

# CLAUNCH-PINTO SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

## DISTRICT



## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2007

## 66 YEARS IN SERVICE



The Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors are very pleased with the District's accomplishments during the past fiscal year.

### **Members of the current Board of Supervisors are:**

Felipe Lovato, Jr., Chairman  
William Caster, Vice-Chairperson  
John Brian Greene, Sec-Treas.  
LeRoy Candelaria, Member

Randy Simmons, Member  
Richard Shovelin, Member  
William Hignight, Member

### **Associate Supervisors:**

Frank Luna  
Linda Kayser

Paul Gardner  
Colvin Connell

### **District Staff:**

Deirdre L. Tarr, District Manager  
Melissa Kayser, Administrative Assistant  
Vernon Kohler, Field Technician  
April Luna, Field Technician  
Jade Lajeunesse, Student Office Assistant

During the year, the Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District was assisted by the following **Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff:**

Louis King, District Conservationist  
Kenneth Branch, Range management Specialist

### **NMACD Farm Bill Specialist:**

Janice Anaya

The Board of Supervisors meets the first Friday of every month at 8:00 a.m. The meeting is held at the Mountainair United Methodist Church, located at the corner of the Sunset and Third in Mountainair, N.M.

The Claunch-Pinto Soil and Water Conservation District encompasses 1,234,002 acres of parts of Torrance, Lincoln, Socorro and Valencia Counties and provides assistance to 326 District Cooperators including several small towns and villages.

The Claunch-Pinto SWCD was involved in a great number of projects this year. All of the District's Objectives in its Annual Work Plan were addressed. The following are highlights of this year's accomplishments with the dedicated assistance of the NRCS Staff:

- I. Brush Control remains our #1 priority; **3,633.4 acres** were completed through the use of mechanical and hand treatment.
  
- II. Improving the environmental quality of our District through Watershed Planning to reduce erosion problems in designated watersheds within the District is another priority. The following has been completed:
  - The District has received five grants from the Water Trust Board and New Mexico State Forestry for a total amount of **\$2,650,460** for watershed health in the major recharge areas of the Estancia Closed Basin. The District is working cooperatively with the East Torrance SWCD, Edgewood SWCD, U.S. Forest Service, Torrance County, N.M. Watershed Institute, Manzano Land Grant, and Chili Land Grant. An advisory committee composed of these district partners meets on a regular basis. The Advisory Committee has recommended projects in the Estancia Closed Basin recharge area during the past several years. These grants are for hazardous fuels reduction, brush management, diversions, re-seeding, and grazing management. SWCA Inc. has been contracted to choose the monitoring sites and report to the committee and the Claunch-Pinto Board over the next several years. The District currently has sixteen (16) active contracts for a total 314.5 acres and \$68,721.25.



**Project before producer started.**



**Project  
after  
producer  
completed  
project.**

- The District is the fiscal agent of a special grant from the Water Trust Board for \$1,200,000.00 to treat the salt cedar and the juniper/pinon invasion in the Abo Arroyo Watershed/Estancia Basin and the Upper Pecos and Taiban Watershed Project. Claunch-Pinto SWCD has seen a dramatic change in the Abo Arroyo with 264.20 acres of salt cedar treated aurally and mechanically in the Abo Arroyo using approximately \$288,772.79. The District also worked with De Baca SWCD on the salt cedar invasion in the De Baca area. \$321,082.10 was spent removing 1,399.7 acres of salt cedar and \$49,993.75 on removal of mesquite. Claunch-Pinto SWCD also worked with East Torrance SWCD and Edgewood SWCD with part of this grant to treat the juniper/pinon invasion in the Estancia Basin for a total of 421.45 acres and a total of \$422,363.76. The District also worked in partnership with Valencia SWCD and Socorro SWCD with spraying in the Abo Arroyo on the salt cedar.





**Salt Cedar in Abo Arroyo before treatment**



**After treatment of Abo Arroyo.**



**Historic Scholle Bridge before treatment.**



**Historic Scholle Bridge After treatment.**



**Salt cedar root being extracted mechanically along Abo Arroyo.**



**Melissa Kayser demonstrating how large the salt cedars really are.**



**EQIP Project – Fence**



**EQIP Project – Fence**

- The District has forty-six (46) active EQIP contracts for a total of 366,138.5 acres and \$483,224.00



**EQIP Project – Metal tank**



**EQIP Project – Rubber tire tank**





**EQIP Brush Project before treatment.**



**EQIP Brush Project after treatment.**

- The District has one grant through the US Fish and Wildlife Foundation and one grant through New Mexico State Forestry for their Noxious Weed Program. The grants are for information education, a Noxious Weed Coordinator, mapping and spraying noxious weeds. The Noxious Weed Coordinator is Tom Perkins. The District is partnering with the Edgewood and East Torrance SWCD's, US Forest Service, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, State Land Office, NM State Land Office, NM State Highway Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Torrance County Commissioners, Torrance County Farm Bureau, and BNSF Railway Company through a Memorandum of Understanding to form the Central New Mexico Weed Management Area. The group has spent time mapping noxious weed areas, setting up test plots on Highway 41 between Willard and Estancia, and spraying Russian Knapweed on County Road rights of way. William Caster, Melissa Kayser, Tom Perkins, Brenda Smythe, Kelly Archuleta, Jim Berlier, and several county employees attended the Noxious Weed Short Course in July of 2006.

