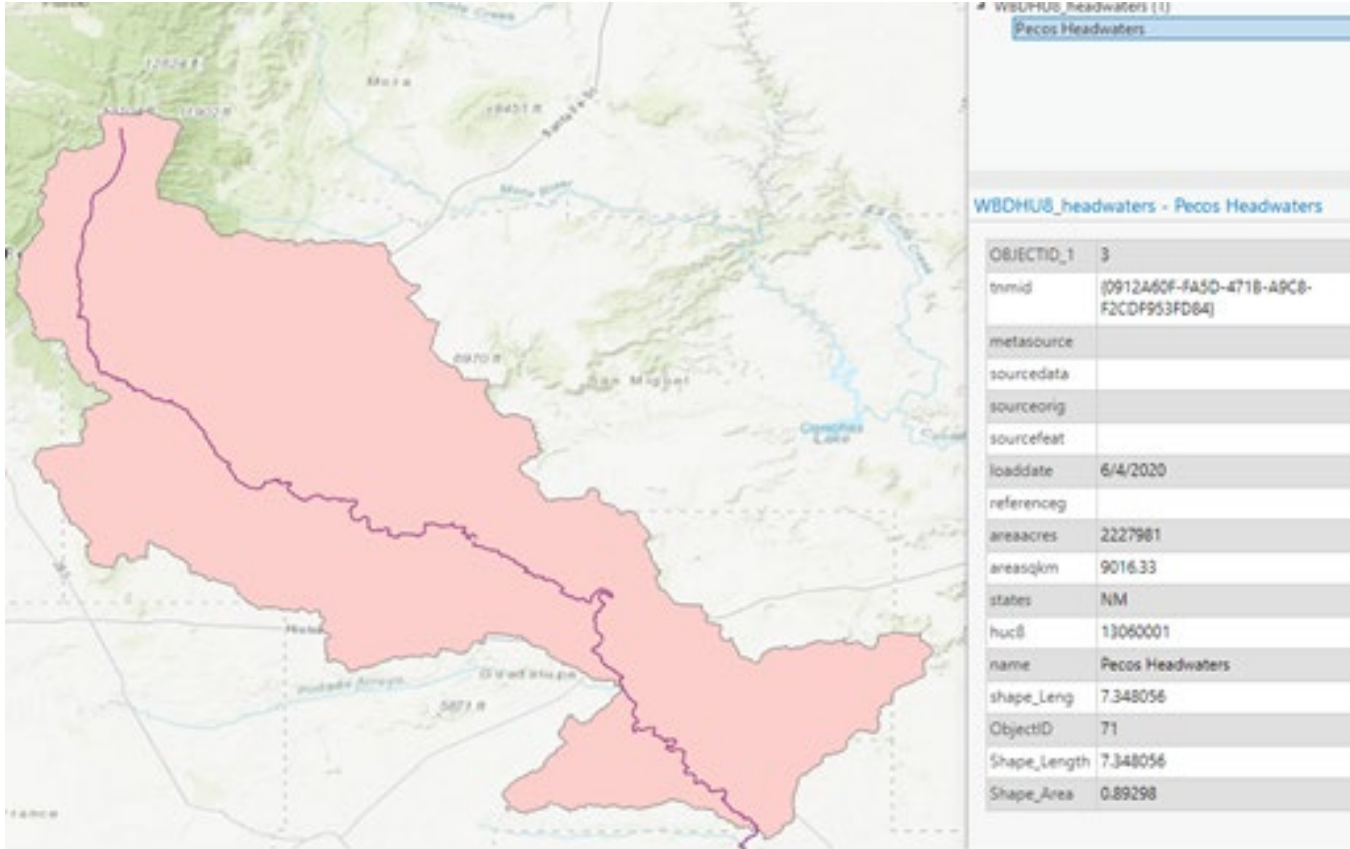
Considerations for ALE ranking

- Distinguish between already protected land:

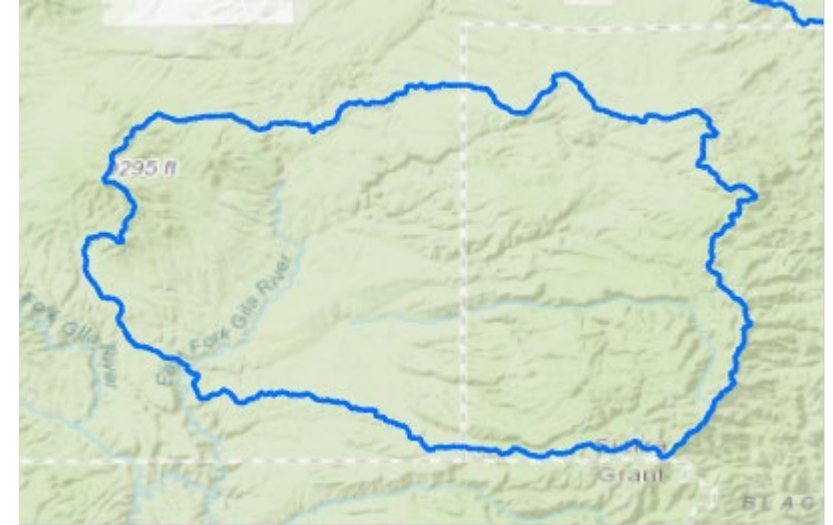
Give a wildlife refuge a higher value than state land that is leased for grazing?

- Give ranking points for land with natural areas that provide value to nearby agricultural land?
- Give more points for projects receiving other grant funding. Currently only 4 points are allocated if 15% of the easement purchase price is from land trust resources.

Headwaters- consideration for priority



HUC 8 of Pecos Headwaters- may work if this is also a state or local priority area



HUC 10 of east fork of Gila River- all on Forest Service land

Wetland restoration criteria guidelines

- To be eligible for WRE, there must be a need for restoration
 - Removal of brush and phreatophyte species.
 - Installation of fences to limit grazing.
 - Installation of low cost structures to reduce erosion and restore floodplains and wet meadows.
 - Filling in pitted playas and shaping playas.
 - Removing tile drain systems, ditches and levees.
 - Restoring springs and seeps.
- Other actions?



Extent of alternative plant community

- Example: Originally the site was a permanent wetland but will be restored to a seasonal wetland to mimic the functions of oxbow wetlands that occurred historically in the area but not at the specific site.



Thoughts on alternative plant community?

- Playa and surrounding grassland → no alternative plant community allowed.
- Emergent marsh dominated by cattails → open water with depths that discourage cattail growth is allowed on 50% of area
- Saltgrass meadows → no alternative plant community
- Montane meadows → no alternative plant community
- Riparian/forested wetlands → native grassland or emergent marsh where replanting trees is not feasible.



Conservation Innovation Grants

- No new contracts are yet allowed.
- Existing contracts can continue work, except that payments cannot be made for IRA funded contracts for work completed after February 25, 2025.
- New Mexico will not offer CIG in FY2025.



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Emergency Watershed Protection
David Griego –EWP Program Manager

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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NRCS New Mexico

- **14 Active Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Projects around the State.**
- **1 Pending**

Hondo Valley EWP

- **Disaster Date: 5/31/2021**
- **Sponsor: Lincoln County**
- **Total Project Amount: \$1,154,810.71**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 100 %**
- **Working with the Hondo SWCD District on the close out documents**

Corn Ranch / Roswell Flooding EWP

- **Disaster Date: 5/30/2021**
- **Sponsor: Chaves County**
- **Total Project Amount: \$ 3,727,935.23**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 90 %**
- **The goal is to close it out by 30 June**

McBride Fire EWP

- **Disaster Date: 4/12/2022**
- **Sponsor: Lincoln County**
- **Total Project Amount: \$1,804,760.00**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 90%**
- **Priorities changed due to the South Fork and the Salt Fire**
- **Remaining project is large diversion dam**

Hermits Peak / Calf Canyon EWP 2 Agreements

- **Disaster Date: 4/22/2022**
- **Sponsor: NM Department of Finance and Administration**
- **Total Project Amount: \$268,669,180.00**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: ____%**
- **Still getting new requests**

Cerro Pelado EWP

- **Disaster Date: 7/23/2023**
- **Sponsor: Sandoval County**
- **Total Project Amount: \$4,070,000.00**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 10%**
- **Working on Cultural Clearances and Designs**

Gila and Mimbres Flood EWP - 1 (Grant)

- **Disaster Date: 8/18/2022**
- **Sponsor: Grant County**
- **Total Project Amount: \$ 10,703,524.00**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 10%**
- **Most of the designs are competed**
- **We have 4 large projects that are going out for bid**

Gila and Mimbres Flood EWP - 2 (Hidalgo)

- **Disaster Date: 8/18/2022**
- **Sponsor: Hidalgo County**
- **Total Project Amount: \$319,770.00**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 10%**
- **The engineers are finishing up the designs and hoping to bid them out by mid summer**

Gila and Mimbres Flood EWP - 3 (Luna)

- **Disaster Date: 8/18/2022**
- **Sponsor: Hidalgo County**
- **Total Project Amount: \$652,700.00**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 50%**
- **The design is being updated and should be ready for contracting sometime in May**



South Fork and Salt Fire EWP - 1

- **Disaster Date: 6/16/2024**
- **Sponsors: Lincoln County**
- **Total Project Amount: \$50 Million**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 50%**
- **Large acequia projects that will require major engineering**



South Fork and Salt Fire EWP - 2

- **Disaster Date: 6/16/2024**
- **Sponsors: Mescalero Apache Tribe**
- **Total Project Amount: 24 Million**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: less than 25%**

Blue 2 2.0 EWP -Amendment

- **Disaster Date: May 16, 2024**
- **Sponsor: City of Alamogordo**
- **Total Project Amount: \$1,250,000.00 original award
\$310,500.00 additional work**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 99%**
- **Closing this one out**

