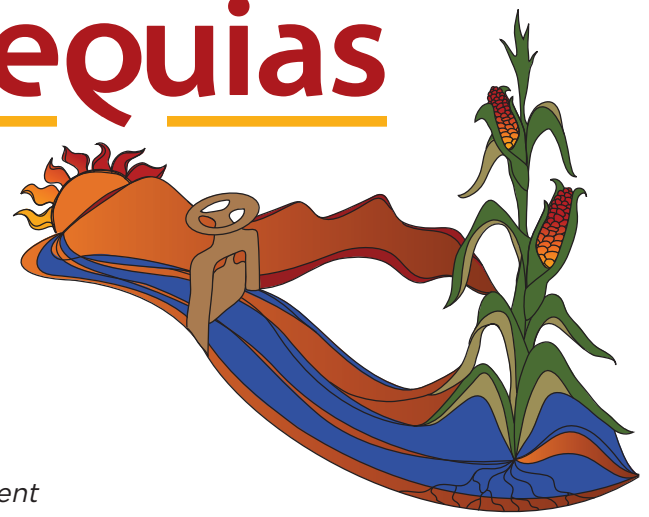


# Noticias de las Acequias

New Mexico *Acequia* Association • Winter 2015



## Message from the President, 2015

by Harold Trujillo, President,  
New Mexico Acequia Association



NMAA President Harold Trujillo, delivering the President's Address at the 16th Annual Congreso de las Acequias at the Hispanic Cultural Center on November 21st 2015. Photo by Seth Roffman.

*As I reflect on my first year as president and as cofounder of the New Mexico Acequia Association, I see that much has been accomplished and much work remains to preserve our Acequia water rights and ways of life. My goals are to preserve the work of our ancestors, strengthen the organization and strengthen our family farms.*

### Maintain and improve our infrastructure.

Acequias have a very high value from an infrastructure and environmental point of view. Acequias provide a significant environmental service by creating green islands in an arid environment for wildlife, crops, livestock and our families. In addition, the replacement value of our diversions, flumes, farm head gates and easement are probably worth several 100's of thousands of dollars or more.

We need to start developing long range plans to maintain, renew and improve our Acequias. We need to make our systems easy to operate and more water efficient. We already see this plans (asset management plans) being requested for applications to the Water Trust Board or for our ICIP plans to request funding. We also need to look at our internal resources with our Acequia parcientes

who have equipment and skills that can improve our Acequias. Our ancestors did not depend on the state or federal government to build and maintain our Acequias.

### To strengthen the NMAA by increasing the capacity of our regional associations, creating new regional associations and becoming more self-sufficient.

Regional associations can help their local Acequias resolve water issues or inform them of statewide issues that will affect them. For example, regional associations can help develop capital outlay projects and prioritize needs. We currently have the Jemez region that develops, prioritizes, coordinates and implements projects funded by the legislature.

We also need to voice our concerns for our water rights and way of life from all parts of the State where we have Acequias. We need to create regional associations in areas that are not represented. We have Acequias all over the state, not just in the northern part of the state.

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## Acequia de Los Lovatos, 300 Años Celebration

by Juanita Lavadie & Olivia Romo,  
NMAA Staff

On September 20th 2015, Taos Mayor Dan Barrone stood among some of the strongest acequia leaders, advocates, and farmers in the Taos valley to proclaim Acequia de Los Lovatos Day, a historic moment where as a community we will honor the preservation, dedication, and strength of our acequia traditions as a profound livelihood. September 20, 1715 marked the first official documentation of the Acequia de Los Lovatos in a correspondence between the Alcalde de Taos and the Gobernador de Nuevoméxico in regards to a Taos Valley land grant request. Alcalde Juan de la Mora Pineda indicated that the tract lay north of the middle road between las piedras negras

on the west and la toma de la acequia to the east, one of the earliest references to this specific acequia in the Taos area.

The Acequia de Los Lovatos' flowing into Ranchitos de Taos was already well in use when it was identified as one of the cardinal boundaries of the land grant in question. It is also one of four Taos acequias with special designation in light of early use with close proximity to the Taos Plaza. Official identification of the acequia, through colonial protocol correspondence, established a specific seniority date and status. Acequia de Los Lovatos feeds from the Rio Pueblo water which courses from the mountains through the center of the Taos Pueblo. The 1715 correspondence also identifies the conditions to be met with acquisition

of granted land. (References from John O Baxter's book, *Spanish Irrigation in the Taos Valley*, pg 7, NM State Engineer Pub., 1997. Includes names of grant applicant, NM Gobernador and Taos Alcalde.)

At this beautiful day of commemoration, Father Daniel Gutierrez centered the celebration with a blessing of the water from the acequia, reminding us about the true faith and sacrifice it takes to be stewards of the water, without which there would be no life in our lush valley. These blessings flowed into the rich commentary given by Acequia de Los Lovatos' president, Mario Suazo, by Taos Historian Roberto Romero, who re-

*continued on page 8*



(l) President of Acequia de los Lovatos, Mario Suazo, receiving the Acequia de los Lovatos Day Proclamation from Taos Mayor Dan Barrone. (r) Historian and professor David Garcia plays for celebration attendees. Photos by Francis Santistevan from UNM-Taos, Digital Media Arts Program.

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## Congreso Approves 2015 Resolutions

by Paula Garcia, NMAA Executive Director

The 2015 Congreso de las Acequias (see also pages 6 and 7) was a celebration of the lifetime of work of many leaders with recognition of numerous water defenders and awards to deserving community leaders who keep our acequia communities vibrant! The Congreso is also the largest gathering of acequia leaders in the state and it serves as the culmination of a year-long process to analyze policy issues and develop policy recommendations. Through our process, NMAA leaders consider several trends affecting acequia communities and develop resolutions expressing a policy position or a strategy for accomplishing our mission.

This year, the Congreso de las Acequias adopted several resolutions. The Plan del Movimiento de las Acequias is a bold call to action in which NMAA will embark on a participatory process to develop a Manifiesto on the Future of Acequias with meetings and events around the state, culminating in a presentation of the plan at the 2016 Congreso de las Acequias. Also, along the lines of community organizing and leadership development, there was a renewed focus on women's leadership. Las Comadres de las Acequias, a women's leadership caucus, presented a resolution recognizing the contributions of women and resolving to coordinate at least one workshop for women who are serving or who are interested in serving as elected officials on their respective acequias. Another resolution supported the Water is Sacred initiative of the South Valley Regional Association of Acequias and CESSOS.

Two resolutions were focused on federal policy, particularly in relation to USFS lands. NMAA voted to support Traditional Use legislation currently being drafted by Congressman Ben Ray Lujan which would recognize land grants and acequias within USFS lands and recognize traditional uses. For acequias, traditional uses are mainly associate with the maintenance, improvements, or replacement of historic irrigation structures. A second resolution dealing with the USFS was the NMAA position on the expansion of the Pecos Wilderness. NMAA carefully considered the various viewpoints on the proposal and took into consideration that land-based communities around the proposed area continue to have concerns about the expansion, particularly in areas within Taos County in the Rio Pueblo watershed.

