



The Congreso de las Acequias is a dynamic and vibrant gathering that celebrates the acequias as part of our way of life and our livelihood. Our theme this year is 'Celebrating 30 Years of the Acequia Movement in New Mexico.'

20th Annual

## Congreso de las Acequias!

Celebrating 30 Years of the Acequia Movement in New Mexico

Saturday, **November 2<sup>nd</sup>** 2019

9:00am–3:00pm (Registration starts at 8:00am)

Sagebrush Inn

1508 Paseo Del Pueblo Sur, Taos, NM 87571

The NMAA convenes the Congreso, which is our statewide governing body, to learn about current issues affecting acequias, to pass resolutions that guide our policy positions and strategic direction, and to elect leadership. Each year, the Congreso contributes to our ongoing history by honoring community leaders and collectively identifying organizational priorities for the coming year. NMAA works to continue building the acequia movement by protecting our land and water resources for future generations.

New Mexico Acequia Association | 505.995.9644 | [www.lasacequias.org](http://www.lasacequias.org)



Dear Acequeros and Acequieras,

**Welcome to the Congreso de las Acequias! Support our Work and Join as a Member!**

Thank you for joining us to celebrate our 30th anniversary! We are excited to share this special occasion with acequias and supporters. As part of our celebration, we look back on our history full of gratitude for the generations before us. Our predecessors and ancestors kept acequias flowing so that our inheritance would be a healthy community with a proud heritage and food traditions that are culturally meaningful.

During the past thirty years, NMAA has grown from a small circle of committed community leaders to a grassroots, statewide membership organization. The strength of our statewide community is in the parcientes who continue our traditions of farming, ranching, and stewardship of our land and water. We are also grateful for those leaders who, in addition to being parcientes, have served as Commissioners, Mayordomos, and officers of regional acequia associations. Some of our leaders have spent decades defending water rights in adjudication, water rights protests, and legislative advocacy.

Perhaps one of our greatest accomplishments is that we have collectively embraced a new generation of leaders who have been cultivated and nurtured in the acequia movement. Some of our young leaders started in elementary school as part of Sembrando Semillas. They have gone on to be experts in acequia governance or farming training. Others started as farm apprentices and are now supporting core programs of NMAA in education, technical assistance, and outreach. Today, we celebrate the intergenerational movement we are growing. All of this work is only possible with the support of our community. We invite you to renew your membership, join the NMAA as a first-time member, or support our work with a donation!

To join the NMAA or to make a donation, please use the envelope provided or go to our website at [www.lasacequias.org](http://www.lasacequias.org).

*Join the movimiento en defensa del agua ~ Join the New Mexico Acequia Association !*

Con gran respeto,

Paula Garcia, NMAA Executive Director

#### **Memberships**

Parciente Member \$25/year

Acequia Member \$50/year

Regional Association Member \$75/year



#### **Donor Levels**

Padrino/Madrina de las Acequias \$500 and above

Hermano/Hermana de las Acequias \$250 - \$500

Amigo/Amiga de las Acequias \$25 - \$250

# 2019 Congreso de las Acequias Program

## *Celebrating 30 years of the Acequia Movement in New Mexico*

### Friday, November 1st – Hosted by Taos Soil and Water Conservation District

#### 3:00-5:00pm - Acequia Revitalization in the Town of Taos

Peter Vigil will lead a tour of acequias in the Taos Valley. The buses will leave the Taos SWCD promptly at 3:10pm and will return at 5:00pm. We will visit recently completed projects involving local acequia leaders and technical support from the Taos SWCD.

### Saturday, November 2nd

8:00am Registration, Coffee, Mañanitas

8:30am Música de las Acequias, David Garcia and Jeremías Martinez

9:00am Welcome

9:10am Bendición de las Aguas

9:30am Call to Order

- Roll Call of Delegates
- Approve Agenda
- Approve 2018 Minutes
- Approve Regions Resolution
- Recognition of Dignitaries
- Despedida al estimado Senador Carlos Cisneros

10:00am Retrospective on 30 Years of the Acequia Movement

10:15am 2019 State of the Acequias

10:30am Corrido del Movimiento de las Acequias: Grupo Teatro Acequero

10:50am Sharing Querencia Across Generations: Mentors/Mentees, Sembrando Semillas, Los Sembradores

11:10am Through the Eyes of our Youth: Perspectives from the Acequia Crew for the Carson National Forest Acequia Inventory

