**San Francisco**

**Soil and Water Conservation District**

**LAND USE PLAN**

**Revised June 12, 2023**

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**Centerfire Creek Restoration**

The San Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District (District) Land Use Plan (Plan) is an executable policy for natural resource management and land use on the lands within the District and provides a scientifically and culturally sound framework for resource planning objectives.

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1. **INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT**

There are approximately 2,155.380 acres within the San Francisco SWCD. Of this there are about 314,227 acres private and state, 106,010 acres Bureau of Land Management, 1,734,983 acres in national forest, 160 acres national park, and 4,112 acres of irrigated land and 500 acres dry cropland. The present economy of the District is based on agriculture, supplemented by off farm employment in lumbering, guide and outfitting, recreation and tourism and mining.

Cattle ranching remains a dominant activity with grazing on forest and other federal land supplementing the private holdings. Nearly all the crops grown on the farmland are used for supplemental feeding of cattle. The population within the District is approximately 2,700 or about 0.5 persons per square mile, making it one of the most sparsely settled places in New Mexico and U.S. The population of Catron County, of which the San Francisco District comprises about one half, has had a downward trend.

**CATRON COUNTY TOTAL POPULATION**

Year Population

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1910 | 3,804 |
| 1920 | 3,780 |
| 1930 | 3,282 |
| 1940 | 4,881 |
| 1950 | 3,533 |
| 1960 | 2,773 |
| 1970 | 2,100 |
| 1980 | 2,755 |
| 1990 | 2,353 |
| 2000 | 3,543 |
| 2010 | 3,725 |
| 2020 | 3,527 |

In general, the climate is characterized by light precipitation, abundant sunshine, relatively low humidity and a considerable annual and daily temperature range. There is considerable variation in climatic conditions from year to year and from one locality to another in the district.

The local citizens created the San Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

This district includes approximately 3,369 square miles of rugged mountains, plateaus and plains, mountain streams, ponderosa pine and fir, piñon and juniper forests, mountain meadows and grama grass, rabbit brush and cactus.

It is a land of small, irrigated farms and sizable ranches, of lumbermen and merchants, and of hunters and fishermen. This is a land just being discovered by the city dweller and the vacationer.

With the expected increases in population it will continue to become more important that our land and water resources be utilized and maintained to their fullest productive capacity.

This is why the Supervisors of the San Francisco SWCD have prepared this land use plan. The purpose of this long-range plan is for orderly development and wise use of our land, water and recreation resources.

1. **DESCRJPTION OF FARMLAND IN DISTRICT**

There are approximately 4,112 acres of irrigated cropland within the District. Most of the farmland in the District lies along the San Francisco River Valley in Glenwood, Reserve, and Luna areas. There is also some farming along the Tularosa River, Mineral Creek and Whitewater Creek.

The two land resource areas within the District are Arizona and New Mexico Mountains and Western Plateaus and Mesas. The Glenwood area farming lies in the Western Plateaus, whereas the rest of the farming is done in the Rocky Mountains. Almost all of the farmland is irrigated by diverting water from the creeks and rivers through the ditches to the fields, with very few irrigation wells. The main irrigated crops are pasture, alfalfa and small grains with smaller amounts of corn, sorghum, orchards and gardens.

The soils on the cropland fall into predominately four classes. They are (1) deep loamy soils, (2) moderately deep soils over sand and/or gravel, (3) moderately deep to shallow over sand and/or gravel and possibly 3 to 5 percent slopes and (4) shallow soils.

