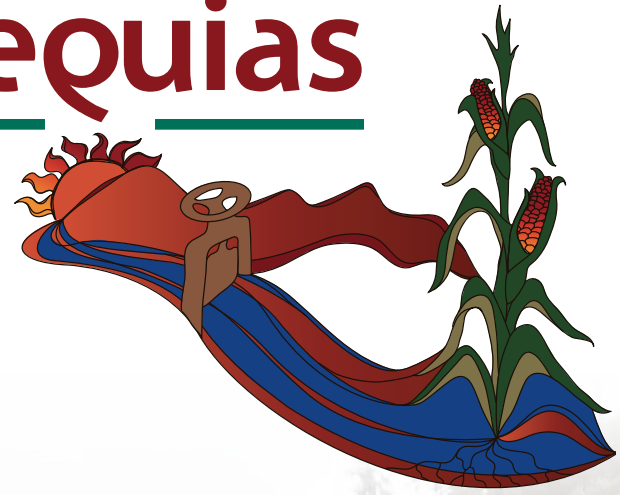


Noticias de las Acequias

New Mexico *Acequia* Association • Summer 2018



Land-Based Peoples, Get Involved!

by Peter Vigil, District Manager of Taos Soil and Water Conservation District

Watersheds are important. We know this to be a somewhat simple truth. Ask anyone. People will agree that quality and quantity of water, soil health and the continued propagation of native vegetation is necessary for a sustainable environment and a vibrant local economy. Populations throughout the world have always held in high reverence the life giving attributes of the watershed and except for a few arid regions of the earth, every civilization that has ever existed on the planet is in one way or another, tied to the watershed.

It is with this in mind that I must acknowledge the often overlooked contributions of land based peoples when it comes to watershed health and viability. Our ancestors have related to us via verbal stories and written histories that local communities have always tended our forests. This is an ancient primordial obligation that is never taken lightly. Both Native American as well as colonial residents have always held in reverence, the gifts bestowed upon them by the watershed. We are taught from an early age that herbs and remedies keep us healthy. Streams feed our Acequias so we can grow food. Firewood keeps us warm during the cold winter months. Fence posts help us maintain and manage livestock. Latillas and vigas are used to provide us with shelter. These are all examples of gifts, and as such, we must honor them.

The watershed means many different things to many different people. I believe that local land based-peoples very existence is connected to water, soil and trees. Water is life, humans are of the soil and trees connect us to the planet. Watershed resource management policies and plans that affect forests, farms, ranches and streams must involve locally led conservation efforts on both private and public lands. This is consistent with Federal policy that requires land management agencies to be aligned with state and local land use plans.

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Top: Pecos Watershed, the headwaters of the Angostura Acequia. Photo by Edwin Greiner. Bottom: The Rio Jemez Who Gives Life To Over 18 Acequias. Photo by Gilbert Sandoval.

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En Memoria:

Remembering Our Acequero/as

It is because of the work of our ancestors, elders and maestros that we now stand on the shoulders of giants, taking steps to ensure that our acequias and way-of-life will never be erased from this landscape. We pause to reflect on and honor the lives of the men and women who worked tirelessly for our acequias out of love and querencia.

Pablo O. Chavez

January 20, 1948–May 24, 2018

We note the passing of a defender and protector of the acequia way of life!

Pablo Chavez, farmer, mayordomo, and loving father.
Photo submitted by Paula Sisneros.



Pablo O. Chavez, Mayordomo of Acequia Madre del Rio Grande del Rancho in the Taos Valley with an estimated 300 parcientes passed away unexpectedly on May 24th 2018. According to his daughter Paula, “my father was a very simple man who loved working the land. He gave it his all; bailing hay, working the acequia, and showing everyone respect. The constituents of the acequia respected him and yes, even in times of drought when people would get mad he knew how to keep the peace while distributing the water. He took this position as Mayordomo very seriously”. Daniel Martinez, Commissioner of Acequia Madre del Rio Grande del Rancho remembers chatting with him along the ditch the week before his passing about bringing the water down to the parcientes who had not irrigated this season yet, “We are in a bad drought but Paul always had a plan to make sure that every parciente got the water at least once.” Currently the commission of the acequia will take turns completing the duties of Mayordomo until they can appoint someone for the remainder of the term.

Pablo enjoyed being outdoors, hunting, fishing and going for wood. His passion was working with his tractor, whether it was irrigating or bailing hay. Pablo loved his family dearly and enjoyed spending time with everyone he loved.

Pablo was preceded in death by his parents, Eleverio and Gregorita Chavez; mother and father-in-law, Eloy and Erlinda Pacheco; brothers, Eusebio Sanchez, Jose Chavez, sister, Christina Mares; sister-in-law, Dorthy Martinez, brothers-in-law, Bobby Pacheco, Eloy Pacheco Jr.; grandson, Clarence Sisneros, nephews, Robbie Martinez, Jose Chavez Jr., and Rodney Tafoya. He is survived by his wife, Mary Alice Chavez; children, Paula (Fred) Sisneros, Christopher (Carla) Chavez, Francisco (Brienne) Chavez; nephew whom he considered a son, Lawrence Chavez (Theresa); sister, Connie (Bobby) Martinez; sisters-in-law, Emilia Sanchez, Frances Martinez, Ellen Tafoya, brothers-in-law, Jerry (Geneva) Pacheco and Alfred (Barbara) Grant; grandchildren, Mateo Sisneros, Christopher Chavez Jr., Edward Romero, Justin Chavez, Victoria Chavez and Leila Belle Chavez, and numerous nieces, nephews and friends whom he loved dearly.

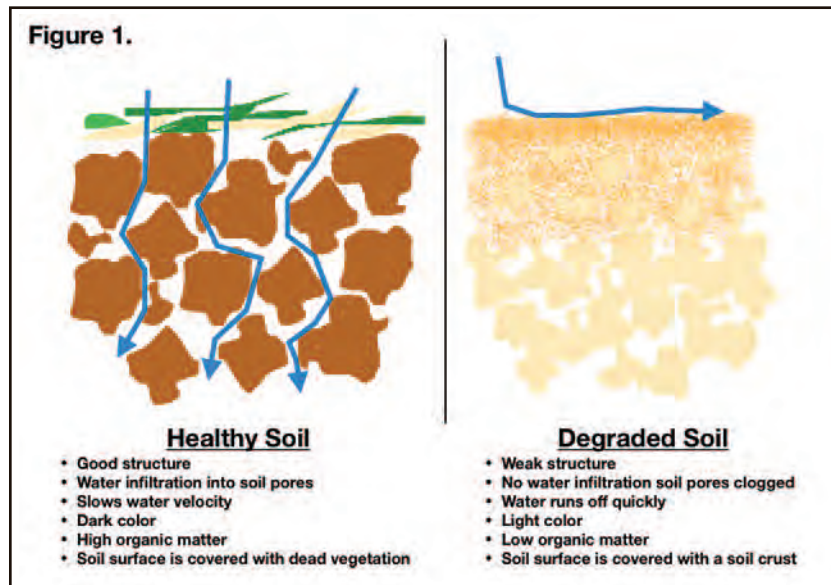


Parcientes, neighbors and friends organized a Tractor Tribute from the Ranchos Church to Paul's home after his services. Photo submitted by Paula Sisneros.

Soil Health for Storing Water

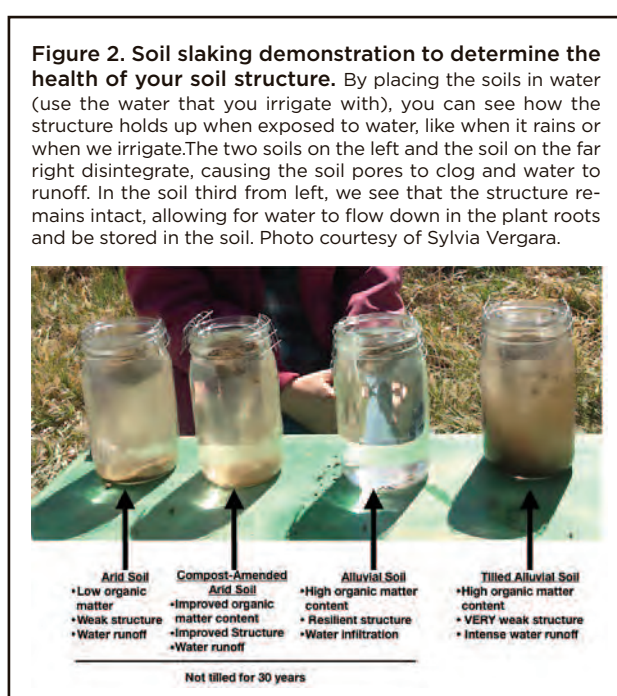
by Linden Schneider

Robust monsoon predicted. On Wednesday April 11th folks gathered to learn and teach about soil health at the NMAA teaching farm in Chamisal. This drought year is the perfect time to think about soil health; most of the water we will receive will be from the intense monsoon rains. Almost all climate models are predicting a robust monsoon season and this comes with particular challenges for our soils and plants. When this intense, heavy rain falls we want it to penetrate deep into our soils, feeding the plant roots, and recharging our aquifers. Having healthy soils with lots of **organic matter, good structure, and a covered soil surface** will help us keep the little water we will get (see Figure 1).



