Project Year-End Summary Report

Title of Project: Restoring Urban Ecosystems as Barrio Chamizal

Begin answering in the shaded box right beside or below each question and it will expand to accommodate as you type. Use up to a total of two and a half pages for questions 1-8. More detailed presentations, a final report, articles or posters are welcome separately (See final instructions at the end of this form.)*

1. Organization name or Individual who received the grant: Centro del Obrero Fronterizo dba La Mujer Obrera

2. Amount of Grant: $ 3500

4. Was additional outside funding obtained? (check box that applies) Yes x No ☐
Other funding source(s) if you checked "yes."
Rural Coalition - National Resource Conservation Service
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas - Proyecto Madre Tierra

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

- 3 Intergenerational Educational activities:
  - Water celebration and garden tour focused on native plants and passive rainwater harvesting
  - Spring native plant planting with Chamizal residents
  - Fall native plant planting with Chamizal residents
- Youth centered educational activities:
  - Native food demonstration
  - Exploration of our role in the ecosystem
- Adding additional native plants to living wall and rainwater harvesting swale
- Adding an Additional tree to our garden tree canopy
- Soil amendments and tools for the garden
- Food and transportation for event attendees

6. Write an abstract or 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 sections, 7&8.)

This year we held a series of events and work days in our community farm and garden with the goal of expanding knowledge in our neighborhood about native plants and our role in the ecosystem. Through these events residents of the Chamizal learned about native plants, their role in the ecosystem, our role as humans in the ecosystem, passive rainwater harvesting and incorporating native foods into our diet. Through these work days we also incorporated more plants into our “living wall” which we are growing to help mitigate the pollution and noise from the major street which borders our community garden. We’ve also incorporated a more dense planting of native plants in our streetside rainwater harvesting swales. Throughout

the year we also worked to make improvements in our community garden such as adding a tool shed and removing landscape fabric which was preventing the natural propagation of native plants throughout our garden.

7. How does your project further a Native Plant Society mission area, namely: *plant or ecological education; conservation/restoration of native plants and/or their habitats; adds to botanical research; promotes appropriate use of native plants to conserve water, land and/or wildlife.*

This project primarily furthers the Native Plant Society mission area of plant or ecological education. Living in a community that is highly urban and industrial, most residents of our neighborhood do not have the opportunity to interact with or learn from native plants that are common in our region or were once common in the land where our neighborhood now sits. Through the events outlined above as well as many of the other community meetings, festivals, activities and conversations we have throughout our neighborhood we strive to promote an awareness of our role in the ecosystem as humans and our potential to damage as well as restore the habitats around us. This is done through more formal methods of education such as presentations, however, equally, if not more important to us is the education that comes from direct experience. This includes caring for the land in our garden and at our homes, learning from the experiences of our neighbors and celebrating our knowledge, connections and the beauty of our ecosystem.

Through our youth summer camp children from our neighborhood were able to learn about the important ecological role, rich nutrients and the historical and cultural significance of mesquite trees and pods in our region through tasting the pods fresh off the trees of our community farm as well as in its dry form in delicious mesquite pancakes. Residents of all ages gathered for an afternoon of learning and festivities at our first annual Chamizal water celebration where we discussed the history of the Rio Grande including the riparian ecosystem it once supported on the land where our neighborhood currently is. During this celebration we walked through the community garden discussing the various native plants and the methods we use for efficient irrigation and water conservation in our garden. We then moved to talk about how we might implement what we've learned to scale up our green infrastructure and habitat restoration practices to more of our neighborhood. Through planting native plants together at our community garden residents learned about various native plants and their interactions with other living beings and were encouraged to incorporate more native plants in their home landscaping.

8. Any other conclusions, lessons learned, benefits to you, the community or the environment hopefully result from your work as assisted by this grant.

The Chamizal neighborhood, named for the once abundant Chamiza plant, is today an almost unrecognizable landscape compared to the riparian ecosystem which once thrived here before the Rio Grande was straightened and channelized. Today, any person would be hard pressed to find this plant, which is the neighborhood's namesake, growing amongst the maze of asphalt, commercial and industrial facilities, and abandoned lots covered in concrete and sparsely vegetated compacted soils. Amongst this, the potted plants, reclaimed patches of soil and small gardens of residents of the chamizal provide refuge for birds and bees, food for humans,and beauty to the neighborhood. However, residents of our neighborhood often

face an uphill battle in these efforts as many are not home owners, and cite rising water costs as a barrier to growing more plants. The Chamizal garden, being in the heart of the neighborhood, provides a place for residents to connect to the land around them without having to worry about many of these barriers. In addition, with our incorporation of native plants in the chamizal garden residents are able to learn about these plants when many sources of this information might otherwise be inaccessible to them. For example, many residents of the Chamizal do not have reliable access to personal transportation which would allow them to attend educational activities through the city or region, and are monolingual Spanish speakers where much of the available educational resources about native plants are primarily in English. We provide transportation to and from all of our activities and conduct all of them in Spanish, bringing this education to residents where it is physically accessible and provided in a language they are comfortable with.

At our community farm, we have overseen several years of restoration work including increasing the tree canopy and the installation of a bird fountain and habitat. We have had an increase in bird species visiting our farm since the installation of the habitat and fountain. We have also measured that the temperature of our farm is several degrees cooler than the surrounding residential plots as well as several degrees cooler than our garden. We hope by adapting some of the strategies that we've used at our community farm in our community garden, including some of those supported by this project, we will see similar results in our garden. Several years ago when we began the process of trying to incorporate more plants into our community garden we noticed that many native plants, although adapted to the rugged conditions of the Chihuahan desert, struggled to survive in our garden. We believe the compacted and landscape fabric and gravel covered flooring of the garden as well as heat and pollution from the neighboring major road made it difficult for more delicate plants to survive. In the past year we have seen a positive change in our garden as the hardier trees and shrubs (including our namesake plant Chamiza) have begun to thrive in our garden. For the first time, more delicate flowers and native grasses which were planted this spring under the protection of a mesquite tree in our rainwater harvesting swales have all survived and happily made it through the summer heat. During the course of this grant period, we have begun planning the installation of a bird feature- fountain and habitat- in our community garden with the hopes of seeing an increase in bird population as we've seen in our community farm.

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Final Instructions

Please send your completed form as a PDF email attachment to cartergrantapps@gmail.com by November 1, 2026.

* *To remain in good standing for any future funding from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, we ask that you educate our membership more fully in some way. This could be an article (250 words minimum, at least 1 high resolution illustration or photo) for our newsletter,* ***or*** *a paper or electronic copy or link to a published article connected with the past year's work,* ***or*** *by making an educational and visual presentation to one of our chapters. Contact information for our 7 area chapters is found on our website at www.npsnm.org under the Chapters tab.*

What are your intentions in this regard?
We intend to submit an article for the NPSNM newsletter highlighting the redesign of our community garden to incorporate more native plants through a community-led process.

This year end report is submitted by (Type your name)
Lorena Andrade

My typed name is equal to my handwritten signature in testifying to the accuracy and truth of this report to the best of my knowledge today.

eMail address
Lorena@mujerobrera.org

Date
11/1/26

Please contact us again at cartergrantapps@gmail.com if you have any questions or alternate suggestions.