Rio En Medio EWP

- **Disaster Date: 10/07/2022**
- **Sponsor: Santa Fe County**
- **Total Project Amount: \$350,005.00**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 10%**
- **Smaller designs are completed and once we get the permit from the USACE we are ready to implement**



Rio Arriba Flooding EWP

- **Disaster Date: July 2024**
- **Sponsor: East Rio Arriba SWCD**
- **Total Project Amount: \$3,000,000.00**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 05%**
- **Funded in FY 2025**
- **Taking applications and securing Right on Entries**



Chaves County Flood EWP – Pending

- **Disaster Date: 10/17/2024**
- **Sponsor: Chaves County**
- **Total Project Amount: \$15,285,968.75**
- **Estimated Percent Completed: 0 %**
- **The Agreement is being generated at GAD (Grants and Agreements)**



Questions



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Resource Technical Services

Art Ariaz – State Resource Conservationist

Training -Business Tools - Archaeology – Agronomy - Forestry - Biology



RTS Staffing Updates

- Pamela Herrera- State Biologist- Retired March 2025
- Nick Goodman- Acting State Biologist
 - Stu Tuttle- ACES/NMACD Biologist-Assisting with HPCC/EWP NEPA
- Jim Wood- ACES – State Archaeology Workload

RTS Updates

- Statewide Trainings- All travel halted therefore smaller informal OJT at Team and FO level or Teams until further notice.
- As of October 1st, Cost Sharing on Virtual Fencing and Telemetry for Storage Tanks and Watering facilities through EQIP and CSP. (State Range Con/SO Engineer)
- RTS staff assisting with NMDA Healthy Soils Program application review committee.
- Staff assisting with EWP, HPCC Restoration Plan development, as well as other FO and AO needs.

HPCC Conservation Restoration Plans

- Field Visits Ramped up March 17th
- Total of 8 (3 teams of 2)

As of 04/10/2025, NRCS has processed the following:

- Total Applications Received – 2637
- Completed and/or Delivered Plans - 1649
- Total Reassessment Applications Received – 200
- Completed and/or Delivered Reassessments – 50
- Reassessment Plan Amount - \$46,887,707
- Acres – 162,962
- Total Dollars Planned - \$1,143,025,801
- Total active plans that still need a site visit: 401 (not including the 500+/- from Law firm on deadline)
- Roughly 900 Total applicants remaining with late additions





Emergency Conservation Program Farm Service Agency

NRCS Involvement

- 1. Technical Support-NRCS provides technical expertise to determine the extent of damage to agriculture land caused by natural disasters.
- 2. Engineering Guidance-If engineering solutions are required, NRCS engineers may be involved in designing or reviewing plans to ensure they are effective.
- 3. Conservation Practice Standards-NRCS ensures that any recovery work funded by ECP addresses appropriate resource concerns to return them to pre disaster conditions.

Team 10 & South AO

County	Chaves
Disaster ID	1334
Date Implementation was Approved	December 2, 2024
Approved Signup Period	December 2 – January 27
Number of Affected Producers	Approximately 80
ECP Practices Approved	EC1 – Removing Debris from Farmland; EC2 – Grading Shaping, Releveling, or Similar Measures EC3 – Restoring Permanent Fences; EC4 – Restoring Conservation Practices.

As of April...

- 47 Total Applicants
- 42 site visits have been completed
- 3 site visits remain and are scheduled for next week
- 2 applicant's have cancelled
- 10 plans have been reviewed, signed by producer and uploaded to FSA system.



Questions?

arthur.ariaz@usda.gov- State Resource Conservationist

ana.gomes@usda.gov- State Business Tools Specialist

andrew.lee@usda.gov- State Forester

nickolas.goodman@usda.gov- State Biologist (Acting)

jim.armendariz@usda.gov- State Range Management Spec.

daniel.bloedel@usda.gov- State Resource Con

william.volf@usda.gov- State Archaeologist

molly.murphy@usda.gov- State Field Archeologist

samuel.fullen@usda.gov- State Agronomist

amanda.brown@usda.gov- Admin Assistant

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CART OVERVIEW-Ana Gomes
State Tech Committee- 2025

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The methods that planners use to record the conservation planning process have changed dramatically since the 1930s.

For many decades, conservationists used handwritten notes and surveys and sketched maps when inventorying resources. The observational data and planning conditions of the landscape and associated resource concerns were tied to individual farms.

Fast Forward- in 2019-CART was introduced-Planners evaluate resource concerns and practices applied by clients, and the system matches benefits from the applied practices

CART- CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT RANKING TOOL



What is CART?

- Conservation
- Assessment
- Ranking
- Tool

Objectives here
were to have
one centralized
place

- Set of Business Practices to streamline Conservation Planning and Program Delivery
- Program Neutral integrated Information Technology (IT) Software Application



Any USDA
Conservation
Program!



How does CART work? => Integrating IT



Phase I

Collect & Analyze

- Identify Problem
- Determine Objective
- Inventory Resources
- Analyze Resource Data

Conservation Desktop

Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool

Environmental Assessment

Resource Concerns
Planning Criteria (Threshold)
Existing Conditions

Phase II

Decision Support

- Formulate Alternatives
- Evaluate Alternatives
- Make Decision

Conservation Plan

CAPS – Resource
Assessment

Conservation Practices
Economics

Phase III

Implementation & Evaluation

- Implementation Requirements
- Implement the Plan
- Evaluate the Plan

Protracts

Funds
Manager

CAPS -
Outcomes

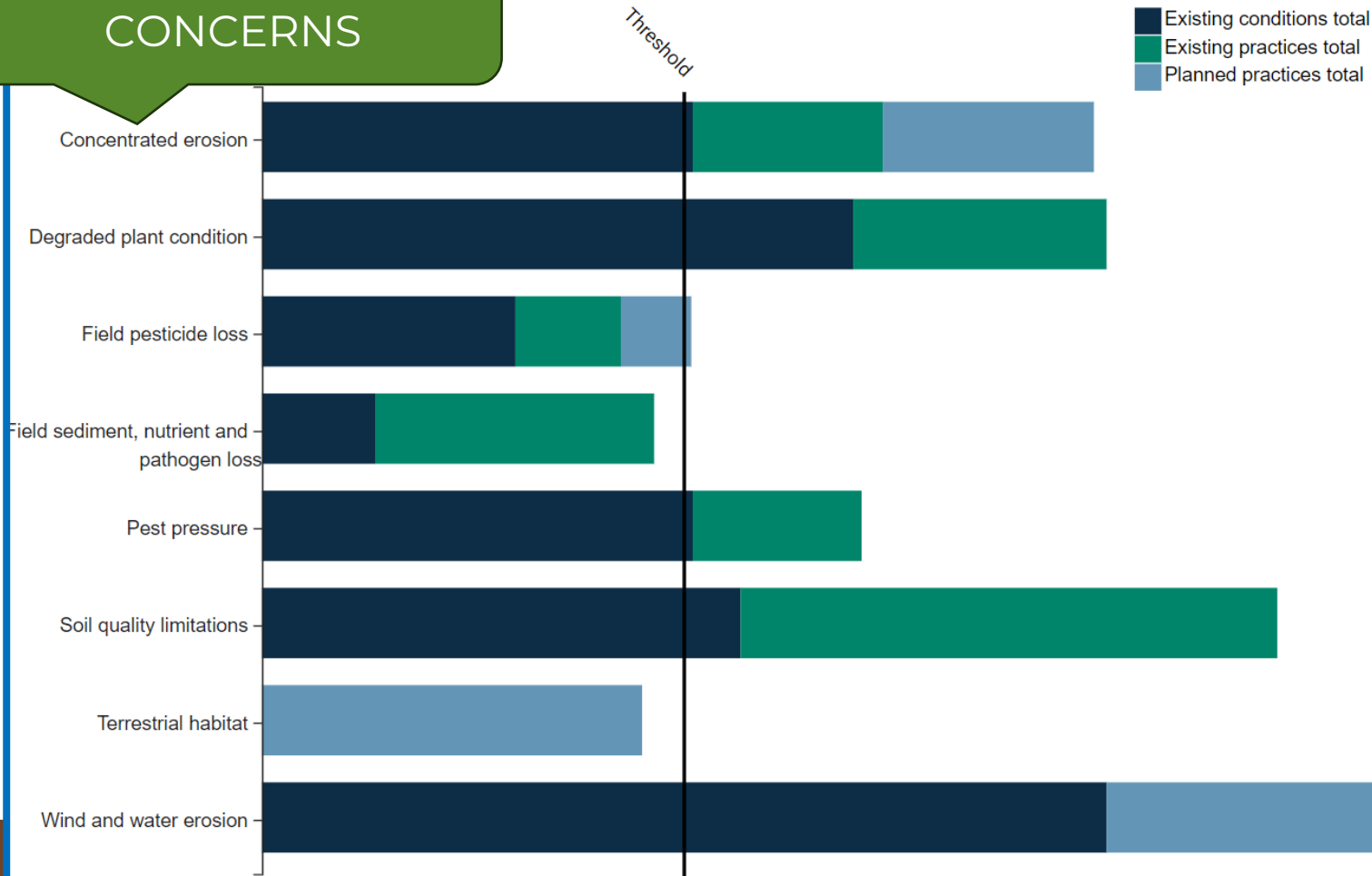
CAPS -

Designs
Checkout

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RESOURCE CONCERNS



Bar Graph View

The formulas for the CART framework are as follows:

When **existing condition points** + **Planned Practice points** < Threshold, then resource concern exists and requires treatment.