Diversity. Acequia irrigation systems require us to have community consciousness making both our plant and human communities robust in times of change. In the workshop we heard about the many unique soils and farming goals all the participants had. A diversity in farming perspectives, techniques, management and adaptation plans are absolutely necessary for resilience. The same goes for soils! A diversity of life and components within soils makes them healthier and more resilient!

Time and change. It takes about **500 years for one inch** of that soil to form. However, the degradation of soil health through intensive agricultural practices such as over tilling or over grazing can happen in **a season or two!** Restoring soils to their previously healthy state **can take decades** if it is possible at all. Soil degradation destroys the ability of soils to capture and store water (see Figure 2).



New Mexico Soils. Not only is New Mexico's seasonal weather pattern unique, but so are the soils themselves. At the bottom of this article you will find resources specific for our New Mexico soils as most other farming and gardening literature is meant for eastern or coastal soils and climates.

New Mexico Soil Health Indicators. There are a few key factors to consider when thinking about the health of our New Mexico soils:

- 1. Soil texture.** This is the ratio of the three soil particle sizes to one another: sand, silt, and clay. Knowing your soil texture will help you determine things like:
 - a. Will water runoff or infiltrate?
 - b. Will nutrients stick to the soil particles, making them available to plants or will they run off?
 - c. Will tillage greatly deteriorate the soil structure or can the soils stand up to light tillage?

At the bottom of this article is a reference to a chart to help you determine your soil texture by feeling damp soils with your hand.

- 2. Soil structure (aggregation).** This is how the particles (the sand, silt, and clay) that make up the texture, along with organic matter, all stick together. Knowing about your soils aggregation helps you understand how stable your soil will be when it comes in contact with water:

- a. Low aggregation- formation of soil crusts and water runoff
- b. High aggregation- water infiltration and storage, oxygen infiltration (good for healthy roots)**

The biggest threat to high soil aggregation is tillage (see Figure 2), the more we till the more we break up the structure of the soil. It is very hard to increase aggregation, but you can do so by adding organic matter like compost or manure.

Figure 1 and Figure 2

- 3. Organic Matter content.** This is how much organic (plant, animal, microbial) material we have in our soils and it is important for aggregation and **holding and supplying water and nutrients.** You can get a rough idea of this by looking at soil color, if it is a beautiful dark brown, you know you have high organic matter (see Figure 2, 2 soils on the right). In New Mexico we have some very beautiful soil colors: yellow, red, light brown...however all these colors indicate very low organic matter.

- 4. pH.** This is the main descriptor of the chemistry of your soil. Knowing the pH of your soil will tell you things like what plants you can grow and the availability of nutrients to your plants. In New Mexico we have neutral to high pH soils, this means:

- a. We have limited availability of the essential nutrients phosphorus, potassium, iron and manganese
- b. We have a hard time growing plants like blueberries and blackberries.

We can change the pH of our soil slightly by adding elemental sulfur usually sold as 'Soil Acidifier', but this takes a lot of monetary investment. Instead we can choose to add phosphorus rich amendments like chicken pellets and grow crops tolerant of our high pH soils like carrots, cauliflower, corn, garlic, lettuce, winter squash and peppers.

Soil Health Tests. Some of the workshop participants had their soil's health tested. Here are a few pointers on things that you should make sure the testing lab does for you:

1. For testing phosphorus make sure you get the Olsen Test: this will tell you about how much phosphorus is available to your plants at a pH relevant to your soil
2. Make sure they give you the sodium adsorption ratio: this will; tell you about the stability of your soil aggregates when watered.
3. The results that you receive can be difficult and frustrating to interpret, contact your local NRCS office for help: <https://goo.gl/sgDIYr>
4. Lastly, if you plan on applying your own compost or manure to the soil as an amendment get that tested too.

Resources:

Soil Texture by Feel <https://goo.gl/KZPp9C>
NRCS Soil Health <https://goo.gl/DkQAK5>
USDA WebSoilSurvey <https://goo.gl/4cLgtT>
NMSU Western soils <http://westernsoil.nmsu.edu/>
Soil Slaking Test <https://goo.gl/6hksGG>
Linden Schneider, author of this article:
linden.schneider@gmail.com 💧

Protect Pollinators and Your Water Rights!



Pollinator Garden in Embudo, NM. Challenges to our acequias and pollinators overlap. We can overcome. Photos by Adrienne Rosenberg.

by Adrienne Rosenberg

My heart sank as I drove over the bridge last week. Here on both sides of Highway 75, the Embudo River pockmarked the stream bed interrupting mud and cobble and willow. It pooled right around the presa for Acequia de la Plaza but went no further. Today my heart broke. It is completely dry on both sides of the bridge.

Most of us who read the New Mexico Acequia Association newsletter know that our acequias, while resilient, are extremely vulnerable. We not only know, we are experiencing it firsthand. Land division, residential development of agricultural land, water fragmentation due to urbanization, climate change, loss of traditional knowledge, aging population of parciantes, etc. all contribute to the potential deterioration of our communities' most precious resource and our rights to it. Similarly, our native pollinators (bees, wasps, butterflies, moths, flies, and beetles) are experiencing grave decline. Land loss and fragmentation of habitat, climate change (which affects timing of blooms, pollinator life-cycles, and etc.), pesticide poisoning, and disease are all causes to their perils. It is no coincidence that the challenges to our acequias and our native pollinators overlap as they are interdependent features of our landscape. Yet within this mutual tragedy of each, there is a solution for both. I propose that by planting pollinator refuges, we can preserve and support pollinators, water rights, and the land itself.

Pollinator refuges are spaces that are intentionally planted to invite pollinators to forage and create nesting sites. When I emailed NMAA Staff Attorney Enrique Romero about whether pollinator refuges could be considered legally a 'beneficial use' of acequia waters, he commented, "In my opinion, it is beneficial use provided that irrigation is occurring in a manner that is not wasteful and there is substantial effort on the part of the water right owner to irrigate and 'cultivate' the garden. Another important aspect of this question is whether the 'gardens' are actually planted or part of the native vegetation that would grow without irrigation. Case law on the subject of beneficial use suggests that whether a use is beneficial depends on whether the community in which the use is taking place considers the use beneficial, i.e. whether it is 'socially accepted' as a beneficial use." My hope is that by reading this article, members of acequias across New Mexico and Southern Colorado will begin to consider pollinator refuges as socially acceptable use of the water.

Pollinators are a keystone species, because many other species rely on pollinators for their survival. As indicator species, their

health signifies the health of the surrounding ecosystem.

Even though riparian areas represent only 2% of the overall area in the southwestern desert, it is not hard to imagine pollinators being a crucial element to the delicacy of these ecosystems. For example, studies have demonstrated that diverse plant communities along the riparian areas support insects which become food for fish. Bosque habitats have been documented to support 42% of mammals, 38% birds, 33% reptiles, and 13% of the amphibians of the arid West. And more than 90% of birds rely on insects during at least one stage of their life. Our acequias expand these riparian areas as well as provide habitat for various species, including native pollinators.

Given that so many are unable to farm their fields, a pollinator refuge may be a simple solution for using the water in a low impact, low maintenance way while maintaining water rights. Three years ago, I planted a pollinator garden behind the Embudo Valley Library with a grant from the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and the help of several volunteers. I selected wildflower and grass seeds that were native to the high desert and drought tolerant. I also planted hedges and perennials as well as built pollinator hotels and drilled holes into logs. My intention was to make the garden as low maintenance as possible while also planning for upcoming water shortages on the ditch. Since the first season, I have hardly weeded as the garden has suppressed most of the unwanted plants, including bindweed. The wildflower meadow can also serve as a cover crop that maintains the soil biome and keeps the top soil intact all growing season. Furthermore, the garden has benefited the community as a seedbank for those who wish to invite pollinators to their land. Each year in the garden, I revel in the return of lacewings, ladybugs, wasps, bumble bees, swallowtails, and more as well as the stain glass, season long array of blooms.

