



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 pursuing 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 complete 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.



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.