When **existing condition points** + **Planned Practice points** > Threshold, then resource concern is adequately treated



CONSERVATION DESKTOP
A CDSI Solution

Training Site

LEONARD RANDALL

The_Big_CART_Farm—Leo_CA...

40 Field Test

Manage Practice Schedule

Assess

Practice Schedule Approval

Close Practice Schedule

Manage Client Associations

Open Agreement

Create/Edit Practices

Create/Edit Agreement Items

Active PLUs | Case PLUs | Practice Schedule PLUs | Practice Schedule

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Create Schedule

- Identify or create case
- Create practice schedule
- Add PLUs
- **keep the Tracts and PLUs matching the FSA CLU boundaries as closely as possible.**

HUB of all operation



How does CART Work? – Planning Steps



Assessment results for CART UAT DEMO 20190822

Assessment Date: 08-26-2019 Assessment Status: In Assessment Client Name: TOBYN V GUTIERREZ
Case Name: Stroda_Kevin--130235se4 Planner Name: Chad Volkman Schedule Name: CART UAT DEMO 20190822
Schedule Status: Active

Assessment Dashboard

Steps 1 & 2 **Steps 3 & 4** **Steps 5 & 6**

Assessment Dashboard

Assessed Tract / Land Unit **Land Use** **PLU Modifiers** **Acres** **Resource Concerns** **Resource Inventory** **Existing Practices** **Planned Practices** **Overall Status** **Results**

✓ 964	--	--	--	✓ Complete	○ Not Started	○ Not Started	○ Not Started	⌚ In Progress	Not Met
✓ 964 / 1	Crop	Irrigated/ Drained	79	✓ Complete	○ Not Started	○ Not Started	○ Not Started	⌚ In Progress	Not Met

CLEAR CHANGES **SAVE CHANGES**

Questions like
“is there
cover out
there”,
percentage?



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Plan Assessment Ranking Points

Ranking pools will evaluate client's applications for 5 main areas

1. **Plan Assessment:** Existing Vulnerability*
2. **Plan Assessment:** Planned Practice Effects*
3. **Pool Priorities: Resource** - (ex. *Geospatial Based Priority Watershed*)
Question Based (ex. Do the practices in the application affect sage grouse?)
4. **Pool Priorities: Program**-Question Based (ex. Veteran Farmer), past contract information
5. **Efficiency**

***Information captured already in the assessment process**

The locally led process can have input on each of these

NOTE:

Only resource concerns which are identified by the ranking pool will garner plan assessment points-Only practices on land uses which are identified by the ranking pool will garner plan assessment points

Bonus! Rank applications in multiple funding pools



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FEEDBACK

SharePoint

We Are NRCS

CADD

EFT

NRCS of the Future



NRCS State, Field & Technical Staff

★ Follow

> Libraries

> Lists

> Pages

Site contents

Conservation Practice Dat...

Conservation Planning Po...

CD CART Geospatial

Recycle bin

Return to classic SharePoint

+ Add new item

Edit in grid view

Undo

Share

Copy link

Export

Forms **New**

Automate

Integrate

...

Manage ac...

CART Resource Concern Assessment and Points Feedback (Non-IT Development) ☆ ⓘ

🔍

☰

⌵

All Items ▾

+ Ac

User Name	User Type	State Name	Service Center	Date ①	Feedback Type	Feedback Title/Summary	Resource Conc...	Feedback Des...	Status
Komiskey, Michelle - I	State	Wisconsin		7/28/2023	Ranking	Ranking data from CD		Wisconsin's FA programs have asked for the functionality of ranking to be able to auto answer ranking questions using planning documentation in CD/CART. For example: Ranking question - How many LWG priority resource concerns are addressed? This would be	Sent to POC(s) for Re M

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Conservation Desktop and CART do not eliminate the need to go to the field and plan with the Producer.



FAP



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NRCS 2025 Biology update

Nick Goodman-Acting State Biologist

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Topics

- CPA-52 updates





CPA-52 updates

- **New CPA-52 excel sheet that we should start using immediately**
- **Mandatory after 4/13**
- **Environmental Justice (EJ) tab along with all mentions of EJ were removed**

1		USDA United States Department of Agriculture U.S. Department of Agriculture NRCS-CPA-52		A. Client Name:		See Instructions	
2		Natural Resources Conservation Service		B. Conservation Plan ID # (as applicable):			
3		ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION WORKSHEET		Program Authority (optional):			
4							
29		ENERGY					
30							
31				☐ NOT meet PC		☐ NOT meet PC	
32							
33				☐ NOT meet PC		☐ NOT meet PC	
34							
35				☐ NOT meet PC		☐ NOT meet PC	
36							
37				☐ NOT meet PC		☐ NOT meet PC	
38							
39				☐ NOT meet PC		☐ NOT meet PC	
40							
41				☐ NOT meet PC		☐ NOT meet PC	
42		Human Economic and Social Considerations					
43		• Land Use					
44		• Capital					
45		• Labor					
46		• Management Level					
47		• Profitability					
48		• Risk					
49		• Public Health & Safety					
50		• Other					
51		Special Environmental Concerns: Environmental Laws, Executive Orders, Policies, etc.					
52		In Section "G" complete and attach Environmental Procedures Guide Sheets for documentation as applicable. Items with a "•" may require a federal permit or consultation/coordination between the lead agency and another government agency. In these cases, effects may need to be determined in consultation with another agency. Planning and practice implementation may proceed for practices not involved in consultation.					
53							
54							
55		G. Special Environmental Concerns		J. Impacts to Special Environmental Concerns			
56				No Action		Alternative 1	
57		(Document existing/		✓ if		✓ if	



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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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United States Department of Agriculture

Questions?



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505-280-0826



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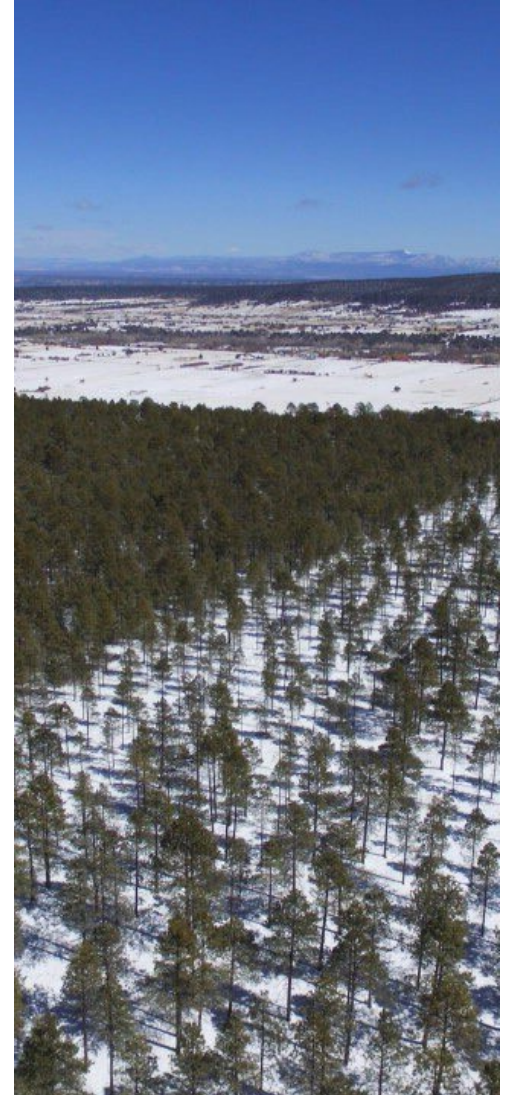


Woody Residue Treatment upcoming changes

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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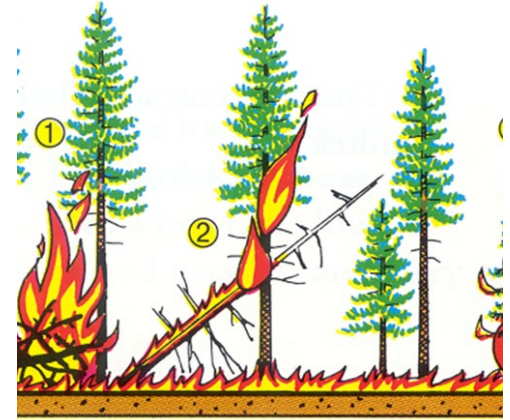
Background

- National prescribed burning policy was updated around 2023 and again in 2024
- Woody residue treatment (384) national practice standard was updated in 2024



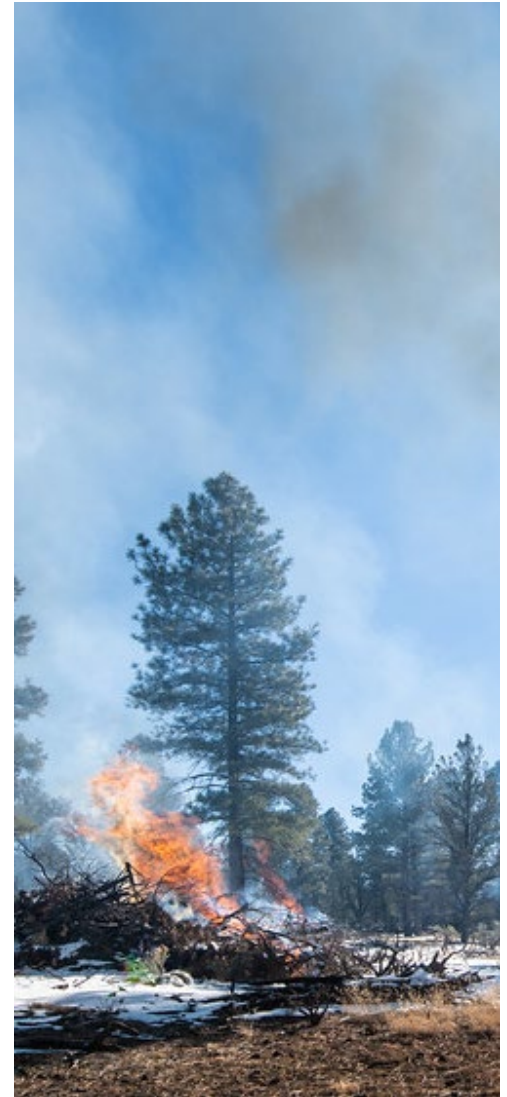
Importance of Prescribed Burning Standard

- Prior to 2023
 - National prescribed burn policy did have requirements for “low complexity pile burning”
- 2023 revision
 - National prescribed burning policy applies to “All planned ignitions”
 - This now applies to pile burning when required for completion of the practice



Impacts of Changes

- Requirement of a burn plan for all ignitions, including pile burning
 - If a client must burn piles in order to be paid for the woody residue treatment practice, a burn plan is required to be developed and signed off on by staff with appropriate 338 JAA
 - OGC has reviewed the summary is that:
 - Actions that deviate outside of this policy pose an exposure of risk to both the employees working outside of the scope of their duties and the NRCS as an organization where property destruction or loss, or personal harm or death is incurred to a employee, a client, or the community.



