

Project Year-End Summary Report

Title of Project: Capacity Building for NM Native Seed Farmers

Text boxes expand as needed to contain your answers, but keep your report to two pages if possible. More detailed presentations, articles or posters are welcome separately.*

1. Organization or Individual who Received the Grant: Institute for Applied Ecology

2. Amount of Grant: \$ 1,500

3. Was additional outside funding obtained? Yes No

Source(s) NM Bureau of Land Management and Southwest Region Forest Service

4. Briefly, how was the grant money from the Carter Conservation Fund used?

This capacity funding was used to purchase rolls of 3' wide weed barrier fabric and staples (to hold down the fabric) and planting tools for a new native seed farmer in Albuquerque - Grow the Growers. Grow the Growers is an organic farm and weed fabric was is an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy for controlling weeds in planting areas. Weed fabric was installed over a 0.3 acre field and tools were used to plant 3 native species.

5. Write an abstract or complete summary of the activities performed and the progress that was made this year on your project. Save any conclusions, lessons learned, and benefits achieved for the final section 6.

IAE's SW Seed Partnership Coordinator visited the Grow the Grower farm (South Valley, Albuquerque) in May 2019 and assessed the farm's capacity and interest to produce seed for native species. We established a contract with AgriculturaNetwork (Grow the Growers fiscal agent) to support production of approximately 1/3 of an acre of production for 3 native species (Dalea candida- white prairie clover, Thelosperma megapotamicum - Cota, and Heterotheca villosa - hairy golden aster). Because we are experimenting with novel IPM techniques and working with species/sources that have not been produced previously, these fields are considered Research and Development plots.

Grow the Growers is an organic farmer incubation/training program, typically for food crops. As such, they had limited resources and infrastructure to add a new type of crop- native species in this case. IAE staff helped them design the field planting, provided the plant materials to start the 3 seed fields, provided the weed fabric (through NPSNM funding), provided guidance on planting and cultivation practices, and organized a large planting day event.

IAE worked with Sandia High School and the NM Nature in Prisons project to grow the white prairie clover and Cota plugs for this field (both also supported by NPSNM funds), and IAE's Agricultural liason conducted the direct sowing of hairy golden aster. Locally sourced seed used in these fields was collected over the past 3 years (since 2016) by the SW Seed Partnership. A Grow the Growers graduate prepped the fields, burned planting holes into the

weed fabric, weeded the field after planting on a weekly basis, and watered the field through flood irrigation when needed.

6. State any conclusions. What benefit to you, the community or the environment has resulted or will result from your use of our funding? Include any lessons learned that would assist others. This project benefits IAE's SW Seed Partnership because our goal is to improve the supply of native seed, but the Southwest is currently lacking native seed producers. Supporting and working with a grower training program we were able to engage multiple potential native seed producers. It was also a great opportunity to leverage resources from multiple partners for multiple benefits: Sandia High, NM State Penitentiary, BLM, IAE, NPSNM, and USFS. Our funding from BLM and the USFS is for establishing production contracts, not building capacity for growers and helping them learn to grow seed fields for native species. The Grow the Growers trainees got to experience a large planting activity working with native species and learned why these species were of value. The farm benefited from these native species as they provide: wildlife habitat, pollinator food plants, nitrogen fixation, and beauty (forbs are attractive, and the field is adjacent to a public road). Grow the Growers had not previously utilized weed fabric, and this adds another (potentially much more cost effective) tool to their IPM toolbox.

Please send your completed form as an email attachment to cartergrantapps@gmail.com.

* To be in good standing for any future funding from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, plan to write an article (600-1000 words) for our quarterly newsletter, **or** create and present a poster at our annual statewide conference, **or** send us a copy of a published article on the past year's work, **or** work with a chapter of NPSNM to make an illustrated, educational presentation.

Find information about the upcoming conference and about the regional chapters on our website www.npsnm.org. Contact cartergrantapps@gmail.com at any time with questions.