Two resolutions concerned state policy. One was a resolution opposing the objectives of SB 665 from the previous legislative session. The purpose of the bill was to streamline the water transfer and water leasing process by circumventing due process protections of importance to acequias and other interests who may want to protest such applications. Other objectives of the bill related to ground-water depletion and speculation of water rights. A second state policy resolution addressed the respective roles of the NMAA and the New Mexico Acequia Commission in which NMAA expressed support for the role of the NMAC and resources to carry out their purpose. In turn NMAA requests of the Commission recognition of the role of the NMAA in providing educational services and technical assistance to acequias.

Finally, the Congreso approved a resolution expressing support for continued hydrological research at NMSU by Dr. Sam Fernald. His research team has documented with on-site data the hydrological benefits of acequias so streams and aquifers. Another resolution encouraged acequia officials to engage in emergency and disaster planning in coordination with county emergency managers. All the 2015 resolutions are posted at the NMAA website at [www.lasacequias.org](http://www.lasacequias.org) 💧



### Message from the President, 2015

*continued from page 1*

We also need to become more self-sufficient. Currently, less than 10% of the funding for the services we provide by NMAA comes from our membership.

#### **We need to strengthen our family farms.**

We are facing pressure from our communities, cities, developers and others who want water rights for their own needs and ventures. We need to look at improving the crops we grow and trying new more valuable crops and more efficient irrigation systems. We also need to restore our traditional methods and spend time in the field to guide and shepherd the water to prevent over-watering and waste. Our traditional system of water allocation by time (datas) is inherently water efficient because it encourages us to irrigate the most we can with our time allocation.

I welcome your suggestions and hope for your support to implement these goals. 💧

## Reflections by Las Comadres de las Acequias

Women have had a historical role in the support and survival of acequias for generations, including their role as farmers and irrigators, serving as elected officials in some cases, providing labor and meals for other laborers, and teaching children the values of land-based culture and way of life. Las Comadres Caucus is a group of women in acequia leadership that hope to nurture, empower and bring other women in leadership together. The New Mexico Acequia Association is opening a space for women in the *Noticias de las Acequias* to reflect on seasonal land based traditions, organizing, and other personal endeavors or struggles they are a part of in order to develop and strengthen support systems for women leaders, particularly in acequia communities. *Acequieras unidas defenden agua, tierra, y familia!*

### Comadre Reflection

by Maria Gallegos

It was nineteen eighty something and we were on the move, yet again. As we crossed the border from one county to another, in the rain and in between the thunder and lightning, I swore that I would hold my breath until the day I could return home. Home. San Miguel County. The place of my birth where I could breathe, think and be free to be the Mestiza, Chicana radical thinker/dreamer that I was born to be. San Miguel County, the place where I learned about poetry, arte, music, literature, theatre, history and me. San Miguel County, where I saw my first live play at Ilfield Auditorium; where I saw Don Quixote: Man of La Mancha at the Kiva; San Miguel County where the Red Clay of Mother Earth holds my roots—where the veins of precious water and la tierra have always been and will always need to be protected.

Moving from San Miguel County to a place that was as unfamiliar to me as I was to it, at a time when I was (or so I thought) just beginning to figure out my place in this Journey, met me with openness and nurturing welcome. By way of Santa Rosa, we landed in Puerto de Luna on farmland. We had lived on farmland before, where we grew calabasas, maiz, pepinos, peas, chile y mas. One place we had access to irrigation by the acequia; the other we watered with well water. In

Puerto de Luna, we grew maiz, chile, ajo, sandia, melon, pepinos, radishes, peas, beets, quelites... off the acequia which get its water from the Rio Pecos. We had our own animals and therefore our own source of meat. Sure we were 11 crowded in a four room house, sometimes without water, sometimes without heat but we had good food to eat... and books, lots of books to read. We dried, froze and canned food for the winter months... carne seca was and still is my favorite (though, I can be persuaded with cabrito cooked in a pit, or capulin jelly.) Puerto de Luna accepted my curiosity and showed me Her gifts. I spent many hours atop La Mesa Encantada day dreaming and declaring to the hawk circling above, "I will never leave this land—I shall be a farmer!"

It is now nearly the year 2016 and I am still holding my breath hoping to return home. Though I have lived in Albuquerque for twenty years I have never accepted it to be my home. A few years ago I was invited to a local poetry event in 'Burque' and for the first time I felt like I fit in. It did not take me a long time to figure out why... this particular monthly poetry community gathering brought in folks from El Norte... folks like me who shared words about farming and traditional life—something I felt at home with—like smelling piñon and orange peels on top of la estufa. I met women who are leaders within the New Mexico Acequia Association and started to connect. Feeling like I could share my story and dreams with these beautiful, intelligent, and dedicated women reminded

me that I can return to farm and learn from my Dad—what he tried to gift to me but I resisted, so many years ago.

If not for the breath in between the lines of poetry I write, I might have forgotten that I am a farmer. Seems like poetry held my breath for me so I could breathe and live until I get home. 💧



Maria Gallegos with her father, Tony Gallegos at the Tri County Farmers Market in Las Vegas.

## Acequia Pathways to Funding: Financial Compliance

by Paula Garcia, NMAA Executive Director



NMAA Workshop, "Acequia Pathways to Funding: Financial Compliance," held at the Nambé Community Center on December 4th, 2015. Photo by NMAA staff.

Act. Most acequias need only submit an annual certification letter but acequias with revenue over \$50,000 or with expenditure of state funds have to submit a report prepared by an accountant. Susan Rodriguez presented on behalf of DFA Local Government Division. She advised that any acequia with revenues over \$10,000 in year is considered a "local public body" for purposes of reporting requirements to DFA. These include annual budgets and quarterly reports.

NMAA can provide additional guidance in meeting these funding requirements. Please call Serafina at 505-995-9644 for more information or for contact information at state agencies who can also provide assistance. Also, NMAA will be holding additional workshops before June 2016 in the Aztec/Farmington area, Mimbres Valley, San Miguel County, Taos County, and Mora County. Dates and locations will be announced in the NMAA online newsletter. Call the NMAA office for more information. 💧

# Homage to Piñon



Photo by Olivia Chavez.

## Bendición de Piñon

by Juliet Garcia, NMAA Staff

The harvest brought about the loveliest crop of piñon. It's a topic everywhere I go, and until the recent snow storms, people were still out on southern slopes picking piñon. The entire region was bountiful with Piñon. People were picking in Pot Creek, Placita, Vadito, Chamisal, the area between Picuris and Dixon, Truchas, and in the Santa Cruz Dam Area. I heard of Piñon picking as far north as southern Colorado, and as far south as the Manzano mountains.

What I know about Piñon, is that if the conditions are just right, Piñon trees produce the lovely pine nut only every 7 years. I have lived in Chamisal my entire life, and this is only the 4th time that I am fortunate enough to have the pleasure to pick in my back yard.