Current options for NM NRCS

- Do not require the burning of piles created under the 384 practice. Consider the practice complete when the piles are created and from that point it is on the landowner to complete the pile burning on their own.
 - Downside here is that every piece of research into this has demonstrated that without burning the piles, the fire hazard on the project is not effectively reduced.
- Comply with the revised national standard and write burn plans for all instances of 384 practice where slash is to be piled and burned.
 - Downside is this is very time consuming. And ALL burn plans must meet prescribed burning standard. Additionally these plans likely will have little benefit for the time required to prepare.



Current options for NM NRCS

- Suggestions have been put forward for a moratorium on pile and burn slash treatment, and to use alternative methods.
- Much higher costs to alternative slash treatment methods. Additionally we have planners with 338 JAA who could write plans.

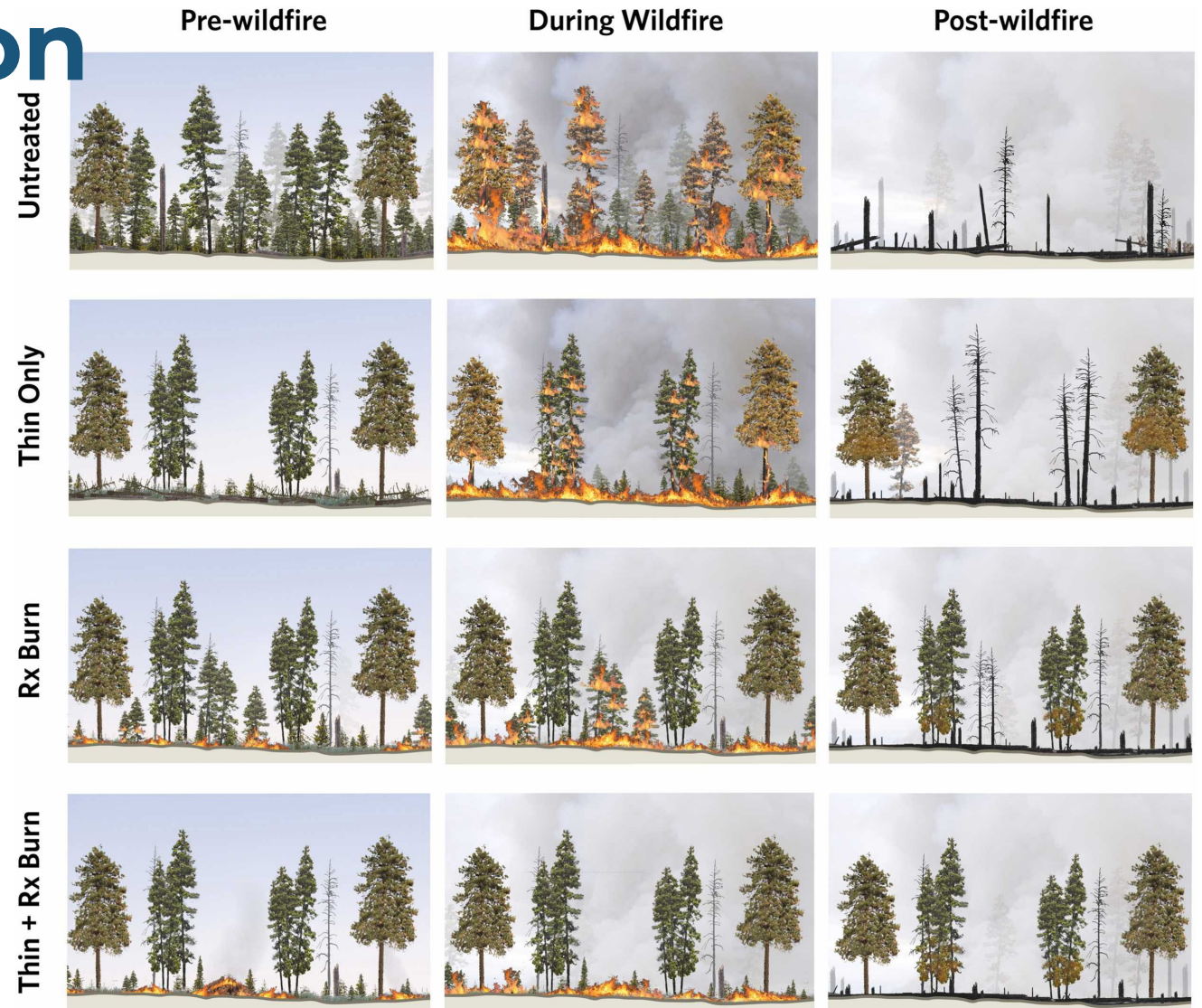
Future Options

- Seek variances to allow for state and local jurisdiction processes or permitting to fulfill our policy requirement
 - In order for the variance to be granted, the state and local process would likely have to meet our prescribed burning standards.
 - The variance request “would need to be reviewed by National Discipline leads and OGC. Downside is lost opportunities, and that a variance request would be denied leading to either a moratorium... or immediately supporting current prescribed burn policy”
- Work towards a policy revision at the national level on the prescribed burning policy.

Questions/Discussion

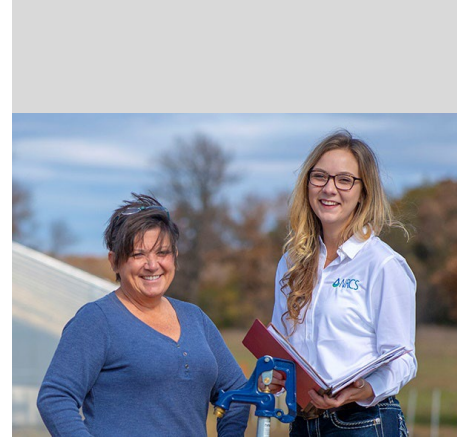
- Probably the best research article on this topic
 - [Davis et al. Tamm review: a meta-analysis of thinning, prescribed fire, and wildfire effects on subsequent wildfire severity in conifer dominated forests of the Western US, 2024](#)

- Contact info:
 - Andrew Lee
Andrew.Lee@usda.gov





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State Tech Committee Meeting 4-2025

Kris Graham Chavez and Dusty Glidewell

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
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Project #	Project Title	Lead Partner	Funding Amount	Funding Pool	CCA	Summary
1893 A-0040	San Juan Non-Native Phreatophyte Removal Program	San Juan SWCD	\$1,042,208.00	State	N/A	The San Juan Soil and Water Conservation District aims to protect reduce wildfire risk by removing non-native Russian olive and Salt Cedar infestations in identified high priority areas. The project will also undertake native plant and tree restoration activities to help restore riparian habitat and improve hydrology, involve the community in restoration and monitoring activities, and to encourage a renewed connection with the river.
1905 A-0056	Eastern New Mexico Prairie Grassland Initiative	NMACD	\$2,025,974.00	CCA	Prairie Grassland	To increase suitable and occupied habitat to meet critical habitat needs of Lesser Prairie-chicken. Habitat improvements will occur through chemical and physical destruction of Mesquite patches across five priority areas identified using a mesquite density model and a study by scientists at New Mexico State University.
514-2127 A-0057	2015 NM Restoration Initiative for Rangeland, Forestland, and Wildlife on Ranches w Fed Lands	NMACD	\$4,000,000.00	State		The New Mexico Restoration Initiative will utilize EQIP contracts with ranchers whose operations include federal lands.
287-2137 A-0046	2015 North Central NM Watershed Restoration Project	Claunch Pinto SWCD	\$2,313,359.00	State		Claunch-Pinto SWCD and its partners have identified over 35,000 acres for forest restoration treatments on private, public, state and tribal lands that are located within both the upland ponderosa pine, pinon, and juniper watersheds, and in the lower elevation riparian ones. Claunch-Pinto SWCD and their partners are committed to successful restoration treatments aimed at improving watershed health and mitigating the extreme risk of wildfire.

