

Report to New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Districts

*New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Programs and Resources
Division*

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January 2018

December	Review mileage and per diem policy (See Item #1)
January	Conduct district board mid-year budget review
January	Ensure the proper bonding policy is in place
January 30	2 nd quarterly budget report is due to DFA-LGD (cc: SWCC, region commissioner, NMDA Specialist)
January 31	WQ&C grant 2nd quarterly report and budget due to SWCC, NMDA Specialist

1. Review Your Mileage and Per Diem Policy

If a supervisor or district employee uses their personal vehicle, they are eligible for mileage at the Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate set **January 1 of the previous year**. The state statute and rule for this can be found in the Mileage and Per Diem Act [10-8-4(D) NMSA 1978] and Mileage and Per Diem Rule (2.42.2 NMAC). The Internal Revenue Service standard mileage rate can be found on the IRS website at: <http://www.irs.gov/Tax-Professionals/Standard-Mileage-Rates>

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2018, the IRS standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be:

53.5 cents per mile for business miles driven, down from 54 cents

17 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes, down from 19 cents

14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

2. Preparing to Publish the Open Meetings Resolution

Be sure to pass your Open Meeting Act Resolution in either **November** or **December**.

When preparing to publish the Open Meetings Resolution, remember that the state sets a limit on advertising rates that can be charged to governmental entities for required advertisements. Title 1, Chapter 4, part 4 of the New Mexico Administrative Code states: “...the newspaper publisher is entitled to receive no more than:

- A. \$.63 cents (\$.63) for each column line of eight point or smaller type for the first insertion
- B. \$.49 cents (\$.49) per line of each subsequent insertion
- C. All emblems, display headings, rule work and necessary blank spaces shall be calculated as solid type and shall be counted and paid for as such.”

3. Potential Days of Interest During the Legislative Session

Below are some dates during the 2018 Legislative Session that might be of interest:

- January 16th – Legislative Session Begins
- January 22nd - SWCD Day
- January 23rd - NMACD Board Meeting; New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau AgFest
- February 15th – Legislative Session Ends

4. SWCD Boundary Description Project

Every district that submitted their final resolution for their updated legal description and map to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC), has been approved. Each district should have received their updated legal description and map.

The packet needs to be filed with the Secretary of State’s (SoS’s) office. Once it’s been filed with their office, *please notify the SWCC (swcc@nmda.nmsu.edu) and your NMDA Specialist. **Once the SoS’s office confirms receipt, please forward that email to the SWCC and your NMDA Specialist.***

If you have questions, have not received the packet, or have had any trouble receiving/opening any of the attachments that were sent, please inform Katie Kruthaupt at kkruthaupt@nmda.nmsu.edu.

5. Meeting and Comments on National Forests in NM

All five of the National Forests in New Mexico are in various stages of completing their Forest Plan Revision. For updates, please visit the National Forests’ websites below for meeting times and comment opportunities.

- Cibola NF:
http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/cibola/landmanagement/planning/?cid=FSBDEV3_065627

- Carson NF:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/carson/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5443166>

The Carson National Forest has completed several draft documents as part of the forest plan revision. They are available for review on the forest plan revision web page. The forest has completed:

- **Preliminary Draft Proposed Plan (PDPP)** – This PDPP is dated December 2017 and includes changes made in response to public comments received on the PDPP dated July 2017. The focus of this updated PDPP is providing for restoration and diverse ecosystem services.
- **Alternatives to the PDPP (narrative)** – This document compares different ways (alternatives) to address issues. Issues came from the public, other stakeholders, agencies, and tribes who commented over the past year on the forest plan revision process and specifically on the previous PDPP.
- **Alternatives to the PDPP (matrix)** – This document compares the differences between alternatives in a matrix form.
- **Proposed Wilderness Analysis Areas (PWAA)** – The PWAA paper describes how the evaluated areas for wilderness characteristics were included in an alternative. Proposed wilderness analysis areas will be analyzed by alternative for effects to ecological, social, and economic conditions in an environmental impact statement.

Other supporting documents include:

- **Draft Habitat Connectivity Plan Components**
- **Draft Canada Lynx Southern Rockies Management Direction Crosswalk**

The Carson NF will now begin developing the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) which will analyze and compare the alternatives for effects on ecological, social, and economic conditions. Development of the DEIS will take several months. The completion of a draft proposed plan and DEIS is anticipated to be late summer/early fall 2018.

