



NMAA Acequia Youth Programs
Presentation to the 69th Annual New Mexico Water
Conference
November 5, 2024

Who I Am



Alex Griffiths

Background

Education and training

Pivot to preventative work

NMAA's mission statement: Our mission is to protect water and our acequias, to grow healthy food for our families and communities, and to honor our cultural heritage



What The Youth Education Team Does

The New Mexico Acequia Association offers culturally relevant and place-based educational presentations, training, leadership development, and hands-on learning opportunities to children and youth around New Mexico.



Our goals are:

- To support youth in understanding the history and deep social, cultural and environmental importance of our unique acequia systems.
- To affirm and uplift cultural heritage; help youth deepen their feelings of “querencia”; and strengthen their connection to the land, water and community around them.
- To inspire youth and demonstrate the many possibilities that exist for living lives and having future careers as advocates and caretakers for acequias and local land, water and seeds.
- To support parents, teachers, communities, acequia leaders, and youth organizations with resources to help them integrate acequia and farming education into all that they do.

www.lasacequias.org/youth-education/

Why It's Vital

- **Land based knowledge** is more important than ever
- **Intergenerational learning**
- **Resolana:** Learning through praxis
- **Critical thinking and critical consciousness**
- **Belonging and sense of place**

La Acequia es Nuestra Escuela

NMAA Youth Education Initiatives

School/Classroom Presentations

Sembrando Semillas Youth Project

Los Sembradores Farmer Training Program

Acequia Culture Youth Leadership Institute

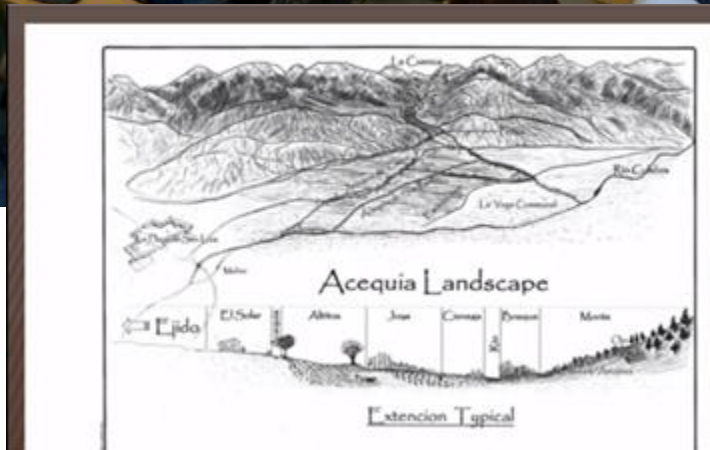
Acequia Career & Lifeways Program

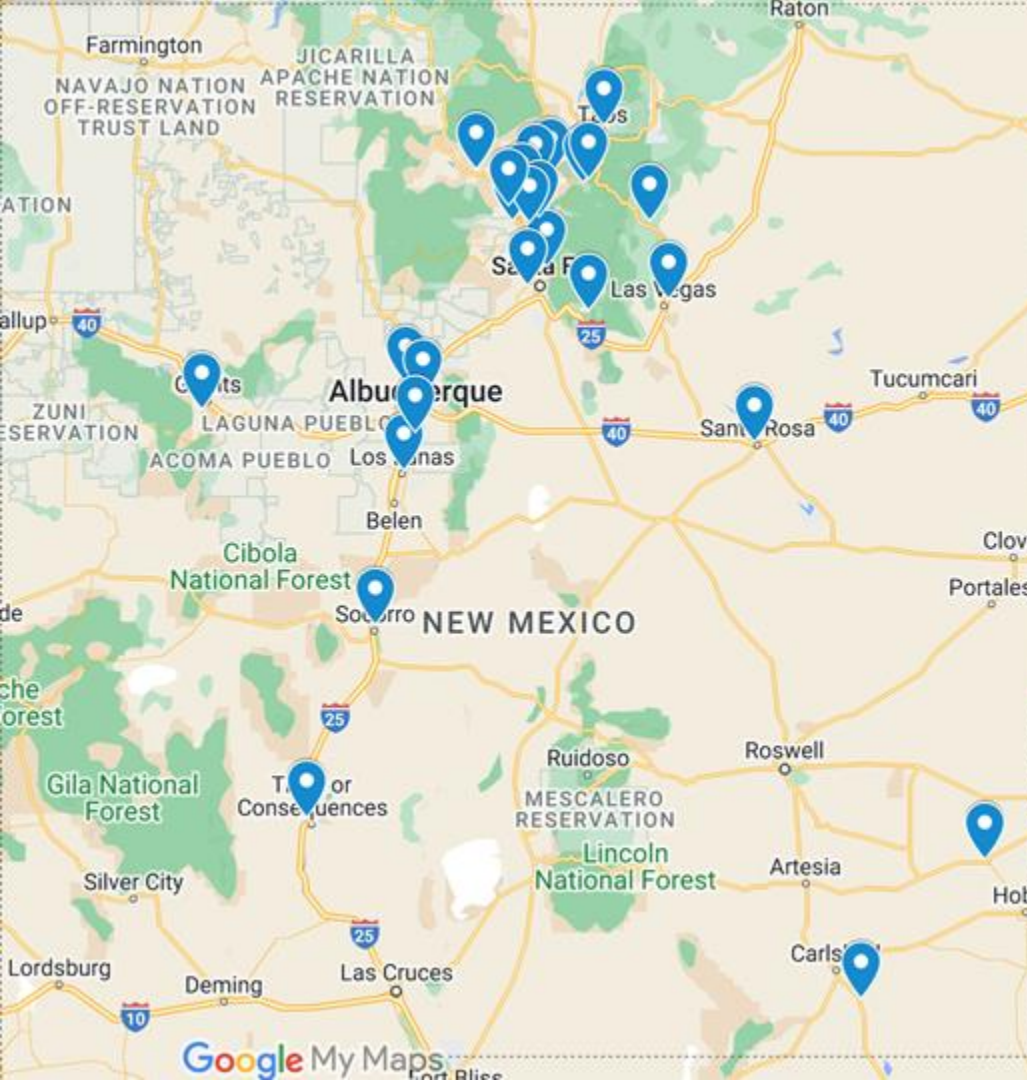
Acequia Youth Conservation Corps - Mora

School & Classroom Presentations



- 1,000+ students across the state served **EACH YEAR** in school classrooms, after school programs and outside of school youth programs (2018-2024)
- Lessons tied to diverse subjects including science, history, Spanish, writing, creative arts and more
- Online adaptations and home-school worksheets provided during covid-19 pandemic