Native pollinators are equally if not more important to pollinating crops and native plants than the honey bees, which were introduced to North America and did not evolve with our native ecosystems. Considered to be potentially more "efficient" and "effective", native pollinators, as studies indicate, are well suited

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The Art of Acequia Irrigation in Times of Drought - Part 2



l: La Escarda: Hoeing weeds is probably the most important activity to support crop growth in general but especially during drought. **r:** Legumes such as lentils (center), beans (left), and habas (right), can be planted early and withstand frost and water stress to varying degrees.

by Miguel Santistevan

It is difficult to write a piece on 'the art of acequia irrigation' at a time when so many *parciantes* are already feeling the effects of water shortage. Many acequias are dry or drying up and irrigators are struggling to get sufficient water to their fields. These times of water shortage remind us of times when the ancestors of acequia culture also withstood drought. Times of drought likely motivated our water sharing customs in addition to the development of methods, crops, and ceremonies that helped weather water scarcity and became cornerstone to acequia traditions.

Research into acequia culture across the region has allowed me the privilege of interacting with many *acequero/as* that shared information with me which is profound and relevant in adapting to water shortage. In my last article on acequia irrigation in the Summer 2017 edition of 'Noticias,' I wrote about the traditional terracing systems in the acequia landscape and re-creating irrigation structures that create water conservation in soils through refined irrigation techniques. Application of these techniques can conserve irrigation water as soil moisture that can have lasting benefits through the growing season and beyond.

But once acequia waters run out, other methods need to come into play to optimize the harvest given the potential deadly effect of water scarcity, heat, and wind to crop production. A primary consideration for weathering drought is to shift the cropping system toward crop types that are hardier during dry years. A memory of "secano" or "al temporal" styles of dryland or rainfed agriculture reminds us of the potential for crops to survive, and even thrive, during dry years. Crops such as habas (fava beans), *alberjón* (peas), trigo (wheat), cebada (barley), garbanzo beans, lentils, and a diverse array of beans like *bolitas* have been successful in dryland conditions. Many of these crops are also frost tolerant and can make use of early springtime precipitation, even snow, and will not freeze while giving us a head start on the season before water stress of the summer fully sets in.

For acequia crop production in general, I remember the wisdom in the saying, "Es mas importante escardar y arrimar la tierra que regar." (It is more important to cultivate your soil and mound your crops with soil than to irrigate.) This saying points to two of the most important things we can do to adapt to drought: care for our soils and care for our crops.

Caring for our soils means limiting erosion, salinity, and building up the organic matter content. Augmenting soils with compost and manure adds organic matter, which then acts as a sponge to absorb moisture when it is available from irrigation or precipitation. Not only does adding organic matter help support the crops and soil microbiology, it is also the most promising tool for farmers and land managers to mitigate climate change by putting carbon from the atmosphere back into the soil.

The process of cultivating the soil and forming mounds around

the stems and stalks of crops not only controls weeds that compete for soil nutrients and moisture, but also oxygenates the root zone. An elder once told me that corn in particular likes oxygen more than it likes water. When I received this information, I was taught to vigorously cultivate the soil and pile it around the plants with a hoe, and to not be afraid to cut the roots of the crops in the process. This was surprising to me, but I later experienced a new vitality in the crops that lasted for several days. If rains did not come, another round of soil cultivation allowed for continued survival until rains do come. Perhaps this is due to the wisdom found in another saying, "el mejor humido para las plantas es el sudor del frente." (The best moisture for plants is the sweat of the brow.)

Another important, and maybe the most important, factor we have to remember that comes with acequia culture is the importance of faith in our activities. An elder woman once shared with me that the reason we are suffering drought is because we aren't gathering at the church to take the Saints on processions along the acequias and laterals during dry spells. There is much reason to believe that gathering in ceremony can create positive effects in the environment through our collective intention. Relationships between neighbors can also be strengthened and maintained through this kind of gathering; relationships that can also strengthen our sense of community, security, and mutualism in ways that were common to acequia culture in the near past. If we re-learn to equitably share scarce water and work together in community, we can not only have a better result at harvest time, but also maintain the essence of acequia culture that allowed us to survive in community over millennia.

Miguel has been dedicated to agriculture/acequia conservation and education for 23 years. He has a Master's in Agriculture Ecology and design certifications in Permaculture and ZERI and does consulting. His greatest accomplishment is being a husband and father for his family in Taos, NM. He can be contacted at solfelizfarm@gmail.com



Arrimando: A farmer can support individual plants by piling soil around the stalk and even mulching to conserve soil moisture. All photos by Miguel Santistevan.

Acequia Drought Summit



Water Sharing in Times of Scarcity Panel. Photo by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff.

by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff

On April 3, 2018 acequia leaders from across the state gathered at Los Luceros Ranch to strategize about water management during times of drought. The main topics of the gathering were water sharing, active water resource management, and water quality. The dialogue began with Chris Romero, NRCS Hydrological Technician and Snow Surveyor who reported on the science of our current snow pack condition for the state of New Mexico. In April, the state was at an overall 15% snowpack with a projection that the runoff will be over at the end of May. Unfortunately, we are not getting either snow or rain! Chris also reported that we have a 7% snow water equivalent when in normal years we have at least 34%. How far off is this from our normal in New Mexico? In a thirty year average, 2018 is in the bottom tier for the worst year in precipitation and snowpack.

Afterward, esteemed acequia leaders from Taos, Embudo and Anton Chico participated in a panel discussion that focused on



Joe Ciddio, Commissioner of Acequia del Llano in Embudo, NM, presents on behalf of the water sharing agreement of the acequias who draw water from the Rio Embudo. Photo by Pablito Herrera.

water sharing practices between acequias. The panelists explained that historically acequias have rationed water equitably based on verbal understandings, court orders, or written agreements. These water sharing practices continue today and are especially relevant during this year's drought. Water sharing agreements keep the management of acequia water under local decision-making.



Gael Minton, Parciante of Acequia del Monte del Rio Chiquito in Taos, NM, describes the challenges in water distribution on her acequia with a growing membership. Photo by Pablito Herrera.

The next panel consisted of commissioners who have endured long standing disputes about water within the context of adjudication or administration of basin specific rules and regulations implemented by the State Engineer. Commissioners within the Rio Gallinas, NPT (Nambe, Pojoaque, Tesuque) and Rio Chama shared a wealth of experience in defending acequias regarding administration by the State Engineer. They discussed the complexity of water meters, water masters, and their experience in working through tensions between entities sharing the same stream system. A recent concern in the NPT basin is having to report to the State Engineer acreage "to be irrigated" during the irrigation season. Commissioners expressed their continued work to affirm local autonomy, decision making, and leadership development for the future of managing water resources at the local level.



Mayordomo, Leon Tafoya from San Fidel, NM, expresses the challenges of water in his basin. Photo by Pablito Herrera.

Finally, the topic of water quality was discussed to raise awareness of the potential devastation of acequia-served farmland due to discharge and effluent being dumped into rivers by municipalities and cities. The conversation extended beyond protecting farmland and addressing the need to protect fish and wildlife. Participants were encouraged to get involved and keep the State's Water Quality Control Commission accountable and to do their own water testing.

The outcome of the summit encouraged acequias to begin organizing more intentionally around creating water sharing plans that adapt to a changing climate, legal landscape and affirming cultural customs in our communities. At a minimum, acequia leaders must critically engage in the administration of water, be vigilant in ensuring that water metering agreements are fair and water meters are accurate, and get more involved with county governments, especially on developing land use codes that protect acequias. Commissioners and Mayordomos are encouraged during the drought to take inventory of farm infrastructures and begin making improvements by applying for funding and creating an infrastructure capital improvement plan. 💧



The Fernandez brothers of Acequia Madre del Sur de Cañon en Taos, listen attentively to the snow pack report given by Chris Romero, NRCS. Photo by Pablito Herrera.

Inspection of Public Records Act & Acequia Record Keeping

by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff

Acequias and land grants are prominent public bodies that demonstrate a history of good record keeping practices. Today, secretaries and other officers possess maps, membership lists, bylaws, and financial records that go back hundreds of years. These repositories are a beautiful testimony of how local governments like acequias are serious about preserving the acequia system for future generations. Maintaining records is only part of the preservation efforts. Community access to records not only provides a healthy transparent system of governance; it also provides a concrete link to prior generations of acequeros.

