



UPPER HONDO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Fall 2023 Edition

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WHO WE ARE

About Us:

The Upper Hondo Soil & Water Conservation District was created in July 1941. We are a governmental subdivision of the state of New Mexico. Today we consist of 1,073,426 acres primarily in Lincoln County and some in Chaves County.

What We Do:

We educate and inform the public on programs available to them for soil and water conservation practices as well as noxious weed eradication. We offer cost share plans for those who qualify in the areas of brush control, erosion control, pipelines, dirt tanks, cross-fencing and rainwater harvesting (to name a few).

For more information about our programs, contact us at:

Phone: (575)354-2220

Email: upperhondo@uhswcd.com

Web: uhswcd.com

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings are held at the office, 267 Main Road, Capitan, NM, on the second Tuesday of each month@ 1pm



Photo by: msummerfieldimages

Did you know?

Surface water (rivers, lakes and streams) in New Mexico originate as rain or melting snow, but over 95% of that water evaporates or is transpired by plants. Most of New Mexico's fresh water is stored as groundwater in aquifers or confining layers below the land surface, where it occupies small open spaces between sand or gravel and small fractures in rock.

RIO RUIDOSO WATERSHED RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Figure 1 (Above) Fallen cottonwood blocking flow of the river in San Patricio, NM.

The Rio Ruidoso Restoration and Management Agreement is a riparian restoration program along the Rio Ruidoso River in Lincoln County. This program benefits individuals who own land and have been affected by flooding, high winds, erosion, or fire that has caused damage to watersheds, acequias, the Rio Ruidoso or surrounding area.

Qualifying projects to be eligible for this program will:

- | |
|---|
| - Promote a healthier river through the removal of invasive species |
| - Prevent/Control soil erosion |
| - Reduce current and future damage from flooding events |
| - Clear debris that may slow or prevent proper flow of water |

***If you would like to know more, contact Upper Hondo SWCD.
You may qualify for assistance.***

RAINWATER HARVESTING



Is it Legal?

In New Mexico, **YES, it is legal to harvest rainwater for personal use.** However, it is not legal to sell harvested rainwater or to use it for commercial purposes without a permit. There are no state-wide regulations on rainwater harvesting, so each county and city may have its own rules.

What are the Benefits?



How Much Water Can You Collect?

Use the following formula to calculate the total amount of water collected through rainwater harvesting system:

$$\text{Catchment area (roof size in square feet)} \times \text{Inches of Annual rainfall (12-15 in Lincoln County)} \times \text{Conversion factor (0.65)} = \text{Collection Potential in Gallons/Year}$$

Rainwater harvesting is the collection and storage of rain, rather than allowing it to run off. Rainwater is collected from a roof-like surface and redirected to a tank, cistern, aquifer, or a reservoir. This water can be used for gardens, livestock, irrigation, or domestic use (with proper treatment). The harvested water can also be committed to longer-term storage or groundwater recharge. Rainwater harvesting is one of the simplest and oldest methods of self-supply of water for households.

Upper Hondo Offers a Rainwater Harvesting Cost Share Program! Call our office or stop by for more information.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START CONSERVATION PLANNING!

Every farm or ranch has its own unique resource problems or concerns. Whether it's a large-scale ranching operation or a small hobby farm, conservation planning is an important first step that owners and operators can take to meet their land management goals. At your request, certified conservation planners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and local conservation districts can provide planning and financial assistance to help producers identify options that provide the greatest conservation benefit while meeting production goals. The Environmental Incentive Conservation Program (EQIP) offers financial and technical assistance to help eligible producers install structural & management practices on agricultural and forest land uses. Participants can apply for these programs on a continuous basis, but they're considered for funding in different ranking periods. Be sure to ask your local NRCS office about the sign-up and ranking deadlines.

An update from our partners...

NRCS New Mexico Receives \$7,074,548 for Inflation Reduction Act Funding for Climate-Smart Agriculture

Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry – Inflation Reduction Act (CSAF-IRA): The Inflation Reduction Act provides additional funds to NRCS specifically to address climate change mitigation through activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon storage using a scientifically identified sub-set of practices. The benefits are two-fold: producers improve the health, productivity, resiliency, and profitability of their operations while mitigating the impacts of climate change for our nation.

About the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)



“The Inflation Reduction Act provided a once-in-a-generation investment in conservation on working lands, and we want to work with agricultural and forest landowners to invest in climate-smart practices that create value and economic opportunity for producers,” said Vilsack. “We know that agriculture plays a critical role in the nation’s effort to address climate change, we’re using this funding to bolster our existing programs, maximize climate benefits, and foster other environmental benefits across the landscape.”