**William Caster and Melissa Kayser at the Noxious Weed Short Course in July of 2006 in Farmington NM.**



- The District completed a grant for the Wildland Urban Interface Project through the NM State Forestry. The District completed seven (7) contracts for a total of 71.1 acres and a total of \$44,606.00. The District held a State Forestry training for thinning contractors and landowners at the Manzano Mountain Retreat. Approximately 21 people attended the training which was conducted by State Forestry personnel. The District has applied for another Western State Wildland Urban Interface Grant through NM State Forestry.

**III.** We promote conservation education with the District's education and information programs as follows:

- The District supports the Mountainair and Corona Elementary School Science Fairs with \$50.00 savings bonds. This year's (2006) winners were: Mrs. Swanson's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class and Mikayla Wilson (4<sup>th</sup> grade).
- The District received approximately 100 units of planting materials from the Plant Material Center in Los Lunas NM. These were used as a project at the Mountainair High School/Middle School Outdoor Classroom. Mr. Lockwood the Ag teacher helped the District setup the location and is maintaining the project.
- The District received approximately 2000 units of plant materials from the Plant Material Center in Los Lunas NM. These were used as restoration efforts in the Abo Arroyo after the salt cedar removal. The District worked with the Mountainair High School and local Home School Students during the planting of these materials. Louis King, NRCS District Conservationist instructed the students on the proper way of how to plant the materials, Brent Racher, Ph.D. students on the natural flow of arroyos and the removal of invasive species. Kenneth Branch, Range Management Specialist on material species and type.

**Claunch-Pinto's Board Chairman Felipe Lovato Jr. instructing Mountainair High School Students in planting technique's along the Abo Arroyo.**



- We continue to sponsor students and teachers to Forestry Camp, Range Camp, Black Range Camp, and Water Camp.
- We continue to publish a newsletter on a quarterly basis. Circulation is currently 1850.
- Our earth team volunteers consist of 69 volunteers which include 38 women and 31 men. The District's goal is to increase this number every year. Volunteer assistance currently being offered:
  1. Newsletter publication
  2. Grant Writing
  3. Natural Resources Conservation Day Coordination
  4. Administrative Support
  5. Monitoring project on the Abo Arroyo Watershed
- The District sponsors the Abandoned Well Plugging Project.
- The District created and displayed an information booth for the Statewide Phreatophyte Meeting in Abiquiu N.M.
- The District had an informational booth at Soil and Water Conservation Day at the New Mexico Legislation.
- The District and Cougar Mountain Preserves used the Rolling River Trailer at the Corona Elementary School to illustrate watershed health.
- The District had an information booth for Rio Grande Day at the Legislation Santa Fe N.M.
- The District and P&M Plastics Inc. is conducting the monitoring for the Ultima Biomass CFRP Project. We have 10 students and a coordinator working on this project.
- The District has a new website. We will be posting all of the district's information including agenda's and minutes.
- The District had an information booth at the Art Fair in Mountainair N.M.



**IV.** We continue to encourage implementation of accelerated range management practices. Listed below are the achievements made in the field for 2006:

- Individuals and Groups assisted during FY2007 producers which include Ag-Related producers, Rural landowners, suburban land owners, ag groups, non-ag groups, business, and government entities’:

**Additional Achievements Include:**

| <b>List of Practice</b> | <b>Completed in 2006</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Brush Management        | 3,113.40                 |
| Diversions              | 9,705 feet               |
| Pipeline                | 54,830 feet              |
| Fence                   | 10,575 feet              |
| Well                    | 2                        |
| Pumping Plant           | 2                        |
| Watering Facility       | 13                       |
| Flow Meters             | 2                        |
| CSP                     | 6,906 feet               |

- Value Added Juniper Woodland Products (chipping)
- District Purchased a Chipper

**V.** We promote Civil Rights and encourage increased participation of minorities and women cooperators.

**VI.** We continue increase awareness of local, state, and federal legislative actions and activities to influence political decisions and appropriations.

- Three Supervisors attended the NMACD Convention in T or C NM, in November 2006.
- Richard Spencer, Area Resource Conservationist, with assistance of the District Manager presented the Memorial Program at the NMACD annual conference.
- Two Supervisors and the District Manager attended the Summer Conference and Region II meeting in Ruidoso in July, 2006.