11:30am Acequias in the Next 30 Years: NMAA Young Leaders Reflect on Our Future

11:50am "Fighting the Tragedy of the Commons" - Poetry by Olivia Romo

12:00pm Lunch – Música de las Acequias

1:00pm Resolutions

- Opposing Comexico Mine in the Upper Pecos Watershed
- Supporting use of Acequia and Community Ditch Fund for Implementation of Water Settlements
- Requesting Guidance from USDA on Acequia Funding and Rules on Hemp Production
- Providing Input on ISC Guidelines for Acequia and Community Ditch Infrastructure Fund
- Supporting an Acequia Storytelling Project for Acequias

2:30pm Election of Concilio

3:00pm Adjourn



#### **Special Thanks to Our Funders:**

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# Remembering Carlos Cisneros

by Paula Garcia



It is impossible to discuss the acequia movement in New Mexico during the past three decades without including Senator Carlos Cisneros as a major player. He was one of the longest-serving Senators and his passing came as a sudden shock to his friends, loved ones, and supporters. He was a staunch advocate of acequias during his 34 year tenure as a lawmaker, sponsoring numerous bills and memorials for acequias over the years in close partnership and solidarity with the state's acequia leadership.

Carlos was the youngest in a large family and his parents died when he was a boy. He was raised mostly by an older sister who he continued to visit on a regular basis and help her with chores around the house. His parents operated a ranch and he remained connected to Acequia del Llano in Questa. Although he was not an active rancher, his roots in the land shaped his values as a legislator and eventually as one of New Mexico's greatest acequia advocates.

He started his role in leadership with his union at the mine in Questa. He was a welder, eventually earning a leadership role in the union. He became a Taos County Commissioner and was later appointed to the State Senate where he would continue to serve for over three decades.

Perhaps his most significant pieces of acequia legislation were those that he passed in 2003, with Speaker Ben Lujan as the co-sponsor in the House of Representatives: 1) acequia authority to approve or deny water transfer applications and 2) acequia authority to operate water

banks to internally reallocate water rights and prevent loss for non-use. These two bills were a historic affirmation of the importance of acequias in their respective communities.

“...he remained steadfast in his support of acequias. One of our elders said about him, “El Carlos no se raja.” In English, “Carlos never gives up.”

Even when acequia bills encountered opposition from strong interests, such as real estate developers or industry, he remained steadfast in his support of acequias. One of our elders said about him, “El Carlos no se raja.” (In English, “Carlos never gives up.”)

He would later go on to sponsor legislation affirming acequia easements, clarifying the flexibility in the width of acequia easements, providing stronger enforcement powers for acequias, and improving notice of water transfers.

An area where he had some of his greatest impact was with funding. He appropriated funding to the Acequia and Community Ditch Fund,

which helped provide legal defense to thousands of acequia irrigators facing adjudication of their water rights. In the 2019 legislation session, Senator Cisneros, with co-sponsors Senator Pete Campos, Senator Richard Martinez, as well as House Representatives Andrea Romero and Bobby Gonzales, passed legislation creating a \$2.5 million fund. This ensures a steady, recurring source of funding for acequia projects for generations to come.

New Mexico lost in Senator Carlos Cisneros a champion for the rights of rural communities to retain control and democratic decision-making over their water. As an acequia champion, he lifted our voices to the highest levels of policymaking in New Mexico and gave us a seat at the table. He never wavered in his support for acequias, even in the face of strong political forces that countered our collective efforts. He used his position for good. For that, we remember Senator Carlos Cisneros with great affection, con mucho cariño. Estimado Senador, gracias por su apoyo y su liderazgo. Estamos muy agradecidos. We are grateful for the life you lived and the fights that you fought on our behalf.



## Música y Teatro de las Acequias

**David García and Jeremías Martínez** are an acoustic musical ensemble from northern New Mexico acclaimed for their depth of tradition and culture. They are a versatile musical duo sometimes playing in formal venues but often playing for family and community gatherings. Their music graces the Santuario de Chimayo for Sunday mass on a regular basis. David and Jeremías share their musical talent at the Congreso every year and assemble an expanded group of musicians for Las Mañanitas at the start of the day. David Garcia was recipient of the Acequia Scholar of the Year award at the 2017 Congreso de las Acequias.

## Un Corrido del Movimiento Acequiero - Treinta Años de Lucha

Narrative ballads known as the corridos have had a long lasting memory in New Mexico. Their performance has spanned generations relating stories along the spectrum from tales of famous horses, tragedies of love, heroic deeds of cultural warriors of days past as well as heartfelt eulogies of people who have passed on. **The Teatro Acequiero** has cooperatively created and will perform this new corrido which highlights the work of the New Mexico Acequia Association in its 30 year trajectory of activism and movement building. Through this corrido we would like to honor those who have worked so hard so that we may still open our headgates and hear the water rushing out, music to our ears. Synopsis: The corrido is performed around a table (the place we share our sustenance) which represents our collective memory (**La mesa de la memoria**), as each poetic verse is performed a symbolic item is placed on the mesa (as an ofrenda for día de difuntos) as a way to honor their memory and work.

