

RIO GRANDE AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST



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Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust

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INTERMOUNTAIN WEST JOINT VENTURES WATER 4 INITIATIVE

“Conserving wet meadows and water for agriculture, wildlife and fisheries habitat, groundwater recharge, and landscape resiliency in ways that matter to people”



Photo by Christi Bode

We are thrilled to announce the Intermountain West Joint Ventures (IWJV) has recognized the middle Rio Grande (MRG), New Mexico as a priority focus area for their new Water 4 Initiative. RGALT and IWJV will officially launch the program at our Annual Fall Harvest Fundraiser on November 9, 2019.

The IWJV recently developed the Water 4 Initiative to support agricultural producers, water managers, and other partners with conservation in ways that truly matter to people. These include improved forage production, high quality wildlife-associated recreation, enhanced groundwater recharge, and more resilient landscapes. Flood-irrigated agriculture provides critical habitat for migratory birds in the MRG and throughout the west. Agricultural return flows are an important source of water for Rio Grande wetland complexes and flood irrigation can provide important spring and fall foraging habitat for migratory birds. Yet these “working wetlands” are under significant pressure due to urban growth, shifts in water policy, drought, and changing environmental conditions. RGALT’s work to protect agriculture land, water, and riparian habitat is key in meeting the goals of the initiative.

RGALT, along with our partners Rio Grande Return (RGR) & Save Our Bosque Task Force (SOBTF), have been working with the IWJV to highlight the grassroots conservation efforts taking place in the middle Rio Grande. The Water 4 Initiative will build on the groundwork RGALT and partners have laid over the last decade. It will bring new partners, strengthen current partnerships, and expand funding for conservation efforts. Through the Water 4 Initiative, IWJV is working with local partners to secure and leverage funding to build the capacity for conservation at the landscape level. In key focal areas the initiative will help fund and facilitate flood irrigation infrastructure improvement, working lands conservation easements, floodplain and fish habitat restoration, and improved water quality and quantity. This will expand opportunities for the important conservation work that RGALT and our partners do to connect wildlife corridors along the Middle Rio Grande.



Cecilia Rosacker (RGALT), Alan Hamilton (RGR), Hank Taliaferro (La Joya Farm), Dave Smith (IWJV) and Gina Dello Russo (SOBTF)

RIO GRANDE AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST

HARVEST DANCE

2019 ANNUAL FALL FUNDRAISER

Saturday, November 9th

3 to 9 pm

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR DETAILS: www.rgalt.org

RGALT protects agricultural land and water for people and wildlife, forever.

CINCO ESTRELLA CHILE FARM LEMITAR, NEW MEXICO

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR TICKETS: WWW.RGALT.ORG/HARVEST-DANCE

CONSERVATION HEROS

JACKIE BOUKER'S CONSERVATION LEGACY

"I want to go to my grave knowing this land I have cared for will be a farm forever."

Jackie Bouker raised her children on their Albuquerque North Valley farm in the 1970's. She still farms the land today. Over the years she has watched her north valley neighborhood slowly change from an agricultural community to a mixed-use neighborhood.

RGALT is working in partnership with Bernalillo County to protect Jackie's farm, and others like hers. Jackie's conservation easement will serve as a pilot project in the development of a Bernalillo County Conservation Easement Program. This effort is the next step following multiple Bernalillo County initiatives to protect farms within the county. All of these initiatives identify agriculture in the county as priority conservation lands and support implementing voluntary conservation easements on private land. In 2017, Bernalillo County Commission passed a resolution "to encourage and assist landowners who choose voluntarily to protect in perpetuity the open space or agricultural character of their land".

The Bouker CE also meets the goals of the "Cultivating Bernalillo County - Grow the Growers Program", a comprehensive farm training and business acceleration initiative designed to attract new and emerging farmers into professional food production. It includes the "Independent Business Phase" that commits to providing long term access to land and water through agricultural conservation easements. Placing conservation easements on farmland in the quickly growing Bernalillo County is vital to help keep land affordable for the next generation of farmers.



NM-DOT MADRONE CONSERVATION EASEMENT

RGALT is in the final stages of completing a conservation easement (CE) with New Mexico Department of Transportation on their Madrone property located in Valencia County. RGALT, Taos Land Trust, and New Mexico Land Conservancy are working with NM-DOT to establish CEs on three of their properties. Each land trust is working on a project in their respective service area. Through this effort NM-DOT is establishing Advanced Permittee-Responsible Mitigation sites, or "banks", that once established can be used to offset future impacts to wetlands within the designated watershed area, providing significant financial and time savings to NM-DOT construction.



Photo by Robert Browman, ABQ Journal

The 33-acre Madrone property is located on the east bank of the Rio Grande south of Belen. The plan is to protect the property with a CE and work to restore and enhance the wetland. The NM-DOT CE should be finalized in the next months. It will add to the chain of RGALT's riparian wetland CEs in the area. The target of protecting these limited, last remaining Rio Grande riparian wetlands is to improve overall conditions for a broad spectrum of wildlife, including threatened and endangered animal species such as southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, and New Mexico meadow jumping mouse. Protecting, restoring, and enhancing these wetlands also contributes to river health and limits wildfires and their impacts.

YOU'RE INVITED!



Join us for our 2019 Fall Harvest Fundraiser! Dust off your dancing boots, this year we are hosting an old-fashioned Barn Dance at Cinco Estrella Chile Farm in Lemitar, NM. The Duggins family farm produces New Mexico chile, grain, and hay. This year we have lowered our prices so the whole family can join in the festivities. The event will include pony rides, a hay ride farm tour, local food, live country music by the High Desert Playboys, dancing, and a vibrant silent and live auction!

Our event will also launch the new Water 4 Initiative, a program whose goal is to protect agricultural land and water in the middle Rio Grande. We will kick off the start off this exciting program at the Fall Harvest Fundraiser with a tour through Cinco Estrella's chile fields, experiencing firsthand the intersection of agriculture and wildlife conservation.

Want to help us meet our fundraising goals and make a difference right here at home?

SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES:

Farmall \$500 / 2 complimentary tickets.

Massey Ferguson \$1000 / 4 complimentary tickets, plus your name on our website.

Minneapolis-Moline \$2500 / 8 complimentary tickets, plus your name or logo on our website and social media posts plus email newsletter.

John Deere \$5000 or more / Ten complimentary tickets, your name or logo on our event flyer, event mailer, website, and included in RGALT social media posts and our email newsletter!

Contact Cecilia Rosacker, cecilia@rgalt.org if interested in sponsoring



Photos by Stephanie Cameron, Edible NM

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR TICKETS: WWW.RGALT.ORG/HARVEST-DANCE