For those of you who are new to acequia governance, community ditches are political sub-divisions of the state and must comply with the Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA), Sections 14-2-1 to 14-2-12, NMSA 1978. The IPRA ensures that citizens have access to public records, including acequia records and documents. For additional information, you can contact NMAA or access the New Mexico Attorney General's *Inspection of Public Records Act Compliance Guide* at <http://www.nmag.gov/consumer/publications/inspectionofpublicrecordsactcomplianceguide2009>

Record keeping is one of the essential aspects of operating an efficient acequia. While managing water distribution is often the primary role of acequias, maintaining records is necessary to keep the association afloat. Here are some tangible tips for good record keeping:

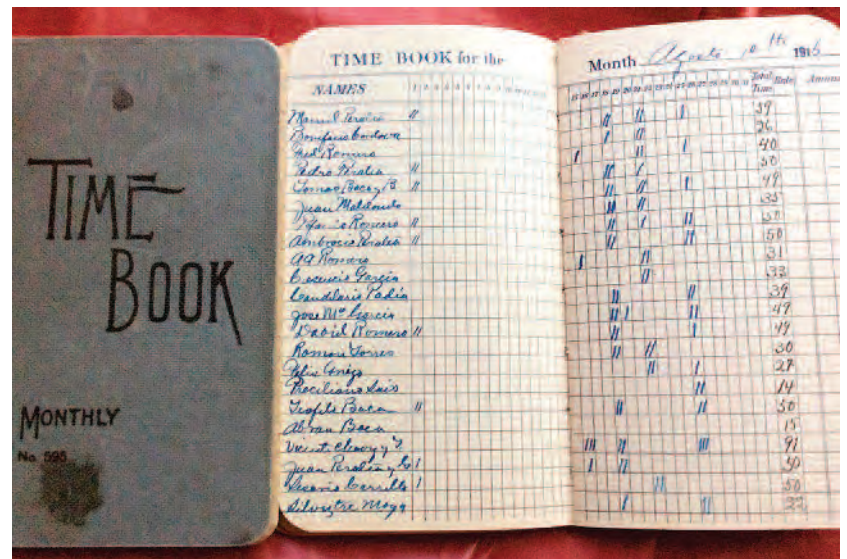
1. Choose a Good Record Keeping Tool: Acequias have kept a historic ledger that captures the activity within the acequia and tracks workers, assessments, and delinquencies over years of operation. Find a tool that is accessible and user friendly like a written ledger, Excel, or QuickBooks depending on the professional experience of your commissioners. All are sufficient if you can quickly generate a report for your upcoming meeting, complete your Tier certification with the Office of the State Auditor, or manage an infrastructure improvement plan.

2. Keeping the Right Records: There are a few different types of records for acequias that are important to the institutional memory of the association and documents required by state law. Here is a list of just a few of the records that should be preserved and organized so that when they are needed, they are easily accessible: minutes of meetings, bylaws, budgets, bank statements, contract agreements, Infrastructure Improvement Plans (ICIP), membership lists, water right declarations, and hydrographic surveys and maps.

3. Give Your Records a Home: Many times new commissioners will inherit filing boxes filled with acequia records. It is always important to keep your records safe and protected from the elements. Consider purchasing a filing cabinet or other durable storage container that can be passed on from one commissioner to the next during periods of transition. Acequias may consider asking local organizations or partners – like irrigation districts – if they would be willing to provide a more permanent home to older acequia records.

Now that you have good record keeping skills, here is what to expect if your acequia receives an Inspection of Public Records Request:

- The request should go to the commissioner, usually the Secretary, who has custody of the record requested.



Grandfathers Ledger. Photo by Sarah Rivera-Cordova, La Joya, NM.

- The IPRA only apply to written record requests. If the acequia receives a verbal request, the acequia should still provide inspection of the records but will not be held to the timelines and other provisions in the IPRA.
- The request must include the name, address, and telephone number of the requestor, and identify the records sought with enough specificity to allow the custodian to identify and find them. No reason for inspection is necessary.
- The custodian must respond to the request in the same medium it is made. If the request is mailed, respond by mail. If the request is e-mailed, respond by e-mail.
- Within 3 days of receiving the request, the custodian must permit inspection or explain in writing when the records will be available for inspection or when the acequia will respond.
- Within 15 days of receiving the request, the custodian must permit inspection or provide written notification that additional time is needed to respond. Additional time is only allowed if the request is “excessively burdensome or broad”. Otherwise, a request not granted within 15 days will be deemed denied. The requestor can then pursue remedies authorized by IPRA, including damages.
- To grant the request, redact protected information from the document(s). If you have a question about what information is “protected information” or exemptions from disclosure, please call NMAA. The exceptions are few. Some examples of protected information that the acequia may have in its custody include attorney-client communications and some “protected personal identifier information” which includes taxpayer identification numbers, driver license numbers and financial account numbers. For the latter, the last digits may not be redacted.
- Allow on-site inspection if requested. Provide electronic documents if requested and they already exist. Provide paper copies if requested. You can charge up to \$1.00 per page of paper copying and the actual costs of downloading and/or transmitting electronic or paper copies by mail, e-mail, or fax. You can require advance payment before making copies and must provide a receipt upon request.

If your acequia has questions about IPRA or needs a treasurer worksheet to more effectively manage your financial records, please call NMAA at (505) 995-9644 or email lasacequias.org



Acequia del Medio in Embudo, NM. Photo by Sylvia Ernestina Vergara.

A Few Tips for Acequia Treasurers to Survive the Modern World



Cortando Alfalfa en Taos. Photo by Jacinta Chavez, Acequia del Marrano Taos NM.

by Serafina Lombardi, NMAA Staff

Dear Acequia Treasurers (and those family members, friends and fellow commissioners who assist them),

Duties of the Treasurer used to be collecting dues, paying peones, making deposits, giving financial reports and maybe paying the mayordomo—all the while recording transactions in the ledger—if that wasn't already enough work for one person, no? However, times are changing and the modern world is upon us, like it or not. Many acequias have moved to electronic methods of accounting including Quickbooks; but more importantly, in 2013 Gov. Martinez issued executive order 2013-006, which enforces statutes 6-6-1 through 6-6-19 D, regarding the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) and NMSA and 2.2.2 NMAC regarding the Office of the State Auditor (OSA), all in reference to the financial accountability of political sub-divisions to the state. These statutes make two major points:

- 1) If your acequia has \$50,000* in annual revenue (excluding Federal funds) then you must comply with DFA budget reporting requirements.
- 2) All acequias are subject to the tiered reporting system
 - If you expend 50% or more of Capital Outlay, or have \$50,000 or more in annual revenue, you are required to engage in Agreed Upon Procedures (basically a mini audit).
 - Acequias that have annual revenue of \$50,000 or less merely need to submit a tier certification form via an OSA portal.

Public funds and online reporting

As of 2017 all OSA and DFA reporting has moved online, which can provide an additional hurdle to acequias that are not resourced with a scanner and consistent internet. While most of us see “financial compliance” as an annoying distraction, it is worth recalling the spirit of these laws – being accountable for state funds. One leap of logic for many folks is seeing the funds we collect on our own acequia as “public funds” for which we must account to the state. But as political subdivisions, this is our obligation.

Infrastructure projects often trigger reporting requirements

For the majority of acequias the only thing they need to do is submit the annual tier certification form to OSA within 5 months of the close of their fiscal year. These same acequias find themselves bumped up to tier 3 or above only when they take on funding for infrastructure projects, then they return to tier 1 or 2 when they have completed spending what is usually Capital Outlay, ISC or Army Corp funding.

CPMS

This stands for Capital Project Management System. Anyone who has recently expended Capital Outlay or Interstate Stream Commission 90/10 funding knows that you are required to log into the system on a monthly basis to report the progress and expenditures of your project. The ISC staff kindly sends out reminders. Once you are used to doing the updates it should only take a few minutes if you have good records for your project.

Meeting the challenge

The bottom line is that none of the reporting is rocket science (mostly it takes a lot of time and tech savvy), but for many it can be very challenging when we are volunteer Commissioners (or merely the spouse of a Commissioner), are pulled in many directions and may have limited access to technology. None-the-less this is what is being asked of us. At the NMAA we are here to offer support and guidance regarding financial compliance. We have seen ditches go from no compliance to up-to-date, receiving infrastructure funding and jumping the hurdles of greater financial compliance! We have also seen ditches take on creative solutions. For some this is recruiting auxiliary support from other ditch or community members who may be more proficient in this area, while other acequias have hired book keepers.

None of us become parcientes because we love paperwork – rather we love to move the water and help make things grow. At the NMAA, we offer our gratitude, respect and support to all of you who serve in this role or assist those who do. !Que vivan los Tesoreros!