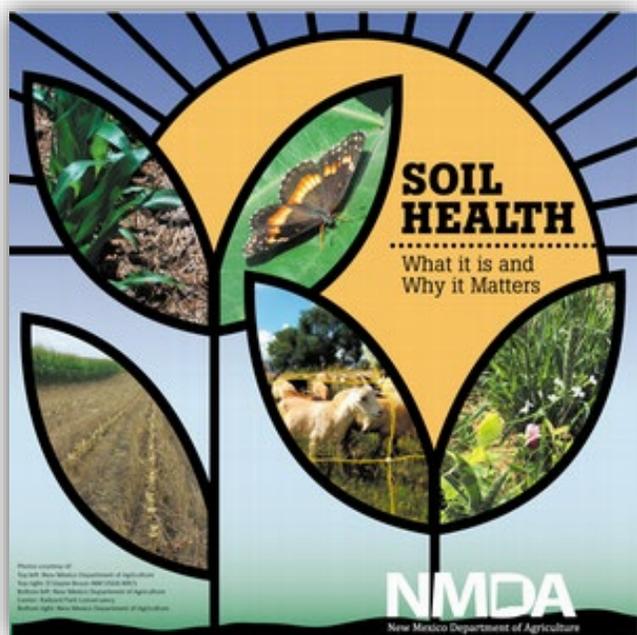
The IRA funding includes an additional \$8.45 billion for EQIP, \$4.95 billion for RCPP, \$3.25 billion for CSP, and \$1.4 billion for ACEP. The increased funding levels begin in fiscal year 2023 and rapidly build over four years. These additional investments are estimated to help hundreds of thousands of farmers and ranchers apply conservation to millions of acres of land. Additionally, the IRA provides \$300 million to quantify carbon sequestration and greenhouse gases (GHG) through the collection and use of field-based data to assess conservation outcomes. Information gained through this effort will be used to improve practices and technical assistance to customers. Further guidance on this important work will be provided as the implementation of this portion of the IRA continues.

These funds will provide direct climate mitigation benefits and will expand access to financial and technical assistance for producers to advance conservation on their farm, ranch or forest land through practices like cover cropping, conservation tillage, wetland restoration, prescribed grazing, nutrient management, tree planting and more. In administering the Inflation Reduction Act climate investments, USDA will also support other environmental co-benefits, including – among other things – water conservation, wildlife habitat improvements, and reducing runoff.

(Article Provided by: www.nrcs.usda.gov)

NMDA'S HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM

Grants to improve soil health are the centerpiece of NMDA's Healthy Soil Program. Every year, NMDA awards grants to implement on-the-ground projects that involve one or more of the five soil health principles, stated as follows in the legislative Act that created the program:



1. Keeping soil covered
2. Minimizing soil disturbance on cropland and minimizing external inputs
3. Maximizing biodiversity
4. Maintaining a living root
5. Integrating animals into land management, including grazing animals, birds, beneficial insects or keystone species, such as earthworms

NMDA welcomes applications for Healthy Soil Program grants from 2 types of applicants:

1. Eligible Entities, defined in the Healthy Soil Act as "local governmental [entities] with proven land management capacity to support healthy soil", including:
Pueblos, tribes, and nations; Acequias; Land grants ; Soil and water conservation districts; (SWCDs) ; NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service ; Other local governmental entities with "proven land management to support healthy soil"
2. Individual Applicants, a category that includes individuals, businesses, and nonprofits directly engaged in farming, ranching, and/or other forms of land management. Learn about the Fiscal Year 2025 application requirements unique to Individual Applicants.

The application process for Individual Applicants starts by completing conservation planning with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). NMDA is teaming up with NRCS to host a webinar about their conservation planning process, particularly as it relates to NMDA's Healthy Soil Program.

For more information about the program visit: nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program.html

FUN FACT: Soils store more carbon than the atmosphere, and all the world's plants and forests combined!

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

LINCOLN COUNTY FAIR

Upper Hondo & Carrizozo SWCD participated in the Lincoln County Fair in August. This was a great opportunity to reach out to the community and educate youth about local natural resource issues that affect our area. Participants were able to learn about cost share projects, noxious weeds, and even take-home grass seed samples. Prizes were given to youth of all ages who correctly answered trivia questions concerning the water cycle, erosion and conservation friendly practices. District members, youth and parents thoroughly enjoyed this exhibit.



NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

NPLD is the nation's largest, single-day volunteer event for public lands. Since 1994, National Public Lands Day has brought together hundreds of thousands of volunteers to help restore America's public lands.

In September, Upper Hondo SWCD, teamed up with the Bureau of Land Management and Girl Scouts to celebrate National Public Lands Day. The girl scouts assisted in planting 6 cottonless cottonwoods in Rob Jagers Campground at Fort Stanton's National Conservation Area. They also planted native seeds along the Rio Bonito River. This joint effort will be enjoyed by future generations to come! Well done, Girls!!!



“What you do makes a difference, you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

- Jane Goodall
