

# Black Range RC&D Resource

## Conservation & Development

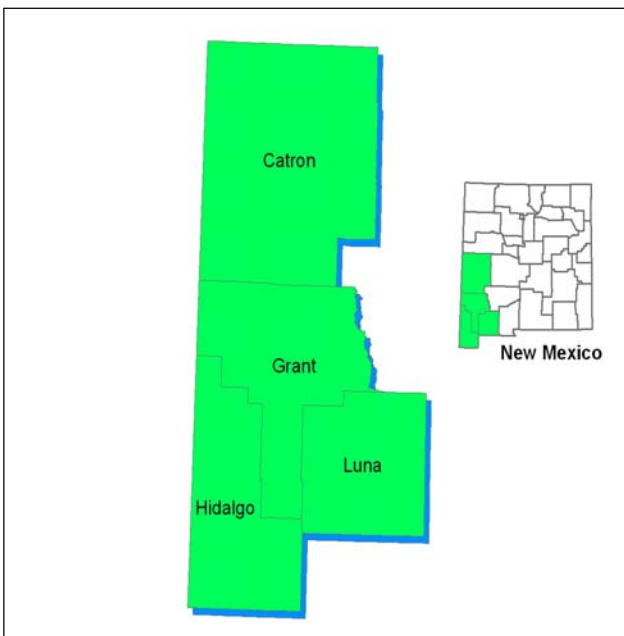
Partnerships Serving America's Communities



Help our public and private partners to meet their regionally identified resource conservation and economic development needs.

### Arizona– New Mexico Borderlands Initiative Benefits Both States

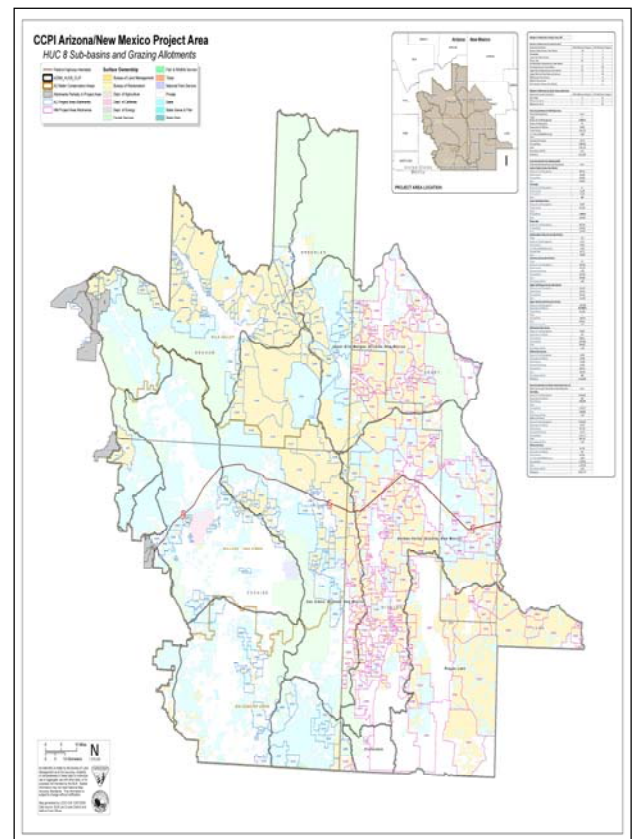
The Black Range RC&D partnering with the NM Association of Conservation Districts and the AZ Association of Natural Resource Conservation Districts submitted a successful proposal to the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative program (CCPI) in 2010 for the *AZ-NM Borderlands Conservation Initiative*



CCPI. State, federal and local agencies from both states came together to design this bi-state five year proposal rangeland improvement project to address brush control, erosion control, water quality and wildlife habitat in the 8,000,000 acre project area involving three New Mexico SWCD's in and three Arizona NRCD's. The AZ-NM BCI was awarded \$7.5 million in the NRCS CCPI program which the Bureau of Land Management in both states is matching dollar for dollar. The combined in-kind contributions of the State Land Offices and Conservation Districts in SW NM and SE AZ the funding will total \$16.5 million over a five-year period.

The goal is to keep the group functional beyond the life of this specific CCPI project so that future proposals can be developed to benefit the bi-state area. CCPI EQIP contracts for \$500,000 in NM and \$300,000 in AZ were signed in FY2010 for nine rangeland improvement projects.

FY2011 CCPI funding for \$750,000 for NM and \$350,000 for AZ has recently been released for



2011 EQIP projects. Review of the ranking criteria, application dates and contract deadlines are currently being review and will be released the third week of January.

### Paired Watershed Study on Burro Mountain to Measure Moisture Improvements

The Black Range RC&D received a Conservation Innovation Grant in 2007. It was designed to instrument a small watershed in the Burro Mountains with soil moisture and alluvial water monitoring equipment to measure the response to tree and brush thinning.

The original grant had a \$12,450 budget to buy and install data loggers on the soil moisture and alluvial moisture monitoring equipment. The NM Interstate Stream Commission provided \$50,000 for additional instrumentation at this site as well as for the Stiver Site in a Ponderosa ecosystem in Black Canyon on the east side of North Star Mesa. An evapotranspiration tower was installed with telemetry equipment allows the Climatic Center at NMSU to permanently monitor climatic data at the Burros site.

The site has been monitored for three years by Earth Team Volunteers to collect the pre-thinning data. Using a NM State Forestry Grant of \$150,000 a US Forest Service crew and a private contractor thinned the study area in the fall of 2010 to a predetermined prescription leaving 40 acres un-thinned for the control.

The study area will be monitored for the next 13 years to study the vegetation and moisture response to the thinning. Project partners in included Grant SWCD, Gila National Forest Silver City and Black Range

Districts, NM State Forestry, NMSU Climate Center, Jornada RC&D and the Sierra SWCD.



ET/climate station near completion as Stan Engle, NM Climate Center, attaches instrumentation to solar panel and battery. April 2008.