



Partnerships and Passion | Pathway to Conservation



Letter from the President – Jimbo Williams

Hello Everyone! I hope this finds you in good health and in good spirits. As you know the current situation, we are all experiencing is one that has taken some getting used to by all of us. It's a pandemic that no one has ever really experienced before. Luckily as those in the agriculture sector, we are able to carry out our daily duties as essential businesses. I also feel that it is another good reminder to those around us of just how important the agriculture community is. I hope and pray that you are all safe and able to do the things you need to and will be able to come out of this unharmed.

As most of you know, we had what I call a successful turn at the legislative session in Santa Fe. We spent a lot of time working towards the conception of the Agricultural and Natural Resource Trust fund. After many, many hours of meeting and discussions, nothing could ever be agreed on. Once the bill took a turn with verbiage of land acquisitions and other things, we had to step away from supporting it. There were however quite a few positives. Additional money was set-aside for the Healthy Soils Act, additional monies were allocated to each districts yearly points budget and we saw the introduction of the Ag & Natural Resource Pilot Program. Now keep in mind that these were all approved with the foresight of oil prices staying at their current level when these items were passed. With the current situation of oil prices drastically going downward I cannot guarantee that everything will hold in place. There is talk of a special session to re-evaluate the budget. If that does happen, we will be sure to keep you all up to speed if there are any changes.

With spring rapidly approaching we will all be busy with our springtime chores. In our area we are still experiencing freezing temperatures but are looking forward to productive spring as our winter was one of the wettest that we have seen in quite some time. I'm sure others of you have already started planting crops and getting ready to put your plans of action into place for a lavish season. We pray that you are successful and are able to produce healthy and abundantly at what ever it may be that you are growing.

I pray that you are all able to exit the covid-19 subject without an issue and that it is able to go away as quick as it showed up. Until we are able to meet in person again I wish only the best for you all and will continue to lift you all up in prayer to stay healthy and to stay safe.

Sincerely, Jimbo Williams

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Kendall Brown, USFS Glenwood Ranger District, receiving the 2019 NMACD Conservationist of the Year Award with members of the San Francisco SWCD and NMACD President Jimbo Williams.

CONGRATULATIONS,
Kendall Brown!

SWCD's Get \$939,350 in Capital Outlay

House Bill 349

- \$500,000 - San Juan SWCD - Building
- \$ 75,000 - McKinley SWCD – Equipment
- \$ 20,000 – Western Mora SWCD – Building Improvements
- \$ 15,000 - East Rio Arriba – Equipment
- \$ 70,000 – Upper Chama SWCD - Storage Facility
- \$109,350 - Coronado SWCD – Reservoir Improvements
- \$ 15,000 - Edgewood SWCD – Vehicle
- \$ 60,000- Claunch Pinto SWCD – Vehicle and Equipment
- \$ 75,000- Valencia SWCD – Educational Center Phase 2
- There is also \$800,000 to expand the NMSU weather network

NMACD Names 2019 Conservationist of the Year – Kendall Brown

During its annual meeting, New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts awarded the 2019 Conservationist of the year to Kendall Brown of the US Forest Service Glenwood Ranger District. According to the San Francisco SWCD who nominated him, “Kendall has played an integral part in partnerships with producers, San Francisco SWCD, NMACD, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Since 2015 coordinated planning with 8 producers has led to 9 EQIP/RCPP contracts coming in just shy of 1 million dollars (\$944,430).” The award is presented to a district volunteer, supervisor, a county, state, federal employee or individual who exemplifies conservation of natural resources. Mr. Brown goes beyond his everyday duties to build collaborative partnerships that put conservation on the ground and provides benefits to the ecosystem and to the producers.