As we develop the DEIS we will continue to consider comments from the public on the above draft documents. As we have stated each time we provide documents for public review, our forest plan and EIS will not be final until a record of decision is signed (anticipated fall 2019). While we continually accept comments, it would help in the progress of our forest plan revision effort to receive comments for the above documents by February 01, 2017.

The forest will have a hard copy of these documents available at each of the district offices for the public to review.

We appreciate your continued interest and involvement in the revision of 1986 Carson NF Land and Resource Management Plan.

- Santa Fe NF:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/santafe/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprd3791442>

- Gila NF: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gila/home/?cid=STELPRD3828671>

- Lincoln NF: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/lincoln/home/?cid=stelprd3814307>

NMDA encourages all SWCDs to stay active in the Forest Plan Revision process for all five national forests. We also encourage SWCDs to provide information as requested to make sure that SWCD information is included in the process.

6. USDA Application for Conservation Easement Funding to Protect Privately-Owned Wetlands, Agricultural Lands and Grasslands

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages people and groups wanting to protect critical wetlands, agricultural lands and grasslands to consider enrolling their property in conservation easements. This year, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) plans to invest \$250 million across the United States in technical and financial assistance to help private landowners, tribes, land trusts and other groups protect these valuable lands.

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) focuses on restoring and protecting wetlands as well as conserving productive agricultural lands and grasslands. Landowners are compensated for their land easements. Last year alone, the program protected nearly 300,000 acres through easements.

“New Mexico NRCS is prioritizing the protection of agricultural lands with riparian and wetland habitats. Approximately 90% of New Mexico's original riparian habitat has disappeared and easements are a valuable tool to restore these important habitats,” said Kristin Graham Chavez, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs in New Mexico.

Applications for ACEP are accepted year round. The deadline to apply in order to be considered for fiscal year 2018 funding is January 19, 2018. The application forms and information on how to apply can be found at the NRCS New Mexico ACEP website.

For more information, please refer to attachment.

7. Pecan Weevil Emergency Quarantine

The recent findings of pecan weevil in residential and commercial pecan trees in several eastern New Mexico towns and cities has prompted New Mexico Department of Agriculture to implement an emergency quarantine. The quarantine identifies Curry, Chaves, Lea and Eddy counties as currently infested with pecan weevil and places restrictions on the movement of in-shell pecans originating in those counties and destined to other New Mexico counties. The quarantine also places requirements on pecan buyers and on cold storage facilities that are using freezing as one method to kill pecan weevil. Pecan weevil is considered the most serious insect pest of pecans and is considered established in all pecan growing regions of the country except far west Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. It is primarily spread to new pecan growing areas through the movement of pecan weevil infested pecans and equipment that harbors infested pecans.

The effective date of the rule was November 20, 2017 and the duration of the rule will be 180 days, or through May 2018.

Questions? Contact New Mexico Department of Agriculture at 575-646-3007 or email blewis@nmda.nmsu.edu. For more information visit: <http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu/>, <http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Emergency-Pecan-Weevil-Quarantine-Published.pdf> and <http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu/laws-regulations/> .

8. Soil and Water Conservation Day at the Legislature

Soil and Water Conservation Day in Santa Fe at the Legislature will be on January 22, 2018. Ag Fest and the NMACD Board meeting will be on January 23, 2018. We are encouraging all districts to attend.

9. Annual NM Cotton Growers Conference

The Annual NM Cotton Growers Conference will be held January 17, 8:30 to 4:30 pm at the Ruidoso Convention Center. Topics include Dicamba drift issues, new technologies for precision cotton farming, cotton leaf diseases, and much more. Cost is \$25 per person. Deadline to submit registration forms is January 10. Fax number: 575-541-0788. For more information, contact Patrick Sullivan at 575-541-0584 or visit <http://aces.nmsu.edu/calendar/>

10. 2018 New Mexico Chile Conference

The 2018 New Mexico Chile Conference will be held on February 5th and 6th 2018, at the Hotel Encanto de Las Cruces. Please visit: <http://www.chilepepperinstitute.org/events.php> for more information and to register.

11. 2018 Organic Farming Conference

There will be an Organic Farming Conference February 16th and 17th, 2018 in Albuquerque. This conference will be held at the Marriott Albuquerque Pyramid North, 5151 San Francisco Road NE, Albuquerque. To view the agenda, registration form and conference pamphlet go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/new-mexico-organic-farming-conference-registration-38509958322> . Registration is \$105 for both days or \$65 for one day.

