Otero Soil & Water Conservation District
Action Plan

July 2016

Organization: A governmental subdivision of the state of New Mexico organized under state law (Chapter 73, Article 20).

Function: To take available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land user.

We Serve: The People of Otero County.

Why: The health, welfare, and livelihood of Otero County residents depends on the county’s natural resources.

The district is uniquely fitted to serve as the focal point for planning and implementation of programs to protect and enhance natural resource values in Otero County.

To this end, the district operates in close and continuing cooperation with Otero County government.

Mission Statement: The Otero Soil and Water Conservation District promotes and facilitates effective stewardship of natural resources.

Critical Natural Resource Issues:

1. Watershed Health
   - Lack of understanding of watershed function
   - Stream Bank Restoration
   - Sediment/Erosion Control
2. Forest and Rangeland Health
3. Resource Education & Protection
   a. invasive species
   b. soil erosion
   c. flood control
   d. irrigation efficiency
   e. planning committees
   f. other emerging threats and concerns

Critical Geographic Areas:
- Upper Pecos River Watershed
- Lower Tularosa Basin
- Chihuahuan Desert
- Sacramento Mountains
**Statements of Intent (outcome) for the natural resource issues:**

1. Optimize, to the maximum extent possible and practical, the functioning (e.g., yield and storage) of watersheds in the district.
2. Minimize, to the greatest extent practicable, the undesirable impact of invasive species.
3. Maximize the production of beneficial vegetation, to include timber and forage.
4. Provide outreach material and educational opportunities to county residents.
5. Attend meetings/stay involved in planning groups.
6. Participate in efforts to protect life and property from flood and fires.
7. Minimize harmful accelerated soil erosion.
8. Coleman Ranch  
   a. Eight Mile Canyon  
   b. Three L Canyon
9. Sacramento River
10. Alamo Canyon

**Priority Actions for the next 12 months:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>DATE COMPLETE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure funding for three work plans developed by NM Tech. [Resource issue 1]</td>
<td>Otero SWCD, NM Tech</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborate with NRCS, BLM &amp; NMACD to implement the Otero Landscape Restoration Initiative funded through the CCPI and the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program. [Resource issues 2 &amp; 3]</td>
<td>Otero SWCD</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Collaborate with NM State Forestry and South Central Mountain RC&amp;D to reduce hazardous fuels within high priority areas on private land. [Resource issues 6 &amp; 8]</td>
<td>Otero SWCD</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborate with NM State Forestry and South Central Mountain RC&amp;D to reduce hazardous fuels within residential, business, and recreational areas to reduce the threat of wildfires. [Resource issue 6]</td>
<td>Otero SWCD</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborate with other public agencies to implement the Sacramento Mountains Watershed Restoration Project to include stream bank restoration/protection and erosion control structures. [Resource issue 7]</td>
<td>Otero SWCD</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task Description</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
<td>Status</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to seek out opportunities to enhance watershed function and improve forest and rangeland health. [Resource issues 1 &amp; 2]</td>
<td>Otero SWCD</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Continue to provide outreach and educational materials at local events. [Resource issue 4]</td>
<td>Otero SWCD</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Weed control program, to include:</td>
<td>Weed specialist</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>• Mapping to identify areas of infestation by noxious weed species in the county.</td>
<td>Otero SWCD</td>
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<td>• Host annual meeting with BLM, NMDOT, Mescalero Tribe, County, USFS, Holloman, Ft. Bliss and WSMR to develop coordinated plan among agencies for weed control.</td>
<td>District Administrator</td>
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<td>• Maintain &amp; distribute herbicides appropriate to the requirements of certified private applicators in the area.</td>
<td>District Administrator</td>
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<td>• Connect landowners and commercial applicators through annual sign-up program.</td>
<td>Weed Specialist</td>
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<td>• Ongoing public education, coordinating production of state noxious weed calendar and distribution of other materials to increase public awareness and promote participation in weed control efforts.</td>
<td>Otero SWCD</td>
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<td>• Meet ongoing funding requirements for the above programs from any available sources. [Resource issue 3]</td>
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<td>Sponsor 3 existing flood control dams on USFS land on Penasco watershed. With funding provided by Otero County, perform inspections and routine maintenance on the dams. [Resource issue 3]</td>
<td>Otero SWCD</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Initiate collaborative process with USFS, NRCS, OSE, and Otero County to mitigate concerns with respect to the Curtis Canyon and Graveyard Canyon dams. [Resource issue 3]</td>
<td>Otero SWCD</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>In collaboration with NRCS, provide support for local farmers to measure and improve irrigation efficiency. Efforts in this direction include:</td>
<td>Otero SWCD, District Administrator</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>• Landowner education</td>
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<td>• Assistance in identifying sources of funding for efficiency improvements [Resource issue 3]</td>
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Staffing Needs: 2.5 Employees

Annual Budget Needs:

- Salaries & Benefits: $91,000
- Equipment: $10,000
- Office Supplies: $5,000
- Audit: $4,000
- Programs & Cost Share: $40,000
- Other: Travel - $10,000

**Total Annual Budget: $160,000**

Key individuals, groups, or agencies to reach for program success:

- Otero County
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- US Forest Service
- NM Department of Agriculture
- South Central Mountain RC&D
- NMSU – County Extension Office
- NM State Land Office
- NM State Forestry
- Mescalero Apache Tribe
- Acequia Groups
- Native Plant Society
- City of Alamogordo
- Village of Tularosa
- Village of Cloudcroft
- Alamogordo Public Schools
- Cloudcroft Municipal Schools
- Tularosa Municipal Schools