- The key to the District success has been being very active and involved in coordinating conservation activities with the following:
  - Torrance County:
  - Estancia Basin Water Planning Committee
  - Abo Arroyo Watershed
  - Torrance County Commissioners
  - FSA
  - Extension Service
  - Interstate Stream Commission
  - State Land Office
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - U.S. Forest Service
  - U.S. Park Service
  - Lincoln County Commission
  - USDA-NRCS
  - Cowbells
  - Socorro County Commission
  - N.M. Department of Agriculture
  - New Mexico State University
  - Local Landowners (private and public)
  - N.M. Cooperative Extension Service
  - City of Rio Rancho
  - Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
  - New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts
  - City of Albuquerque (Open Space Division)
  - Santa Domingo Pueblo
  - Santa Clara Pueblo
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
  - U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
  - U.S. Bureau of Land Management
  - U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service
  - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
  - Office of Natural Resource Trustee
  - Friends of Rio Rancho Open Space
  - Mid Region Council of Governments
  - BEMP/Bosque School
  - Santa Fe County
  - Santa Cruz Irrigation District
  - N.M. State Land Office
  - Gandydancer Railroad Services
  - Abiquiu Land Grant
  - Rio Arriba County Extension Office
  - Manzano Land Grant
  - Valencia SWCD

- Socorro SWCD
  - East Rio Arriba SWCD
  - East Torrance SWCD
  - Edgewood SWCD
  - Ciudad SWCD
  - Mountainair Public School
  - Corona Public School
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- Brian Greene, a Claunch- Pinto SWCD Supervisor, is a past Chairman of the New Mexico Soil and Water Conservation Commission. He is a past President of the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts. He serves on the Legislative Committee for the State Association. He serves on the Legislative Committee and Grazing Land and Public Lands Resource Committee for the National Association of Conservation Districts. He is on the Executive Council of South Central Mountain RC&D.
  
  - William Caster, a Claunch-Pinto SWCD Supervisor serves as a representative for the District on the HUB RC&D Executive Council as Treasurer. William also is a member of the Torrance County Farm Bureau and is a past President.
  
  - Felipe Lovato Jr., serves as a member on the Upper Rio Grande Phreatophyte Steering Committee.

**VII.** The Board of Supervisors has committed to expanding this office and is working on a plan to have greater conservation impact in the district by increasing revenue and using funds in a prudent and wise manner.

- The District adopted Resolution #05-01 authorizing investment of monies in Local Short-term Investment Fund.



- The District has a grant proposal in the amount of \$2.6 million dollar for a Natural Resource Conservation Center in U.S. Representative Heather Wilson's office. The Center would serve as a hub location in Central New Mexico to trace human activities and resulting impacts on our natural resources for the last 10,000 years. The SWCD has a long-term goal to create a physical plant which would house educational facilities, promote cultural events, display historical information, and provide an indoor and outdoor setting dedicated to the teaching and demonstration of ecological principles, natural resource conservation practices, and cultural influences.
- The Claunch-Pinto SWCD continues to assess its mill levy. A Mill Levy Referendum Resolution was adopted by the Board and approved by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission and notice given to residents of Torrance, Lincoln, and Socorro County. Notice has been given to the Torrance, Lincoln, and Socorro, County assessors. The mill levy accounts for 55% of the total revenue for the district. The money received is used to continue developing soil and water conservation projects, ecological information and education, and natural resource management initiatives.
- Proper financial management was and is a concern of the Claunch-Pinto SWCD. The District completed and submitted their 2007 Financial Report and their FY2007 budget as required by the Department of Financial Administration (DFA). As per DFA, the FY07 budget was reviewed quarterly and reports sent to DFA. The State Auditors Office conducted an audit for the year-end June 30 2006. No audit exceptions were recorded.
- Additional Funds to diversify operations and expand conservation project impacts will be sought through outside grant proposals. The SWCD administrative assistant is planning to attend a grant writing class during the fiscal year to help with grant proposals.

**VIII.** The Claunch-Pinto SWCD conducted their Annual meeting in December 1, 2006. Approximately 30 people attended.

**IX.** The Claunch-Pinto SWCD Board of Supervisors was reorganized in July, 2007. The following are officers for 2007: Felipe Lovato, Jr. Chairman, William Caster, Vice Chairman, and J. Brian Greene, Secretary-Treasurer. The appointed positions #6, Richard Shovelin and #7, William Hignight, were filled. The Open Meetings Resolution was adopted by the Board effective January 1, 2007.



**Claunch-Pinto's Board of Supervisors and the District Manager receiving instructions on the Districts new chipper from the Vermeer sales representative.**

**Felipe Lovato, Jr. Claunch-Pinto SWCD Chainman, accepting the keys to the new chipper.**

