



# Soil and Water Conservation Society New Mexico Chapter

P.O. Box 2142, Albuquerque, NM 87102

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**Craig Cox (Exec. Director SWCS) and Theo Dillaha (President SWCS) present the NM Chapter award to Steve Kadas in Tampa, FL at the National SWCS Convention.**



## **Florida SWCS Conference: Technology, Networking and Alligators**

By Steve Kadas

One of my highlights of the year was attending the SWCS International Conference. The meeting was held in Tampa Florida, July 21-25. Though I have attended several of these in the past, I am always amazed at how beneficial, interesting and fun they can be.

Being a soil conservationist and scientist at heart, I really gained from the technical information. There were over 200 technical presentations and poster displays. You were able to choose from the many topics and attend those which matched your interests. Some of the talks I attended were on bio-fuels, sediment reduction and conservation policy.

I also attended the "Unique Agriculture Tour". We visited farms and orchards using unique irrigation methods and conservation practices. The last stop was an outdoor, vertical hydroponics farm. It was documented to out produce conventional farms by as much as 500%, using only 5% of the water, while promoting organic methods.

You start to learn that networking with conservationists and experts is one of the strengths of the conference. I met people with similar interests and jobs and shared ideas. You also meet experts that can make a positive impact to your own projects.

Others attending from New Mexico were Paul Vainio, Rob Abercrombie, Rex Kirksey and Dennis Alexander. We stayed at the Saddlebrook Resort which has great facilities and gave reduced rates for SWCS. When walking from your room it was common to see armadillos, egrets and alligators, roaming the nearby ponds and golf course. One evening, Dennis and I proved that alligators do enjoy pretzels.

I encourage everybody to attend a SWCS annual conference. Next year's conference will be next-door in Tucson, Arizona, July 26-30. We are already planning to get vans and go over as a group. Everybody is welcome to join us. Now is the time to make your plans and mark your calendars.

## Members in action!

**New Mexico SWCS member Juan Gauna participated in the Giant Sacaton Planting on August 22, 2007 at the Old City Landfill in Hobbs, NM. The planting was done with the goal of controlling erosion on the sides of the old landfill sites, and to create a more aesthetic look to the landfill.**



Project History - Waste Management, Inc contacted personnel from the USDA-NRCS office in Lovington early in 2005 to evaluate the site and develop a plan for stopping existing erosion problems. Gullies were shaped and filled with dirt collected from runoff ponds. Haygrazer was seeded in the fall of 2005 for a winter cover crop to stop any further erosion. Grass was then planted in spring of 2006. Later in 2006, erosion control barriers, or waddles, were put in place to help slow down runoff water and prevent water from creating new gullies. Approximately 1100 giant sacaton seedlings, provided by the Plant Materials Center in Los Lunas, were planted on the uphill side of each of the existing waddles. Once mature, the sacaton will grow together and average 4-5 feet in height. Hopefully, these will provide a permanent “waddle” to prevent gullies from forming in the future. A full grown sacaton looks very similar to Pampas Grass that is used as a landscape ornamental.

### Project Partners:

Waste Management, Inc.,  
Lea Soil and Water Conservation District,  
Monument 4-H Chapter  
Boy Scouts of America – Hobbs Troop,  
Sureste Resource Conservation & Development  
Council,

USDA – Natural Resources Conservation  
Service and  
USDA – Los Lunas Plant Materials Center

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Juan Gauna Sureste RC & D Lovington  
505-396-5857 ext 5



## More Members in action!

**New Mexico SWCS member Sue Hansen, who works as Program Administrator for the Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District, takes the Rolling River to Heron Lake for the Osprey Festival, to exhibit water conservation with a hands-on approach. Children and adults enjoy creating watersheds, experimenting with soil erosion and learning about ways to conserve our natural resources. About 800 people attended the event celebrating the first birthday of Elektra, a young osprey who suffered injuries in a fire and was rescued by the Friends of Heron Lake. Elektra now resides at the Española Wildlife Center as an educational ambassador.**



### Notes from Ruidoso Summer Meeting

The NM SWCS met at the Ruidoso Convention Center on July 10, 2007. We had 14 people in attendance, all enjoyed a lunch and brief, although productive, meeting. Meeting minutes will be posted on our website, short overview follows. Jeff Powell and Susan Rottman spoke about the importance of coordination between SWCS and SRM - holding joint meetings, using joint publicity and news releases. He mentioned the Wildlife Society, the Quivera Coalition and the Nature Conservancy as possible partners in these efforts. Mary said we have 54 members and that the NM Chapter has good diversity at this time, also past presidents would be a valuable resource for our Chapter and she plans to send a letter to NM SWCS members with a survey. Jean told the group that

UNM will be the next John Werner Scholarship recipient school and the committee is in the process of identifying 3 candidates to respond to the questions used for last years recipient. Upcoming activities discussed were:

➤Envirothon is a national program; NMACD is lead agency, where each county within a state sends teams (need 2 teams to get started) of 5 high school students to state competition, the winner going to National competition in Flagstaff for 2008. ➤SMTD and watershed tour - to be scheduled when project is complete.

➤Clovis Playa tour - Juan said that Lea County has more playas than any county in the country and there is currently an exhibit at the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Lea County sponsored by the Western Governor's Association.

➤Hobb's landfill planting - see story this issue

➤Riparian Planning Training/Workshop - aiming for fall 2008.

➤State Soil legislation - Rep. Gaye Curnan is willing carry a bill in 2008 legislative session.

➤NM SWCS Winter meeting - all agreed we will aim for early November before Thanksgiving.

➤ Proposed activity - helping with annual cleaning of earthen pueblo ditches at start of irrigation season next year.

***Paul Vainio is keeping the NM Chapter website up to date, go to [www.nmswcs.org](http://www.nmswcs.org) to check it out!***

***Email ~ [dstomper@msn.com](mailto:dstomper@msn.com)*** New Mexico

## Photos from the National SWCS Convention in Tampa



***NM Chapter Newsletter***  
***The newsletter needs YOU! Please***  
***consider sending articles to run in***  
***our NM Chapter SWCS newsletter.***  
***Looking for: Tech Tips, activities,***  
***photos, ideas for involvement in***  
***communities.***  
***All articles will be welcomed.***  
***Email to [jean.foster@nm.usda.gov](mailto:jean.foster@nm.usda.gov)***

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