“Kendall is well respected by those producers/permittees he works with daily and is a great advocate in using partnerships to apply conservation on the ground. He has a great understanding that healthy landscapes benefit all multiple uses and are often directly associated with working lands. Over the last 5 years the Glenwood Ranger District has had 3 District Rangers with several acting in-between. Kendall’s leadership and dedication to coordinated planning has resulted in continued progress amongst ever changing oversight.” Says San Francisco SWCD, “Outside of partnerships, Kendall is active with teaching conservation to kids. Kendall makes it a priority to take part in the McKeen Ranch Days which is an event held annually to promote sustainable agriculture to approximately 500 school kids.”

2020 New Mexico Legislative Session

The 30-day legislative session this year was slightly less active than last years 60-day session. That’s not to say there wasn’t plenty for the legislative team to be active with. Of the 727 bills and 187 memorial and resolutions introduced, the NMACD legislative team followed approximately 25. There wasn’t a lot of progress on most bills but there was some success for Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Below are a few of the highlights:

House Bill 2 – General Appropriations Act of 2020

\$ 500,000 - The interstate stream commission’s authority to make loans for irrigation improvements

\$ 200,000 - for soil and water conservation districts for operation

\$15,148,600 - Ag Experiment Stations from General funds

\$ 1,800,000 – Pilot Ag and Natural Resources grant program over 3 years

HB 146, Expand Biomass income Tax Credit & Reporting (support) allows a tax credit of \$5/ wet ton of biomass delivered to an approved facility to generate electricity or biofuel.

HB 349 – Capital outlay

Nine Soil and Water Conservation Districts received capital outlay in excess of \$900,000 for projects including building, vehicles, and equipment.

We want to thank Senator Neville, Senator Stefanics, Representative Chatfield, Representative Small, Representative Stansbury, Representative Sweetser, Representative Fajardo, Representative Armstrong, and Representative Dow.

“If conservation of natural resources goes wrong, nothing else will go right.” M.S. Swaminathan



KNOW YOUR ENEMY!

COMMUNITY LECTURE AND TOUR OF WEEDS IN TAOS COUNTY

It's the forest fire you can't see!

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2020

9:30 – 4:30 P.M.

JUAN I. GONZALES AGRICULTURAL CENTER
202 CHAMISA ROAD, TAOS, NM 87571

Join the Taos Soil & Water Conservation District and Taos County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) for the second annual free noxious and invasive species lecture and tour featuring Dr. Richard Lee (National Integrated Pest Management Specialist for BLM) and Dr. Leslie Beck (Extension Weed Specialist at NMSU). Attendees will learn how to identify and mechanically control noxious weeds & other invasive plants found in a wide range of habitats including backyards, forests, gardens, fields, roadside areas, and along waterways. Bring a sample of an invasive plant for assistance with identifying and/or controlling it! After a morning lecture and a free lunch (grilled up by Rio Grande Ace Hardware), attendees can enjoy an afternoon educational tour of problematic noxious weed areas around Taos.

Space is limited ~ RSVP today to reserve your spot!

Official Taos County CWMA partners: Taos SWCD, Town of Taos, Amigos Bravos, Southern Methodist University, Taos Land Trust, Rio Grande Ace Hardware, RMYC, NMSU Cooperative Extension Service, NMDA, TVAA, NMDOT, Taos Chapter - Native Plant Society of NM, Taos County, and Sunset Park, Inc.

TO RSVP OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: TANYA DUNCAN AT (575) 751-0584

SHADE BALL WATER CONSERVATION PROJECT COST-SHARE PROGRAM

Roosevelt SWCD has been conducting research with “shade balls” on livestock water tanks since September 2015. The HDPE balls are 4 inches in diameter, UV-stable, and water-filled. High surface-area coverage is achieved by placing a sufficient number of balls on the surface of the water. As water levels rise and fall, the balls organize themselves into a cover that provides coverage of up to 91%. During this time, we have been measuring evaporation, water temperatures, rainfall, and ice formation. We have recorded significantly less evaporation and ice formation with the ball-covered tank. To see our project or for more information on availability, pricing, and current cost-share programs, please visit us at 050 NM Highway 46 Portales, NM, call us at (575) 356-6629 Ext. #3019, e-mail us at RooseveltSWCD@gmail.com or visit our Website at <http://rooseveltswcd.wixsite.com/mysite/contact>



Shade Balls

2020 AG FEED



Ag Feed is an annual event sponsored by various agricultural organizations who come together to prepare and serve all the members and staff of the New Mexico Legislature. It is an opportunity to increase and thank legislators and staff for all the time they put into the legislative session. This year's event was held on February 20, 2020.

