

| FALL 2024 |

# LA VOZ

CONNECTING PEOPLE, WATER, & LAND



 **CESOSS**  
CENTER FOR SOCIAL SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS

<https://www.cesoss.org/>



# UPCOMING ACEQUIA EDUCATION PROGRAMMING



SEPTEMBER 21, 2024  
Los Padillas Acequia Walk & Talk

**Starting Location:** 2301 Malpais Rd SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87105

SEPTEMBER 28, 2024  
CESOSS @ Prickly Pear Fest

**Location:** Gutierrez-Hubbell House  
6029 Isleta Blvd SW, Albuquerque, NM 87105



OCTOBER 5, 2024  
Acequia Bike Ride with Justice Outside & Story Riders  
**Starting Location:** Central & Sunset

OCTOBER 26, 2024  
Acequia Curriculum Day



DECEMBER 21, 2024  
La Voz Winter Edition Published



# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As the air grows cooler and the days shorten, we welcome the arrival of fall—a time of transition and reflection. **At CESOSS, this season reminds us of the profound connection between our land, water, and community.** The acequias, which have sustained our people and agriculture for centuries, continue to be a source of both nourishment and cultural identity. It is our mission to ensure that this heritage remains vibrant, not just for today, but for the generations to come.

This past quarter has been a time of growth and renewal for our organization. We've expanded our educational outreach by working with Valle Vista Elementary School and Los Ranchos to deepen their understanding of acequia traditions and New Mexican agricultural practices. Through our Acequia Walk & Talk we aided in reconnecting our community with the wisdom of our ancestors—**knowledge that teaches us to live in harmony with our environment, honor our water sources, and work together for the common good.**

As we move forward, we are excited to announce new initiatives focused on intergenerational learning at an Outdoor Acequia Learning Space. By bringing together elders who hold traditional acequia knowledge and younger generations eager to learn, we are creating bridges that not only transfer technical skills but also foster a deep respect for our shared history and culture.

We couldn't do this work without your support. Whether you've volunteered, attended a workshop, or contributed financially, you've played a critical role in helping us protect and preserve our acequias. **Together, we are ensuring that these vital waterways continue to thrive, and that the knowledge surrounding them remains alive and accessible.**

Thank you for standing with us in protecting and preserving acequias in the South Valley. We look forward to the work ahead and to sharing more of our progress in the months to come.

Wishing you all a peaceful and prosperous fall season.

Mil gracias a todxs,



Jorge Garcia  
Executive Director





# ACEQUIA INFRASTRUCTURE DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

This summer, in partnership with Story Riders, we launched the pilot phase of the Acequia Infrastructure Documentation Project. This initiative engaged a group of youth in bike rides along the acequias of the South Valley, with the goal of documenting and addressing issues related to acequia infrastructure.


Over the course of two weeks, students explored the acequias, identifying areas that required attention from the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD). They geolocated problem areas, took detailed photographs, and communicated directly with MRGCD, which responded promptly to the concerns raised. Through this hands-on experience, the students played a key role in the upkeep of these vital irrigation systems, learning about the intersection of environmental stewardship, local governance, and community advocacy.

In addition to their documentation efforts, the students had the opportunity to meet with Congressman Gabe Vasquez, where they voiced their concerns about broader community issues. They expressed a desire for more green spaces where they could spend time with friends, as well as shaded areas and protected bike lanes to ensure safer and more enjoyable access to these communal spaces.

As an extension of this project, we are now collaborating with students from ACE Leadership High School and MRGCD to develop a Mobile Acequia Classroom.

This innovative project will allow visitors to learn about the history, cultural significance, and water-sharing practices of acequias, while also highlighting the importance of conservation. The students will also work on developing an app that will enable community members to document and report areas along the acequias that need attention, making it easier for MRGCD to address issues efficiently and keep these vital waterways functioning smoothly.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Story Riders, whose partnership in this project has been nothing short of phenomenal. Their dedication and collaboration have been instrumental in bringing the Acequia Infrastructure Documentation Project to life. We wholeheartedly encourage everyone to explore the incredible work this local organization is doing within our community, from fostering youth engagement to promoting environmental stewardship and cultural preservation.



