



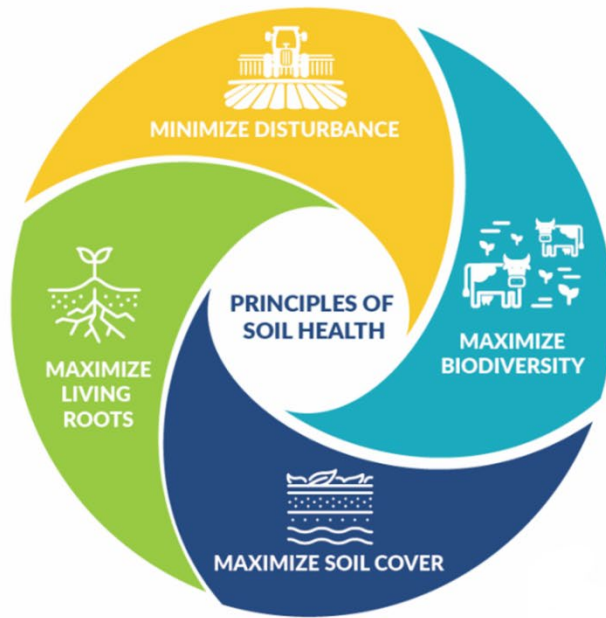
Background photo – a pasture in Questa, NM Planted with cover crop seed from our TSWCD Healthy Soil Funding.

# Healthy Soil Benefits

- **Improved Farm Profitability** - Healthy soils typically require fewer inputs over time. Producers often see reduced needs for fertilizers, pesticides, and need for tillage operations.
- **Enhanced Productivity** - Soils managed according to these principles often show improved yields, particularly in relationship to inputs over time as soil biology becomes more active, nutrient cycling improves, and soil structure enhances root development and water availability.
- **Risk Management** - Diverse rotations and improved soil structure help agricultural operations become more resilient to weather extremes, pest pressures, and market volatility.
- **Soil Preservation** - The principles help maintain and build topsoil rather than depleting it, ensuring long-term agricultural viability.
- **Water Conservation** - Improved soil structure and organic matter enhance the soil's water-holding capacity, making more efficient use of precipitation and irrigation.
- **Water Quality Protection** - The principles help reduce runoff and erosion, which decreases nutrient and sediment loading in waterways. Better soil structure also improves water infiltration, reducing downstream flooding risks and increasing water and water quality in shallow aquifers.
- **Carbon Sequestration** - Practices aligned with soil health principles can increase soil organic matter, helping sequester atmospheric carbon.
- **Biodiversity Support** – Diversification of crops and reduced disturbance create and improve habitat for beneficial insects, soil organisms, and wildlife.



Top Photo: Los Pachecos Ranch Cattle. Bottom Photo: A pasture managed by Los Pachecos and Shawn Howard outside of Angel Fire. Ten years ago this 200 acre parcel was bare ground, set to be developed. Today it is a highly productive, unirrigated agricultural property under regenerative management using the soil health principles.



## New Mexico is a Leader in the Soil Health & Regenerative Agriculture Movement

Thought leaders in the movement from New Mexico, Ray Archuleta and Rudy Garcia.

5<sup>th</sup> in the Nation to pass Healthy Soils Program legislation – 1<sup>st</sup> to develop a principles-based, not prescriptive program.

More National Assn of Conservation District Soil Health Advocates than any other state in the nation.

Great stewardship happening across the state from Dona Ana to San Juan, and Harding to Lincoln.



Top Right: Rio Gro regenerative pecan production in Mesquite. Top Left, Ray Archuleta Soil Scientist born in Rio Arriba and graduated from Northern Community College. Bottom: Cattle at the award winning Ute Creek Cattle Company in Harding Co.



