



# **NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

## **2024 Annual Report**

Debbie Hughes  
Executive Director



Kandy Hutchins, Vice President; Josh Smith, President; Lisa Runyan, Sec-Treas.

## Current NMACD Board of Directors

**President**

**Josh Smith**

**Vice President**

**Kandy Hutchins**

**Secretary-Treasurer**

**Lisa Runyan**

**Region 1 Chair**

**Julian Sanchez**

**Region 2 Chair**

**Joseph Salazar**

**Region 3 Chair**

**Dusty Hunt**

**Region 4 Chair**

**Andy Yates**

**Region 5 Chair**

**Kendell Buzard**

**Region 6 Chair**

**Colt Howland**

**Region 1 Vice Chair**

**Lynn Montgomery**

**Region 2 Vice Chair**

**Christina Estrada**

**Region 3 Vice Chair**

**Russell Woolf**

**Region 4 Vice Chair**

**Phillip Trujillo**

**Region 5 Vice Chair**

**Kendell Buzard**

**Region 6 Vice Chair**

**vacant**

## NMACD Staff

Executive Director  
Executive Assistant  
Program Manager  
Business Manager  
Business Manager  
Business Assistant  
Project Manager  
Project Manager  
Project Manager  
Project Manager  
Project Manager  
Project Manager  
Administrative Coordinator  
Administrative Coordinator

Debbie Hughes  
Rebecca Dow  
Troy Hood  
Ken Leiting  
Beverly Schrock  
Cathy Ellsworth  
Norman Vigil  
Kenny Walker  
Steve Kadas  
Don Ellsworth  
Jesse Juen  
Donald Griego  
Joe Grainey  
Linda Hood



Josh with Astor Boozer & fellow board member

NMACD is very well represented at the National Association of Conservation District meetings. Willard served as NACD Board Delegate, and Kandy was Alternate Board Delegate. Josh serves as the SW Region Chair and was a member of the Next Generation Leadership Group. Josh Smith also represents the SW on the NACD Executive Board.

## NMACD Annual Report ~ October 2024

**NMACD WORKED VERY HARD WITH PARTNERS TO FUND THE NEW MEXICO LAND OF ENCHANTMENT LEGACY FUND for 300 million Dollars ON BEHALF OF NEW MEXICO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS.**



The 30-day Legislative session was very successful because NMACD was able to secure an appropriation for 2.5 million to help districts with staffing THANKS TO Representative Gail Armstrong, Representative Nathan Small and Representative Jack Chatfield.

**NMACD IS VERY ACTIVE AT THE STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL WORKING WITH CONGRESS ON THE FARM BILL AND OTHER NATIONAL POLICY AND FUNDING ISSUES FOR DISTRICTS IN NEW MEXICO.**





## NMACD Annual Report ~ October 2024

### NMACD SUPPORTS SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROJECTS THROUGH PUBLIC INFORMATION AND INFORMATION SHARING.

Maintains active website: [nmacd.org](http://nmacd.org)

NMACD Directory is updated regularly and posted on the NMACD website.

List of District Supervisors and Employees who have taken the District Supervisor Certification Training is maintained.

We are active on social media sites including Facebook and Instagram.

NMACD Conference is held annually to share information and training.

Provides regular updates regarding Legislative activities

Three regional meetings were held with information and training on Grants and Funding Sources.

### NMACD CONTINUES TO WORK WITH LOCAL DISTRICTS AND PARTNERS TO IMPROVE INFORMATION AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

**ENVIROTHON**



The New Mexico Envirothon continues to be supported by NMACD. This includes financial support and judges for the contest.

17<sup>th</sup> Annual NM Envirothon took place in Cloudcroft, NM, April 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## NMACD Annual Report ~ October 2024

Nestled in the Lincoln National Forest, 10 teams applied the 5 topics (aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife) to this year's Special Topic, "Renewable Energy for a Sustainable Future."

Congratulations to the first place winning Scat Cats from Truth or Consequences!! For the 12<sup>th</sup> time in 12 years, the Scat Cats, Hot Springs High's Envirothon team has taken the state championship. The team from Navajo Prep in Farmington was second followed by Los Lobos from Aldo Leopold Charter School in Silver City. Many of our teams brought the heat, including our newcomers to the competition, McKinley Academy! The 2024 NCF-Envirothon Competition will be held at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY, July 28 - August 3, 2024.