I heard stories about an individual that got bit by a rattlesnake while picking piñon and saw the pictures of his hand on facebook. There were photos demonstrating the size of this year's Piñon, alongside stories and pictures of the many pounds that were picked by individuals or combined efforts of husband and wife.

I even understand that there was a piñon harvest in Mexico, which I came across in Pojoaque early one morning on my way to work. I was excited about how inexpensive it was, and then upon approaching the gentlemen, being told in Spanish that he was "going to tell the truth." He told me that the Piñon was hard. It turned out to be really thick and hard, unlike any piñon I have never seen. My excitement quickly exited as I felt that I may break a tooth in cracking the shell.

Piñon prices varied from \$12 a pound to \$20 depending on location. I was sure I would pick a nice amount, and then didn't make the time. So I scheduled a piñon picking day with friends and family, then the evening before, the weather provided a fair amount of moisture. Some of us made it late that next morning, and others didn't. We sat together, ate sandwiches and chips as a group, and it turned out to be a great day!

We tried a couple different ways to harvest Pinon. On one occasion, we tried using a tarp to catch the piñon as my husband shook the branches with an old painter's extension stick that he attached a horse shoe to. The tarp was tricky, since you could easily pick up cactus. We opted for what seemed the simplest. My husband would shake the trees, and once we were all accommodated, we would sit under a tree and just pick piñon. Some trees were abundant, and you could sit there and pick piñon for hours. I personally found it to be very peaceful and meditative.

Of course I looked up "Piñon" on the internet and learned some things. There is a Piñon Nut Company here in New Mexico where you can purchase a pound of pinon for \$24.95. The nut is high in Vitamin E, high in manganese, (good for healthy bones); they have plenty of fiber, and of course, the dreaded confirmation that there is 1,000 calories in 1 cup of pinon.

At the end of the day, any Piñon stashed for the season is a huge prize. It's a gift, it's delicious, and that's truly how it feels. 💧

*"Unlike other crops introduced by the Spanish settlers, piñon is a native of the Americas but it also grows in Europe and Asia usually in altitudes between 4,500-7,500 feet. This is usually the same elevation most of the acequias (traditional irrigation canals) in New Mexico and throughout the world are found. If there is piñon, there is also bound to be acequias, carrying water to sustain agriculture."*

—Juan Estevan Arellano in  
*"Moctezuma Born of a Piñon Seed"*

## Food, Fuel, Medicine

by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff

I have waited seven years for you at 9,300 ft. above the Taos Valley. I watched as you combated the bark beetle, drought, and millions of wood haulers who've brought you to your knees after your centuries of commitment to our mountains—  
our protection.

You have kept me warm through the toughest winters—  
chainsaw chopping consciousness, chips of ocote, and the stories  
around the wood stove.

It's been a few years since your trementina crusted my knees searching  
for your fruit.

Traces of your existence linger at the bottom of my freezer and I can't  
help but pray for your return home.

But this year, rain was a frequent visitor.  
Muddy portals along dirt roads, lips of aspen leaves curled and pursed  
with excitement!

Acequias, llenita—gurgling with laughter as their water toppled over,  
spilling into the roads and down the canyoncitos.

Children, stand strong in the middle of the storm—mouths stretched  
open like a morning glory awaiting drops of rain to bless their tongues.

The smell of your pine needles after a fresh wash is invigorating, re-  
minding me that this is the same breath my ancestors took thousands  
of years ago.

I promise you that if you are lost, you can still follow the Camino Rael  
where grandfather piñon pines lead the way, guiding you from Mexico  
back to Atzlan.  
Home

The return of Piñon to our mountains this year was a blessing, like a  
mature soldier that returned back from war—  
grown, hardened, wearing a bronze armor of war.  
Returning to feed his people.

As the harvest approached, people pilgrimaged from all corners of the  
state to kneel at your presence.

One can hear the ringing of Folgers coffee cans as people deposit  
bronze nuts into their winter savings.  
Families pack a sack lunch and adventure into the mountains together.  
Cars parked along the side of the forest roads and all you can hear is  
the breath of the mountain—  
laughter  
and snapping of pine needles.  
All you can see is bright red panyos wrapped around sweaty foreheads  
as people pick—  
snap  
crack  
and nibble away!

Today we pray, and give thanks for generous amounts of Piñon that our  
sacred mountains produced and we respect this offering by harvesting,  
sharing, and snacking for years to come!

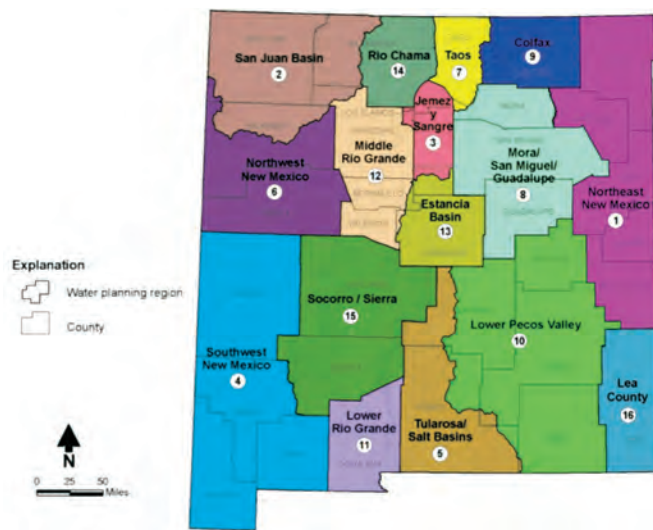
# Regional Water Planning: Acequia Voices are Needed

by Serafina Lombardi, NMAA Staff

The participation of acequia leadership in regional water planning is vital. The Office of the State Engineer is currently working with the state's 16 regions to update their plans.

Regional Water Plans support:

- ◆ Stewardship and protection of NM water resources
- ◆ Meet future water needs
- ◆ Incorporate public input on water management policies
- ◆ Integrate water quality (NMED) with water management
- ◆ Provide strategic plans for policy and project development
- ◆ Forecast funding needs for program implementation



It is essential that acequias stake out a claim to future water use and infrastructure projects. The New Mexico Acequia Association strongly encourages regional acequia associations and local acequia leadership to take an active role in crafting the regional water plans.