1. **Farmland Problems in the District**
2. **Soils problems:**
3. The soils of the irrigated cropland are of alluvial origin and range in texture from sand to clay. These soils vary considerably from field to field in texture and also in depth. This calls for intensified management of soils, crops, and irrigation water.
4. Some fields have a high water table, which limits the depth of the root zone. This requires special management as to the kinds of varieties of crops that can be grown and/or drainage.
5. Due to the large amounts of sand and gravel in the soil, the efficient use of irrigation water calls for highly intensified management such as application of water at a fast rate, frequent irrigations, and short irrigation runs.
6. Because of the sand and gravel in the soil, fertilizer is easily leached.
7. Due to the shallow soils on much of the land, land leveling must be carefully done.
8. **Flood Problems:**
9. Floods on the San Francisco River and it tributaries are an annual occurrence. These floods cause:
10. Loss of crops.
11. Loss of cropland
12. Damage to wells, fences and homes.
13. Ditches and ditch headings are constantly washed out.
14. The stream channel to change its course, cutting away valuable land.
15. **Problems connected with surface irrigation water:**
16. The inadequate irrigation systems used in the District are a major problem in the handling of irrigation water. The majority of these systems consist of pushed up sand and silt diversions and earth ditches. These diversions must be replaced three and four times a year. Many times the irrigation ditches are one to two miles long before reaching the cropland, causing a high loss of water through seepage.
17. Since irrigation water in the District is allocated to the extent of about three acre feet of water per acre of cropland, efficient application of this wafer is a must.
18. Watershed treatment is needed to improve delivery of water and improve water quality.
19. **Economic problems connected with the farming enterprises:**
20. With limited cash crops grown in the area, very few farmers make their living solely off their farm.
21. Many farmers have a farm and ranch combination and use their farmland to supplement their cattle.
22. Others who are strictly farmers must supplement their farm income with off-the-farm employment.
23. Due to the low income-producing cropland, farmers are hesitant in applying needed conservation practices.
24. **Program for the solution of Farmland Problems**
25. **Soil management program**
26. Conduct soil surveys to identify the various depths and textures of soil.
27. Examine for more efficient irrigation systems. To obtain efficient use of irrigation water on these various soils will require the measurement of water going into the fields. It may also require leveling fields, making shorter irrigation runs and installing borders.
28. Identify better-adapted crops.
29. With the efficient application of irrigation water, some fertilizer leaching can be avoided. Also with the use of a good rotation in the cropping system and by plowing plant stubble into the soil, this will help in improving the tilth and fertility of the soil.
30. Fields having shallow soils that need leveling may have to be leveled in two or more fields to reduce the deep cuts into the shallow soil.
31. Work toward getting small-scale water diversion structures built on the Frisco River for water control so that the farmers will have their water when the crops need it.
32. Encourage seeding of dry land fields to protect against erosion. Encourage seeding of adapted introduced and/or native plant species.
33. **Flood control program**
34. The District will co-sponsor the Upper San Francisco and the Tularosa small watershed projects, which appear to be potentially feasible in the Conservation Needs Inventory.
35. Provide technical assistance to any group or individual who has flooding problems and requests the District's assistance.
36. Need watershed treatment to maintain sustained stream flow for yearlong supply.
37. **Application of irrigation water**
38. Assist individuals and groups in reorganizing their field and community ditch systems. Some of the community ditches are the Luna, McKeen, Spurgeon, Middle Frisco, North Aragon, and South Aragon, also the East Side and West Side Pleasanton.
39. The following improvements are needed:
    1. Permanent type diversions such as rock and wire
    2. Install pipe and concrete lined ditches with checks and turnouts.
    3. Land leveling.
    4. Install infiltration diversions.
40. **Solutions for Economic problems**
41. Provide cost-return data to individuals
42. If a cash crop or specialty crop can be found suitable for the area, technical assistance could be provided on the management and marketing of this crop. Assistance in finding a suitable specialty crop for the area will also be provided through the Extension Service and others.
43. **DESCRIPTION OF RANGELAND IN THE DISTRICT** There are approximately 314,227 acres of private and state lands lying within the District boundary, 106,010 acres of BLM and 1,734,983 acres of national forest. The ranches vary from 5 to 10 head to over 1,500 head with elevations ranging from below 5,000 feet to above 10,000 feet. The primary objective of the District's long-range program is to achieve the highest degree of use and still use the area within its capabilities. This includes protecting the soil; maintaining or improving the rangeland, woodland, and wildlife habitat, reduce floodwater and sediment damage, and possibly converting to a recreation area.
44. **Problems on rangeland in the district:**
45. With the invasion of pinion, juniper and brush in the District, grass production had declined. This has also reduced the amount of water infiltration into the soil, reducing the flow from springs and generally lowering the water table. The decrease in grass cover also contributes to diminished water quality through sheet erosion that increases surface water turbidity and siltation of streams.
46. Because of the low rainfall in the District, permanent cattle waterings are very scattered therefore, the proper distribution of livestock is not attained.
47. Because of the large amounts of federal land in the District, an overall plan of conservation operation is hard to achieve. This indicates a need for stronger cooperation of the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.
48. Gully erosion is evident on all ranches within the District.
49. Lack of adequate soil surveys for districts.
50. The Forest Service refuses to place limitations on elk populations claiming elk are under the jurisdiction of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish claims they do not have jurisdiction to manage the range conditions on federal lands. When there is resource damage from elk cattle numbers are cut by the Forest Service.
51. Post fire restoration of fencing, tanks, roads and water distribution.
52. **Program for the solution of these problems:**
53. Encourage ranchers, using cost-return data, to control brush on their lands.
54. Furnish technical assistance to ranchers in installing pipelines and storage tanks.
55. Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with other federal and state agencies for the orderly development of conservation plans on public lands as well as privately controlled lands.
56. Provide technical assistance on the application of erosion control dams. 1. Encourage cost-share needed practices such as brush control, water developments, and fencing.
57. To encourage ranchers to increase productivity and reduce erosion on poor and fair condition rangeland, by installing grazing systems and practicing good range management.
58. To encourage ranchers to reseed old fields and areas where vegetation is not adequate to protect soil from erosion.
59. Technical assistance is available to all the ranchers within the District. the District, through the Soil Conservation Service, will help the district ranch cooperator prepare a basic inventory of his lands, help him gain a better knowledge of his plants, and furnish him with cost-return information for treatment alternatives. From this information the rancher is able to develop a range forage improvement plan. A ranch plan map is developed with the rancher showing his ranch inventory and the practices he plans to do.
60. The rancher's crop is grass, which is harvested by cattle and sold as beef. The pounds of grass grown determine the pounds of beef sold; therefore, the importance of proper range use cannot be overemphasized.
61. The District will advocate that the Department of Game and Fish obtain better elk heard counts and establish carrying capacity for elk on the federal lands range so that allotment owners are not penalized for damage to resources.
62. The District will advocate through Congress, the New Mexico Legislature, state and federal agencies for prompt restoration of allotment and road infrastructure following fire events. The District will also seek any available funding to assist in restoration efforts.
63. **DESCRIPTION OF RECREATION IN THE DISTRICT** The District recognizes that our region has a high potential for recreation. We are a popular destination for recreation from the five major metropolitan areas in our state and Arizona.

