



Socorro Soil and Water Conservation District

Socorro's Soil & Water Conservation Leaders Since 1944

June 2014 Newsletter



Recently, African Rue has made its home in Socorro and the surrounding areas, and has unfortunately completely taken over a few locations, making its potential for damage high. Herbicide is the only truly effective way to eradicate African Rue, as new plants can sprout from broken off root fragments. Mechanical means of removal tend to exacerbate the infestation.

African rue is a perennial plant with a low-growing, bushy habit reaching 2 to 3 ft. in height. The white, five-petal flowers are present from late spring to early fall in the axils of the leaves. Leaves are succulent, alternate, irregularly divided, and bright green. African rue is found in disturbed environments such as roadsides and fields in desert to semi-desert areas. It is native to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. African rue produces primarily by seed, but severed roots can produce new shoots. The plant is poisonous to people and livestock.

If you have African Rue on your property, please contact our office immediately to schedule treatment of this noxious weed at no cost to you. If this weed is allowed to take over, the effects can be devastating to our community.



Our Water Imbalance

Creating Adaptive Strategies Together

A Free Public Forum And Discussion

Saturday, June 28, 2014

9:00 am to 12:30 pm, UNM - Dane Smith Hall - Room 120

Continental Breakfast at 8:30

Agenda

- 9:00 Introduction/Background: Water Budget, Regional Water Plan, Conditions Have Changed, Plan for the Day**
Bob Wessely, President of the Water Assembly
- 9:45 Water Budget Update**
Bruce Thomson, Research Professor, Civil Engineering, UNM
- 10:15 Drought in context of long-term trends - Projected Stresses and Challenges**
Dagmar Llewellyn, Hydrologist, US Bureau of Reclamation
- 10:45 Break**
- 11:00 Transformational Solutions: Where Should We Go From Here?**
Howard Passell, Ecologist, Sandia National Labs
- 11:30 Audience Discussion: Addressing Our Current Challenges**
Brainstorm adaptive strategies
Prioritize top strategic approaches
Join a group to present ideas to the Annual Assembly

Our Water Imbalance: Creating Adaptive Strategies Together

In keeping with its original promise to include and engage members of the public in planning and revising a strategy for sustainable water use, the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly is sponsoring a free forum on Saturday, June 28, a part of updating the MRG Regional Water Plan. The event runs from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at UNM's Dane Smith Hall, Room 120. A complimentary Continental breakfast will be served at 8:30.

The Water Assembly has long functioned as an open round-table on water issues, where citizen input is valued and volunteers have a key roll in shaping policy. At the Assembly's request in 1999, a formidable lineup of local experts and advocates produced the state's first regional water budget. What their investigations showed was that between 1979 and 1997, inhabitants of the three-county area known as the Middle Rio Grande used 15 to 20% more water than Nature delivered in the form of rain and snow. That disparity impelled framers of the subsequent MRG water plan to adopt as a primary goal the motto, 'Balance use with renewable supply,' and to recommend forty remedial actions that might begin to mitigate the have/need gap.

In the ten years since the water plan was adopted, significant conservation efforts have been undertaken to reduce water use in the middle basin. Per capita use is down, and municipal reliance on groundwater has been reduced; the MRGCD irrigation delivery system has been improved; local, state and federal agencies are restoring habitat and fortifying natural river function. At the same time, increased population, natural system stress, and a sequence of extraordinarily dry years suggest that future water supplies could fall considerably short of regional requirements, both human and environmental.

Revising the 1999 water budget to reflect such plusses and minuses, and to incorporate fifteen years worth of improved data in dozens of categories, is a logical prerequisite to updating the region's water plan, so once again, technical specialists have been asked to assess the relationship between consumptive use and renewable supply, this time for the period between 1998 and 2013. On the agenda for the June 28th forum are presentations on the new water budget; projections about future water availability made by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in conjunction with Sandia National Laboratories; and some "out of the box" thoughts on how the region might adapt to these new realities. The forum is to begin to plan how best to respond to the observables, not why we're seeing various phenomena. We'll contemplate how to endure the extremes—cold & hot, wet & dry—that we're already experiencing in the high desert.

**** Updating Our Regional Water Plan ****

This is a great opportunity to get involved in regional water planning!

Sponsored by the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly

An All-Volunteer Non-Profit Organization www.WaterAssembly.org

"The purpose of the Water Assembly is to assure – through an open, inclusive, and participatory process – the effective implementation, monitoring and updating of the Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan. The Water Assembly will also perform educational and outreach activities to enhance the common interests of the people of the Region for a sustainable water future that balances water use with renewable supply."

Please contact Elaine Hebard, 247-8767, ehebard@yahoo.com for more information

IMPORTANT DATES

June 24 5:30 PM Socorro SWCD Board Meeting

June 30 End of fiscal year

July 1 New cost share applications accepted for FY 2015

July 4 Fourth of July—SSWCD Office closed

July 8 5:30 PM Socorro SWCD Board Meeting

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