Pictured above

(Top) New Mexico Cattle Growers President Randell Major and New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts President Jimbo Williams prepare to serve NM Legislators and Staff at the 2020 Ag Feed (Middle) Eddie Vigil, Otero SWCD and part of the NMACD legislative team, takes prepared meals to Legislators and Staff who are busy in committee meetings.

Be a Soil Health Champion

The NACD Soil Health Champions Network is made up of more than 250 farmers, ranchers and woodland owners from across the nation who practice good soil health management on their operations and promote the use of soil health management systems in their communities.

PRIMARY GOAL OF THE NETWORK

To increase the adoption of soil health systems by farmers and other landowners nationwide.

MEMBER BENEFITS

Soil Health Champions play an integral role in the nationwide movement to improve and conserve America's soils and other natural resources for their dedication to promoting soil health systems in their communities and across the nation, Network members receive:

- Membership in an exclusive Network where they can exchange best management practices, tell success stories, and learn how to make improvements in their own operations.
- Special and exclusive access to new technologies, services and information specific to soil health and conservation outreach, including a quarterly soil health bulletin.
- National recognition for their work to advance soil health in NACD's publications, on social media, as part of national presentations and on NACD's website. Requests for privacy will be respected.

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

All soil champs should have the support of their local conservation district and be able to show how they use conservation practices – such as integrating best management practices (BMPs), cover cropping, no-till, crop rotation, terracing, prescribed grazing, nutrient management and integrated pest management – in their operations. They should also:

1. Conduct soil health outreach in their communities. Forms of outreach include holding farm tours, hosting field demonstrations, speaking at conferences and meetings, giving media interviews, presenting at seminars or workshops, contributing to their local district's newsletter, and manning educational booths at community events.
2. Report on their outreach activities to NACD. NACD collects and utilizes Soil Health Champion research, stories and testimonials on NACD's website and in national publications. NACD also rounds up information on Soil Health Champion events and outreach and shares it through social media, on its website and in a quarterly bulletin. By engaging in this network, NACD is able to amplify the voices of conservation-minded producers on a national platform.

CALL TO ACTION

If you or someone you know would like to be recognized as a Soil Health Champion, please contact NACD's Beth Mason at beth-mason@nacdnetwork.org.

Healthy Soils Working Group Hosts Regenerative Ag Day 2020

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE DAY 2020 was held February 14, 2020 at the New Mexico State Land Office in Santa Fe. Participants were led in discussion about how regenerative agriculture will look in New Mexico. The session was hosted by the Healthy Soils Working Group.

The [presentations by Dr. Christine Jones are now online on our Youtube Channel](#), including the links to further information that Dr. Jones sent.

Please stay in touch and we wish you the very best in all your soil health endeavors.

In gratitude,
Robb, Jeff, Christine and Isabelle
NM Healthy Soil Working Group

NMhealthysoil.org



NMACD and the National Wild Turkey Federation plans for Field Day

The New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts is working with the National Wild Turkey Federation on initial plans for a field day. Geographically, they are looking at a community/ field setting in and around the Lincoln National Forest. Possible Mayhill, Ft. Stanton, Capitan and others. The key to the setting and day is the following:

- Youth outreach - a classroom visit or field day for area youth to educate them on how forest health practices enhance habitat.
- Landowner field day - recruiting local landowners to attend a half-day workshop to explain available conservation practices.
- State meeting breakout session - introducing the partnership to your statewide members or staff through a panel or presentation at your next District meeting or annual state meeting.

Timing is flexible for the actual event as long as it is hosted in 2020 and doesn't interfere with anyone's turkey hunt though. If you are interested in helping plan the event, please contact Jesse Juen with NMACD.