- Ongoing curriculum building for independent use and K-12 public school integration





School presentation locations include -

Taos	Peñasco	Vadito
Chamisal	Alcalde	Velarde
La Puebla	Hernandez	Española
Abiquiu	Dixon	Chimayo
Pecos	Las Vegas	Mora
San Fidel	Santa Rosa	Los Lunas
Santa Fe	Tesuque	Pojoaque
Albuquerque	Bernalillo	Tijeras
Truth or Consequences	Loving	Lovington
Socorro		



Sembrando Semillas Youth Project

- 2005-2024, est. by Miguel Santistevan of Taos
- Family based, inter-generational experiential learning network for children in their home communities throughout growing season
- Acequia practices, farming/gardening, food preparation and preservation, traditional skills and medicine-making



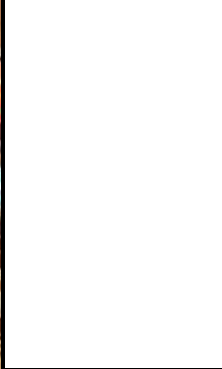
Los Sembradores Farmer Training

- 2016-2024 - 30 young farmers trained through an intensive 9 month paid apprentice program
- On site training farm + support for cultivating personal/family farms and gardens
- Traditional cultural farming, medicine making & water stewardship practices + 'modern' farm techniques
- Business training and development



Acequia Culture Youth Leadership Institute 2021 - 2024





Acequia Career & Livelihood Program

NMAA is dedicated to helping the young people of New Mexico discover and be successful in career and livelihood paths that bring them health and happiness – and also contribute to the wellbeing of their communities, acequias, land and water.

We are honored to help train and mentor the next generation of acequia farmers and ranchers; mayordomos and commissioners; and curanderas, adoberas, leñeros and cocineros – while also helping youth understand how their diverse interests in arts and languages, sciences, engineering and tech trades (and so much more!) can connect to their querencia and families. We encourage youth to dream big – and to see the value in both their school education, and in the hands-on skills and ancestral knowledge taught within their communities.

Career & Life Paths To Care For Your Acequia Community



Middle school, high school and college age youth (and families):
Join us to learn how you can use your unique interests and skills to help care for your community, acequias, and the land and water of New Mexico!