Project #	Project Title	Lead Partner	Partner T/A	Lead State	Funding Amount	Summary
2553 A-1000	New Mexico Ogallala Preservation & Conservation	NMACD	\$493,468	NM	\$2,184,900	The New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts will offer land management contracts and entity-held easements to help Eastern New Mexican farmers convert irrigated cropland to dryland crops, pasture, or native grasslands to reduce groundwater pumping from the Ogallala Aquifer and maintain sustainability of agricultural communities. The land use conversions will significantly reduce tillage and soil erosion, as well as sequester carbon.
2764	Establishment of Grassland Strongholds across the Southern High Plains	NMLC		CO, NM, OK, TX	\$9,158,500.00 \$1,110,000.00 NM	The creation of 200,000+ acre "Grassland Strongholds", designed to meet the needs of rural America and achieve conservation success for key wildlife species. Such Strongholds are focal areas of voluntary, incentive-based conservation that include 25-50,000 acres or more of perpetually protected core area surrounded by approximately 150,000 acres or more where producers are formally committed to increasing grassland resilience and habitat.
2679	North Central NM Watershed Restoration Project	Claunch-Pinto SWCD		NM	\$717,413.74	Claunch-Pinto SWCD and its partners have identified over 35,000 acres for forest restoration treatments on private, public, state and tribal lands that are located within both the upland ponderosa pine, pinon, and juniper watersheds, and in the lower elevation riparian ones. Claunch-Pinto SWCD and their partners are committed to successful restoration treatments aimed at improving watershed health and mitigating the extreme risk of wildfire.
3093	Grazing Management and Non-Lethal Predator Risk Mitigation in NM and AZ	Western Landowners Alliance		NM, AZ	: \$6,665,854.00	The goal of the project is to reduce the financial and social burden of recovering predator populations on livestock operations by increasing access to conservation activities relevant to rangeland livestock production. Locally-delivered outreach and TA in partnership with NRCS will advance adoption of climate-smart grazing management systems that incorporate non-lethal risk management strategies, addressing multiple threats to sustained livestock production.

Deadlines



Program/Initiative	RCPP #	Application Deadline	Ranking	100% Obligation
2018 RCPP- San Juan Phreatophyte Removal	1893	November 8, 2024	March 14, 2025	May 30, 2025
2018 RCPP- Eastern NM Grasslands	1905	November 8, 2024	March 14, 2025	May 30, 2025
2018 New Mexico Ogallala Preservation & Conservation	2553	November 8, 2024	March 14, 2025	May 30, 2025
2018 Grazing Management and Non-Lethal Predator Risk Mitigation in NM and AZ	3093	TBA	TBA	TBA

Balances

Project Title	Lead Partner	Funding Amount	FA Balance
1893 -San Juan Non-Native Phreatophyte Removal Program	San Juan SWCD	\$1,042,208	\$156,784.00
1905 - Eastern New Mexico Prairie Grassland Initiative	NMACD	\$2,025,974	\$217,039.00
2127- NM Restoration Initiative for Rangeland, Forestland, and Wildlife on Ranches with Federal Lands	NMACD	\$2,800,000	\$95,106.00
2137- North Central NM Watershed Restoration Project	Claunch-Pinto SWCD	\$1,781,286	\$23,719.80
2553 - New Mexico Ogallala Preservation & Conservation	NMACD	\$6,911,311 (Easements)	\$4,295,727.89
		\$2,184,900 (Land Management)	\$843,628.89
2764 - Establishment of Grasslands Strongholds across the Southern High Plains	NMLC	\$1,110,000	\$0.00
2679 - North Central NM Watershed Restoration Project	Claunch-Pinto SWCD	\$717,413	\$7,375.74
3093 - Grazing Management and Non-Lethal Predator Risk Mitigation in NM and AZ	Western Landowners Alliance	\$6,665,854.00	\$2,500,000.00
3503 - Tribal Buffalo Restoration in the Southwest Region	Intertribal Buffalo Council	\$21,250,000.00	\$5,000,000.00

Project #	Project Title	Lead Partner	Lead State	Funding Amount	Summary
3503	Tribal Buffalo Restoration in the Southwest Region	Intertribal Buffalo Council	NM, AZ, CO, UT	\$21,250,000.00	The Inter Tribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) will support the management and restoration of buffalo to member Tribes in the Southwest region, including the states of Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. Land management improvements implemented through this project will result in restoring native grasslands and creating a more climate-resilient landscape dedicated to and sustained by buffalo. The primary goal of this project is to provide an opportunity for Tribal communities to play a key role in reducing the impacts of climate change through buffalo, which sustained humans and ecosystems in North America for millennia.
4157	Navajo Nation Tribal Ranch Water Distribution Installations	NN Department of Agriculture	NM	\$25,000,000.00	To address the following resource concerns and priority areas: (1) Climate-smart agriculture; (2) Meaningfully and measurably engage with and benefit historically underserved (HU) ranchers; (3) Livestock Production Limitation; (4) Source Water Depletion; (5) Insufficient water/drought; (6) Water quality degradation; and (7) Long-term protection of the land. In order to achieve this goal, Navajo Nation intends to complete the following objectives: (1) Install Remote Well Solutions (RWS) water distribution technology systems to upgrade 7 existing wells on tribal ranches per year for a total of 35 tribal ranches over five years; (2) Conduct cattle and range health assessments, and economic and environmental impact analysis through technical assistance partners at New Mexico State University to optimize carrying capacities and quantify the economic, environmental, and social benefits of the project; (3) Conduct water quality assessments through technical assistance partners at Sandia National Laboratories to ensure adequate water livestock quality; and (4) Conduct outreach and support for land management contracts through technical assistance partners at Navajo Tech University.

QUESTIONS





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Watershed Programs Update

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The “NRCS Watershed Umbrella”

WFPO

- Watershed & Flood Prevention Operations Program
- Helps units of Federal, State, and Tribal Governments (project sponsors) to protect and restore watersheds

Rehab

- Rehabilitation Program
- Helps project sponsors rehabilitate aging dams that are reaching the end of their design life and/or no longer meet Federal or State Safety Criteria or performance standards

EWP

- Emergency Watershed Protection Program
- Helps people reduce imminent hazards to life and property threatened by excessive erosion and flooding caused by a natural disaster



Watershed vs. Farm Bill Programs

- Agreements are with Local Sponsor Authorities rather than an individual landowner.
- Viable Sponsors can include:
 - Any entity legally organized under state law
 - State
 - County
 - Town
 - Soil and Water Conservation District
 - Natural Resources District
 - Irrigation Districts
 - Any Indian Tribe organization

Sponsor Responsibilities

- At least one Project Sponsor must have the authority and be willing to provide the following functions:
 - Power of Eminent Domain
 - Acquire Real Property Rights and/or Easements
 - Authority to Levy Taxes
 - Acquire Permits and Licenses
 - Implement Land Treatment above Reservoirs
 - Operation and Maintenance: must Fund, Operate, and Maintain Features Installed as Part of the Project
 - Watershed Management
 - Public participation



What Type of Project Qualifies?

- **Rehab** – Modify an existing NRCS-constructed dam to meet current Federal and State Dam Safety Standards

- **WFPO** – More “Generic” Purposes
 - Flood Prevention
 - Watershed Protection
 - Agricultural Water Management
 - Municipal and Industrial Water Supply
 - Water Quality Management
 - Public Fish and Wildlife
 - Public Recreation

Active Watershed Projects

■ Rehab (6 Total)

- Santa Cruz Dam Sites 1 & 4
- Tortugas Dam Site 1
- Upper Rio Penasco Dam Sites 1, 2, & 3A

■ WFPO (4 Total)

- (CO) Marble Wash-San Juan River
- Belen Watershed
- Rincon Arroyo Watershed
- Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Burn Scar



