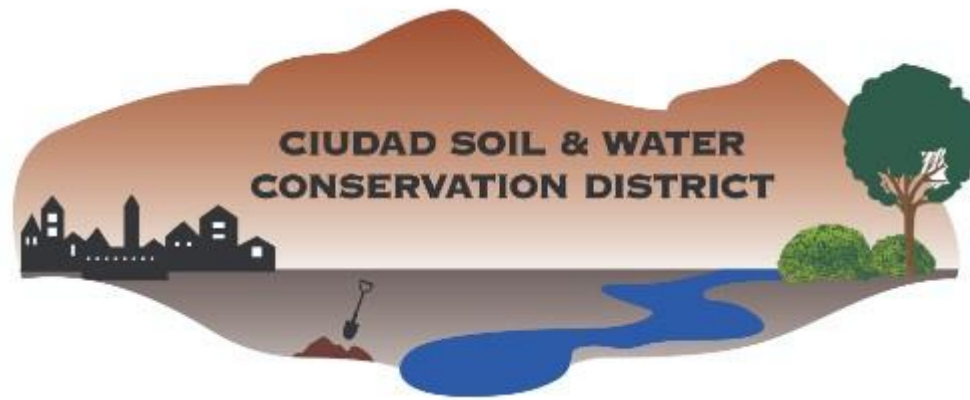


**We're from the government,
and we're here to help!**

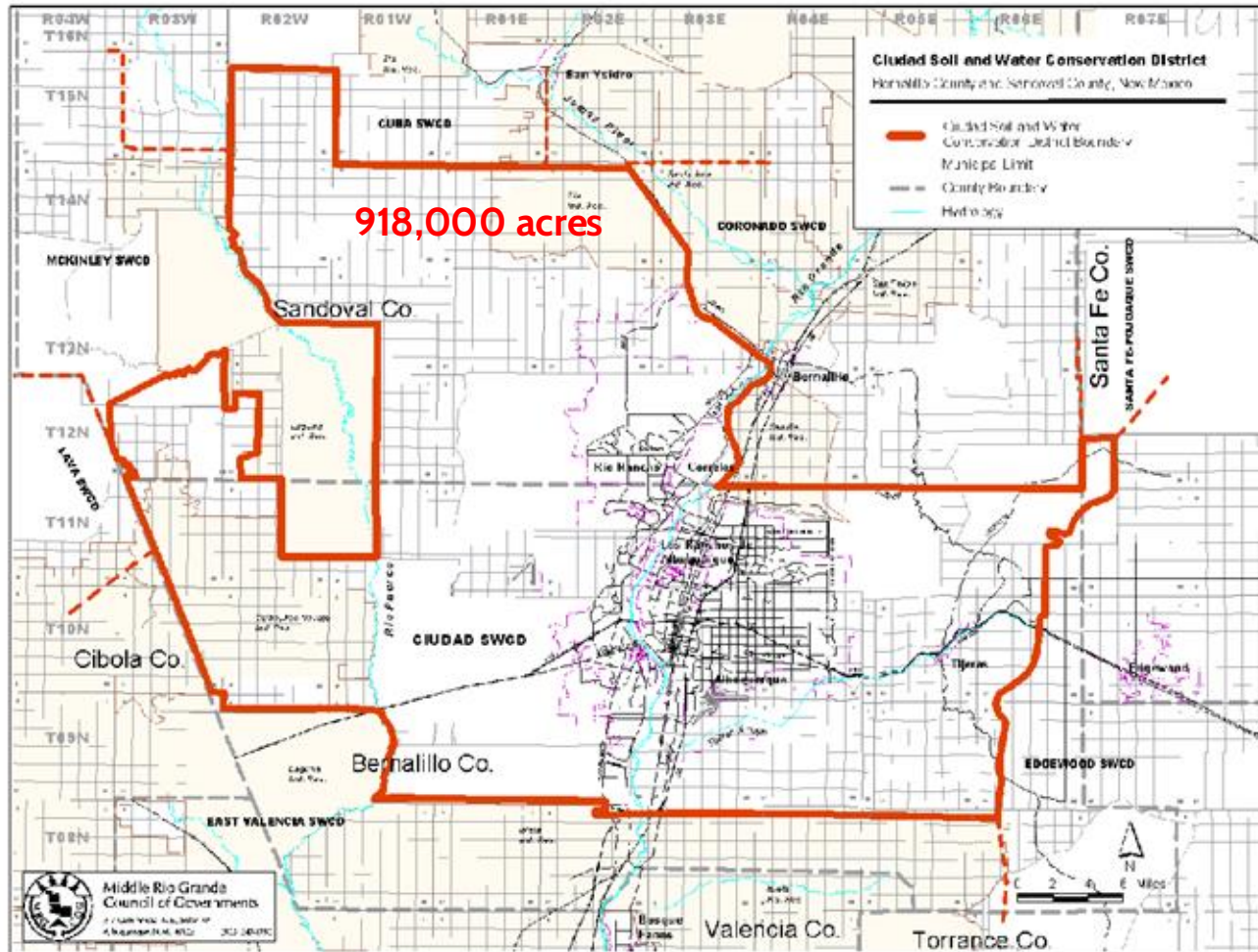


CIUDAD SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT: PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION

**Friends of the Sandia Mountains
May 5, 2026**

Ciudad SWCD Boundaries

Background





NM Soil & Water Act Purposes

- control and prevent **soil erosion**;
- **prevent floodwater** and sediment damage;
- further the **conservation, development, beneficial application** and proper disposal of water;
- promote the use of impounded water for **recreation, propagation of fish and wildlife, irrigation** and for **urban and industrial needs**; and
- by the application of these measures, **conserve and develop the natural resources** of the state, provide for flood control, **preserve wildlife**, protect the tax base and **promote the health, safety and general welfare** of the people of New Mexico.



NM SWCD Duties & Powers

- **Conduct research, investigations and surveys** treating soil erosion and floodwater and sediment damage [73-20-44(A) NMSA 1978]
- **Demonstrate by example** the methods by which soil and other natural resources may be conserved [73-20-44(C) NMSA 1978]
- **Assist, contract with and render financial aid** to district landowners and state or federal agencies ... that are engaged in erosion control and prevention projects, flood prevention works or the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water within the district [73-20-44(D) NMSA 1978]
- **Develop comprehensive plans for natural resource conservation, development and utilization**, including flood prevention, control and prevention of soil erosion and the development, utilization and disposal of water [73-20-44(F) NMSA 1978]
- **Act as agent for any instrumentality or agency of the state or of the federal government** in the acquisition, construction, operation or administration of a natural resource conservation, utilization or development project [73-20-44(I) NMSA 1978]