**Legislators at NMACD Conference- ALL CONSERVATION !**



## COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS WORKING ON CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES



A special thank you to all the SWCDs and RC&D that set up booths in Santa Fe!  
We could only show a few of them here.



Peter with Rep. Chatfield



Coronado SWCD



Ciudad SWCD



East Rio Arriba



Mesa & Ute Creek



Guadalupe SWCD



Taos SWCD



Soil and Water Conservation District Employee  
and Partner Luncheon



Lava SWCD



NM RC&D



Border & Roosevelt SWCDs

## NMACD OPERATIONS

**Ken Leiting** reports NMACD continues to use the Payday iSolve HCM program to manage Farm Bill, TSP and Vendor bills, payments to SWCDs and for Board members' travel. All bills are paid through Payday, except for those on Credit Card, and Bank Checks. The 1099 reports are generated by Payday. Ken Leiting, Beverly Schrock, and Cathy Ellsworth process the Payday Timecards and bills from contractors monthly. Linda Hood processes Farm Bill Bi-Weekly Payroll for employees and develops and submits NMACD monthly invoices to NMDA for reimbursement.



## NMACD Annual Report ~ October 2024

The new system to electronically move information from Payday iSolve to NMACD QuickBooks is working well. This allows for more information to be recorded in QuickBooks and provides additional reports. A new accounting firm, Daniel Anderson CPA PC, is helping with bank reconciliation and QuickBooks entries.

The SharePoint software has become the primary filing system for NMACD records. This includes: All NMACD Organization information; billings and payments; personnel and vendor information; grants, contracts, agreements, correspondence, and financial status. The software is part of Microsoft 365, which resides in the cloud. All Program Managers have access to their home internet systems. Backup software is set up to prevent loss of the files.

### **Linda Hood** reported:

Role with NMACD Employees (The number of employees has increased from 11 and 12 to 26 as of Pay Period 12):

- Provide PayDay's iSolve program and timekeeping training to NMACD employees each time a new employee is hired.
- Continue to verify timecards, review reports, process Farm Bill Bi-Weekly Payroll, travel reimbursements, promotions, and awards; set up new and terminate employees in PayDay.
- Download and save PayDay Quarterly Reports.

District Supervisor and Employee Certification Training (co-lead with Troy Hood)

- Certified since July 1, 2024 - 33 (In-person training)
- Certified through nmacd.org - 4 (On-line training)

We are revising the training to incorporate current NACD requirements, update the module on Funding Sources, Partners and perhaps other modules.

We would like to recognize especially Dean Bruce for presenting part of this training, along with Katie Mechenbier and Katie Kruthaupt.

Other FY 2024 activities:

- Post [nmacd.org](https://nmacd.org) updates (almost monthly) to the NMACD Directory and Record Log; update and try to keep current NMACD activities on our website
- Develop and submit NMACD monthly invoices to NMDA for reimbursement
- Research and provide audit information as needed
- Post records to SharePoint

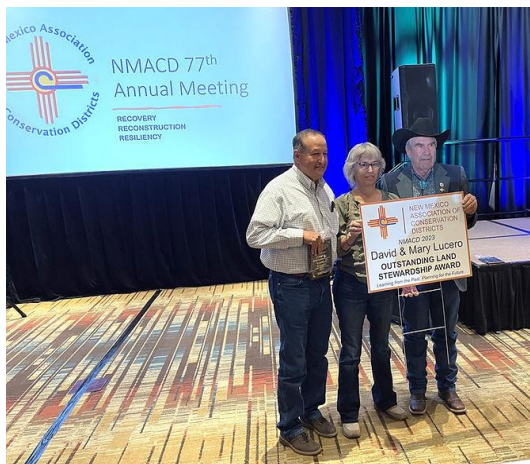
## NMACD Annual Report ~ October 2024

- Developed two spreadsheets, one with Rebecca Dow, to assist with mailings to District Supervisors (surface mail and email). The other developed for mailings to District Managers. These will both need to be kept current.
- Assisted with planning and arrangements for Annual Meeting, set up first District Grant Writing Training in Albuquerque with Troy.
- Edit information as requested.
- Gathered information and presented the 2023 Memorial with Troy during the Annual Meeting.

