

Project Year-End Summary Report

Title of Project: Building Nursery Capacity with the New Mexico Nature in Prisons Project

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 (to deliver NM Nature in Prisons program)

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

This funding was used to expand the capacity of the Nature in Prisons Project infrastructure at the NM State Penitentiary by constructing a shade structure on the prison grounds. Specifically funds were used to purchase construction materials (6 large metal poles-welded, shade cloth, and a pulley system to put up and take down the cloth seasonally) and to reimburse mileage for our Ag Extension volunteer who transported supplies to and from Belen, NM in his truck and trailer.

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.

We constructed a shade structure adjacent to the hoop house at the NM State Penitentiary for hardening-off plants prior to out-planting. The space was also utilized for teaching lessons to participants. The Institute for Applied Ecology partnered with UNM Extension Service for this project. Del Jimenez, educator and representative for UNM, worked with us to plan the layout, purchase and construct materials, and supervise the final build out of the shade structure. Ten inmates helped to construct the shade structure, and they also seeded and cultivated more than 5000 plants from three native species and landscaped the prison grounds with native species they grew. We completed the shade structure on September 27th, 2019. Del Jimenez volunteered his time while assisting with the project. A presentation regarding this project and results was provided to the Gila Chapter Native Plant Society at their monthly meeting in October 2019, and an update for the project will go out in IAE's January newsletter.

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. The shade structure completed for this project provides plants with a safe transition between a greenhouse environment to restoration and production field outplanting sites. It will improve outplanting success and provides additional space to grow and overwinter plants. This was an excellent educational opportunity for participants in the program to learn how to build a simple but effective shade structure, and to observe first-hand how such a structure can support nursery production. Having a shaded area for IAE and professional mentors to provide

horticultural workshops to participants is extremely helpful, particularly during hot summer months in NM.

Producing native plant materials and engaging diverse populations in conservation stewardship aligns with NPSNM's mission to foster plant conservation and the preservation of natural habitats and encourage the appropriate use of native plants to conserve water, land, and wildlife, as well as IAE's mission to conserve native species through restoration, research, and education. Native plant production directly supports the 2015 National Seed Strategy and the Southwest Seed Partnership, improving the availability of native species for restoration projects. Growing native species in different locations under different conditions increases our understanding of cultivation needs, particularly if they have never been cultivated before.

Plants grown for this project were out-planted to both restoration sites on public lands and to farm fields in 2019. For example, plugs of *Thelesperma megapoticum* (Cota) and *Dalea candida* (white prairie clover) were delivered to the Grow the Growers program in Albuquerque, NM, where they were planted in seed production fields on October 3rd, 2019. This work connects and supports a second 2019 grant funded by NPSNM to increase capacity of native plant cultivation fields. In addition to production fields, this year plugs of *Asclepias speciosa* (showy milkweed) were cultivated and out-planted on Taos BLM lands to restore connectivity for migrating monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

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.