

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:

ACTION	WHO	DATE	DATE COMPLETE
Secure funding for three work plans developed by NM Tech. [Resource issue 1]	Otero SWCD, NM Tech	Ongoing	
Collaborate with NRCS, BLM & NMACD to implement the Otero Landscape Restoration Initiative funded through the CCPI and the new Regional Conservation Partnership Program. [Resource issues 2 & 3]	Otero SWCD	Ongoing	
Collaborate with NM State Forestry and South Central Mountain RC&D to reduce hazardous fuels within high priority areas on private land. [Resource issues 6 & 8]	Otero SWCD	Ongoing	
Collaborate with NM State Forestry and South Central Mountain RC&D to reduce hazardous fuels within residential, business, and recreational areas to reduce the threat of wildfires. [Resource issue 6]	Otero SWCD	Ongoing	
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]	Otero SWCD	Ongoing	
Maintain/Encourage involvement with groups and associations regarding natural resource issues: Forest Working Group, Regional Water Planning, Resource Management Plans, and Forest Plan Revisions. [Resource issue 5]	Otero SWCD	Ongoing	

Continue to seek out opportunities to enhance watershed function and improve forest and rangeland health. [Resource issues 1 & 2]	Otero SWCD	Ongoing	
Continue to provide outreach and educational materials at local events. [Resource issue 4]	Otero SWCD	Ongoing	
Weed control program, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping to identify areas of infestation by noxious weed species in the county. • Host annual meeting with BLM, NMDOT, Mescalero Tribe, County, USFS, Holloman, Ft. Bliss and WSMR to develop coordinated plan among agencies for weed control. • Maintain & distribute herbicides appropriate to the requirements of certified private applicators in the area. • Connect landowners and commercial applicators through annual sign-up program. • Ongoing public education, coordinating production of state noxious weed calendar and preparation and distribution of other materials to increase public awareness and promote participation in weed control efforts. • Meet ongoing funding requirements for the above programs from any available sources. [Resource issue 3] 	Weed specialist Otero SWCD District Administrator District Administrator Weed Specialist Otero SWCD	Ongoing	
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]	Otero SWCD	Ongoing	
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]	Otero SWCD	Ongoing	
In collaboration with NRCS, provide support for local farmers to measure and improve irrigation efficiency. Efforts in this direction include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowner education • Assistance in identifying sources of funding for efficiency improvements [Resource issue 3]	Otero SWCD, District Administrator	Ongoing	

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