**Please note the previous threshold was \$10,000. Due to advocacy by the NMAA, the threshold was raised to \$50,000, passed by the legislature in 2017, and in 2018 the NM Supreme Court declared Gov. Martinez's veto was not properly issued, thus enabling SB222 to become law. 💧*



Rio Fernando de Taos. Photo by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff.

Ask a Water Lawyer: Legal Notice of a Water Transfer

by Enrique Romero, NMAA Staff Attorney

“Our bylaws require that any member proposing to transfer water rights must first apply to our acequia commission for approval before applying to the Office of the State Engineer. How can we be sure that the State Engineer is not accepting water transfer applications prior to the acequia making a decision on the proposed water transfer?”

Acequias often come to us seeking advice on how to proceed after the acequia has received a water transfer application. Less frequently – but still too often – an acequia will come to us after an applicant has bypassed the acequia decision-making process and gone straight to the Office of the State Engineer (OSE). In some of these cases, the State Engineer’s district office staff has erroneously accepted the application as complete and may even have issued a notice of publication for the application. The notice then gets published in a local newspaper, the acequia sees the notice, and correctly comes to us for advice.

Acequias have the transfer bylaw because they want the local community to decide on important local water issues. Any attempt to bypass the local community is a very serious thing that should be addressed right away. Any time an officer or a *parciante* hears about or believes the acequia is being bypassed they should contact us right away.

Clearly, the district office should never accept an application for a water transfer of acequia water rights if that acequia has adopted the water transfer bylaw and the applicant did not go through the acequia decision-making process. The current OSE water transfer application requires the applicant to state whether the water rights are served by a community ditch. If the applicant is aware that the water rights are served by an acequia or community ditch, yet nevertheless indicates that they are not, the applicant is acting dishonestly. Whether intentional or not, the OSE district staff should catch this “error” and require that the applicant go to the acequia for approval, following the detailed process laid out in the acequia’s bylaws.

If the district staff either does not do its research regarding the water rights, i.e. whether they are served by a community ditch and whether the applicant has complied with statutory requirements, or believes the type of change contemplated in the application does fall within the acequia’s jurisdiction, it could accept the application. The first legal notice that the public – and the acequia – will get of the OSE’s acceptance of the application will be in a legal notice in a newspaper that publishes in the county in which the water rights are located. Alternatively, one could check the OSE’s website to see if the OSE has issued a notice for publication. The notice for publication is not the legal notice itself; rather, it is what the district office prepares for the



Acequia Madre del Rio Chiquito in Taos, NM. Photo by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff.

applicant so that the applicant can then take the notice to the local newspaper for publication. Still, it’s a good indicator that legal notice will likely be made in the near future. You can search the OSE website here for notices for publication: <http://www.ose.state.nm.us/NFP/nfp.php>.

Once the notice is published, acequias – and the public generally – have ten calendar days after the last date of publication to protest the application. Applicants are required to publish the notice for three consecutive weeks. This opportunity to protest the application is the acequia’s chance to argue that the applicant has not complied with the law by bypassing the acequia’s decision-making process.

Technically, if an acequia sees the first publication of the legal notice, it will have about three weeks and ten days to contact us so that we can help it draft a formal protest to the application. But, honestly, how many of us keep our eyes on the legal notices?

The New Mexico Press Association (NMPA) does a good job of compiling online all the legal notices published in those newspapers that are part of the NMPA. The NMPA used to provide a free service that made my job—and yours—easier. After subscribing to the service,

one could enter search terms – like “State Engineer” – and any legal notice that had that term would be sent directly to your email inbox within a day or two of the notice being published. The “straight to your inbox” service is not free anymore. What is still free is a manual search of legal notices through the NMPA website. You can access the manual search tool here: https://www.nmpa.org/public_notices/. Limit your search to the exact term “State Engineer” and you are likely to be amazed at how much activity is going on statewide. The search will produce lots of changes related to groundwater permits, but you’ll also find changes to surface rights as well. Consider adding an additional limiting term like “ditch” or “acequia” if you want to drill down—no pun intended—to those applications dealing only with acequias.

So, vigilant acequia commissioners, or anyone who wants to know what the “State Engineer” is up to, have a few options: 1) read the legal notices in your local paper on a consistent basis (daily), 2) search the NMPA website regularly (once a week), or 3) check the OSE’s website for notices of publication by county. Ideally, you’ll find time to do all three and, hopefully, the results of your search will show everyone’s proceeding aboveboard. 💧

Those Dang Rodents in the Ditch and Fields

by Serafina Lombardi, NMAA Staff

The bane of many an acequia farmers and ranchers are prairie dogs and gophers. Yet, you might be surprised to see the list of gopher benefit enumerated in NMSU publication L-9:

- increased soil fertility by adding organic matter such as buried vegetation and fecal wastes.
- increased soil aeration and decreased soil compaction.
- increased rate of soil formation by bringing sub-soil material to the surface of the ground, subjecting it to weatherization.
- increased water infiltration.

But as the publication rightly points out “in many cases, the damage caused by pocket gophers is the overriding factor”. Maybe some of us are oblivious to the benefits – but we are very aware of the damage.

If you are experiencing damage on your farm or ranch here are some steps to consider:

- Properly ID the culprit. Is it prairie dogs, gophers, mice, rats, rabbits or squirrels?
- This will help determine the most effective approach. You can ask your local Extension office for assistance.
- Where is the problem? The field or the acequia?
- Different solutions exist for each.
- What are you growing, what is your farming methodology?
- Are you ok with using chemicals?

When dealing with burrowing animals along an acequia madre or lateral, piping or cementing can be useful, but without controlling the critter population they will likely migrate to other areas of the ditch. In the meantime, many of us use discarded pieces of carpet and other found materials or soil to merely block the flow of water to the animal tunnels while irrigating, avoiding losing the water or flooding a neighbor’s driveway . . .

According to the National Center for Appropriate Technology: Gophers (*Thomomys* spp.) are burrowing rodents that feed mostly on underground plant parts, with alfalfa being one of their pre-



Pocket gopher probing. All photos courtesy of Google.

ferred foods. Besides weakening or killing the plants, they also damage irrigation ditches and borders. The mounds of soil they push up from their burrows also bury other plants and cause obstacles for the harvesting equipment. Non-toxic controls consist of trapping, flooding the burrows, surrounding a field with plants that repel gophers, such as gopher spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*) and castor bean (*Ricinus communis*). Depositing predator urine, pine oil, or any other foul smelling substances in the burrows has been reported to provide temporary control. The use of barn owl perches to attract these predators has been successful in controlling gophers in California. On average, a barn owl can eat 155 gophers per year (Power, 2003). Propane devices that ignite injected gas, causing the burrows to explode, are reported effective in reducing populations temporarily. Check with your certifier before using this method. Additional treatments are necessary, depending on the length of the season.

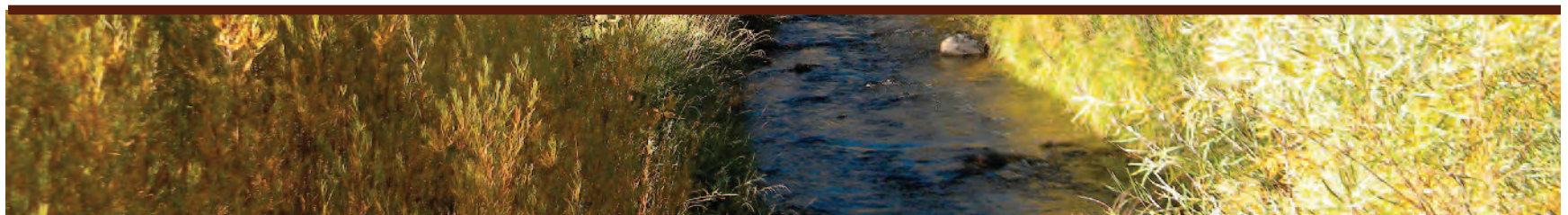


Control measures include trapping, baits and fumigants. Some of the baits and fumigants are restricted and not available to homeowners. Professional pest control companies are beneficial in this case. Exclusion by “fencing” root systems of landscape plants as protection from gophers is recommended, but this should be done with caution. The hardware cloth recommended for this purpose can girdle tree and shrub roots, resulting in plant death if installed too close to the plant. The appropriate distance to install hardware cloth from the plant will depend on specific plant root systems. Lining the base of raised planter beds with hardware cloth can help protect vegetable and flower gardens.