With the increase in national population, the natural scenery, the District’s wildlife and fish, we can expect an increase in recreation activities. The District will assist farmers and ranchers who want to devote part or all of their land to recreation enterprises. Multiple use of their land in agritourism could also be established. Some of the recreation conservation practices which the District will provide technical assistance on are:

1. Fishpond construction.
2. Fishpond stocking.
3. Fishpond management.
4. Recreation access roads.
5. Recreation area stabilization.
6. Tree planting.
7. Grass planting.
8. Water development.
9. Wildlife habitat development.

An appraisal of outdoor recreation potentials for the county has been made. This appraisal showed a high potential for the following types of recreational developments:

* 1. Vacation Cabins, Cottages and Home sites.
  2. Camping Grounds - Vacation Site Camping and Pack Trip Camping.
  3. Trout Fishing Areas.
  4. Small and Big Game Hunting Areas.
  5. Vacation Ranches.
  6. Off Highway Vehicle Recreation.

1. **Recreation problems in the District**
2. Lack of restroom and sanitation facilities.
3. Lack of accessible rafting river put-in and take-out areas.
4. Development of roads for proper drainage.
5. Trailheads need improvement.
6. Lack of solid waste facility sites.
7. **Program for solution of problem**

1. Construction of more restroom facilities throughout the District as well as construction of an R V sanitation dump station.

2. Design and construction of proper put-in and take-out areas on the San Francisco River.

3. Trailhead enhancement as well as construction of facilities for housing of livestock at some trailheads.

4. With only about 5 percent of the county accessible by all-weather roads, the District encourages the improvement of transportation and access to recreation areas within the county. With the improvement of access and the development of recreation, it is felt that tourism would greatly expand and thereby improve the income earning potential of the local people.