WFPO - PIFRs

1 (CO) Marble Wash-San Juan River

WFPO Planning - EAs

2 Belen Watershed

3 Rincon Arroyo Watershed

WFPO Planning - EISs

4 HPCC Burn Scar

WFPO Design

WFPO Construction

Rehab - Assessments/Inspections

5 Santa Cruz Site 4

Rehab Planning - EAs

6 Tortugas Site 1

7 Upper Rio Penasco Site 1

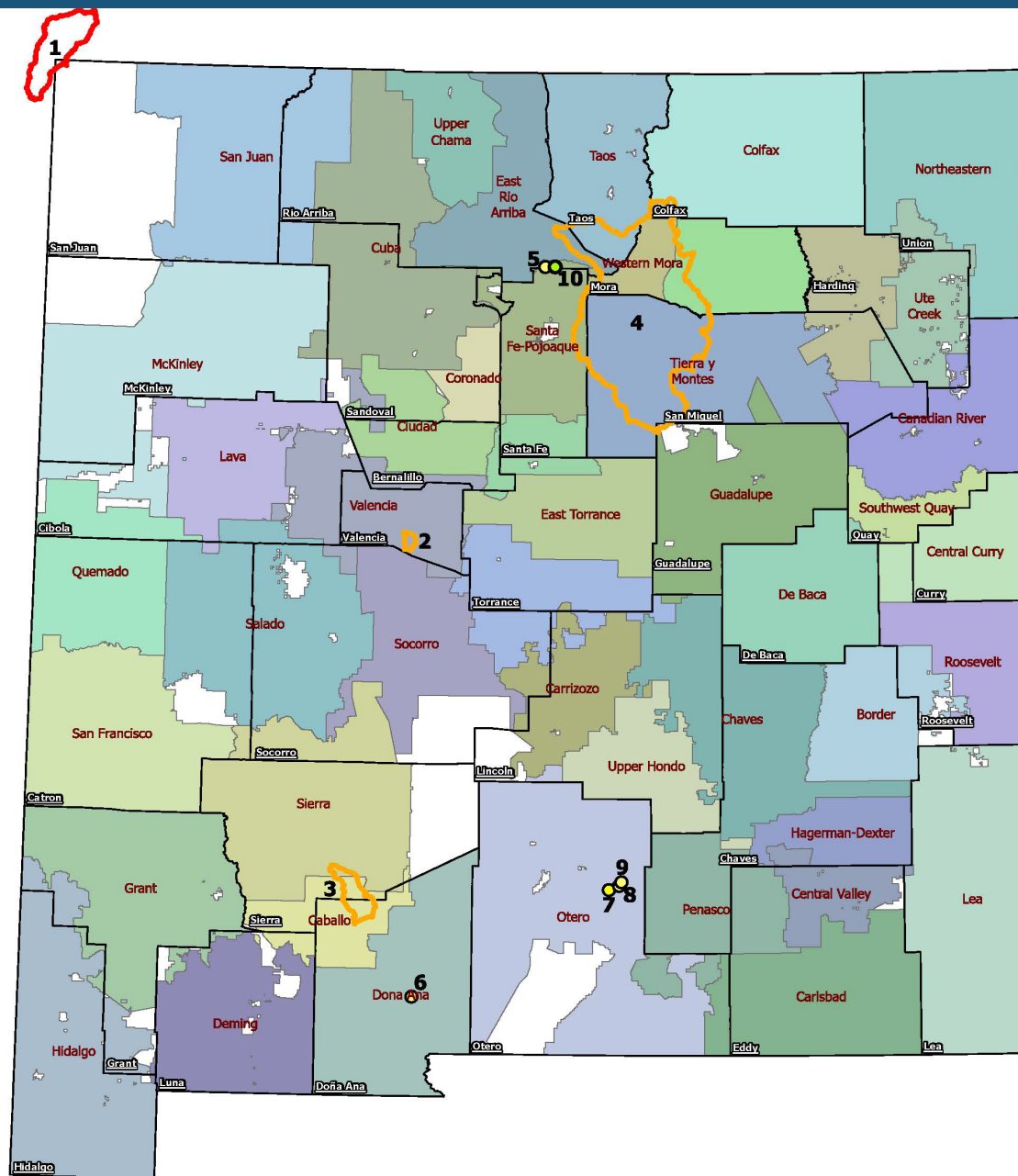
8 Upper Rio Penasco Site 2

9 Upper Rio Penasco Site 3A

Rehab Design

10 Santa Cruz Site 1

Rehab Construction



Project-Specific Updates (Rehab)

■ Santa Cruz Dam Site 1

- 30% Designs are underway.
- Working with Sponsor on land rights and permitting needs.
- Completion date is scheduled for late Summer of 2025
 - Due to funding shortages, construction will likely not take place until 2026 or 2027

■ Santa Cruz Dam Site 4

- Engineering team is working on the Dam Inspection Report
- Completion date is scheduled for Summer of 2025



Project-Specific Updates (Rehab)

■ Tortugas Dam Site 1

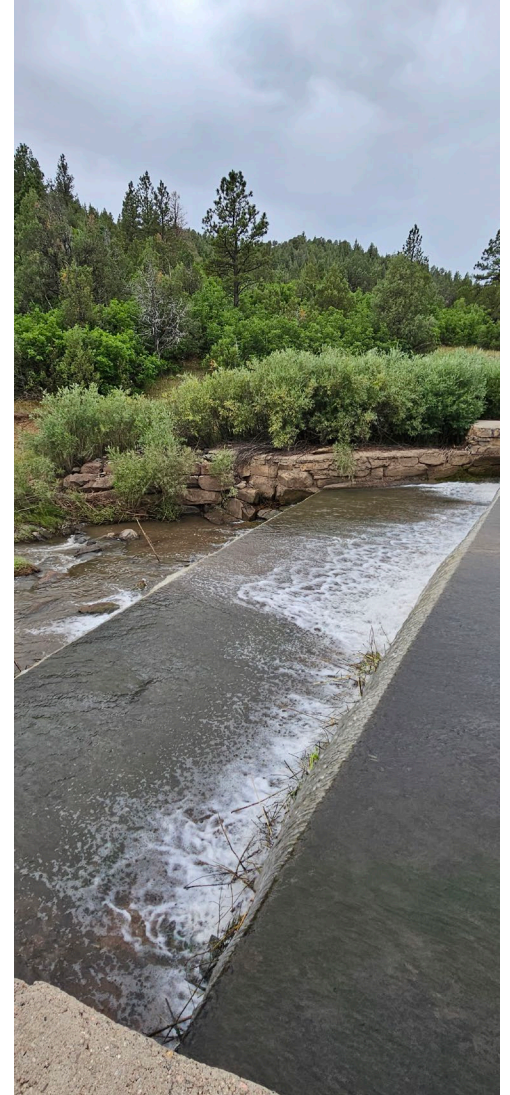
- Completed initial Scoping Meetings with public and other agencies.
- Contractor is working on evaluating existing conditions.
- Completion date is scheduled for Spring of 2027.

■ Upper Rio Penasco Dam Sites 1, 2, & 3A

- Completed initial Scoping Meetings with public and other agencies.
- Contractor is working on evaluating existing conditions.
- Completion date is scheduled for Spring of 2027.

Project-Specific Updates (WFPO)

- **(CO) Marble Wash – San Juan River**
 - NRCS-CO is leading planning efforts, but we have not received an update from them.
- **Belen Watershed**
 - Have identified a diversion channel as the preferred alternative to reduce flooding in the area.
 - Due to economics, the alternative is not considered feasible. Other options are being explored, but if no other solutions can be identified project will likely be terminated.
 - Completion date is scheduled for September 2025.



Project-Specific Updates

■ Rincon Arroyo Watershed

- Contractor is continuing to work on identifying preferred alternative.
- Currently completion date is scheduled for April 2025
 - Upon approval of a no-cost time extension, new completion date will become December 2025.

■ Hermit's Peak & Calf Canyon Burn Scar

- Completed initial Scoping Meetings with public and other agencies.
- Contractor is working on evaluating existing conditions.
- Completion date is scheduled for Fall of 2026.



Watershed Program Expectations for FY25

- The WFPO and Rehab Programs are viewed in the USDA Budget Summary as “Discretionary Programs”
 - Because of this, funds are never guaranteed and fluctuate exponentially over time
 - **As currently stated in the Continuing Resolution, the WFPO Program has a \$14.6 million national budget for FY25 and the Rehab Program has \$0.**
- As funding allows, these are the goals for the upcoming years:
 - Funding of 18 new dam assessments
 - Funding of 1 new Rehab Plan
 - Funding for design phase of 2 active WFPO Projects
 - Funding for construction phase for 1 active Rehab Project
 - Bring on new projects as Sponsors submit new requests

Questions????

- Watershed POCs
 - Elias Gnann – State Conservation Engineer
 - *Email:* elias.gnann@usda.gov
 - *Phone:* (505) 761-4490
 - Merceidez Fabok – Watershed Program Manger
 - *Email:* merceidez.fabok@usda.gov
 - *Phone:* (505) 761-4421





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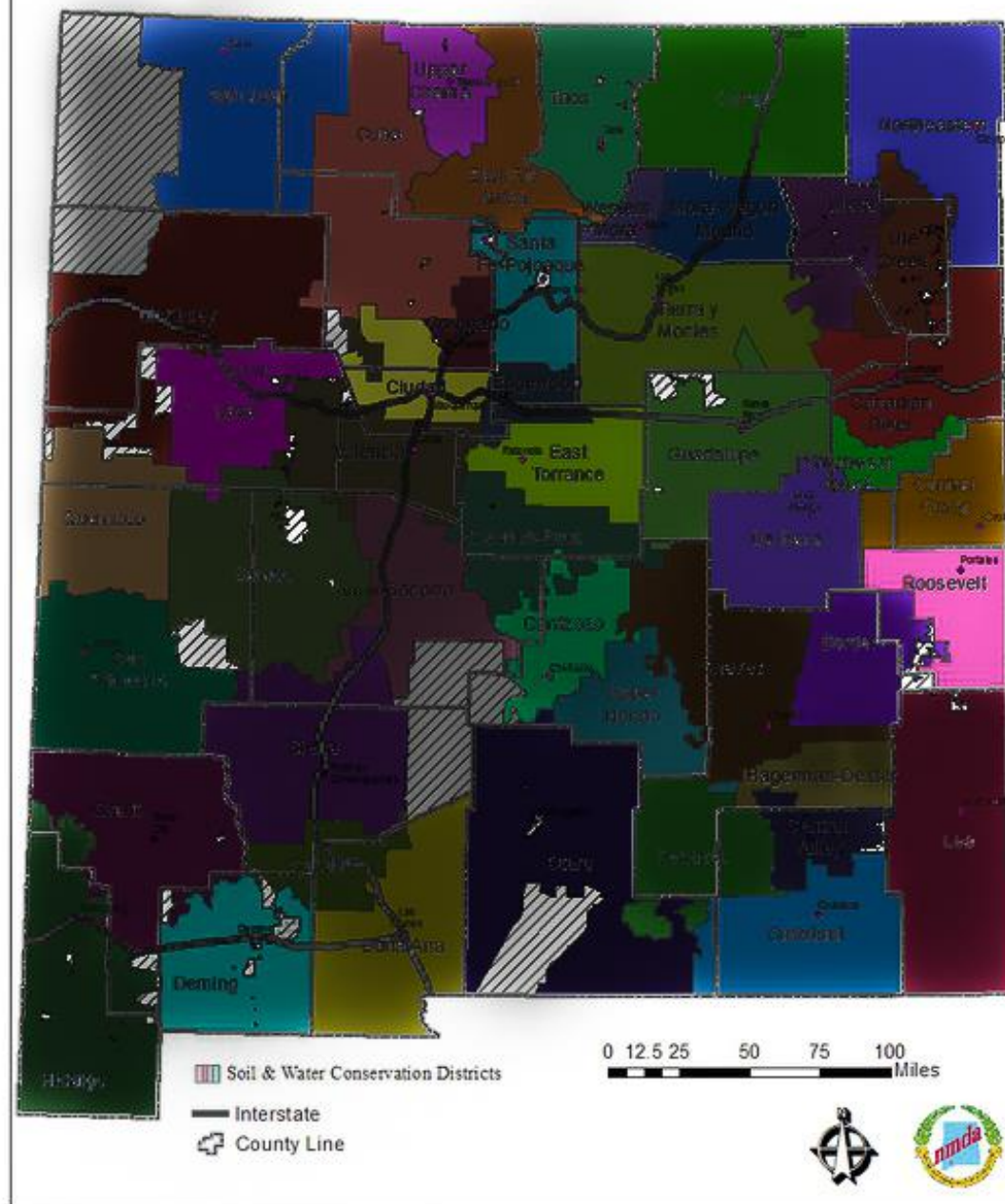


SHADE BALLS

Roosevelt Soil and Water Conservation District



New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Districts







What is a “Shade Ball”?