Collectively our group would like our work to inspire other communities to engage the arts as a creative way to share our stories, which center around our kitchen tables. In that way, we conclude in celebration with a very special NMAA premier of **Agua es Vida**, a song written by Jeremías Martínez.

### El Teatro Acequiero

#### Participants:

Yolanda Jaramillo  
Nick Jaramillo  
Lucinda Ortega  
Patricia Perea  
Jeremías Martínez  
David García

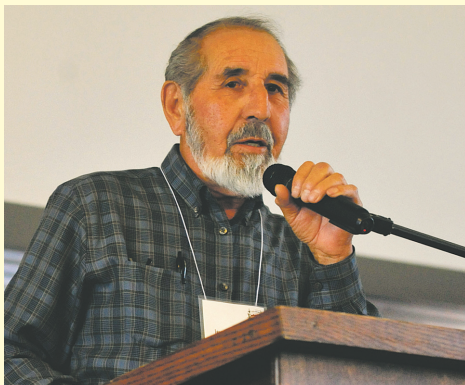


David García and Jeremías Martínez lead the march of the palas to the State Capitol on Acequia Day 2019.

# Sharing Querencia Across Generations

The acequia movement is comprised of people of all ages. On our 30th anniversary, we wish to recognize the importance of mentorship in inspiring others to continue our acequia legacy. These mentors are inspiring their own family members, friends, or neighbors to be farmers, parciantes, mayordomos, commissioners, and community leaders. Mentees will briefly introduce their mentors and thank them for their inspiration. Others in attendance will be asked to thank a mentor during our lunch and networking break.

**Lorenzo Candelaria** is a seventh generation farmer who owns and manages a family farm, Cornelio Candelaria Organics, in the Atrisco Valley. He is the Vice President of the South Valley Regional Association of Acequias, the Mayordomo of the Primera Acequia de Atrisco, and a member of the New Mexico Acequia Association. His use and protection of the acequia system has been a lifelong endeavor, and he hopes that through collaborative efforts we will continue to understand the essence of what water means to us as farmers and users of the water in the Rio Grande. Lorenzo is a dedicated educator, who offers opportunities throughout the year for youth interns and schools to come to his farm and learn about farming, traditions, and healthy living.



**Gilberto Sandoval** celebrated his 84th birthday on October 20th, 2019. He graduated from Bernalillo High School Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado. He was employed with the US Forest Service and retired after 35 years of service. He also served in the US Army, 1958-1960. He was married on April 19, 1958 to an exceptional woman named Genevieve Aguilar, and raised four children - one son, Gilbert Jr., and three daughters, Juanita, Camilla, and Monica. He is proud to have been a husband and parent for the past 62 years. Gilberto served in several volunteer positions as an EMT for the local ambulance service, coordinator for search and rescue, For the past 58 years, since 1961, he has

served as the Mayordomo for the East and West Sandoval Acequias, and as Chairman of the Jemez River Basin Coalition of Acequias for 36 years. He has been instrumental in the process of working with the Pueblos of Jemez and Zia on the mediated settlement and adjudication of the Jemez River basin, Aboussleman case.

**Kenneth V. Salazar** resides in the small community of La Mesilla, NM, which is located in the Espanola Valley. For 31 years, he worked at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) as a chemical technologist and technical staff member. He published 23 refereed publications and presented at 55 national scientific society meetings. For more than 32 years, he has worked on water issues including oversight of the Santa Cruz Irrigation District, serving as Governance Program Manager for the NMAA (5 years), Chairman for the Acequia de La Mesilla (21 years), and currently (since 2006) Supervisor for the East Rio Arriba SWCD. He also served as President of the NM Association of Conservation Districts for two terms.



Photo via the Santa Fe New Mexican



**Isabel Trujillo** grew up in Medanales where her family was involved with livestock, cleaning acequias, planting gardens, riding horses, and traditional food preservation. She has been married to Virgil Trujillo for 36 years living in Abiquiu with their three children, Ventura, Delilah and Chavela, as well as grandsons Isaiah and Jaden Trujillo, with another boy due in the New Year. Isabel is a grant writer and Director for El Pueblo de Abiquiu Library and Cultural Center, where she coordinates youth programs. She has been a Sembrado Semillas mentor, Escuelita de las Acequias participant, and Chair for Las Comadres Caucus. She supports several community projects including the Northern Youth Project, the Great Carrot Crunch with AFSC, and the Manitos Project. She gave testimony on the Farm Bill in Washington, D.C. with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. She provides herbal classes and is part of the NM State Library Rural Initiative.