Some plants may be advertised as gopher repellent plants, but these are just plants that the gophers will avoid, going around or under them to get to desired plants. At least these are plants that gophers will usually not damage; however, some of these plants have their own negative characteristics, such as causing dermatitis in humans.

The drought intensifies our need to get the water precisely where we need. We hope you find these tips helpful. Please feel free to share with us what has worked or not for you on your land.

For additional resources on controlling gophers, prairie dogs and other similar pests please visit the following webpages:
http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_1/L109.pdf - on gophers
http://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/_1/L201/welcome.html - on prairie dogs
https://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/alfalfa/alfalfa Vertebrate_pests.html
https://attra.ncat.org/calendar/question.php/how_can_i_control_rodents_organically
<https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/life/sunlife/2017/01/15/yard-garden-controlling-pocket-gophers-can-challenge/96469962/> 💧



Land-Based Peoples, Get Involved! *continued from page 1*

Long before the United States Department of Agriculture created the US Forest Service, local communities sustainably harvested small diameter timber, thereby reducing fire danger and enhancing forest health. Our ancestors knew that such practices allowed warm sunlight to travel unimpeded through tree crowns and reach the ground thereby enhancing native grass production and preventing soil erosion. This in turn kept our streams free of additional sediment and increased water quality for fish and wildlife. Additionally, the economic value of such harvesting activities helped local economies battle poverty and income inequality.

No other segment of the population, in my opinion, has demonstrated more practical knowledge about solid watershed management than local land-based peoples. Additionally, no one understands the needs and or deficiencies that currently exist in

current resource management policy better than those local communities.

Sound watershed restoration strategies are based on science and best management practices. I believe the key to success in this effort is consultation and partnership with locally-led, statutorily-created entities such as Municipalities, Counties and Soil Conservation Districts. This will result in improved watershed management for current and future generations.

Our local Acequia traditions have always taught us that above all things, the care and maintenance of our watersheds is of paramount importance. This can only be accomplished through education and active stewardship. Land-based peoples, get involved! 💧

13th Annual Owingeh Táh Pueblos y Semillas Gathering and Seed Exchange



Farmers and seed savers from across New Mexico exchange seeds at the historic Los Luceros Ranch. Photo by Seth Roffman

by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff

On Earth Day, April 21, 2018 over three hundred farmers and seed savers rejoiced the gifts of our ancestors for the 13th Annual Owingeh Ta Pueblos y Semillas Seed Exchange. People from near and far gathered at the beautiful Los Luceros Ranch to be enveloped by the hundreds of apple tree blossoms and the Acequia Madre de Alcalde flowing with grace. The gathering was a celebration of the sacred traditions of farming and seed saving with the mission of reconciliation, healing, and honoring the history of the land based people of the Rio Grande Valley. To open the day, Marie Markestyn provided a historical background of the indigenous Pueblo communities and waves of colonization and settlement that came with the Spanish, Mexican and later American people to Northern New Mexico. Marie set the tone for the gathering with the call to be truthful about this history in order to heal wounds of the past.

The ceremony began with a prayer for rain to our Patron San Ysidro by Los Hermanos Penitentes de La Morada de Nuestro Señor de Esquipula (Chimayo), La Cofradia de la Santísima Trinidad (Santa Cruz), La Morada de San José, y otras Moradas. Following the alabados, seed, earth and water offerings which were brought from all 4 directions, the Rain Dancers from Santa Clara Pueblo blessed with their dance and song. In the afternoon, we were also honored to have Josiah Enriquez from Pojoaque Pueblo with the Lightning Boys Foundation close the sacred circle with a Hoop Dance.

The NM Food and Seed Sovereignty Alliance awarded Madeline and Fidel Naranjo with the Anciano Se:daa Lifeways Award for their outstanding contribution and commitment to teaching their family, community, and others about the sacredness of seeds and cultural life-ways. We also had powerful presentations by Ralph Martinez of San Pedro, "Un Valle Unido y Fuerte" and Paula Garcia, of the NM Acequia Association regarding the Seed Bill HB161. Ralph gave a very personal and compelling testimony about his battle with addiction and how important planting seeds of resilience and healing in our communities is so important. Paula Garcia discussed the history of the NM Food and Seed Sovereignty Alliance and House Bill 161 as it appeared to be the handiwork of the biotech industry, which was attempting to prevent local governments from enacting regulations on the cultivation of seeds. Marian Naranjo of Santa Clara Pueblo closed the gathering with a prayer for all those living within the sacred mountains to respect them as the Tewa church, honoring our past and working toward healing and reconciliation as land based people.

We are honored and thankful for this gathering and want to give great thanks to those who traveled and made the journey to celebrate the sacredness of our seeds, traditions and culture!"

The NM Food and Seed Sovereignty Alliance would like to thank the following for their support with the gathering:

**Los Hermanos Penitentes
Santa Clara Pueblo Dancers
Marie Markestyn**

**Land and water offerings:
(North) Donne & Ignacio Gonzales, (West) Amos Peña & Amber Wasson, (South) Kasey Naranjo & Ethan Naranjo, (East) Mitchel Gray & Levina Gray**

Margaret Garcia of Taos Real Food for the delicious and healthy lunch

All of the volunteers for giving us your time and good energy

David F. Garcia and Jeremias Martinez for the wonderful music

All of the families and individuals who brought seed -- you are our reason and inspiration for this gathering!

Que Viva la Gente de la Tierra!

Special thanks to all our sponsors and donors who made this event happen!

American Friends Service Committee, Communities for Clean Water, Los Sembradores, Priscilla & Raymond Romo, Los Rios River Runners, Sprouts, Iconic Coffee, Four Bridges, Better Day Coffee, Eve's Farm, Sage Bakehouse, Emily Arasim, Gilbert & Rosa, Ghost Ranch, Shane Tolbert, Richard Barnard, Tesuque Pueblo Farms, Plants of the Southwest, Eloy and Frances Trujillo, ABQ Costco, Albertsons, Santa Fe Farmers Market Gift Shop, La Mesa Organic Farm, La Cocina, Newman's Nursery, Herbs Etc., Farmhouse Café and School Lunch Program, Espanola Community Market Co-op, Buckin' Bees Honey, Second Blooms Farms, Sembrando Semillas de Chamisal, Cids Supermarket & Lore Pease.

Please contact NMAA to become a sponsor of next year's Seed Exchange! We accept in-kind and monetary donations. (505) 995-9644 or Juliet@lasacequias.org



l to r: Sisters, mothers and seed savers. Honoring the land by sharing seeds with neighbors. Photos by Seth Roffman. Patricia Quintana of Taos exchanges seeds with Pilar Trujillo of Chimayo with a smile. Photo by Emily Arasim. Paula Garcia and Marian Naranjo continue to organize and pray together for the healing of land-based communities. Photographer unknown.

Dia de San Ysidro and Acequia Blessings

by NMAA Staff

“Dios tarda pero no olvida” is a dicho that rings through the dry fields of New Mexico this year as farmers and ranchers pray for rain. This year for Dia de San Ysidro, May 15th 2018, acequia communities across New Mexico saco el santo, pilgrimaging and celebrating for our Patron Saint of Agriculture. To be in agriculture in these times of severe drought, requires a lot of faith, ingenuity, and creativity. From these cultural celebrations we see the resiliency in farmers as are tested by their neighbors, the environment, and statewide water management, yet, continue to be grateful for the water.

Here are a few celebrations that took place:

San Ysidro y Santa Maria de la Cabeza Acequia Blessings & Celebration South Valley of Albuquerque:

"For hundreds of years, New Mexicans have celebrated San Ysidro Day, the patron saint of farmers. The ancient annual procession and blessing of San Ysidro y Santa María de la Cabeza commenced with a procession from the San Ysidro Carousel to the Armijo Acequia. The blessing of the Acequia is a beautiful blend of indigenous and Spanish Catholic traditions. Flowers, Prayers and Danza to these traditional guardians of rain, water, and farmers took place at the Sanchez Farm Open Space and La Plazita Gardens"

—Santiago Maestas, President of the Regional Acequia Association



San Ysidro y Santa Maria de la Cabeza Acequia Blessing 2018. Photo by Sayrah Namaste.

San Jose de la Cienega Acequia Blessing & Dia de San Ysidro Celebration:

On May 15th 2018 farmers and community members from the Bluewater basin came together in celebration for the feast day of San Ysidro, the patron saint of farmers. For over 20 years now, the San Jose de la Cienega acequia association with the help of acequia leaders Beverly and Leon Tafoya have come together to bless their acequia, the farmers, and share a meal together all in honor of their precious water.

