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OTERO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Current SWCD Board of Supervisors:

Bob Nichols, Chairman Rick Baish, Vice Chairman Jeff Rabon, Secretary/Treasurer Eddie Vigil, Supervisor Colt Howland, Supervisor James Evrage, Supervisor Clifton Varbel, Supervisor

NRCS Staff:

Kristi Wright, District Conservationist
Katie Pritchett, Soil Conservationist
Erika Rodriguez, Range Management Specialist
Jennifer Howard, Soil Conservation Technician
Morgan Smith, Civil Engineering Technician
Amalia Montoya, Area Range Conservationist

FSA Staff:

Cheyanna Reyes, County Executive Director Amanda Wylie-Largeteau, Program Technician

3501 Mesa Village Dr. Alamogordo, NM 88310

District Employee:

Victoria Milne, District Manager

District board meetings are generally, the first Wednesday of each month at 9:30 am.

The meetings are held in the same building, in the Forest Service's Smokey Bear conference room located at 3463 Las Palomas Dr.

The USDA Alamogordo Service Center will be closed:

February 19th, Presidents Day, May 27th - Memorial Day and July 4th - Independence Day



OTERO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

3501 Mesa Village Drive, Alamogordo, NM 88310 (575) 437-3100 x 3



The Otero SWCD hosted its Annual Luncheon on December 6th. We were pleased to have the following legislators in attendance: Vickie Marquardt, Gerald Matherly and James Townsend.

The district's annual report was presented by Rick Baish. He highlighted the condition of our three watershed dams and their need for repairs and

improvements. These dams are classified high hazard due to their age and the threat to life and property should they fail. The USDA NRCS recently finished Dam Assessment Reports on the three dams. NRCS State Conservation Engineer Eli Gnann presented the summary of the reports. We have requested assistance through the Dam Rehabilitation Program to have a watershed plan is developed to address environmental



New staff in Alamogordo

Meet the team

NSIDE THIS

SSUE:

Annual

luncheon

continued

impacts, costs, benefits, planned conservation practices, and the responsibilities of involved parties for each dam.

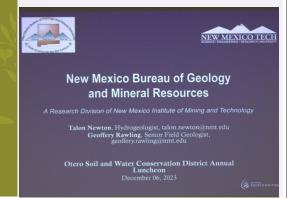
Kristi Wright provided an update on the success of the Alamogordo Field Office in getting conservation on the ground. Through Farm Bill Implementation, conservation practices applied were:

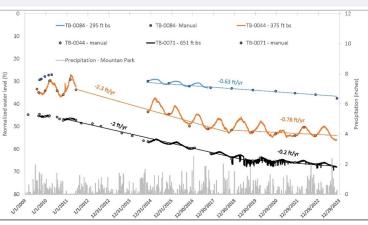
3,063 acres of Aerial Brush Management and 331 acres of Mechanical treatment

24,022 feet of fence installed 169,016 acres of Prescribed Grazing Livestock and wildlife water development systems:

- 7,834 ft of Livestock Pipeline roughly 1.5 miles through various types of terrain
- 4 storage tanks for 20,000 gallons
- 5 troughs for 3,750 gallons
- 2 solar pumping plants
- 2 wells

Talon Newton and Geoff Rawling from the NM Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources updated us on the regional water levels. Below is a chart of the changes in the Tularosa Basin.





Bob Nichols presented the Mescalero Apache Tribe with the Outstanding Land Stewardship award. In 2023, Mescalero Apache Tribe has been working to apply over 100 acres of Forest Stand Improvement and Woody Residue Treatments through Joint Chief Funding, over 300

acres of brush management and 4 watering facilities (troughs and storages). They have successfully accomplished this while still maintaining abundant conservation practices that have been installed over the last 20 years, spread over the entire reservation. Mescalero Apache Tribe was featured this past summer in "We live with fire, Blending Tribal knowledge and science



with western science." In 2022, they were featured in Peter Santenello's "Native Cowboys: Mescalero Apache Tribe". In 2021, Mescalero Apache Tribal conservation efforts were also recognized in National Cattlemen's Beef Associations "NRCS Helps the Mescalero Apache Cattle Growers Implement Conservation Practices", as well as being featured on "Native American Beef: Mescalero Apache Supplier Story". Due to their relentless efforts to tell the conservation story and outstanding land stewardship, Mescalero Apache Tribe is recognized as the 2023 Otero Soil and Water Conservation District's Land Stewardship Award recipient.

In conclusion Bob Nichols stressed the importance of understanding our water resources, and thanked everyone for their continued support.

Starting at the NRCS office December of 2023, thanks to a recommendation, Jennifer Howard is the newest addition to team 9 as a Soil Conservation Technician and is now a part of the

Alamogordo Field Office. Growing up in Moriarty NM with two AG teacher's Jennifer has grown up around the agricultural industry.

While she had different plans, even staying a year in California to pursing a degree in animation, Jennifer decided it was best to come back to her roots and expand her horizons. Now she is currently earning a degree in IT security through Bethel Tech which she hopes to compete this year. After words she wants to focus on earning her pilots license and travel the world.

While new to the NRCS, Jennifer is thrilled for the opportunity to combine her past personal experiences and knowledge to help both humans and animals alike. Alongside being able to travel and truly see what New Mexico has to offer. Needless to say she's excited and looking forward to this new chapter in her life.



Alamagarda Sarvica Contar - Who we are and what we do

Alamogordo Service Center - Who we are and what we do.

USDA Service Centers are designed to be an individual location where customers can access the services provided by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Rural Development agencies. In addition to these agencies, many include the local Soil and Water Conservation District. Alamogordo has FSA, NRCS and the Otero SWCD.

When a customer enters our office, they are greeted by Vicky Milne (SWCD) and she gets basic information to assist them. Their next stop is usually Katie Pritchett (Lead Planner/Soil Conservationist). Katie learns about their resource concerns and basic agricultural operation structure. All new customers are then given to Amanda Wylie-Largeteau (Program Technician). The FSA processes all the eligibility information for USDA programs. Once the background information is compiled it is time to start planning.

Out in the field-NRCS staff survey the land and collect the data necessary to create a conservation plan for improvements. Katie leads the team with Erika McLaughlin (Rangeland Management Specialist) and Jennifer Howard (Soil Conservation Technician) assisting. Morgan Smith (Area Civil Engineering Technician) provides engineering assistance. Amalia Montoya (Area Rangeland Management Specialist) provides assistance with ranching operations. All of this is available free of charge.

USDA also offers a variety of programs to help farmers, ranchers, communities, and businesses that have been hard hit by natural disaster events. FSA administers numerous programs that can help agricultural producers recover. Amanda handles these programs from sign-up to payments. NRCS natural resource conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damage caused by floods and other natural disasters. Katie can help you through the process from application to contracting. Otero SWCD has assistance available for small conservation projects. Vicky is in charge of this program with assistance from NRCS.

Meet the team:



Left to right-Amanda Wylie-Largeteau, Amalia Montoya, Morgan Smith, Vicky Milne, Erika McLaughlin, Katie Pritchett and Jennifer Howard.