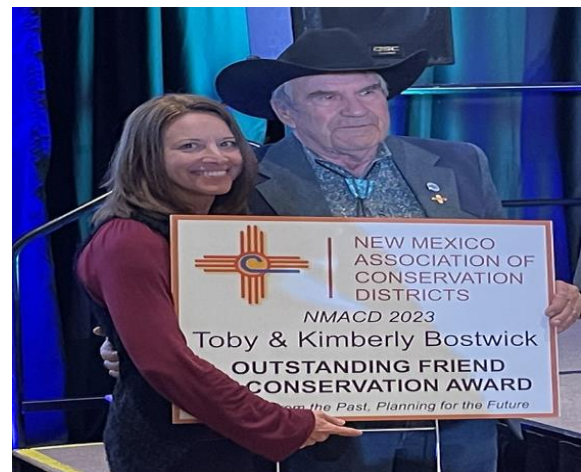
### REPRESENTATION OF SWCDs' NEEDS AND INTERESTS

- NMACD, utilizing the resolution process, represents districts at the state level through policies passed at the state level.
- NMACD board meetings, regional meetings, annual conference, conference calls, web page, social media, newsletters, and email are utilized to communicate activities and attempt to represent district needs and interests.
- NMACD Program Managers coordinate with SWCDs and inform them of current activities regarding funding programs and technical service assistance activities within their individual districts.
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### 2023 NMACD OUTSTANDING ANNUAL AWARDS



David & Mary Lucero  
DeBaca SWCD, Land Stewardship



Toby and Kim Bostwick  
Central Curry SWCD, Outstanding Friend



Valencia SWCD, Outstanding District

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

**NMACD ANNUAL REPORT**  
**TROY HOOD, ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM COORDINATOR**  
**June 30, 2024**

New four-year TSP contract awarded to NMACD on July 1, 2023. Funding amount, \$1,015,468 for Fiscal Year 2024; expect equal amount for FY 2025 + \$1.2 million to be added by NRCS for Inflation Reduction Act.

### NMACD BI-WEEKLY EMPLOYEES

Current staffing plan: 26 employees:

- 11 Team Farm Bill Program Specialists,
- 3 Farm Bill Program Specialists
- 1 Soil Conservationist
- 1 Civil Engineer
- 8 Natural Resources Specialists
- 2 Soil Conservation Technicians



## NMACD Annual Report ~ October 2024

Personnel changes: New hires- 17;

No. separations 5 (Note: 47 previous NMACD employees employed by NRCS; 7 to SWCDs, FSA, FS, RD, etc.)

Fund Balance Estimated 6-30-24 - \$365,700 + FY25 base allocation, \$1,015,468 + \$1.2 million additional from Inflation Reduction Act. See estimated Fund Budget for FY 25.

### DISTRICT CAPACITY PROGRAM EMPLOYEES

Participating SWCD's - 4

Number of employees - 3

District Capacity estimated Fiscal Year 25 budget - \$28,000

### ON-DEMAND INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTORS

Number of contractors - 31 active, conservationists.

Number of archaeology contractors - 11

TSP Program Coordinators - 3

FY 25 On-Demand Contractors Estimated cost: \$250,000

### DISTRICT SUPERVISOR CERTIFICATION TRAINING

Purpose of training program - inform SWCD supervisors of responsibilities, duties, District laws, financial and personnel programs, etc.

Training provided - via in person, classroom style; NMACD website; or Virtual sessions  
Coordinators - Linda Hood; Troy Hood

## **SOIL HEALTH ACTIVITIES**

### **2024 NMACD Project Manager Report**

by Steve Kadas, Project Manager and Soil Health Specialist (July 2, 2024)

#### **NMACD**

**NMACD STATE TRAINING PLAN AND SURVEY:** Developed draft NMACD training plan to support Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Supervisors and Employees.

**SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION AND DISTRICTS:** Providing technical and soil health assistance to the following Conservation Districts and their clients:

- SW Quay SWCD, Guadalupe SWCD, East Rio Arriba SWCD

**New Mexico STAR Program** (Saving Tomorrow's Agricultural Resources)

- Providing support and direction for NMACD's statewide on-the-ground soil health planning and implementation project.
- Serving on the NM STAR Science Committee

**NMDA Healthy Soil Program**

- Provide program support and recommendations to NMDA Healthy Soils Program managers.
- Provided program guidance and program grant application assistance SWCDs.