5. Assist in locating and developing solid waste disposal sites. 9

1. **DESCRIPTION OF WATERSHEDS IN THE DISTRICT**
2. **Watershed problems in the District**
3. Overstocking of trees in ponderosa and woodland communities.
4. The lack of herbaceous cover. Brush invasion of grass lands.
5. Uncoordinated management of ungulate grazing.
6. **Program for solution of the problems**

Working cooperatively with private and public land managers to:

1. Reduce tree densities.
2. Install grading control structures.
3. Encourage reseeding.
4. Working with other coordinators to develop integrated ungulate grazing management.
5. Where appropriate, encourage and promote use of fire as a management tool.
6. Locating and enhancing recharge capture basins.
7. **DESCRIPTION OF WATER OUALITY IN THE DISTRICT**
8. **Water quality problems in the District**

1. Impaired Stream Segments in San Francisco District:

1. **Program for solution of the problems**
2. Stream segments will be monitored for point and non-point source pollution.
3. Whitewater Creek Bank Stabilization Project.
4. Lower Starkweather Creek Stabilization Project.
5. Tularosa River sediment control, river crossing and bank stabilization.
6. District will apply for 319 funding and any state funding available to fund these projects.
7. Conduct water quality monitoring in order to further refine and determine the source of impairments.
8. **FEDERAL AND STATE LAND EXCHANGES, ACQUISITIONS, AND SALES**

It is the District’s position that:

1. There shall be no net loss of the private land base and that the federal and state government hold a sufficient amount of land to protect public interest. No “net loss” should be measured, in both acreage and fair value.
2. There should be no land acquisition or exchange without review and approval of the Catron County Commission.
3. A private property owner has a right to dispose of or exchange his property as he/she sees fit within applicable law.
4. A private property owner should be protected from federal, state, and county encroachment  
   and/or coerced acquisition.
5. The County will be compensated for any net loss of private lands with public lands of equal value and compensated for any loss of tax base resulting from these exchanges by the appropriate acquiring agency.
6. **DESCRIPTION OF OTHER PROGRAMS OF THE DISTRICT**
7. The District is working on water restoration of the San Francisco River. The District will assist the villages and county within the district on soils, housing sites, industrial development, etc.
8. The District is included in the Jornado Conservation and Development area whose objective is to develop and conserve all the resources within the area. It hopes to improve the economy and income earning potentials of the people through wise use of the resources.
9. The District will work as a cooperating agency on the implementation of the Catron County Wildfire Protection Plan that has been attached as Appendix 1. The District will work with Catron County to implement the Catron County Water Plan that has been attached as Appendix 2.
10. **OBJECTIVES OR PURPOSES OF THE DISTRICT PROGRAM**
11. The purpose of this program is to outline the means whereby the Board of Supervisors hopes to bring about the coordination and cooperation of effort for the orderly development of the natural resources on all lands in the district.
12. It is the desire of the District to encourage landowners within the district to become District cooperators and with the assistance of the Soil Conservation Service, develop a map of the land and a plan of conservation operations.
13. The District's objective is to develop a cooperative and coordinated district-wide plan of operations for the orderly development and wise use of all land, water and related resources within their capabilities and to improve the area through total resource conservation development.
14. To use each acre of land within it's capabilities and to treat each acre of land in accordance with it's needs for protection and improvement.
15. To make the most efficient use of the irrigation water available.
16. To assist landowners and operators in applying conservation practices on cultivated, range and recreation lands.
17. To inform the general public of the District activities and accomplishments.
18. To assist schools, churches, and civic organizations in promotion and teaching of soil and water conservation.
19. To cooperate with all state and federal agencies in conservation of soil and water.
20. **GENERAL POLICES AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**
21. Board Meetings - The Board of Supervisors holds a regular meeting each month. All district cooperators and visitors are welcome to attend each meeting.
22. Sources of Funds - District funds come from annual state appropriations, grants and investments.
23. Handling of District Funds - The Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for handling District funds.
24. Records and Reports - Maintained by the Secretary-Treasurer and/or the secretary hired by the District.
25. Services Available Through the District Board of Supervisors - Landowners can contact the Supervisors and request assistance with their conservation problems.
26. Board of Supervisors - There are five Supervisors elected by the landowners of the San Francisco SWCD. Each Supervisor serves a two-year term.
27. **OPERATIONS POLICY AND PROCEEDURES**