## Collaboration and Program Coordination. Example- Bale Grazing Program

- TSWCD is evolving the soil health practices they support in their HSP grant each year, identifying practices that build on each other and respond to local on the ground challenges. For their FY 2026 grant, they are focusing on bale grazing, an NRCS approved practice for soil health.
- In order to ensure increased awareness of the practice, the program, and the process for applying, non-profits and agencies came together to provide a workshop on bale grazing.
- Local Pallet Farm's took the lead, allowing for peer-to-peer learning. NRCS, Taos County Extension and Taos Soil and Water were on hand to provide technical and scientific back up.
- TSWCD provided information on HSP program, NRCS discussed conservation plans, NRCS programs; Extension supported producers in presentation and offered technical assistance, local non-profits put together, advertised and facilitated.
- This allows for for a high level of efficiency in program provision and comprehensive support for producers from all relevant agencies and organizations to increase program participation and success.



Top Left: Tyler Zander, Soil Health and Noxious Weed Coordinator for Taos Soil and Water Conservation District. Top Left, Alice Morillon and Eli Collignon of Pallet Farms demonstrating bale grazing. Bottom Left: 30 community member attending bale grazing workshop. Bottom Right: NRCS District Conservationist Vernon Mirabal and Taos County Extension Agent Will Jaremko-Wright supporting the workshop.

## Amplifying the Impact - Soil Health Education for the Whole Community

The Healthy Soil Program has funded numerous educational events throughout Taos County.

Peer-to Peer Learning

Local and Regional Expert-led education

National and international expert instruction

Targeted education for introductory level soil health, advanced regenerative management, and various practices and approaches, as well as education for the general, non-farming community in order to ensure community awareness and support.

The impact of the Healthy Soil Program goes far beyond the number of producers participating or the number of acres seeded.



Local rancher Pat Pacheco, Soil Health Specialist Ray Archuleta and HSP recipient Tobias Duncan on a ranch tour of unirrigated pastures managed with soil health principles.

## Amplifying the Impact - Soil Health Education for the Whole Community



Top Far Left: Taos' first ever Soil Health Event, Earth Day 2020. Next, former TSWCD employee David Gilroy doing soil health demonstration in Vadito. Next: TSWCD staff and community on cover crop field tour. Next, Alejandro Carrillo and local ranch manager on field tour. Next, Fernando Falomir teaching on grazing allotment in Valle Vidal. Bottom Left: Intro to TSWCD Cover Crop Program workshop. Next, Soil Health Workshop taught by Fernando Falomir at the Questa VFW. Next Ray Archuleta and Alejandro Carillo at our local Taos Community Auditorium.



# Innovation – San Cristobal Acequia

- 34 owners of agricultural land participating.
- 3 years of community soil health work
- Leveled, brushhogged, covercropped, brought in perennial pasture mix, improved fencing, re-lined ponds.
- Brought irreplaceable agricultural lands back into production
- Increased land access for younger producers
- Brought community together to think proactively about future of agriculture
- Provided a model of agricultural community capacity building.



Top Left Farmer Junito Medina with a turnip from the community cover crop mix. Top Right, local producer crimping cover crop. Bottom Left: Community Agriculture Planning Workshop. Bottom Right: Tobias Duncan, community soil health coordinator.



## Impact

Renewed vitality in our agricultural community – 59 events in 2024 four our agricultural community.

Anecdotally, increased land in production, increase in innovation, increase in direct-to-consumer sales.

Increased engagement from outside the agricultural community (traditional conservation and environmental community, public lands agencies).

Increased attention from the broader soil health and regenerative agriculture movement.

Top Left: Ranchers, public lands staff, NRCS and TSWCD staff, and representatives from regional agricultural and conservation organizations look at soil health and land management in the Valle Vidal. Top Right: Local Rancher Mark Flores learning monitoring protocols from Ecdysis Foundation science team. Bottom Left: Ranchers Pat Pacheco and Charles Hibner assess forage with BLM Taos Field Office Range Conservationist Carl Thompson. Middle Right Agro-Ecologist Jon Lundgren talks with local farmer Carlos Arguello. Bottom Right, Taos County Farmer & Rancher Happy Hour.

# Thank you!

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