**Miguel Santistevan** has Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Biology and Agriculture Ecology and certifications in Permaculture and ZERI design. He is an educator, seed saver, researcher of acequias and resilience, and radio producer of "¡Que Vivan las Acequias!" He writes semi-regularly for his blog and the Green Fire Times and has given dozens of professional presentations on acequia agriculture and the search for sustainability in a Climate Change context. Miguel directs the non-profit organization Agriculture Implementation, Research, & Education ([www.growfarmers.org](http://www.growfarmers.org)) that sponsors a project called "Growing Community Now" ([growingcommunitynow.org](http://growingcommunitynow.org)). He farms in Taos on the Acequia Madre del Sur with his wife and two daughters.

**Juliet Garcia-Gonzales** is a lifelong resident of Chamisal, has been married to her husband Edward Gonzales for 25 years, and is the proud mother of four children. She is neighbor to her parents and three grandchildren. She feels a strong obligation to serve the community that has held her family for many generations. She currently serves on the Chamisal Mutual Domestic Water Consumer Associations Board (8 years), Chamisal Community Cemetery Board (6 years), and El Centro Family Health Board (15 years). She served on the Penasco Independent School Board (12 years), and also served on the HELP New Mexico Advisory Committee (3 years). She is the Director of Operations for the New Mexico Acequia Association where she is charged with administering programs and projects. She is a traditional Yierbera and winemaker. In her free time she enjoys making jewelry and gathering firewood in the mountains with her family. She is passionate about maintaining and practicing local land-based traditions and feels that teaching it to families in a practical and relevant way ensures that our connection to land and family are passed on for generations to come.





## Sembrando Semillas Program

The Sembrando Semillas Project was created in 2005 by the NMAA to address the need to engage younger generations in the continuation of agriculture and land-based traditions associated with New Mexico's acequias. The Sembrando Semillas Network works to cultivate a cadre of acequia leaders of all ages passionate about their identity as land-based people who express their *querencia* through working the land, sharing water, and growing food. Participants work on agricultural-related projects in their own communities with a strong focus on acequia traditions and values. Within the network, participants learn from each other by exchanging ideas, visiting each other's projects and communities, and doing hands-on activities together. The 2019 Sembrando Semillas season is supporting a network of intergenerational groups in Chamisal, Mora, Abiquiu, Taos and South Valley of Albuquerque.

## Los Sembradores

Los Sembradores is the farmer training program of the NMAA comprised of farm trainers and apprentices. The program is built upon successful farmer training program curriculum developed by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Using AFSC's curriculum, 'Los Sembradores' learned technical skill development, production, marketing, business planning, crop rotation, and contemporary irrigation techniques. Utilizing years of experience in strengthening agricultural production, Los Sembradores program aims to strengthen the next generation of farmers through innovative, hands-on training, immersing trainees in a year of on-site learning activities. Apprentices use farmland and water rights that are an integral part of the acequias, centuries-old irrigation systems that support the livelihoods of thousands of small-scale farmers and ranchers in New Mexico.





# Acequias in the Next 30 Years: NMAA Young Leaders Reflect on Our Future

Some of NMAA's staff were just children or were not even born when NMAA was founded 30 years ago. Now is their time to make their contribution to the movement. We will hear the next generation of acequia leaders share their hope they have for the future, as well as their perspective on some of the challenges that lie ahead in the next 30 years.



The first cohort of apprentices for Los Sembradores Farmer Training Project: Matt Encinias, Nicanor Ortega, and Shane Tolbert.

# Through the Eyes of our Youth: Perspectives from the Carson National Forest Acequia Inventory Crew 2019 Field Season

Last summer, a group of Taos and Peñasco youth documented acequias for the cultural resource program on the Carson National Forest. The students recorded nine acequias using state of the art technology. However, their most memorable experiences came from interactions with parciantes, mayordomos, Forest Service personnel, and each other. They are excited to share their Esri Storymap presentation.