Requests for assistance are brought before the Board and are reviewed before being approved. These requests for assistance or request to become a District cooperator, when approved, means that the District will help the landowner or operator develop and carry out a conservation plan on his land. It is the job of the Supervisors to coordinate, assign priority and request the help of other individuals and organizations needed to help develop and apply the conservation work on his farm or ranch. Cooperative agreements are canceled by Board action when property changes ownership or when requested by the landowner or operator.

1. **EDUCATION AND INFORMATION POLICIES AND PROCEEDURES**

The District Supervisors will work with youth groups such as schools, boy scouts, FF A, 4-H, and church groups to inform them of soil and water conservation actives in which they can participate. These activities include contests and soil and water conservation projects.

The District will keep the cooperators informed of District work at the annual meeting, by conducting field tours, and through news articles.

1. **ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO THE DISTRICT**

The District has entered into a basic Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretary of Agriculture for assistance of the Department in carrying out the District program. The Natural Conservation Service furnishes technical assistance to the District. Other assistance is available to the District from federal, state and local agencies such as the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service, Extension Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and New Mexico Department of Agriculture. The technical assistance furnished by the Soil Conservation Service includes:

* + 1. Preparing soil surveys
    2. Assistance in planning, applying and maintaining soil and water conservation practices.
    3. Assistance in managing and protecting woodland. D. Conservation information and education. E. Technical assistance and cost sharing on watershed protection, flood prevention and water management.
    4. District will assist landowners in applying for and implementing Environmental Quality Improvement Projects (EQUIP) and Wildlife Habitat Improvement Projects (WHIP) or any other federal or state programs.

1. **APPENDIX - DISTRICT ORGANIZATION**

The San Francisco SWCD was organized on April 14, 1942, by the farmers and ranchers in the area to promote conservation on private lands. Since that time there have been three additions to the district. The first on May 9, 1944, the second addition on July 1, 1957, and the third addition was on November 12, 1957, when the Luna SWCD joined the San Francisco District.

Supervisors that have served the District Board are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Emil Kiehne | Jimmy Christensen |
| W. U. Hutcherson | Eva Aragon |
| Emmett Reed | Skip Price |
| Florentino Jiron | Howard Hutchinson |
| Robert M. Lee | Robert Fisher |
| Buford Hulsey | Zeno Kiehne |
| Jess Brennand | Shawn Menges |
| William S. Laney | Lee Sonne |
| Preston Porter | Richard Weaver |
| Pete Kellar | Sammy Bustamante |
| Owen McCarty | Doug Baird |
| Robert Atwood | J. *Alex* Paterson |
| Kenneth Holliman | Billy N. Webb |
| Gus V. Allred | Adam Polley |
| C. N. Ford | Grace Derrick |
| J. R. Hext | Lou Naue |
| J. E. Porter | Zoe Anne Jones |
| Martin Castillo | Megan Richardson |
| Hubert Faulkner | Kate Fletcher |
| Frank Laney | Bob Howell |
| Hugh B. McKeen | Hadyn Forward |
| Tom Lee Kiehne | Don Morris |
| Vernon Holliman | Carolyn Nelson |
| Clinton Adair | Jan Porter Carrejo |
| Eddie Parsons | Brent Laney |
| Harry Reynolds | Bill Powell |
| Joe Romero | Frank Christensen |
| Alvin Laney |  |
| Tom Klumker |  |
| Harold Keith |  |
| Oliver (Sato) Lee |  |
| Cecil Beard |  |

1. **STATEMENT OF ADOPTION**

This program for the San Francisco Soil and Water Conservation District was accepted by the Supervisors as authorized by a resolution adopted at the meeting held on June 12, 2023 at Reserve, New Mexico.