On December 4, 2015, NMAA and the New Mexico Acequia Commission co-hosted a workshop on regional water planning with presenters from the Office of the State Engineer and the Interstate Stream Commission at the Nambé Community Center. We will be hosting a series of workshops across the state to share what regional water planning is and why it is important. In the meantime do not hesitate to contact Angela Bordegaray, Water Planner at the OSE: (505) 827-6167 or Angela.Bordegaray@state.nm.us

For more information see: [www.ose.state.nm.us/Planning/regional\\_water\\_plans.php](http://www.ose.state.nm.us/Planning/regional_water_plans.php) ◆



2015 Acequia Photo Contest, by Quita Ortiz: "Chile Caribe in the Making," Pojoaque Valley, Santa Fe County



2015 Acequia Photo Contest, by Donatella Davanzo: "Acequia in Winter," Guadalupe Trail NW, Albuquerque

## Nítch'ih Tsoh (Strong Winds/December)

by: Chishí Haazbaa Montoya

"I am Chishí Dine'é (Chiricuhua Apache Clan) and born for Maii' deeshgizhnii (Coyote Pass/Jemez Pueblo clan), my maternal grandfather is Tsé deeshgizhnii (Rock Gap People clan), and my paternal grandfather is Ta'neeszahnii (Tangle People clan). I am from Tse Dildo'i (Hard Rock, Arizona Chapter) on the Diné Nation near Big Mountain. I follow the beauty way path in life and carry poetry and sáád (words) with me as a guide. My name is Chishí Haazbaa Montoya. This is how I am a Diné woman."

A blanket of white snow covers Diné land.  
Inside their homes, The People weave together ancient stories and songs.  
A grandmother sits a child on her lap and begins reciting,  
haigo baa dahane'ígíí.

She breathes life into winter stories, games, and teachings.  
They never died, but were stored deep in the arroyos of her memory.

The snow brings blessing within the four sacred mountains.  
Children are kept inside their warm homes.

Anxious, they begin  
playing games like t'óót tsósí bee nida'jít' o'ígíí.  
A string dances between fingers, summoning more stories,  
strengthening memory.  
They play ké niijeeh, and sing  
shoe game songs that tell the story of Night and Day,  
strengthening probability skills.

A grandmother  
is an anchor.  
She is the Winter.  
White hair falls gently down her back like snow to the ground.  
Hai is not only a season called Winter, it is teaching and learning.

Strong winds of sacred knowledge sweep across the land.

haigo baa dahane'ígíí - winter stories  
t'óót tsósí bee nida'jít' o'ígíí - string games  
ké niijeeh - Navajo moccasin game or Navajo shoe game  
Diné - Navajo/The People

## 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Congreso de las Acequias “Unidos, Defendemos Nuestras Aguas”



Concilio Board Members (Left to right: Paula Garcia, Executive Director of NMAA, Harold Trujillo, President of NMAA, Antonio Medina, Founder of NMAA, Don Bustos, James Beard Awardee, Santiago Maestas, President South Valley Regional Acequia Association, Yolanda Jaramillo, Board Member)

by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff

On Saturday, November 21st 2015 our acequia leaders, farmers, and supporters gathered at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in the South Valley of Albuquerque to honor, reflect, and stand in solidarity for the protection of acequias. This year's Congreso was a great success, with our biggest turnout ever! Over 300 attendees, including delegates from over 20 regional acequia associations, youth, students, supporters and water defenders state wide. Our co-hosts, South Valley Regional Association of Acequias, graciously provided a warm breakfast of local atole, menudo and sopapillas. Many volunteers sacrificed their time and energy to make sure the event flowed smoothly and we are so grateful for their help. The Bendicion de las Aguas, led by Sister Joan Brown, renowned climate justice activist, was elegant and thoughtful with offerings of water from over 70 different acequias or streams. In addition to this, Las Comadres Caucus helped set up a beautiful altar with pictures of cherished women, remedios and flowers to kick off a special initiative in 2016 to support women leadership in acequias and agriculture.

This set the stage for an exchange and moment of recognition, “Unidos, Defendemos Nuestras Aguas” a space for water de-

fenders, guardian angels, and stewards of the water to speak about their individual fights and struggles to protect their water and communities. Acequeros passed the torch around the room to speak on behalf of the acequia projects, protests, and the denial of water transfers successfully accomplished in their region, a true glimpse into the acequia and water movement in New Mexico!

Yet, that's only the beginning. The Sembrando Semillas youth presented their photo voice project that narrated all the tarea they have done en la comunidad, their querencia, and how being a part of Sembrando Semillas has impacted their lives. Being at the National Hispanic Cultural Center, these same youth got the opportunity to tour the museum, where they visited the Torrón Fresco titled “Mundos de Mestizaje” painted by local Santa Fean, Frederico Vigil. In addition to this, the New Mexico Centennial Poet Levi Romero had us all laughing then brought us to tears with his poetry that captures the Manito experience of northern New Mexico. These moments of artistic expression remind us of why we fight so hard for our water and the future! These artistic and cultural reflections reinforce identity and traditions of Hispanic culture, nurturing a generation who are connected to the land, ancestral wisdom, and prepared to paint the future of acequia agriculture.

## Empanaditas de Carne

by Benita Martinez, Acequia Venita del Molina, Taos, NM



### Filling

1 lb. pork, beef, elk, deer, or beef tongue  
1 ½ c. Raisins  
2 c. applesauce or apple jam (optional)  
1 tsp. ground coriander seed  
1 tsp. ground cinnamon  
1 tsp. salt

1 c. sugar  
½ tsp. ground cloves  
½ c. shelled pinon or walnuts

\*Grind meat, add raisins, applesauce, sugar, spices and nuts. If the mixture is too dry add a little of the meat stock. Be careful paste is not too soft. It should be moist but thick in consistency.

### Dough

1 cake yeast	1 ½ c. water or milk	3 tbsp. fat
1 ½ tsp. salt	2 tbsp. sugar	Flour

\*Soak yeast in warm water. Heat water or milk, add fat, salt and sugar to it. Cool to lukewarm and add dissolved yeast. Add enough flour to make medium dough. Do not let rise. Roll out dough to 1/8 inch thick. Cut with biscuit cutter. If the dough rises after the biscuits are cut, roll them thin. Place 1 ½ teaspoon of mincemeat in center of rolled out dough. Fold and pinch together. Then make a turn back in the dough by taking edges between thumb and forefinger, pressing together and turning back in ridges. Let turnovers stand for 5 minutes. Then fry in peanut oil until evenly browned. Makes about 8 dozen.

My mother use to say, “No cuente su pan de cada día, ni sus tortillas, porque mi Dios no mide.”

Benita Martinez, 89, from Ranchos de Taos is a mother, seamstress, chef, and acequia farmer who also hosts regular novenas in preparation for special feast and saint days. Benita recalls the old ways of life and recognizes all the change her community has undergone; she talks about seeing her Tia's cellar go empty as the grocery stores became stocked with overpriced food of poor nutritional value. Benita's mother would take her homegrown wheat to the molino which their acequia is named after—“La Venita del Molino”—where she planted gardens and raised many chickens. At the age of twelve, Benita recalls learning how to cook from her mother and neighbors. Benita became a delicious talent, raising five generations of women along the acequia while weaving all the religious and cultural traditions into her lifestyle and cooking.



Benita Martinez standing next to Acequia Venita del Molino. Photos by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff.