Acequia Madre del Sur del Rio Don Fernando. Photo credit: Miguel Santistevan



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"Assuring our future through conservation"

## 2019 Honorees

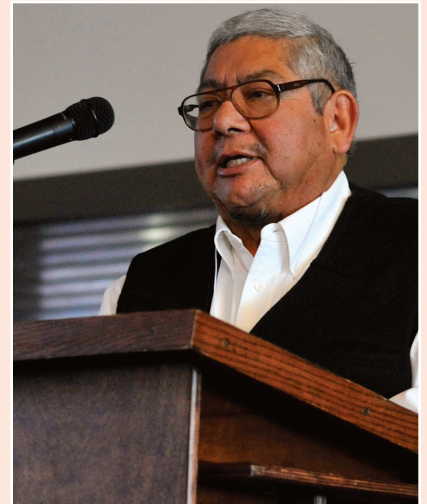
**David Benavides** is director of the land and water rights project for New Mexico Legal Aid, a position he has held for 29 years. He received both his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of New Mexico, and, upon graduating from law school in 1990, was awarded a Skadden, Arps Public Interest Law Fellowship to begin his work with acequias and land grants on land and water rights. David has advised countless acequia officials on water rights protection methods and governance matters. His work has additionally included representing acequias in gaining legal recognition for their water rights, their historic water-use customs, and decision-making authority in local water decisions. He has assisted land grants in retaining their common lands against various legal threats, and in 2008 coauthored a legal history of New Mexico land grants for the New Mexico Attorney General. He lives outside of Santa Fe.

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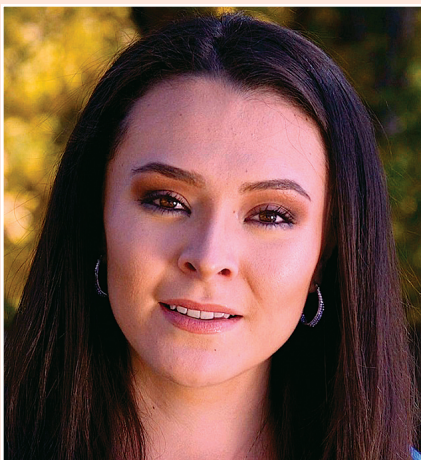


**Harold Trujillo** is from Ledoux, a village in Mora County where he serves as President of Acequia de la Isla, like his father and grandfather before him. He received his B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from New Mexico State University and has had a distinguished career. He is currently Energy Technology and Engineering Bureau Chief in the Energy Conservation and Management Division at the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department. Harold worked a lifetime to preserve water rights of community acequias, to protect our seeds, and to promote food production. He co-founded the New Mexico Acequia Association in 1989 and is currently the President. He is also President of La Asociacion De La Acequias del Valle de Mora and Past President of the New Mexico Watershed and Dam Owners Association. He is also a certified organic farmer and a registered professional engineer in New Mexico.

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## Special Feature



**Olivia Romo** is a farmer, poet and water rights activist from Taos, NM. She earned her dual Bachelor's degrees in English and Chicana/o Studies from the University of New Mexico in 2015. Olivia is also a recognized spoken word artist and storyteller. In 2011, she was titled the New Mexico State Slam Poetry Champion. She was also nominated as a "Remarkable Woman of Taos" and "A Woman to Watch" for the 2013 community-wide celebration honoring outstanding Taoseñas. Olivia is a bilingual poet whose language is immersed in the regional Manito dialect and culture of Northern New Mexico. Olivia intentionally focuses her activism and poetry to educate and mobilize New Mexicans around the risks and uncertainties of their natural resources. She was featured in the Western Folklife Center's poem-film Series.



-----THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS-----

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*Keep the Valley Green!*



# AFSC NEW MEXICO

**A history of accompanying the people of New Mexico**

Since 1976, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) program in New Mexico has accompanied local people in the struggle for self determination, with particular attention to water and land use. We train small farmers in sustainable agriculture, build green infrastructure and coordinate several farm to school programs thereby providing affordable healthy food, protecting land and water rights, and upholding traditional cultural practices.



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**based on the Healthy Soil Act (signed into law April 2, 2019)**

**"To promote and support farming and ranching systems and other forms of land management that increase soil organic matter, aggregate stability, microbiology and water retention to improve the health, yield and profitability of the soils of the state."**

# NMDA

For more information visit [www.nmda.nmsu.edu](http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu) or call (575) 646-2642



*Tewa Women United is celebrating 30 years of Beloved Community, many of those in partnership with New Mexico Acequia Association. Together, we celebrate Wo'watsi, Our Breath, Our prayer, Our Commitment to Live with Good Intentions, in the years to come.*



*The Heart & Soul of Health in New Mexico*



**Congratulations on 30 years from New Mexico Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management.**

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