Other Notes

- The New Mexico Envirothon is scheduled for May 8-9, 2020 via the web. However, The National Envirothon event has been cancelled due to Covid 19
- The New Mexico Department of Agriculture aims to connect consumers with New Mexico agriculture products. If you are a New Mexico producer/business that wishes to include your food, beverage or agricultural product and contact information on our online products-to-consumers database, please visit <http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu/ag-products-to-consumers/>. Once you submit your information, the NMDA staff will verify the submission, and once validated, it will be added to the list. Questions? Email ElevateNMAg@nmda.nmsu.edu
Also, if you are interested in being listed in the USDA database, submit your information at the USDA's Local Food Directory Registration and Update at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional/food-directories-update>. (Kristi Garcia, NMDA)
- AgriFutures and Ag Ambassador Programs have been cancelled
- NMACD Dues notices have been sent to SWCDs
- Please send all bills for NMACD to bills@nmacd.org

New Agrarian Program (NAP) Mentors Sought

Quivira Coalition's [New Agrarian Program](#) (NAP) partners with skilled ranchers and farmers to offer annual apprenticeships in regenerative agriculture. These partnerships provide experienced ranchers and farmers with access to skilled, motivated learners, and provide young agrarians with hands-on skills in agricultural business management, soil regeneration, animal care, and stewardship of the West's working landscapes.

We are actively seeking ranches and farms to join NAP as mentors for the next generation of regenerative agriculture practitioners! Our focus is on operations in the arid to semi-arid West that prioritize healthy soil, food, communities, and ecosystems. NAP provides mentors with training, guidance throughout the season, and basic apprenticeship structure in order to ensure a consistent model across the program.

Interested in learning more? Visit <https://quiviracoalition.org/newagrarian/> or contact newagrarian@quiviracoalition.org.

Save the date: Wednesday, July 22nd! Free Mentor 101 training workshop. Learn from an experienced NAP mentor what it takes to host an apprentice and how NAP can help you succeed. Time and format TBD (will likely be hosted remotely via video conference). Email newagrarian@quiviracoalition.org to receive more info or to sign up!

Conservation Agricultural Mentoring Program (CAMP):

Natural Resources Conservation Service



What Is It?

A state-driven, partnership and field-based program to build strong employee-producer relationships and increase employees' knowledge of production agriculture in their local areas.

How Does It Work?

NRCS will match producer volunteers who are passionate about conservation and teaching with field employees who have fewer than three years of experience or who are new to an area. The producers will have an opportunity to mentor the employees through "on-the-land," hands-on learning to help them develop their knowledge of:

Common agricultural practices, equipment, inputs, and other agricultural factors in the local area, including:

- The types of challenges and decisions producers face day to day.
- Local resource problems and concerns.
- How NRCS and local producers address resource problems and concerns.

The program provides the opportunity for mentor producers to engage with mentee employees several times over the course of the program, which lasts 1-1.5 years for each participating employee.

By focusing on field-based, hands-on learning, we aim to accelerate employees' early career development and increase their ability to provide customer service of the highest quality, while also increasing their confidence, connection to their local communities, and their understanding of producers' needs.

Who Is Involved?

There are three main groups of people who are involved in the program:

1. Volunteer producers (mentors) who are passionate about conservation and teaching.
2. NRCS and conservation district employees (mentees) who have fewer than three years of experience or who are new to an area.
3. The NRCS and conservation district employees who supervise participating employees.

What Is the Time Commitment?

The time commitment is minimal. Producer mentors commit to engaging "out on the land" with their mentees a few times each year, at times that are convenient for the mentors.

Who Can Participate?

Producers who are passionate about conservation and teaching, and who agree to provide a safe learning experience for program mentees can be a mentor.

How Can I Get Involved or Learn More?

To get involved or learn more, please reach out to your local District Conservationist.

To find your local service center go to www.nrcs.usda.gov/contactstates