# 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Congreso de las Acequias "Unidos, Defendemos Nuestras Aguas"



(l) Acequia Shout Out at the Congreso de las Acequias 2015. (r) Ben Ray Lujan Presenting Representative Carlos Cisneros and Peter Wirth with the "Ben Lujan Leadership Award" for their Acequia Advocacy. All Congreso de las Acequias photos taken by Seth Roffman, *Green Fire Times*.

This intergenerational movement is a model that the South Valley has been practicing for generations! Lorenzo Candelaria and Dora Pacias with Cornelio Candelaria Organics and Travis McKenzie with Grow the Future specifically presented about the work they have done across generations to grow food and strengthen the acequias. Filled with music, youth, and food as medicine this organization among many are healing toward a sustainable future that reclaims food justice as an honorable way of living, like our ancestors.

After the luncheon, NMAA inaugurated the first annual Ben Lujan Leadership Award for policymakers who have continued the legacy of acequia policy advocacy of former Speaker Ben Lujan who championed acequias during his legislative career. Congressman Ben Ray Lujan and his family presented the awards to Senator Carlos Cisneros and Senator Peter Wirth for their sponsorship of legislation benefiting acequias. Others honored included Jose Maestas for Mayordomo of the Year, Taos Soil and Water Conservation District for Organization of the Year, Virginia Necochea for Acequia Advocate of the Year, Ernie Chavez for Farmer of the Year, and Hector Gonzales for Lifetime Achievement.

After a delicious lunch we were honored to have Tom Blaine, New Mexico State Engineer present on Water and Acequias: Current Issues and Vision for the future. He introduced himself as an irrigator first and as a protector of New Mexico's water in his position as State Engineer. He addressed the multiple issues the Office of the State Engineer faces particularly with litigation with Texas, adjudications, infrastructure rehabilitation. We closed the day with La Marcha de los Acequeros led by Virgil and Isabel Trujillo who lead us into the annual meeting where resolutions like the Plan del Movimiento de las Acequias and others that NMAA will use to help steer projects that address needs identified by the acequia community.

We hope that everyone enjoyed themselves and nourished their bodies and minds to fuel themselves and any acequia project, initiative, and community to keep thriving together! Porque si es la verdad, Unidos, Defendemos Nuestras Aguas!! We are not alone, and we have a strong hope, chance, and roots for the future!

See you next year! 💧

**Que Vivan las Acequias!**



The Bendicion de las Aguas, led by Sister Joan Brown, OSF, a Franciscan sister and Executive Director of Interfaith Power and Light, was elegant and thoughtful with offerings of water from over 70 different acequias or streams.



## NEW MEXICO ACEQUIA ASSOCIATION: MISSION & VISION

The New Mexico Acequia Association is a statewide, non-profit organization founded in 1990.

### MISSION

Our mission is to protect water and our acequias, grow healthy food for our families and communities, and to honor our cultural heritage.

### VISION STATEMENT

In our vision, acequias flow with clean water, people work together to grow food, and communities celebrate cultural and spiritual traditions. People honor acequias as part of our heritage and express *querencia* through a strong connection to land and community. Knowledge and experience about growing food, sharing water, and saving seed are passed on from generation to generation.

Guided by our core values, the New Mexico Acequia Association grows a movement of people of all ages and walks of life to defend and protect our precious water by resisting its commodification and contamination. Through involvement in NMAA, families and youth are inspired to cultivate the land, care for our acequias, and heal past injustices. Communities have an abundance of healthy, locally-grown food because we recognize agriculture as a respected and dignified livelihood and way of life.



Enrique Romero and his son Taiyari Romero. Photo by Rita Topete.

## Ask a Water Lawyer

by Enrique Romero,  
New Mexico Legal Aid Land and Water Rights Program

### When an acequia officer resigns during his or her term of office, what should the acequia do to fill the vacancy?

Although there is not a simple answer to this question—as most water law topics go—the appointment process is fairly straightforward once you understand the law. What an acequia should do when one of its officers resigns—or otherwise leaves office—depends on several factors including whether the officer is a commissioner or mayordomo, whether the acequia is in an Article 2 or Article 3 county, and, in the case of commissioner vacancies, whether there are multiple vacancies at issue.

Let's go step by step. What is the officer position that needs to be filled? Remember, statute provides that there are four acequia officers: three commissioners and a mayordomo. If the officer vacancy is for *mayordomo*, the process is straightforward. The acequia commissioners, regardless of where the acequia is located, appoint the new mayordomo until his or her successor is elected and qualified at the acequia's next scheduled officer election.

When there is *one commissioner vacancy*, you need to ask another question: Is my acequia in an Article 2 or Article 3 county? As you probably know, New Mexico's acequias are governed primarily by Chapter 73 of the New Mexico statutes – which is found in the “Blue Book” that NMAA distributes at its acequia workshops. While the majority of “acequia law” is found in Article 2 of Chapter 73, some counties are governed by Article 3 in addition to Article 2. For a listing of the counties by article, check out NMAA's governance handbook. If your acequia is an Article 2 acequia, the remaining commissioners make the appointment and the appointed commissioner holds office until a successor is elected and qualified at the acequia's next scheduled officer election. If your acequia is an Article 3 acequia, the remaining commissioners *and* the mayordomo, or any two of them, appoint a commissioner to hold office until his successor is elected.

When there are *multiple commissioner vacancies*, the acequia again has to look at whether it is an Article 2 or Article 3 county. In Article 2 counties, the remaining commissioner makes the appointments for the two commissioner vacancies. However, in Article 3 counties it's a majority of the water right owners that makes the appointments for the commissioner vacancies.

Despite the statutory differences when it comes to commissioner vacancies, there are some common themes that all acequias should follow for all officer appointments. Appointments should be made as soon as possible after the officer resigns. Having only two commissioners, for example, presents the possibility of a tie on important acequia commission decisions, potentially stalling the acequia's decision-making process. Also, because the vacancy occurs during the predecessor's term, the appointed officer holds office only until the next election. Finally, the acequia election statute requires that each officer “shall be the owner of an interest in the ditch or the water therein.” This requirement applies to appointments as well. 💧

## Governance Tips

by Serafina Lombardi, NMAA Staff

### Is your acequia interested in applying for Capital Outlay from the State?

### NMAA is ready to assist your acequia in completing an ICIP this winter/spring.

#### What is an ICIP?:

An Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan is an online series of forms with questions about financial compliance, the infrastructure needs and potential funding sources of the acequia. Political subdivisions in New Mexico are strongly encouraged to do ICIPs. The process will support acequias in identifying, prioritizing, and funding infrastructure improvements. The Department of Finance and Administration/Local Government Division (DFA/LGD) coordinates the Local ICIP process. ICIPs must be submitted by June 15, 2016.