Collaboration is key!

Background

Ciudad SWCD Strengths

- **Over 80 years** of local experience and connections since originally organized in 1944
- State government entity so **no RFP for services**
- **NM Anti-donation Clause exemption** so resources can benefit any entity, public or private
- **Nimble organization** and quick decision-making while ensuring compliance with state laws and regulations
- **Low overhead** (~10-15%) so majority of invested funds are used for projects
- **Broad expertise** in natural and cultural resource preservation in urban and wildland-urban interface
- Well-developed **public education programs**





Ciudad SWCD Support System

- NRCS (Unfunded Collaborative Agreement)
 - Donated office space and office equipment
 - Technical expertise
- NMDA (Memorandum Of Agreement)
 - State operational funding conduit
 - Parliamentarian, regulatory consultant
- SWCDs (formal and informal collaborations)
 - Coronado SWCD
 - Valencia SWCD
 - Central Tri-County SWCD
 - Claunch-Pinto SWCD



Ciudad SWCD Personnel

- Volunteer Board of Supervisors
 - 5 elected Supervisors with 4-year terms
 - 2 appointed Supervisors with 1-year terms
 - 1 Associate Supervisor (ex-officio)
- District Manager, Joshua O'Halloran
 - 5 Program Managers: Education, Forest Health, Agriculture, Watersheds, Finance
 - 10 Project Coordinators
- Contractors & Volunteers
 - Forest health assessors
 - Forest thinning teams
 - Elementary educators



Funding: Collaborative

- NM Legislature
 - ~ \$30,000/year (plus one-time special funding)
 - Distributed through NMDA
- Grants/Partnerships
 - \$3.0 million in FY 2026
 - Local, state and federal sources
- Intergovernmental Agreements
 - \$1.4 million in FY 2026
 - Local government partners
- Subdivision reviews
 - ~ \$1,000/year



Funding: Mill Levy (FY2026 ff.)