The acequia blessing was led by Father Avella from the St. Joseph's Parish in Grants who reminded us that even in times of drought we have our obligation to the land, water, and neighbor to share and be humble. After the blessing, the community had a huge feast as three discos sizzled with chicharrones, roasters topped with enchiladas, and traditional deserts filled the tables. 💧



San Jose de la Cienega Acequia Blessing 2018. Photo by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff.



THE NMAA ENCOURAGES ACEQUIA COMMUNITIES TO SHARE PHOTOS AND STORIES OF A SPECIAL GATHERING YOU HAVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY THAT CELEBRATES AND HONORS WATER. WHETHER THAT IS YOUR COMMUNITY SAINT DAY, HARVEST CELEBRATION, OR FAMILY GATHERINGS, WE WANT TO HONOR LAND-BASED TRADITIONS THAT ARE BEING HOSTED OR REVITALIZED ALL AROUND THE STATE!

QUE LA LUCHA Y LAS FIESTAS SIGUEN ADELANTE!



San Fidel Acequia Blessing: Parcientas of the Acequia of San Jose de la Cienega pray over and bless their acequia. Afterward, celebration with food, music and poetry. Photo by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff.



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.

Pilar Acequia Association



Carl Gray Witkop and Leroy Naranjo, current and former Mayordomos, Pilar Acequia Association. Photo by Pat Blumm.



Carlos Padilla's work crew on the Pilar Acequia Association. Photo by G.G. Witkop.

**Interviews with Acequia Commissioner Patrick Blumm and Mayor-domo Carl Gray Witkop*

Interviewed and written by Olivia Romo, NMAA Staff

What is the history of your acequia community, as you know it (or as you've been told)?

The riverside village of Pilar is located 16 miles south of Taos at the intersection of State Highway 68 and 570 in Taos County. Pat Blumm, Acequia Commissioner jokes that, "the population of the village is about 120 people or maybe more like 150 if you count all of our dogs". Pilar is the first populated community on the banks of the Rio Grande and was settled in 1775 by the Spanish as the Cieneguilla Land Grant. Pat excitedly confirms that, "the heirs of original settler families Vigil, Archuleta, Suazo, Sanchez and Gurule are still active members of our community and acequia today". With a respectful interjection, Carl, Mayor-domo of the Acequia adds, "However, prior to Spanish occupation the indigenous Ute and Apache people farmed and irrigated the land they called the womb from local springs on the north side of the Picuris Mountains. These 5 springs create the Aguitas Caliente Creek and today feed the five miles of the Pilar Acequia Association.

A historic event that occurred in our community was the Battle of Cieneguilla on March 30th 1854, an act of resistance of the Jicarilla Apaches and Ute Allies against the American 1st Cavalry Regiment from Fort Burgwin in their attempt of Western Expansionism in the Four Corners Region". The result was an Apache/Ute Victory with a retreat by the dragoon regiments to Ranchos de Taos after 20 were killed and 30 wounded by flint-lock rifles and arrows.

With a grin, Pat chimed in, "You see, Pilar is rich in a history of resistance. In the early 1900's a legal dispute broke out between the acequia and the Copper Hill Mining Company as they illegally diverted more than half of the water of Aguitas Caliente creek that historically irrigated the community of Pilar. The community refused to allow the company to divert a majority of their water resulting in an injunction that the mine filed trying to prevent people from trespassing on the springs to divert the water and commanding the acequia to court. Mysteriously, the attorney for the mine withdrew from the litigation and the company had to pay the association for damages to their acequia. This was one of the most heroic victories of our community, as you could imagine that our predecessors who challenged the

mine did not speak any English but defended our water in court and resisted industry so that we can continue to farm and irrigate today!"

What traditions and practices does your acequia community maintain? (Food and agriculture, limpia, etc.)

"Our acequia for many years honored the traditional Spring cleaning of the acequia but as people got older and the traditional families grew and left the community, people began to lose hope in the acequia. It wasn't until only 14 years ago when Leroy Naranjo was nominated for Mayordomo that he began to take initiative to re-organize and re-establish our association for the better". Carl emphasized, "because of Leroy we have members participating, irrigating, and respecting our officers and the acequia system again. Although our traditional annual cleaning has changed we have made a strong agricultural come back. Our parciantes plant maize concho, squash, grapes and also maintain fruit orchards like peaches, apples, and cherries. If you didn't know, our very own Leroy Naranjo has been nominated for 7 years in a row for best green chile in Taos County!"

Carl Witkop encouraged us not to forget that their local parish honors Nuestra Señora de Dolores every December with a procession and novena. Our community as a whole celebrates the outdoors and is a tourist destination for rafting, fishing, hiking and biking."

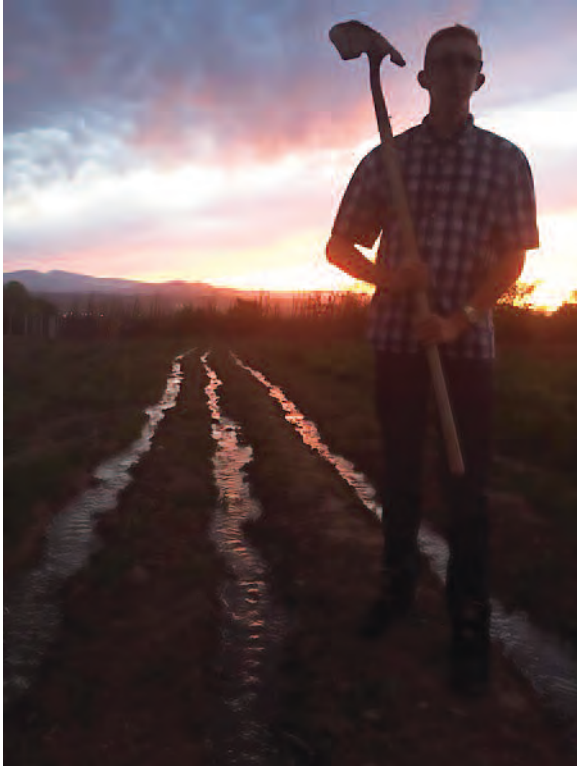
What is your irrigation season? (Time frame)

Carl testifies that, "We typically irrigate the months of May through September with 6-7 days of irrigating a week and refill our holding tank every night. The association is currently trying to re-establish our water tank to have more capacity allowing us to irrigate all summer which the acequias in Taos do not have that ability".

What are your commissioners and mayordomos doing this time of year?

Mayordomo Gray is opening and closing valves every morning and night, walks the ditch twice a week to remove obstructions, weeds, and to divert the water into the North and South ditches. "I go check around to different parciantes if they are getting water, if someone forgets to turn water back to the ditch, I mediate disputes and coordinate work parties so we can walk the ditch freely."

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Jordan irrigating in Santa Cruz.
Photo by Alejandro Lopez.

Planting: Tierra, Amor y Fe

by Jordan Lucero, 22, Chimayo/Santa Fe, NM

As you look into the eyes of our youth what do you see? Some are chasing money, higher education or others are on the streets. They are battling addiction, begging for water, tummy's growling for food. This is what I see.

Our elders always say, "Take care of the earth hito/hita and it will take care of you!" As a young farmer we challenge technology and robotic machinery taking our jobs. We fight against crude oil pipelines, industrialization of agriculture, and GMO seeds. We will fight continuously as young farmers with faith, spirituality and love for the land, to fulfill the petition of our elders.

When you hold seeds in your hands just feel their energy and love. They know exactly what their goal and purpose is when they are planted in the ground. Hold it with love as you place it in the soil and bless it with the dirt of your palm or cavador. See that the plant is nurtured with your love like your gente gave you as a child! That plant will produce fruit of immense quality and stronger seeds for sharing.

As you work long days in the heat plowing, planting, and pulling weeds just know that you are loved by the earth. You are the future voice and light that our elders have been cultivating for years, young farmer! Hours and days of hard work keep our earth alive and souls fed! One elder, one adult, one youth, and one baby will grow and live another day because of you.

Imagine when you were just about to give up, then boom - all your plantas y fruta deliver delicious satisfaction y puro nourishment con mucho amor! We need to keep farming in New Mexico to keep our gente happy, fed and rejoicing in love with each other. By touching that soil, hands are strengthened and healed by la tierra madre. Harvesting the plant can bring not only income but love and a full belly to your abuelita, niño, neighbor or the homeless.