- The shade balls are HDPE (high-density polyethylene)
- 4 inches in diameter
- UV-stable
- Water-filled.

Benefits of Shade Balls

- Evaporation
- Water Quality
- Ice



WATERING FACILITY EVAPORATION LOSSES

Sept. 30, 2015 – Sept. 4, 2018

GALLONS LOST WITH SHADE BALLS

GALLONS LOST WITH OUT SHADE
BALLS

7.5' drinker

20' drinker

7.5' drinker

20' drinker

2,622.75

19,771.50

10,767.25

81,168.5

Water Quality



Sept. 30, 2015

- Reduce algae
- Reduce debris and weeds



Dec. 10, 2015

DRINKER SIZE (diameter in feet)	SURFACE AREA (square feet)	NUMBER OF SHADE BALLS REQUIRED (10/ft ²)
8	50.27	503
10	78.54	785
12	113.10	1131
14	153.94	1539
16	201.06	2011
19.1	286.52	2865
20	314.16	3142
24	452.16	4525
25	490.87	4909
30	706.86	7069







**Roosevelt Soil & Water
Conservation District**

Shade Ball

Water Conservation Project



New Mexico State Technical Committee Meeting

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Program Objective

- **Assist owners and operators in conserving and improving the nation's natural resource base.**
- **Cost share is offered for eligible practices**
- **Cost share rates include the cost of any factors necessary to perform the practice**



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CRP Programs

- **General CRP**
- **Continuous CRP**
 - Regular CRP
 - Highly Erodible Land Initiative (HELI) CRP
 - State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) CRP
 - Grasslands CRP



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CRP Programs

General

- contracts with producers
- FSA provides annual rental payments and cost-share assistance.
- Contract duration is 10 years.

■



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CRP Programs

- **Continuous**
 - Regular



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CRP Programs

- **Continuous**
 - Highly Erodible Land Initiative



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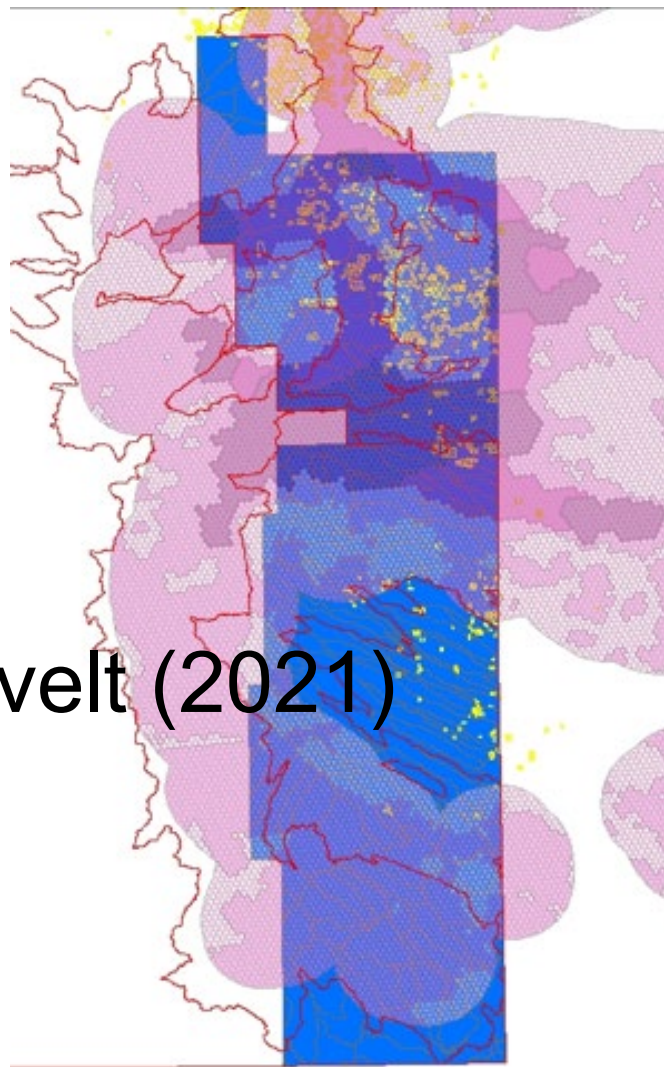
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CRP Programs

- **Continuous**

- **SAFE**

- Lea (2007)
- Lea & Roosevelt (2021)



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CRP Programs

- **Continuous**
 - Grasslands



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CRP Programs

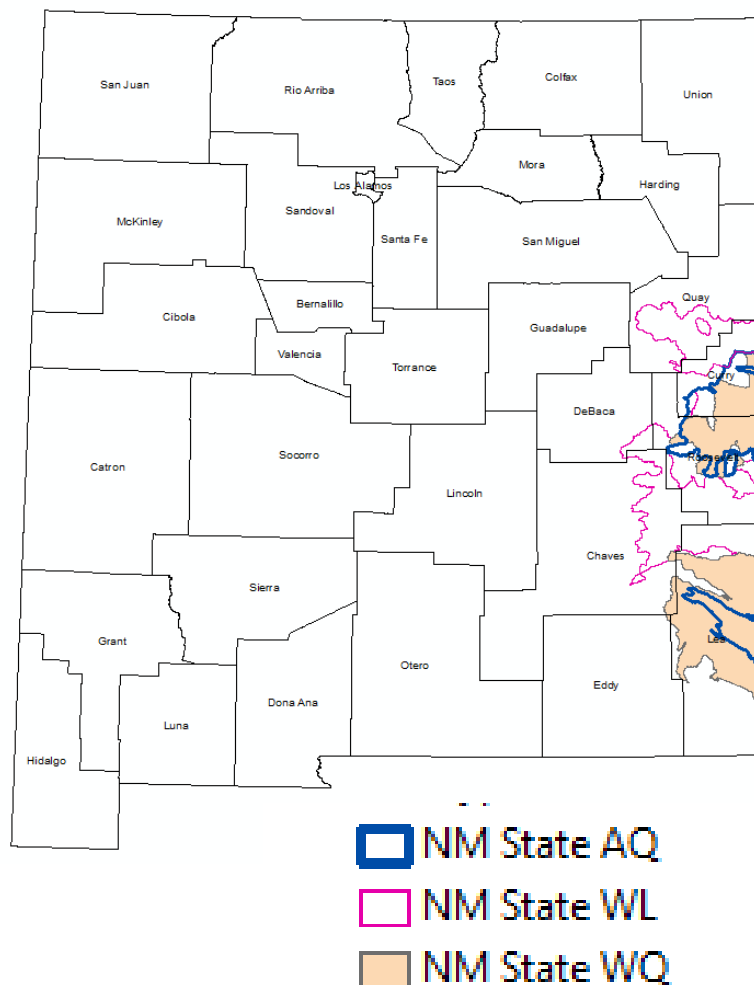
- Summary of Activity

Admin County	Contract Acreage by Signup Sub Category				
	Continuous - REGULAR	General - REGULAR	Grasslands	HEL	SAFE
Chaves			8,673.14		
Colfax			29,813.20		
Curry		51,985.75	133,132.70	30,065.37	
De Baca		313.32	115,388.37		
Guadalupe			41,543.71		
Harding	158.96	1,257.47	54,933.47	1,081.92	
Hidalgo			6,985.41		
Lea		2,615.38	429.20	645.59	4,136.74
Mora			22,630.69		
Quay		19,056.38	191,131.74	15,490.37	
Roosevelt		32,179.69	102,047.81	40,408.52	
San Miguel			21,164.11		
Santa Fe			9,711.20		
Socorro			9,102.70		
Torrance		1,469.92	112,554.80		
Union		7,007.06	146,293.94		
Grand Total	158.96	115,884.97	1,005,536.19	87,691.77	4,136.74



Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs)