- Property tax collection on “real property” within District is permitted by NM Soil & Water Conservation District Act
- Reliable income will enable Ciudad SWCD to provide staff stability, supplement grant funding, strengthen partnerships and expand services
- At a mill rate of \$0.25/\$1,000 taxable value, less than \$30/year for an average property



Land Use Plan (2025): Themes

- **Water Resource Management:** Coordinating with federal, state, and local agencies to ensure sustainable water planning, conservation, and distribution.
- **Land Conservation and Restoration:** Supporting watershed restoration, soil health initiatives, erosion control, and habitat rewilding to enhance ecosystem resilience.
- **Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry:** Encouraging regenerative farming and forestry management practices, agrivoltaics, and responsible grazing to balance productivity with conservation.
- **Wildlife and Habitat Protection:** Promoting native plant restoration, wildland seed harvesting, and responsible land stewardship to preserve biodiversity.
- **Community and Government Engagement:** Facilitating technical assistance, education, and cooperative agreements to support conservation best practices.



Strategic Plan (2026)

- **Vision:** Ciudad SWCD envisions thriving urban and rural landscapes where natural resources are **conserved for future generations** through a **culture of collaborative stewardship**.
- **Mission:** Ciudad's mission is to lead **collaborative** conservation to benefit **people, communities, and natural resources** within our District.





Strategic Plan: Values

- **Leadership with Integrity** ensuring that we lead with honesty, consistency, trustworthiness and accountability
- **Commitment to Community** by serving and respecting the diversity of constituents
- **Culture of Growth** embracing challenges as opportunities for growth and evolution, by promoting science-based best practices
- **Stewardship** of both natural and financial resources
- **Collaboration** with partners, considering partner interests and community needs

Collaborators

Partnerships

FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL FUNDERS



PARTNERS





Collaborator Examples

- Tijeras Creek Watershed Collaborative
- Arid Low Impact Development Coalition
- Greater Rio Grande Watershed Collaborative
- Bernalillo County Extension Master Composters
- Bernalillo County Master Naturalists
- Urban Waters Federal Partnership
- MRCOG Water Resources Board
- Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program
- Rio Grande Water Fund
- Sandia Collaborative
- Children's Water Festival
- ABQ Backyard Refuge





Collaboration Examples

- **Education Program (Erin Blaz, Manager)**
 - Bernalillo County Master Naturalists
 - MRG Stormwater Quality Team
- **Forest Health Program (Ricky Reedy, Manager)**
 - Bernalillo County Open Space forest thinning
 - Bernalillo County Conservation Corps
- **Agriculture Program (CJ Ames, Manager)**
 - Bernalillo County Grow the Growers
 - Bernalillo County Urban Agriculture
- **Watersheds Program (Annie Montes, Manager)**
 - Upper Tijeras Creek Watershed Based Plan
 - Tijeras Creek Watershed Restoration Project



Upper Tijeras WBP

**Collaboration Example:
Tijeras Creek Watershed
Collaborative**



TCWC Genesis (2016 ff.)

- Ciudad SWCD East Mountain Forest Health Program
 - ~30-year (ca. 1995) history of thinning overgrown piñon-juniper to reduce wildfire risk
 - At least 100-200 acres/yr are thinned, reducing wildfire risk & demand on soil water
- Tijeras Creek Remediation Project (TCRP): 2000 ff.
 - 16-acre schools parking lot in Tijeras discharged through culverts to Tijeras Creek -> massive downcutting and sedimentation
 - Community-led volunteer project starting in the early 2000's, initially funded through Ciudad SWCD
 - Purpose: Demonstrate nature-based erosion control and encourage habitat



TCWC Genesis (2016 ff.)

- TCRP and EMFHP were impetus for TCWC
- Originally organized by Bernalillo County Open Space
- Multi-agency collaborative committed to watershed projects in the East Mountain area.
- Examples
 - Local: Bernalillo County, CABQ, Tijeras
 - State: NMED, EMNRD, NMDOT, UNM
 - Federal: USAF/KAFB, USGS, USFS/Sandia District
 - Tribal: Pueblo of Sandia
 - Private: Ancestral Lands CC, Rio Grande Return, Adaptive Terrain Systems, GCC, Sandia Collaborative
- Major project: ***Upper Tijeras Watershed Based Plan***

Watershed-Based Planning

- Non-point source (NPS) pollution impacts receiving waters
 - Both urban and rural watersheds produce NPS runoff
 - Capture and treat model isn't practical due to flashy nature of precipitation
- WBP: Integrated plan for projects and milestones to reduce NPS pollutants discharge to improve water quality
 - Focus on water bodies not meeting water quality criteria identified by NMED/WQCC ("impaired" reaches)
- Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)
 - Calculations set targets for NPS pollution loading reduction