#### Steps to create an ICIP:

- 1) Identify the major infrastructure repairs or improvements needed by the acequia over the next 5 years.
- 2) Prioritize which improvements are the most urgent.
- 3) Acquire a design or cost estimate if at all possible.
- 4) Contact NMAA to get the process started.
- 5) NMAA will refer acequias that do not have a design or official cost estimate to the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts (NMACD) whom NMAA contracts with to acquire a cost estimate.
- 6) The acequia will obtain a “permission to access form” to enable NMAA staff to complete online forms.
- 7) The acequia will also call a noticed meeting to sign the “Resolution of Approval” form.
- 8) NMAA will work closely with a representative of the Commission to develop the plan, including various funding opportunities complete the online process and ensure all required information is submitted.
- 9) NMAA will continue to work with the commission through the Capital Outlay process and other funding opportunities.

NMAA encourages your acequia to contact us ASAP if you are interested in our assistance in completing an ICIP. It takes time to pull together all of the necessary information and we will be working through the winter and spring to complete ICIPs for acequias across the state. 💧

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## Acequia De Los Lovatos, 300 Años Celebration

*continued from page 1*

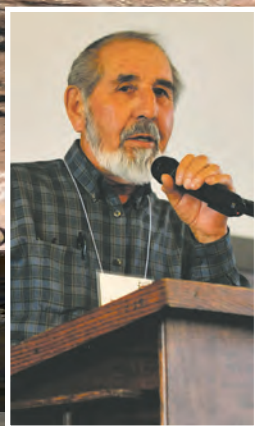
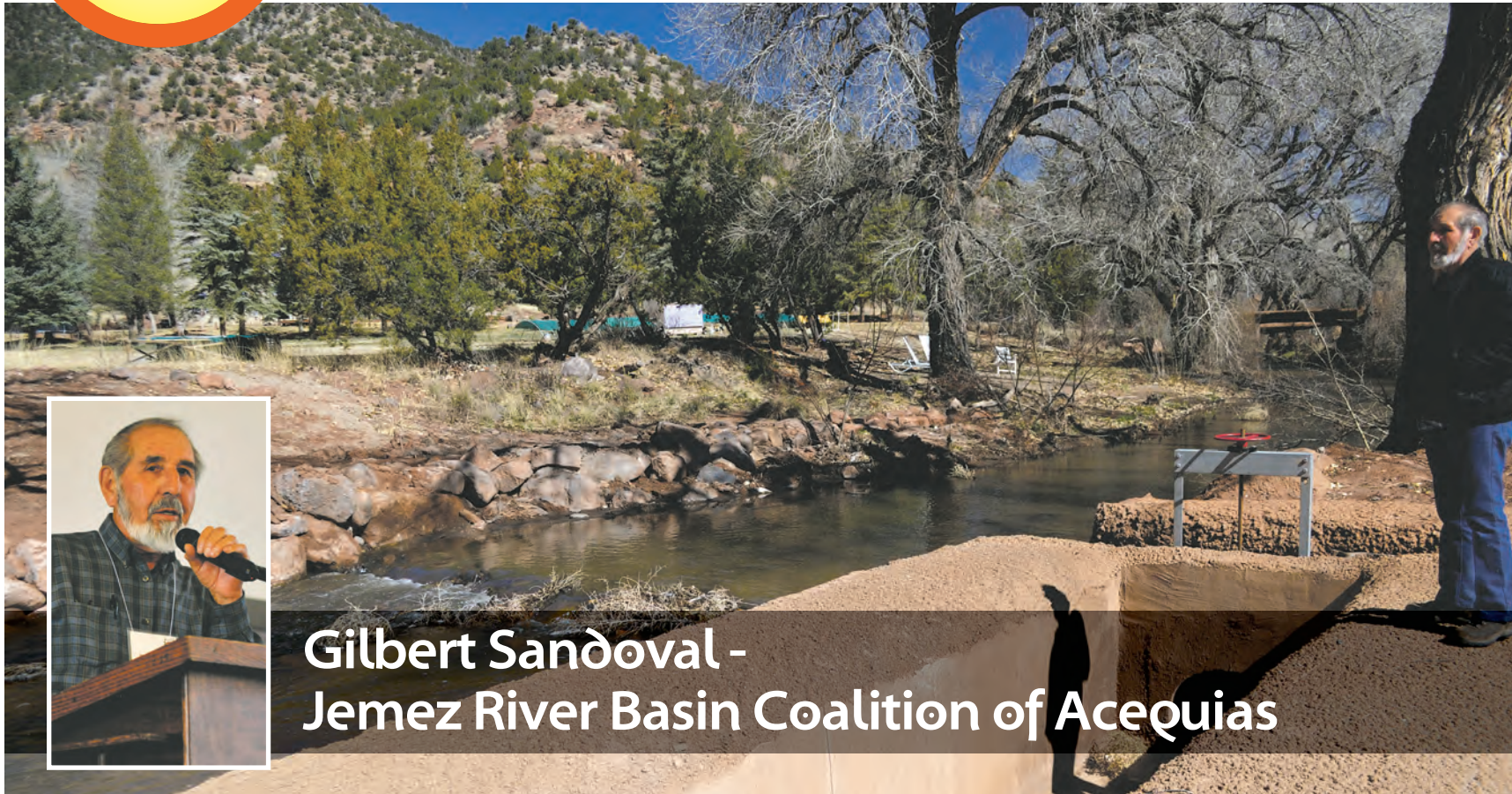


minded us of our powerful historic legacy as a land based people, and last but not least, by Ranchitos Native and Taos Agricultural Advocate, Stephen Trujillo, who respectfully extended acknowledgment to lifetime leaders while also presenting the daunting threats to acequias in Taos that we must overcome in order to protect our water for the next generation! Following this, historian and composer David García sang the “Cancion de las Acequias” in which the ring of his shovel pealed a beautiful message to the children playing in the park that day. Local Taoseña poet and NMAA staff member Olivia Romo read poetry that nourished hearts, while parcientes and community members lined up for a traditional New Mexico feast that nourished bodies, enabling them to celebrate one another and cultivate the energy to fight for the future of acequias in Taos. 💧





Our acequia communities are precious because of the common themes and values that we share, but also because of the unique story that every acequia has. In this section we put a spotlight on different acequia communities to encourage our readers, parciantes, and acequeros to reflect on what makes their acequia special and to share their remarkable story.



## Gilbert Sandoval - Jemez River Basin Coalition of Acequias

Above left: Gilbert Sandoval, Mayordomo of the East Sandoval Acequia and President of the Jemez River Basin Coalition of Acequias. Photo by Seth Roffman. Above: Gilbert Sandoval at the site of a new diversion dam for which he and the Jemez River Basin Coalition have obtained funding. Photo by Juanita Revak.

by Toribio Garcia, NMAA Staff

As the New Year approaches many acequia Commissioners and parciantes are eagerly waiting and preparing for the following year of infrastructure tasks and acequia management. For many Acequias it is during the off-season that they organize and prepare to submit an Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) and apply for Capital Outlay funding, a familiar process to some and a great endeavor for others. Interested in better understanding the process involved in applying for and managing funds awarded to an acequia, I sought out the guidance of Gilbert Sandoval, a wise and experienced acequero. Gilbert Sandoval is the Mayordomo of the East Sandoval Acequia and President of the Jemez River Basin Coalition of Acequias.