12. 2018 New Mexico Hay Conference

Each year the New Mexico Association and NMSU Extension Plant Sciences Department sponsor and coordinate the Southwest Hay & Forage Conference. The event is held in Ruidoso, NM. Producers, scientists, and vendors come from all around the Southwest to learn about the latest research advances and to promote the most current technologies in the hay (and other forage) industries. The 2018 conference will be held January 17-19, 2018. Please visit <http://www.nmhay.com/> for more details on the conference and for online registration.

13. 2018 Northern New Mexico Stockman's Association Annual Meeting

The Northern New Mexico Stockman's Association Annual Meeting will be held in Taos, New Mexico at the Juan I. Gonzales Agricultural Center on January 13, 2018. The agenda is attached.

14. Society for Range Management 2018 Winter Tour and Meeting

The 2018 Winter Meeting and Tour for the Society for Range Management will be held January 18-19, 2018 at Wooton Hall, room 105 on the New Mexico State University (NMSU) campus in Las Cruces.

The NM Section of the Society for Range Management is hosting our annual winter meeting and tour in Las Cruces, NM on Thursday and Friday, January 18– 19, 2018. We plan on touring a wind farm and solar array outside of Hatch on Thursday morning (weather permitting) and then return to Wooton Hall (NMSU) for a hot lunch. Following lunch we will hear from a variety of speakers focusing on topics important to NM rangelands. The meeting will continue Friday morning with more speakers including graduate students from NMSU and beyond. Our annual awards banquet (noon - 1 p.m.), catered by a local 4-H Club will close out our meeting.

Cost for meeting and tour is \$55 per person (\$35 for one day); student rate is \$30; awards banquet only is \$20. Payment can be made by cash, check, or credit card at the event. Check payments should be made out to NM SRM (memo: winter meeting & tour). Alternatively, credit card payments can be made by calling Doug Cram at 575-646-8130.

Please visit <http://nmsrm.nmsu.edu/index.html> for more information.

15. The Dialogue's 24th Annual Statewide Meeting

The Dialogue's 24th Annual Statewide meeting, "Balancing our Water Needs: Adjudication and Alternatives" will be held Thursday, January 11, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, 2401 12th St NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104.

The New Mexico Water Dialogue has been holding annual, statewide meetings for almost 25 years. For these many years, the focus has been on working to ensure that New Mexico has a reliable water supply. We have talked about how to plan, accountability, implementation, economics, declining water supply and increasing growth, adaptation and resilience, opportunities and challenges, conflicts, and political will.

We can be proud that water management has improved over these years. But all is not solved. The state has yet to revise a skeletal water plan adopted in 2003, and there are statewide problems that have not been resolved, among them adjudications, federal mandates, interbasin water transfers, reliable data, and long-term water availability.

For more information or to register, visit:

<https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=2052657> .

16. NACD 2018 Annual Meeting

NACD's 2018 Annual Meeting will be held in Nashville, Tennessee, at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center January 27th-January 31st, 2018. The Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center is located at 2800 Opryland Drive Nashville, Tennessee 37214.

To reserve a room call 659-885-1000 or visit <http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/bnago-gaylord-opryland-resort-and-convention-center/> . Be sure to identify yourself as part of the NACD group rate. Visit: <http://www.nacdnet.org/event/2018-annual-meeting/> for the agenda and more information on the conference.

17. Cooperative Watershed Management Program Funding Opportunity

The Cooperative Watershed Management Program (Phase 1) Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) was posted to www.grants.gov this week.

This FOA is seeking proposals for activities to develop a watershed group, complete watershed restoration planning activities, and design watershed management projects. Up to \$100,000 in federal funds may be awarded to an applicant per award, with no more than \$50,000 made available in a year for a period of up to two years. There is no cost share required. Applicants must submit their proposals by **January 31, 2018**. The FOA is available at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=298735>.

In addition, two Drought Response Program FOAs were posted to www.grants.gov. Under the Drought Contingency Planning FOA, applicants can request up to \$200,000 in federal funds to develop a plan, or plan update, in two years. There is a cost-share waiver available under exceptional/limited circumstances (see C.2. in the FOA). Applicants must submit their proposals by **February 7, 2018**.