Upper Tijeras WBP Development

- Driver: TMDL for nutrients (2017)
- Probable sources
 - Channelization
 - Drought
 - On-site treatment systems
 - Urban stormwater runoff
 - Natural sources
- Approved by EPA in 2024
- Funding from a CWA 319(h) watershed planning grant with match from Bernalillo County and City of ABQ through the **Tijeras Creek Watershed Coalition**
- Implementation projects
 - Tijeras Creek Watershed Restoration Project
 - Carnuel Septic System Project



Tijeras Creek Watershed Project

- Objective is to implement nature-based solutions to reconnect Tijeras Creek to its historic floodplain in the vicinity of the TCRP
- Collaboratively funded by Ciudad SWCD (using a River Stewards grant from NMED) and Bernalillo County
- Massive Siberian elm removal project followed by installation of innovative streambank interventions and native vegetation replanting
- Flooding in July & September 2025 destroyed much of the nearly completed project; repair underway



Carnuel Septic System Project

- Septic systems above fractured bedrock are a likely source of nutrients entering Tijeras Creek
- A sanitary sewer main has already been installed along U.S. Route 66
- EPA 319 grant funds sought to assist homeowners with the cost of connecting to the sewer main

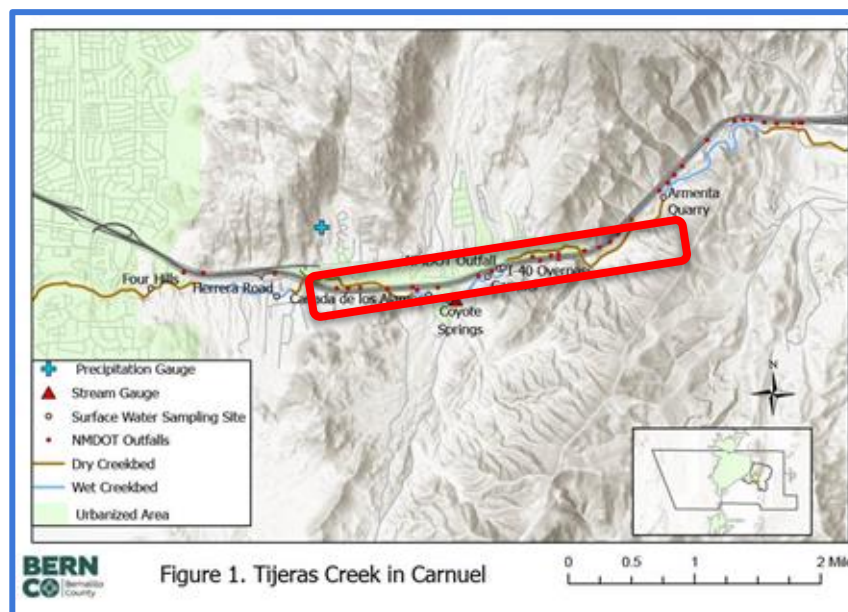


Figure 1. Tijeras Creek in Carnuel



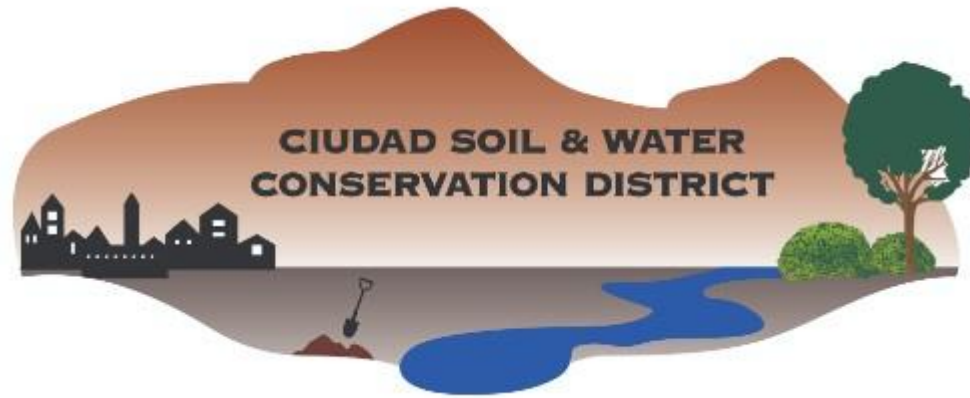
More Information

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**We're from the government.
How can we help you?**



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