It was in 2007 that Mr. Sandoval was instructed at a New Mexico Acequia Association training season on how to prepare the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP). During this time he learned the process and went ahead and submitted his first ICIP. Mr. Sandoval explained to me that in order to submit to DFA he needed to have a letter of resolution by the Jemez River Basin Coalition of Acequias board. Since the Coalition is a non-profit organization it could not receive and manage state funds. Mr. Sandoval on behalf of the East Sandoval Acequia was appropriated the Capital Outlay funding which would manage and pass through the funding to other acequias. Mr. Sandoval informed me that "an acequia is considered an entity of the government and can serve as a fiscal agent, unlike the Coalition which could not serve as a fiscal agent." An Acequia has to have an active commission in order to be a fiscal agent.

Mr. Sandoval drafted a resolution within the guidelines of the ICIP process which he presented to the board members of the Jemez River Basin Coalition of Acequias. After the resolution was passed, the plan was submitted with the understanding that the funds received would then be disbursed to various acequia commissions within the Jemez River Basin. At the same time, the Coalition board members who signed the resolution suggested that East Sandoval Acequia be designated as the fiscal agent.

With the East Sandoval Ditch officially the fiscal agent, and everything in order, Mr. Sandoval submitted plans with requests for funds that included sponsorship forms signed by his state representative. The plans require that you list priority jobs that need to be completed by Acequias. Mr. Sandoval explained he was "able to easily list the projects that needed to be completed along with the priority of each project." Mr. Sandoval had completed a basic master plan through the Bureau of Reclamation, which listed all the infrastructure priorities of the whole basin.

The Jemez River basin Coalition of Acequias is comprised of 14 Acequias. Mr. Sandoval informed me that "the advantage of consolidating ICIP requests going out of Jemez basin is that instead of 14 individual Acequias applying for funds, only one request is made that benefits 14 Acequias." East Sandoval Acequia bank account received the money they had applied for totaling \$50,000. After funds were received a meeting was held with the Acequias to confirm priorities of use for the funds, along with establishing an estimated cost for each project that needed to be completed.

Mr. Sandoval on behalf of the East Sandoval Acequia then distributed the money to the Acequias with enough money to cover the prioritized items. The East Sandoval Acequia handled the disbursement of the money through the Interstate Stream Commission. Mr. Sandoval over saw all the projects that took place. He was required to track and report the work completed, the money spent and all the information needed for the Office of the State Auditor and the Department of Finance Administration.

The money was spent, the work was done and at the same time Mr. Sandoval instructed the commissioners of other Acequias on how to request and obtain valid invoices for their work, to get bids, and meet state compliance. Mr. Sandoval explained that "a lot of the work was done by parciantes. They would send invoices to me, and I would then send them off to the Interstate Stream Commission and then reimburse Acequias for expenditures." He informed me that "initially a lot of the acequias did not have capital needed to initiate the project." As a result of this dilemma, Mr. Sandoval had a meeting with the board of the Coalition and helped developed a plan that would allow the Coalition to loan money from Coalition funds to the Acequias. This allowed the Acequias to initiate their projects. The Interstate Stream Commission would then make a payment to the acequia, the acequia would then use that money to pay back the loan.

As a result of following this model for over 10 years and all the hard work from Gilbert Sandoval, the Jemez River Basin Coalition of Acequias, various commissioners and parciantes, the Jemez River basin has received a total of \$395,000 that has been distributed amongst the acequias. The projects completed include, a new diversion dam, new head gates, culverts, farm gates. They have also removed rocks, debris and silt from reservoirs totaling more than 5000 cubic yards. Mr. Sandoval encourages everyone to take advantage of the ICIP process to effectively plan Acequia projects, request funds in accordance with those plans, implement successful projects and "Don't give up." 💧

# Cambalache! Ending the Season Together with Food and Love



by Travis McKenzie

All photos by NMAA staff.

On November 7th our Sembrando Semillas familia came from Abiquiu, Atrisco, Chamisal, Chimayo, Española and Mora to celebrate our end of the year Cambalache at el rancho de Los Luceros in Alcalde. People brought the fruits of their labor and crops from this harvest season to share, like Capulín jelly, fresh salad and veggies, goat cheese, chile, frijoles, maíz y mas. The Cambalache is a way to come together and share the work we have done and what we have learned, and give each other energy and strength to prepare for the seasons to come. Don Antonio Medina led the group in a morning meditation that inspired a sense of awareness and purpose to who we are, and to what we were about to do. After the meditation each group shared stories and pictures from 2015 and we all reflected on the amazing work everyone has done. A beautiful and delicious lunch was prepared using all the food and items that were brought. There is something very special about cooking with people you love, and breaking bread with your friends and familia, and it was great to share that time together. During

lunch, Toribio, Travis, and all the Semillas helped gather audio recordings for the Sembrando Semillas photo voice project, which premiered at the 2015 Congreso de las Acequias.

After lunch we jumped right into our activities: limpiando frijol y maíz, and making dream catchers, wreaths, and medicine bundles. Doña Dora Pacias and Don Lorenzo Candelaria from Cornelio Candelaria Organics (Atrisco) facilitated a workshop on how to process dried blue corn for harina de atole. Lorenzo reflects, "The youth participating in this workshop were exemplary; the energy they brought to the workshop is the hope of our future. Joaquin Romero brought blue corn he grew in Mora. He shucked it, lo desgranó; winnowed it, lo ventió; roasted it, tostó; and milled it, molió." Dora and Lorenzo brought a corn shucker, una desgranadora, that has been in his family for generations. My Tio Padrino Qurino Baca, after serving in World War 2, returned to the family farm and realized he needed equipment to do the work that was necessary to produce

a sufficient amount. He found the hand cranked desgranadora, and we are still using it today. Gracias Padrino, y a los antepasados por la criansa y herencia que me dejaron. Dora and Lorenzo also brought a winnower, una ventadora, and we winnowed Marisela Trujillo's frijoles de Chimayo, Joaquin Romero's maíz azul de Mora, and maíz azul de Sostenga Farms. They also brought a mill, un molino, and we milled a fresh batch of roasted Atole. During the afternoon activities people also made beautiful dream catchers, wreaths, and medicine bundles. The good farmers from Chamisal brought jaras, chamiso, juniper, romero, dried flowers, beads and stones, and others herbs and medicines. We closed our gathering in a circle, to harness the energy and blessings we received, to wish everyone well on their journey home, and to prepare and look forward to our future to come. 💧

**¡Que vivan las acequias y que vivan Sembrando Semillas!**

# 2016 Legislative Preview: Capital Outlay and Budget Outlook

by Paula Garcia, NMAA Executive Director

The 2016 legislative session will start on Tuesday, January 19th and will continue for 30 days. For our state lawmakers, two of the primary goals of a 30-day session are to enact a budget for state government and to pass a Capital Outlay bill. Generally, legislation that has an impact on the state budget is considered “germane.” Other legislation with a purpose of changing policy can only be heard by the legislature if the Governor issues an Executive Order with a message that specifically puts that bill on her “call.” The NMAA will be primarily concerned with the budget and Capital Outlay package.