Under the Resiliency Projects FOA, applicants can request up to \$750,000 for projects that increase flexibility for water managers through system modifications and improvements, and development of alternative water supplies, among other projects, to mitigate the impacts of future drought. Applicants must submit their proposals by **February 13, 2018**.

The FOAs are attached and available at:

Planning - <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=298720>

Projects - <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=298763>

The recent WaterSMART Program presentation which provides information on these and other programs can be found at: <https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/>.

18. 2018 Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (Endowment) seeks applications for the 2018 Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program. This opportunity closes Thursday, February 1, 2018, at 8:00 p.m. Eastern. Proposals received after this time may not be considered. The Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program is a partnership that includes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Water's Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Endowment.

Applicants are strongly urged to contact Peter Stangel (peter@usendowment.org; 404-915-2763) or Jeff Lerner (jalanlerner@gmail.com; 202-236-1883) to discuss project ideas before submitting an application.

Funding up to \$3 million is available for the 2018 grant round. Funding is provided by the EPA, NRCS, and the Endowment. Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program awards may be federal or non-federal funds, or a combination of both. Funding at about this level is anticipated on an annual basis around this time through 2020. A review committee makes final project recommendations. Projects funded in this cycle must conclude no later than December 31, 2020.

In 2018 priority will be given to proposals that maximize measureable outcomes for watershed protection (e.g. acres protected, progress toward protection goals, degree of watershed function protected, etc.).

Eligible Projects

The Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program was conceived by EPA to protect healthy, aquatic ecosystems and their watersheds. Funding will be considered for projects that

- Achieve large-scale, measureable outcomes (acres protected, etc.);
- Mobilize, expand, and strengthen collaborations to achieve watershed protection;
- Tap into new or existing funding sources for highly leveraged outcomes;
- Develop mechanisms for securing financing necessary to implement protection projects;
- Involve multiple watersheds that are adjacent or clustered in a single geography;
- Implement protection-related activities in existing watershed, source water, or similar plans or programs, such as: National Wild and Scenic Rivers; Sentinel Landscapes; USDA Forest Service Community Forests, and others.
- Develop and/or implement large-scale green infrastructure projects;
- Protect drinking water sources and watersheds;
- Create/expand organizational/social infrastructure to accelerate healthy watershed protection;
- Create sustainable landowner incentives for watershed protection;

- Develop sustainable land-use planning that protects healthy watersheds;
- Demonstrate or quantify the economic benefits of healthy watersheds;
- Demonstrate the human health (drinking water, fishable/swimmable water), recreation, and other benefits of healthy watersheds;
- Communicate the value of healthy watersheds to key constituencies to enhance protection;
- Develop watershed protection plans and the funding needed to implement those plans; and
- Develop a community of learning for watershed protection groups to share information

For more information and to view the entire RFP visit:

<http://www.usendowment.org/healthywatersheds.html>

19. 2018 Windmill Technology Certification Workshop

The workshop will be from May 30-June 2, 2018. For more information contact: Dr. Carlos Rosencrans at 575-649-7946 or crosencr@nmsu.edu or visit

<http://aces.nmsu.edu/ces/windmill/2018-workshop.html> .

20. NMDGF Landowner-Sportsman Courtesy Cards

New Mexico state law requires sportsmen to obtain written permission prior to hunting, fishing or trapping on posted private property (NMSA 30-14-1). Violation of this statute is a misdemeanor offense and could lead to a revocation of hunting and fishing privileges for up to three years. Please refer to the attachment for more information that might be of interest to landowners.

<http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/hunting/maps/Private-Property-Courtesy-Card-Printable.pdf>

21. 2018 EPA Region 6 Stormwater Conference

Please save the date for EPA Region 6's 20th Annual Stormwater Conference, to be held in Albuquerque on August 19-23, 2018. This conference is open to all who are interested in stormwater management, including practitioners under EPA's Construction General Permit, Multi Sector General Permit for Industrial Stormwater Discharges, and entities permitted under EPA's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits. The formal Save the Date invitation can be viewed here: <http://tamuk-isee.com/conferences/epa2018conference/> .

Conference information will be updated as the agenda is finalized.

For additional questions about the conference, you may contact Nelly Smith with EPA Region 6 at (214) 665-7109 (smith.nelly@epa.gov) or Denise Hornsby with Texas A&M University-Kingsville at (361) 593-3046 (kudh2003@tamuk.edu) .