Join one or many sessions!
Free & online (join by Zoom or phone)
ALL sessions are held from 5:00-6:30pm

Feb. 16 - Feeding Our People: Acequia Farming, Ranching & Food Businesses

Feb. 24 - Leading & Organizing: The Work of Mayordomos & Commissioners

March 9 - Con Nuestras Manos: Adobe, Wood, Weaving & Herbal Medicine Making

March 24 - The Heart of Acequia Culture: Artists, Musicians & Poets

April 7 - El Agua No Se Vende: Law & Policy Advocacy

May 4 - Telling Our Stories: Acequia History, Storytelling & Documentarian Work

June 15 - Soil, Water, Forest & Climate Science to Care for Acequias

June 30 - Using Tech to Protect Traditions: Infrastructure, Engineering & Mapping

REGISTER: www.lasacequias.org/career-livelihood

Contact emily@lasacequias.org or (505) 995-9644



@NM_Acequia_Association



Acequia Youth Conservation Corps - Mora



NMAA launched the first Acequia Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) pilot project in Mora in the Summer of 2024. Seven crew members, aged 16-18, and two young adult crew leaders spent six weeks working hard to keep acequia waters flowing by clearing flood debris and silt from acequias in the Mora Valley. The YCC crew met with local acequia leaders, farmers, educators and professionals to learn more about watershed management and restoration, disaster response, and many other skills they can take forward into their lives and careers.

Our Methodology & Vision

Holistic

Storytelling

Culturally appropriate education

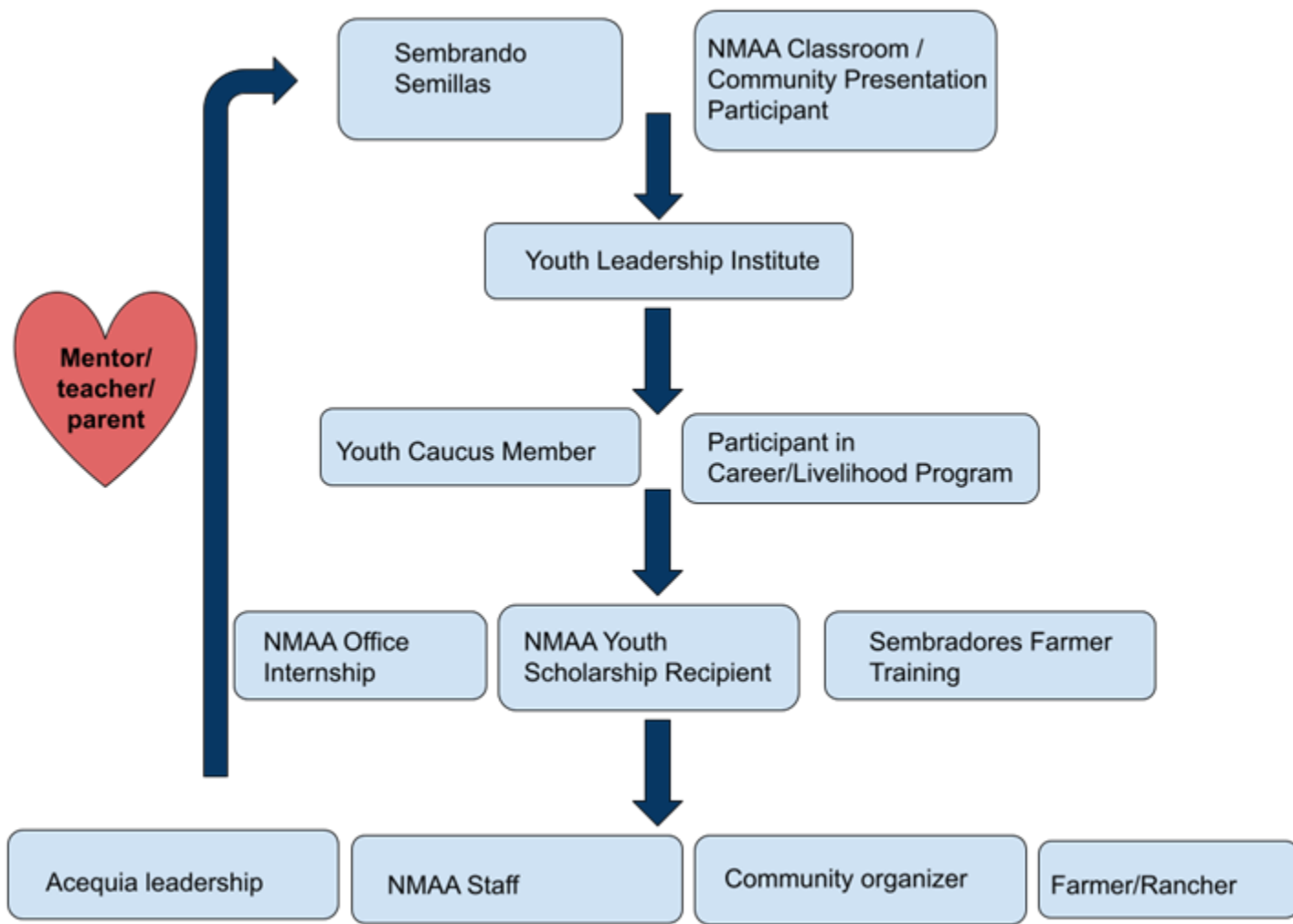
Economic opportunities for youth

Healthy water future

Ladder of Participation



Ladder Of Participation



Impact of Programming

Youth are the future

Sembrando Semillas

Youth Leadership Institute

Sembradores

Acequia Youth Conservation Corps - Mora

Presentations

Seed sharing



Sembrando Semillas:

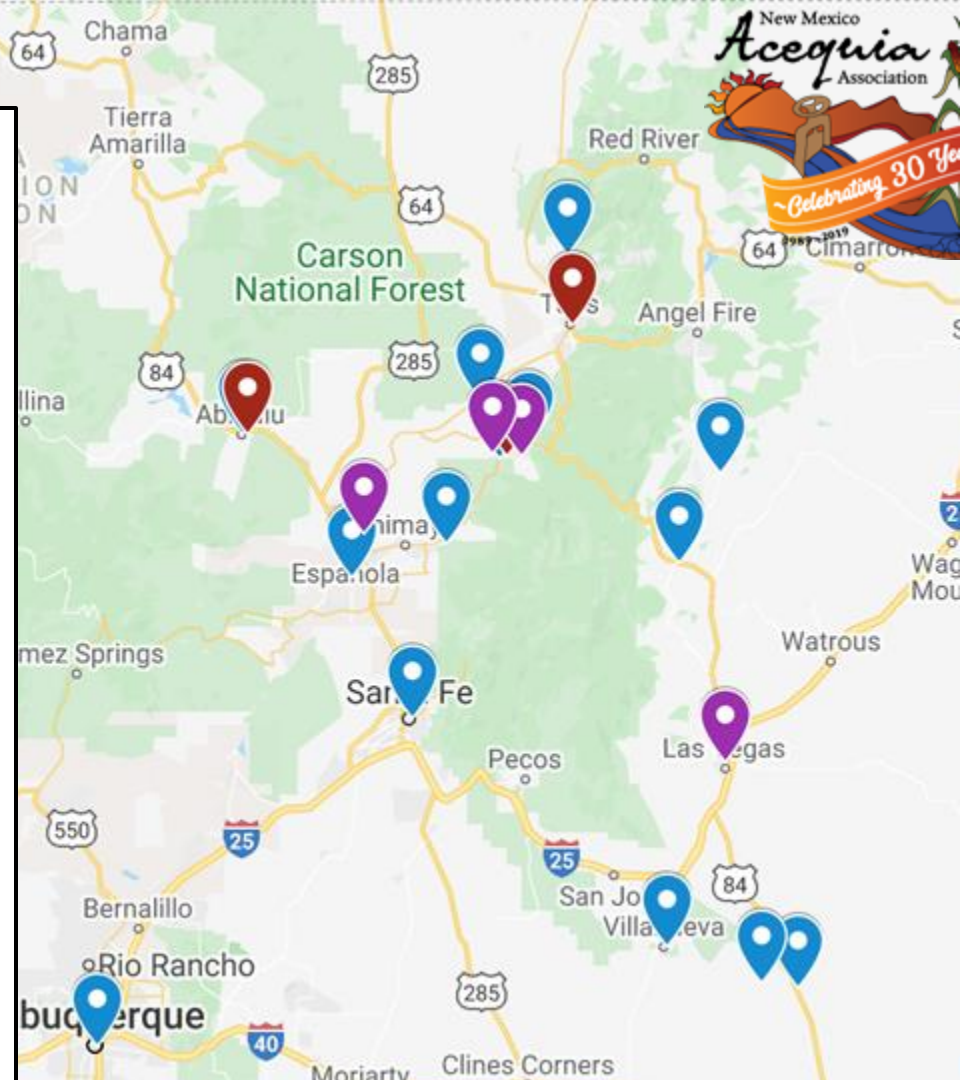
- Taos
- Chamisal
- Abiquiu
- Chimayo

Los Sembradores Farm Apprentices:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| • Peñasco | • Rio Lucio |
| • Las Vegas | • Arroyo Hondo |
| • Española | • Tesuque |
| • Chamisal | • Chimayo |
| • Cordova | • El Guique |
| | • Abiquiu |
| | • Llano |

Youth Leadership

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| • Vadito | • Pojoaque |
| • Valdez/Arroyo Seco | • Questa |
| • Abiquiu | • Cuyamungue |
| • North & South Valley ABQ | • Villanueva |
| • Mora | • Cordova |
| • Dilia | • La Mesilla |
| • Anton Chico | • Shiprock |
| • Youngsville | • Española |
| • Ojo Caliente | • Abiquiu |
| • Mora | • Las Vegas |



Best Practices



Local community is foundation

Relationship based

Respeto and humility

Honoring family knowledge

Our Dreams



Dream programs:

- o Youth Caucus
- o Internships at NMAA
- o Scholarships
- o Expansion of land-based educational programs that are community run (more YCC!)

Watershed restoration that is community organized