



Doña Ana Soil and Water Conservation District

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Master Watershed Conservationists

Introduction:

The Lower Rio Grande River, situated in the tail end of the Rocky Mountains, is the lifeblood of the Mesilla Valley. The Master Watershed Conservationist program is a volunteer based education program focusing on the river's watershed from Caballo Dam to the New Mexico Texas border. This region sustains a fertile agricultural industry, is a crossroads for a growing international trade zone with Mexico, home to the City of Las Cruces the state's second largest city and home to the state's Land Grant University, New Mexico State University. A changing climate brings increasing temperatures, extended droughts, and diminishing water supplies that threaten our way of life. The rapid changes demand an informed engaged citizenry to make the decisions necessary to conserve our water for current and future generations.

Goal:

Equip citizens of New Mexico's lower Rio Grande River watershed with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions in the planning and management of the watershed. Engage and empower volunteers to implement conservation projects that address one or more critical conservation issues of the New Mexico Lower Rio Grande watershed. Empower volunteers to engage in leadership roles and organize educational efforts that promote the stewardship of the New Mexico lower Rio Grande watershed.

Objectives:

- Create a sustainable volunteer program to be called *Master Watershed Conservationists*. Recruited volunteers will participate in a comprehensive conservation education program equipping them with knowledge and hands on experiences that address the pressing issues of the New Mexico Lower Rio Grande watershed. Volunteers completing the *Master Watershed Conservationists* program will be expected to implement conservation project(s) that address one or more of the critical conservation issues of the watershed.
- Develop a partnership of entities engaged in the stewardship of the NM Lower Rio Grande watershed who will design and sustain the *Master Watershed Conservationist* program and extend resources to trained volunteers to engage in stewardship activities that benefit the watershed.
- Document and share the *Master Watershed Conservationist* model with NM Soil and Water Conservation Districts and other entities who may choose to replicate the program.

Master Watershed Conservationist

Topic	Organizer	Organization
1. Watershed & Watershed Planning	Connie Maxwell	NM Water Resources and Research Institute
2. Weather, Climate, Droughts & Flooding	John Gwynn	Dona Ana County Flood Commission
3. Hydrology, Stream Processes and Ecology of the Southern NM Rio Grande	Kurt Anderson & Kevin Bixby	Dona Ana Soil and Water Conservation District
4. Soils and Geologic Processes	Steve Kadas	NRCS
5. Watershed Management & Water Quality	Rhonda Diaz & Peter Bennett Zach Libben	City of Las Cruces Elephant Butte Irrigation District
6. Water Laws and Regulations	Josh Smith	Dona Ana Soil and Water Conservation District
7. Water Supply Management	Leslie Kryder	Spring Rains Consulting
8. Working Together & Project Ideas	Craig Fenske Jerry Schickedanz	Dona Ana Soil and Water Conservation District NMSU