The outlook for the amount of Capital Outlay funding available for local projects appears dim. Because of a decrease in severance tax bond revenues, there will be less Capital Outlay funding generally. If there is any funding available for local projects, it will likely be less than what was available last year. However, local governments will be making requests for funds through Capital Outlay requests. If an acequia plans to request Capital Outlay, the NMAA suggests using the following checklist:

- The NMAA highly recommends that your acequia complete an Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) and secure matching funding for your project before requesting Capital Outlay. ICIPs were completed in June 2015 for Fiscal Year 2017 and NMAA is already working with acequias for the June 2016 deadline.
- If your acequia does not have an ICIP, NMAA highly recommends having a cost estimate. If your acequia has a completed design, you likely have a realistic cost estimate. If you have not completed a design or if your project does not require a design, your acequia should at least have a PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATE (obtained from a contractor, NMACD, or NRCS) that you can use to estimate the cost of an engineering design. If that is the case, your acequia should apply for funds for the design phase first. In the following year, after the design is completed, your acequia can then apply for construction funds.
- In accordance with Governor Martinez’ Executive Order 2013-06, local governments must be compliant with the Audit Act and DFA financial reporting requirements in order to qualify for Capital Outlay. NMAA can guide you through the process of financial compliance.

- The form for applying for Capital Outlay are located on the State Legislature website. [http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/capital\\_outlay\\_request.aspx](http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/capital_outlay_request.aspx)
- The Capital Outlay form has to be completed by you and signed by your legislator by January 31, 2016 and submitted to the Legislative Counsel Service.

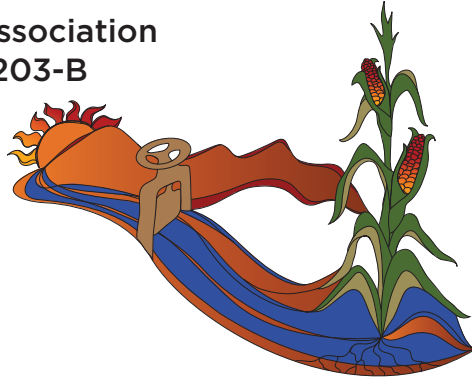
NMAA will be available to assist acequias with their capital outlay requests and will monitor the funding legislation during the session. In addition, the following are some of the budget matters of interest to the NMAA:

- NMAA is supporting an effort to protect the long-term solvency of the Irrigation Works Construction Fund. The fund was created in 1955 for the purpose of making improvements to irrigation infrastructure. On an annual basis since the 1980s, some of the fund has been appropriated to the Interstate Stream Commission for their acequia cost-share program. This program has benefitted many acequias over several years and it continues to be a top budget priority for acequias statewide.
- The principal of the Irrigation Works Construction Fund is nearly depleted because the fund was tapped in starting in 2009, during the time of budget shortfalls, to pay for agency operations. The Office of the State Engineer and the Interstate Stream Commission has requested that the legislature move away from using the IWCF for agency operations and to use General Funds instead. There are several legislators who support this effort but also acknowledge that it is difficult to allocate money from the General Fund given all the other demands in the budget process. The NMAA will be monitoring this budget issue during the session and in future legislative sessions to advocate for continued acequia funding and secure funding for the OSE and ISC.
- Other line items of interest to acequias include the Acequia and Community Ditch Fund (NMSU) which is administered by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to assist acequias with adjudication expenses and the Acequia and Community Ditch Education Program, which is administered by DFA and is used to provide educational services and technical assistance to acequias statewide (under contract with the NMAA). These two are vitally important to acequias in New Mexico and NMAA will monitor them in the hope that they remain at their current funding levels.
- Lastly, the New Mexico Acequia Commission is requesting an increase in their budget. The Commission is the Governor-appointed entity in DFA Local Government Division that is intended to serve as an advisory body to the state legislature, agencies, and the Governor. NMAA supports an increase in funding for the Commission to fulfill their statutory purpose. 💧



2015 PHOTO CONTEST WINNER!! | "Regando en el Rancho de Los Cordovas" | Acequia del Marrano, Taos, NM | Photo by Jacinta Chavez

New Mexico Acequia Association  
805 Early Street Suite 203-B  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
(505) 995-9644  
www.lasacequias.org



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Children excited to begin Las Posadas. (l-r) Jesse Melendez as Jose, Isabella Sandoval as an angel, and Esperanza Sandoval as Marie.



Father Julio Gonzales, Esperanza Sandoval as Marie and Jesse Melendez as Jose. Photos by Angelo Sandoval, Razafotografista.

## Las Posadas en Cordova, NM

by Angelo Sandoval, Commissioner on Acequia Atras de la Plaza

As December 16th approaches we know we have 9 days left before we celebrate Christmas. In northern New Mexico December 16th is more than just the nine days before Christmas, it is the beginning of a nine day prayer that leads to Christmas day. These nine days are celebrated with a play that dates back to Spain—the play is *Las Posadas*. This is the journey of Mary and Joseph looking for a place to stay as they arrive in Bethlehem.

In Cordova, NM, *Las Posadas* are celebrated on December 18th. As a member of the Holy Family Parish in Chimayo we are the third day of the Novena. I have yet to hear any stories of how the Posadas were done many years ago. As long as I can remember the Posadas have been celebrated in Cordova on the 18th of December. On this day, the community comes together to share a spiritual journey that has been passed down from generation to generation.

Today, the Posadas in Cordova have become more than just another stop on the nine day journey from El Valle to El Santuario de Chimayo. In recent years *Las Posadas* have been a celebration of Community, a celebration of seeing our old neighbors return to the church and traditions of our grandparents. It has become a celebration in which we are teaching our children, the generation of technology about ancient traditions that have kept our faith alive and the memories of our grandparents in our hearts.

As we celebrate community, faith and tradition on one holy and special night we also give thanks for the many blessings that we have been given during the last harvest. The question is how does a celebration like the Posadas tie in with the tradition of the acequia? Remembering that during the summer the acequia feed our jardines and arboleras with water and at the harvest we gathered our gain. During Posadas we share part of our gain. Some will prepare a plate with the corn they grew or the make a pie from the apples they grow. Though, we don't see this much in our modern era, we know that our antepasados shared their gain with each other.

The Posadas is a time of reflection and preparation for the next phase of the year, the next phase of our journey on the land. The Posadas of today are the same as they were 100 years ago. It is a time of family, a time when we come together to celebrate our faith, our traditions. For Cordova this is one of the few events that live strong. It is a celebration that gathers a community of people who refuse to give up the ways of their antepasados. *Las Posadas* is a prayer we pray to maintain our way of life, even if it's for one night. This celebration transports us to the place our antepasados left us to enjoy.