

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
FOR
WATERSHED HEALTH AND RESTORATION
IN THE
GREATER RIO GRANDE WATERSHED ALLIANCE AREA**

This Memorandum of Understanding is an agreement by the Taos, East Rio Arriba, Santa Fe - Pojoaque, Cuba, Coronado, Ciudad, McKinley, Lava, Valencia, Edgewood, Socorro, and Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) to address watershed health issues through restoration and conservation practices implementation in the Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance.

WHEREAS: The Greater Rio Grande Watershed Alliance area is located within portions of Taos, East Rio Arriba, Santa Fe - Pojoaque, Cuba, Coronado, Ciudad, McKinley, Lava, Valencia, Edgewood, Socorro, and Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation Districts. (See Map)

WHEREAS: The 12 SWCDs make up a landscape that, while currently stable, contains thousands of acres of forest, woodlands, and rangeland that are characterized by unnatural numbers of small diameter trees, less grass than was historically present, degraded riparian areas, soils that are highly erodible, and unwanted invasive and exotic species, all traits that can be improved by watershed restoration practices;

WHEREAS: The SWCDs have the authority to conduct research, investigations, and surveys pertaining to forest and woodland health, soil erosion, sedimentation, and flooding, relating to conservation, development, and utilization of water.

WHEREAS: The SWCDs have the authority to accept funding and administer projects of any government agency to provide for soil and water conservation, watershed restoration, thinning, erosion control, erosion prevention, wildfire risk reduction, and flood abatement within their respective districts.

WHEREAS: The SWCDs are charged with identifying the local conservation concerns, planning for solving the problems, and implementing developed conservation plans.

WHEREAS: The SWCDs inform and educate landowners, operators, government entities, groups/organizations, political leaders/legislators/county commissioners, general citizens, and conservation stakeholders of water conservation needs.

WHEREAS: A steering committee consisting of the member SWCDs and other interested stakeholders has been established to provide direction for the partnership effort.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE:

THEREFORE: The SWCDs agree to cooperate on developing a scientifically sound watershed restoration program, to be implemented at the landscape scale, which will improve watershed health and function and reduce negative impacts to property and natural resources.

The specific objectives of this MOU are to allow the Districts to work together to:

1. Continue to collaborate with local, state, federal, tribal, and private partners in watershed restoration efforts to acquire funding from local, state, Federal, and private sources to address the problem areas.
2. Continue to implement an information/education initiative, initiate a cost -share program, and provide conservation planning assistance and technical assistance, as funds are available.
3. Identify and map the watershed health concerns and treatment projects of each district.

Each district and partner entity will be responsible for actions, activities, implementation, and monitoring of each project in their respective jurisdiction in accordance with the rules of the fiscal administering entity and funding source.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The undersigned SWCDs agree to work separately and collectively on the above objectives as time, funding, and personnel are available. This MOU will become effective upon the date of the last SWCD Chairperson's signature. Modifications to this agreement can be made at any time by mutual consent of all the participating SWCDs. Any SWCD can withdraw from this MOU at any time after Supervisory Board action and written notification to the remaining SWCDs.

See Attached Signature Pages for the following Soil and Water Conservation Districts:

- Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District
- Santa Fe – Pojoaque Soil and Water Conservation District
- Cuba Soil and Water Conservation District
- East Rio Arriba Soil and Water Conservation District
- Taos Soil and Water Conservation District
- Coronado Soil and Water Conservation District
- McKinley Soil and Water Conservation District
- Lava Soil and Water Conservation District
- Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District
- Edgewood Soil and Water Conservation District
- Socorro Soil and Water Conservation District
- Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District