**Western SARE (USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) Cover Crop Council**

- Serving on the cover crop committee to develop planning tool for NM and Western U.S.

**PARTNERSHIP AND CONTRACT ACTIVITIES**

**NM DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

- Healthy Soil Program - Provided consultation and support to program managers.

**USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)**

- **RCPP - Restore NM:** Managed the NMACD Restore RCPP program by working with NRCS FO and partners to promote and deliver the program.

**NM ACEQUIA ASSOCIATION**

- Provided EWP Technical and program support in organizing the Black Fire EWP project. Coordinating with NRCS to develop project cost estimations and a possible acequia project.

**USDA FOREST SERVICE**

- **Hermits Peak and Cow Calf Fire Restoration** - Provided fire damage assessment surveys as part of a NMACD USFS contract.
- **Grazing Allotment Utilization Surveys** - Performed grazing utilization surveys as part of the NMACD/US Forest Service contract.

**NM STATE LAND OFFICE**

- **Chupadera Mesa Vegetative Assessment Project** - NMACD is assisting the State Land Office (SLO) to assess grass cover, invasive brush (Juniper) and historic brush treatments.

## NMACD Annual Report ~ October 2024



Josh & Jim at NACD Summer Meeting



Josh, Willard & Jim representing NM at NACD

### Report from Jesse Juen

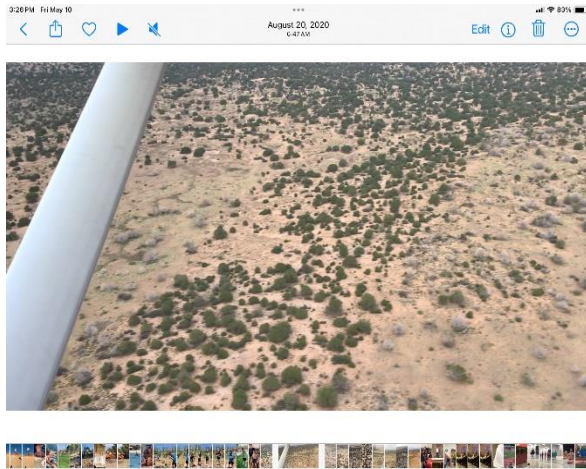
#### NM STATE LAND OFFICE (SLO)

NMACD completed its 2024 agreement with NM State Land Office. Unfortunately, NMSLO had 4 key staff move into new positions including their Range Ecologist and Natural Resource Supervisor. This precluded most of the planned workload as they were hoping to have new staff on to help lead the efforts with NMACD. NMACD completed inventories and data compilation for the White Peaks landscape. Also, brush management efforts have continued and are being led by Greg Alpers for NMSLO.

NM SLO has already requested NMACD to continue work for them (up to \$60,000) for FY 2025. That Agreement has been signed and approved by both organizations. The Purchase order to move forward will be in the beginning of July. Efforts will be focused on brush control and landscape resource management through development of a collaborative RCPP for producers within priority state land areas such as Chupadera Mesa.



## NMACD Annual Report ~ October 2024



Work on pinon/juniper and mesquite

### REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RCPP)

RCPP: Eastern New Mexico Prairie Grasslands Initiative

NRCS awarded one contract in the summer of 2023 and pre-approved 3 contracts in the summer of 2024. These contracts have not been awarded to date. NMACD provided outreach to 5 SWCD's and multiple agency meetings throughout the 2024. In addition, NMACD is working with Playa Lakes Joint Venture on an agreement to assist in landowner outreach to look at current obstacles that preclude producers from applying for RCPP funds within the Eastern New Mexico Prairie Grasslands geography.

### 2024 Acequia Activities

Norman Vigil

#### HPCC Fire

Three reaches on the Acequia de la Sierra de Arriba de Holman have had the debris and silt removed. The first project was completed from the assessments conducted since last June. Acequia de los Romeros del Holman will have the final inspection conducted next week. The diversion dam is 99% complete and lacking only finish work and site cleanup.

