

Debra E. Hughes has been the Executive Director for the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts for five years. She is the Chair of the Lower Pecos River Regional Water Planning Organization and has been with that group for seven years. Debbie also is a member of the Dialogue Board of Directors, the secretary/ treasurer for the Pecos River Native Riparian Restoration Organization, a member of the Agriculture Drought Committee for New Mexico, and an affiliate member of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Water.



Soil and Water Conservation Districts

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

NMSA 73-20-44 District Act directs soil & water conservation districts to plan:

“Develop comprehensive plans for natural resource conservation and development, including flood prevention, control and prevention of soil erosion, and the development, utilization and disposal of water.”

Conservation plans that are developed with individual landowners (cooperators) are individualized to “Needs.”

Plans consider “water, growth, & sustainability”

- Water Conservation
- Irrigation Efficiency
- Growth of Food & Fiber
 - Sustainability of Natural Resources
 - Soil/Water Quantity & Quality
- Watershed restoration and management is a very high priority for soil and water conservation districts; New Mexico water supplies are totally dependent on water yield from our watersheds.
- Our future, our children’s future, and growth depend on sustaining our water supplies and educating our children about how to do this.

- Outdoor classrooms and educational tours are very important tools utilized by soil and water conservation districts.
- New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts sponsored *Conserve the Enchantment* teacher workshop to “grow” their knowledge about watershed and conservation issues. Dr. Karl Wood, WRRRI Director, developed our curriculum.
- Soil and Water Districts are going into schools and conducting water fairs and festivals with the new “Rolling Rivers” mobile watershed trailers. These trailers are an exciting tools to teach about river systems and watersheds.
- This past year a very historic Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the U.S. Forest Service, the Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District, and the New Mexico Conservation Commission to allow partnership work on a local watershed.
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts also work with New Mexico acequias utilizing assistance and technology to sustain their water supply.
- Drought-Fire-Endangered Species Act (ESA)-
Water Demands

It all comes down to managing our limited water resources and restoring our watersheds to allow for growth and sustainability. Soil and Water Conservation Districts are planning for the 21st Century as “Conservation’s Local Response”

Note: For a copy of the video “Restoring the Promise,” which describes watershed management practices for pinon-juniper ecosystems, contact NMSU Agricultural Communications at 1-888-750-4165.