- **National CPA**
- **State CPA (Zone)**



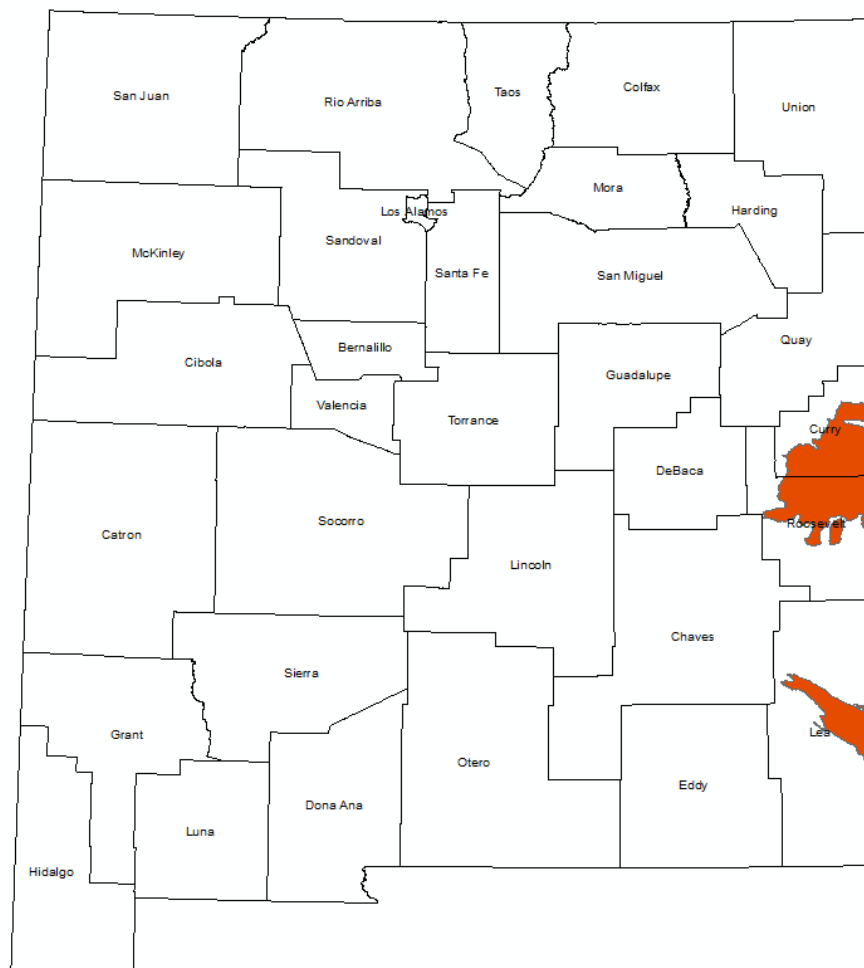
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Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs)

- State CPAs**

Air Quality (AQ) CPA



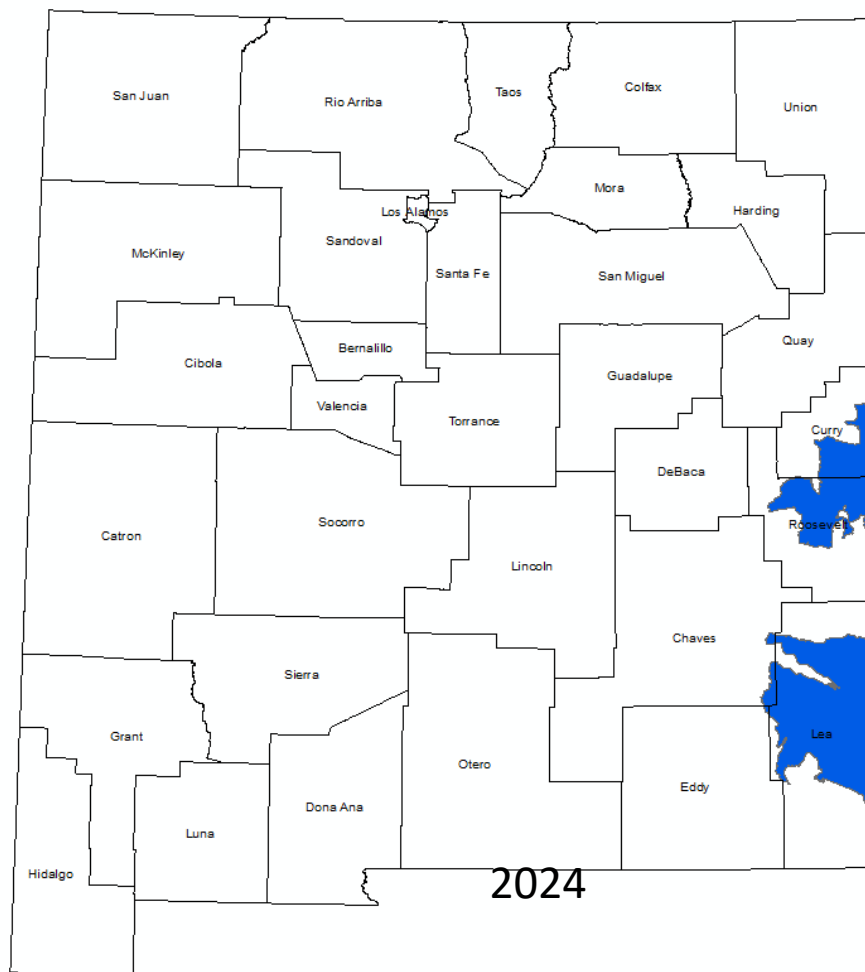
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Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs)

- State CPAs**

Water Quality (WQ)



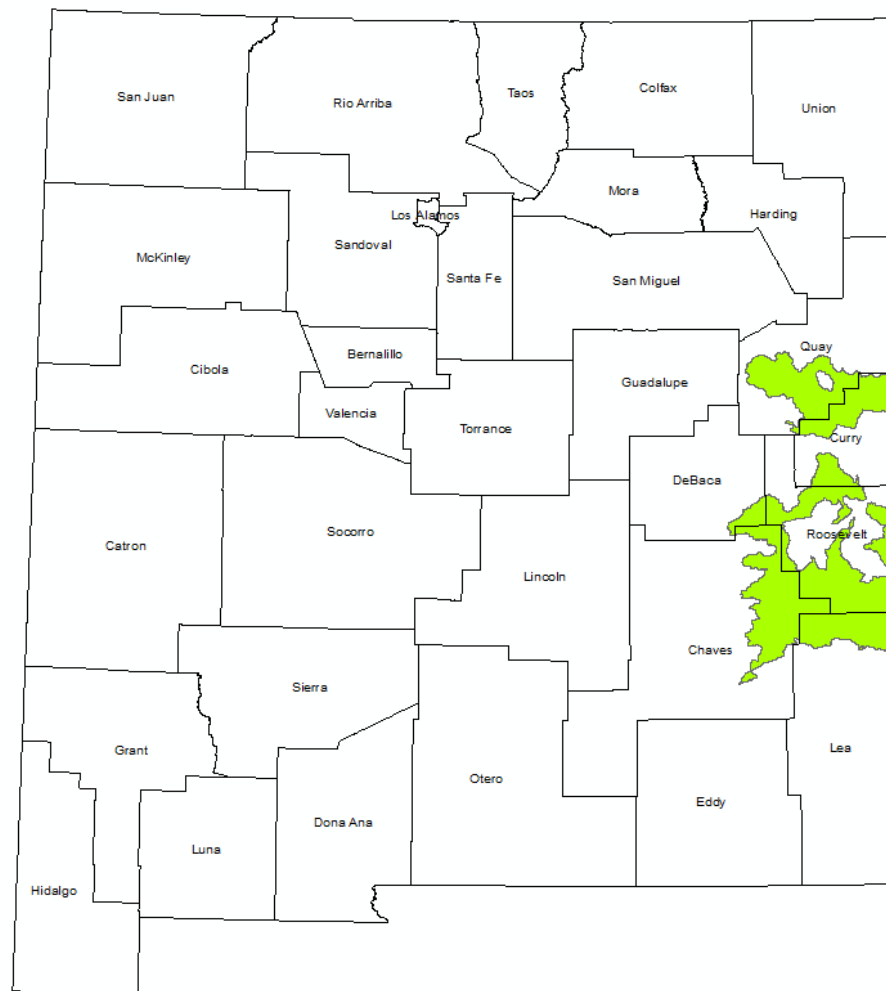
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Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs)

- State CPAs**

Wildlife (WL) CPA

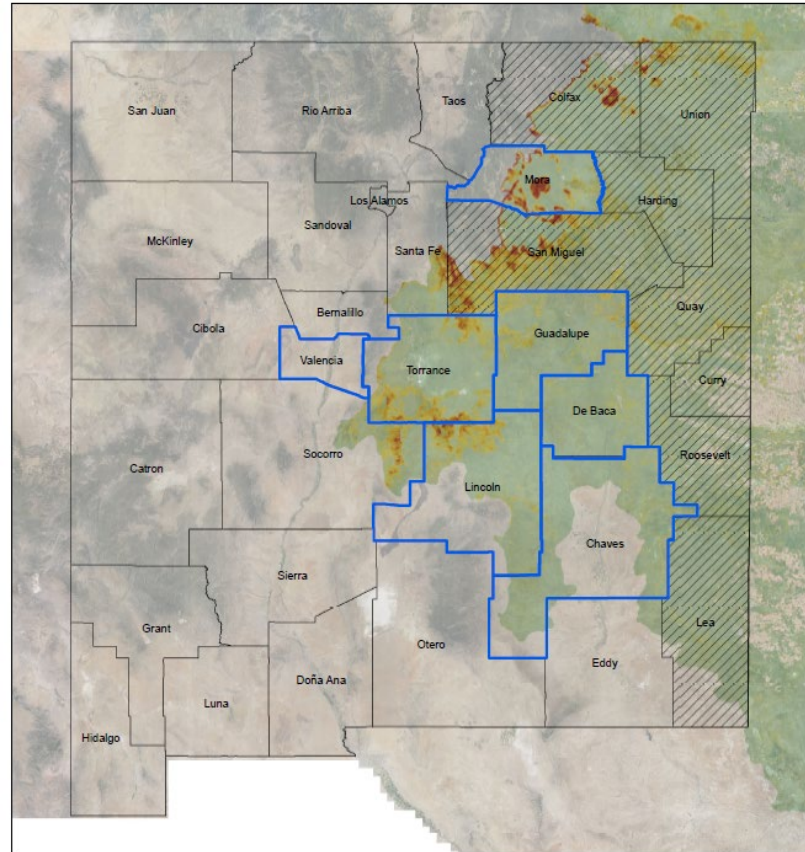


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Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs)

- **State
CPA
Grassland
Zone**



Legend

- 2024 State Grasslands CRP CPA
- CRP Grassland Nat. Priority Zone, Dust Bowl
- County Boundary



**Farm
Service
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Thank you!

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