Over 75 acequias have been assessed since June of 2023. Eight acequias have been designed and awaiting acequia and or NRCS approval/review.

## NMACD Annual Report ~ October 2024

El Ancon Community Ditch is waiting on one part for the irrigation pump to be installed.

Canoncito Acequia will initiate construction once irrigation season is completed. Working with DFA to amend agreement allowing for soliciting of engineering support.

Working with DFA to develop a State Pricing Agreement for EWP statewide.

### **Acequia RCPP 2024**

Met with potential partners twice to move forward with the RCPP application due July 3, 2024. Solicited support letters from partners identifying FA, TA or in-kind leverage/contributions toward application.

Made contact with Nambe and Santa Clara Pueblo explaining the RCPP proposal and partnership opportunities.



Mesquite Spraying for the Canadian River RCPP

## FORESTRY COORDINATION

Participating Agreement between the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts, NMACD, and the Forest Service, Southwest Region. The agreement is to conduct assessments of fire burned infrastructure on the Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak and Black Fires.

### **2024 Annual Report from Donald Griego**

#### **Santa Fe National Forests, Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak Fires (HPCC)**

A meeting was held in January to discuss the remaining funds on the agreement and to discuss expanding NMACD's assistance with the HPCC fires. The Santa Fe

## NMACD Annual Report ~ October 2024

National Forest requested that NMACD continue working on the allotments for the Forest. The Forest has requested additional information be collected on remaining stubble height for the 14 grazing allotments at the end of the growing season. NMACD will also gather fence distances on four allotments for 2024.

The assessment will focus on boundary fences, interior fences and other infrastructure for each allotment. NMACD and the Santa Fe National Forest held a training session for NMACD contractors in June in Santa Fe, NM to ensure that field data protocols were understood, and they provided additional training on Survey 123. The first field assessment with NMACD was scheduled for the week of June 17.

The Forest is also proposing that NMACD collect additional grazing utilization and fence distance information on the allotments for the next 3 years starting in 2024.

### **Black Fire**

I've inspected 8.5 miles of new fence in the Black Range, these fences were destroyed in the Black Fire. I also inspected 8 miles of fence where materials were packed in for building a new fence. This week I will be inspecting 3 miles of new fence along the Continental Divide trail and then we will need to inspect another 3.5 miles of fence along Highway 59 in the Black Range.



**Brent, Jim, & Josh with USDA Deputy Secretary Torres Small**



## Third New Mexico Leopold Conservation Award

Landford Livestock LLC were selected as the recipient of the 4<sup>th</sup> New Mexico Leopold Conservation Award,® and they were presented with the \$10,000 award at the NMACD Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, October 29, 2024.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the prestigious award recognizes farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners who inspire others with their dedication to land, water, and wildlife habitat management on private, working lands.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor American Farmland Trust present the Leopold Conservation Award to private landowners in 23 states for extraordinary achievement in voluntary conservation. In New Mexico, the award is presented with New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts, Quivira Coalition, and NRCS.



# NMACD DUES SUPPORT

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## PLATINUM LEVEL

Lea SWCD

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## DIAMOND LEVEL

Carlsbad SWCD

Central Curry SWCD

East Torrance SWCD

Otero SWCD

Tierra y Montes SWCD

Lava SWCD

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## GOLD LEVEL DISTRICT SUPPORT TO NMACD

Border SWCD  
Caballo SWCD  
Canadian River SWCD  
Carrizozo SWCD  
Central Valley SWCD  
Ciudad SWCD  
Colfax SWCD  
Coronado SWCD  
Cuba SWCD  
Deming SWCD  
DeBaca SWCD  
Dona Ana SWCD  
East Rio Arriba SWCD  
Edgewood SWCD  
Grant SWCD  
Guadalupe SWCD  
Hagerman Dexter SWCD

Lava SWCD  
Mesa SWCD  
Mora WM SWCD  
Northeastern SWCD  
Penasco SWCD  
Roosevelt SWCD  
San Francisco SWCD  
San Juan SWCD  
Sierra SWCD  
Socorro SWCD  
SW Quay SWCD  
Taos SWCD  
Upper Chama SWCD  
Ute Creek SWCD  
Valencia SWCD  
Western Mora SWCD