Now, imagine that the soil, sun, plants, and food in return are cultivating you! Your heart and faith! By that I mean that farming will prepare and use your heart for healing purposes. Not only break up your old heart but sow a new love of seeds to spread love, strength and knowledge to other generations. Above that you are caring for and maintain la tierra madre, your familia y ti mismo! You will learn to grow and maintain a responsibility only faith can sprout. With courage, you will harvest a strong spirit by growing food!

El unico modo amar a ti mismo is by opening your ojos y oidos to our elders and growing strong through the years of hard work, blood and sweat. Next time you are out on the field with your abuelo ask yourself if your heart is open to the plants, the land and one another? Cultivating your heart, harvesting your soul, and spreading your seeds with faith will keep you strong and you will never be alone! 💧



Jordan Lucero, NMAA Farmer Apprentice in the hoop house in Chamisal, NM. Selfie by Jordan Lucero.

Support Los Sembradores!

Jordan is one of four NMAA's Farmer Apprentices for the 2018 Los Sembradores Farmer Training program.

NMAA's Farmer-to-Farmer training program is based in Northern New Mexico and trains prospective farmers in farm planning, business planning, soil health, planting and harvesting techniques, organic pest management, value added processing and an emphasis on network, development/aggregation of food. The program uses a hands-on approach and a 15-point curriculum created by our partners American Friends Service Committee, based on the successful farm model pioneered by Don Bustos.

We know that it is vital to lift up and create opportunities and networks of support for the next generation of aspiring farmers. Our program blends traditional land-based practices, new technology, leadership development, core values and a community health perspective.

If you believe it is important to train the next generation of acequia farmers, please consider donating to NMAA's Los Sembradores Farmer Training Program.



Donate at <https://lasacequias.org/product/donate>
or call Serafina Lombardi at (505) 995-9644 or Serafina@lasacequias.org

Community Spotlight, Pilar Acequia Association

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Pat explains that, “the commission has been focusing on putting in pipe in the slow and troublesome spots to keep the velocity of the water going. Have recently installed a new headgate at our lower pond and even dredged a part of the lower pond. In addition to this, the Commission is working tirelessly alongside the Taos Soil and Water Conservation District, NM Acequia Association and the Interstate Stream Commission to apply for monies, conduct infrastructure repairs, updating bylaws and ensure compliance with state law”.

What makes your acequia special?

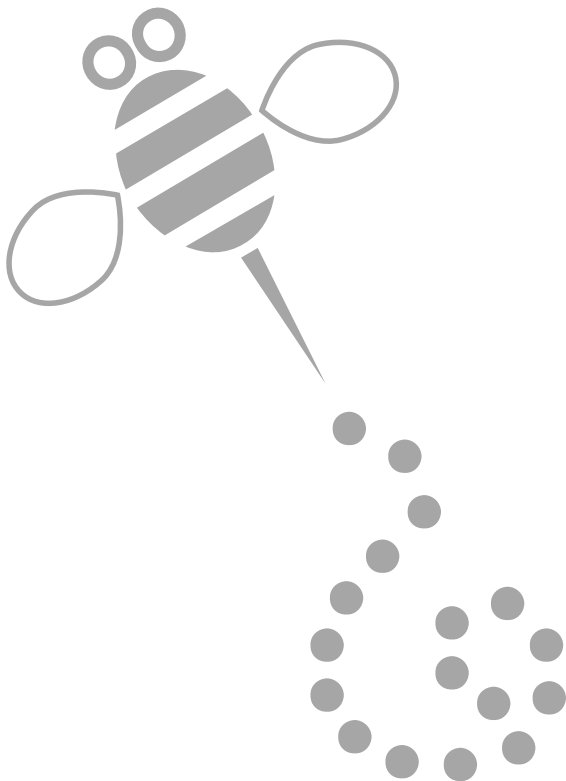
Spoken with a smile, Pat concludes that “the Mountain Springs are very special to our community and most importantly this acequia brings us together! We are headquarters of Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. We are a paradise community surrounded 360° degrees by BLM land with a vision to continue supplying our members with water and keep expanding our agricultural abilities, not just our recreational attractions!” 💧



Lower Pond of the Pilar Acequia Association. Photo by G.G. Witkop.

Protect Pollinators and Your Water Rights!

continued from page 4



to our native plants as well as many of our food crops. However, the same efforts to support the health of native pollinators will also bolster honey bees since each peruse many of the same flowers. Since the intention for a pollinator refuge is to have a Spring until Fall succession of blooms, a parciante may be able to rent their field to a beekeeper to earn some extra income and be able to receive help with irrigation. We can call the parciante a sort of passive micro-rancher.

As farmers and ranchers, we are the barometers of climate change. Scientists can eloquently quantify the effects, but we can both quantify and qualify them, because we experience these calamities intimately. Therefore, we are the ones who are proactive in maintaining our communities' dignity and livelihood. By providing habitat in the form of contiguous pollinator refuges, we can repopulate our watersheds with pollinator habitat while promoting pollination and maintaining the access to our water. This year may not be the year to plant more than what we can water, but consider scattering some seeds for our pollinators and for our acequias in the Fall with hopes of next Spring.

Email me with comments or suggestions at Rosenberg.adrienne@gmail.com.

Resources:

- Plants of the Southwest <https://plantsofthesouthwest.com/>
- The Xerces Society Guide, Attracting Native Pollinators and Farming with Native Beneficial Insects
- NMSU Pollinator Project <http://aces.nmsu.edu/ipm/pollinator-project.html>
- Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/NewMexico/PFW_home.cfm

Bio: Adrienne Rosenberg lives in Embudo, New Mexico. She owns Woven Web Farm, which grows gourmet mushrooms, and is an audio documentarian. Her work has focused on local knowledge and stories of resilience through the land.

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

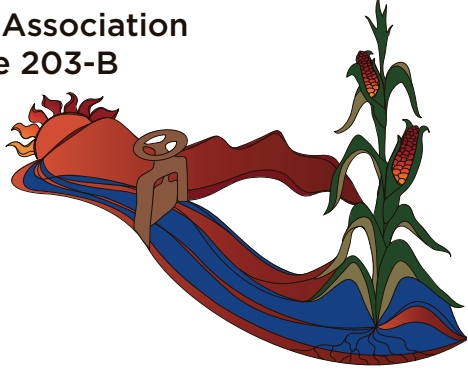
In our vision, acequias flow with clean water, people work together to grow food, and communities celebrate cultural and spiritual traditions. People honor acequias as part of our heritage and express *querencia* through a strong connection to land and community. Knowledge and experience about growing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

Noticias de las Acequias • Summer 2018

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



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Please join the NMAA as a member to
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Noticias de las Acequias is the only quarterly publication in New Mexico dedicated to acequias. NMAA staff enjoys compiling stories to share with our readers. To maintain the quality and distribution of the newsletter, we are asking readers to join the NMAA or to purchase a subscription. During the next 3 to 6 months, NMAA will begin to limit our distribution list to individuals with up-to-date memberships or paid subscriptions.

If you would like to continue receiving *Noticias de las Acequias*, please support NMAA!! Join as a member!!

Parciante Member \$25/year
Acequia Member \$50/year
Regional Association Member \$75/year

Summer & Upcoming Events:



Lorenzo Candelaria and his grandchildren walking through his fields in Atrisco.
Photo by Travis McKenzie.

CONGRESO DE LAS ACEQUIAS NOVEMBER 17, 9AM-3PM

Marriott Pyramid Hotel, ABQ.
TBA: Lasacequias.org

NEW MEXICO ACEQUIA COMMISSION MEETINGS USUALLY EVERY 3RD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH, 10AM

Location varies
For details contact Chairman Ralph Vigil 505 603-2879,
molinodelaisla@gmail.com

APPLE HARVEST CELEBRATION SEPTEMBER 16TH

Los Luceros Historic Ranch, Alcalde
Serafina@lasacequias.org, 505-995-9644

NM COUNTY FAIRS THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER

In your county
<http://aces.nmsu.edu/fairs/>

NEW MEXICO STATE FAIR SEPTEMBER 6-16TH

Louisiana and Lomas, ABQ
<http://statefair.exponm.com/>

SHOP AT YOUR LOCAL FARMERS MARKET ALL SEASON LONG

Locations across the State
<http://farmersmarketsnm.org/find-a-market/>
or call 888.983.4400 to find a market near you

REGISTER WITH THE FARM SERVICE AGENCY

ONGOING Visit your local FSA Office
Become eligible for USDA programs and get counted in the
Ag Census

SIGN UP FOR NATURAL CONSERVATION RESOURCE SERVICE ON FARM IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMS

ONGOING Visit the NMAA office
Call Serafina at NMAA 505-995-9644 for assistance