# ACEQUIA INFRASTRUCTURE DOCUMENTATION PROJECT



SCAN THE QR CODE TO  
LEARN MORE ABOUT  
STORY RIDERS



# ACEQUIA MOBILE WITH ACE LEADERSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

We extend our deepest appreciation to community members Julie Jaynes and Colin Baugh, whose visionary efforts laid the foundation for a partnership between CESOSS, Explora, and ACE Leadership High School. Together, they conceptualized the creation of a mobile acequia learning space, designed to bring acequia education directly to communities where it is most needed. Recently, we had the pleasure of meeting the group of dedicated students who will be constructing this mobile acequia learning unit. Students toured the Gutierrez-Hubbell House and learned about the history of acequias and agriculture in the South Valley.

This initiative aims to make acequia education more accessible, fostering a deeper understanding of the system and its significance among community members.


By the end of the project, students will be able to:

- **Demonstrate foundational knowledge** of the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) acequia system, including its history, current applications, and governance structures.
- **Present and explain the scale model of the acequia system** to various community groups, showcasing its functionality and importance.
- **Articulate the cultural significance of acequias** to both community members and lawmakers, emphasizing their role in sustaining local traditions and agricultural practices.
- **Explore career connections** in fields such as engineering, agriculture, project management, conservation, cultural preservation, and education.

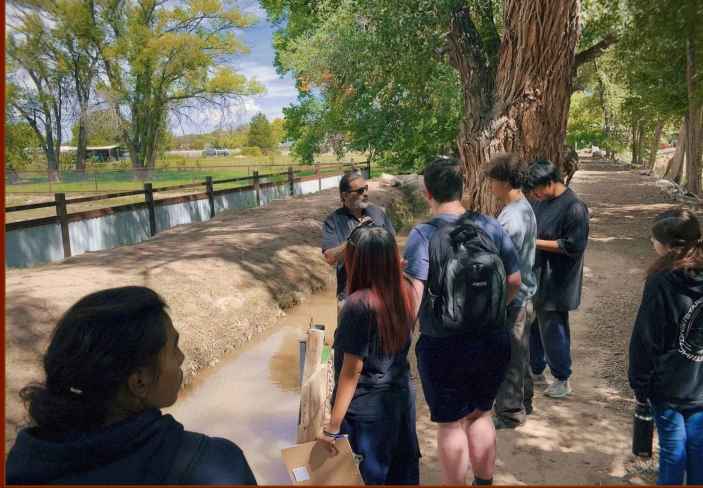
Over the course of the year, students will embark on a journey of self-discovery, learning about their community, the role of acequias, and the broader environmental and cultural contexts. Their efforts will culminate in the creation of a mobile acequia, which will serve as a valuable educational tool for future generations.

We are excited to work with this group of students!

**For more information on this project email [info@cesoss.org](mailto:info@cesoss.org).**



# ACEQUIA MOBILE WITH ACE LEADERSHIP HIGH SCHOOL



**SOMOS ATRISCO**

EST. 1692

# ACEQUIA EDUCATION UPDATE:

## CICLOS DE LA TIERRA IN SCHOOLS

This past summer, the CESOSS staff and board members have been diligently working to integrate Ciclos de la Tierra, a place-based curriculum, into local classrooms. Designed to foster *querencia* (a deep sense of connection to place), *mutualismo* (mutual support), self-governance, and *resolana* (spaces for reflection and dialogue), this curriculum encourages students to explore these foundational values in meaningful ways.

**Our efforts have gained traction, and we are now collaborating with Valle Vista Elementary School and Los Ranchos Elementary School. Our dedicated team has been working closely with school staff, offering training to teachers to ensure they feel confident and comfortable using the lesson plans in their classrooms.**



This fall, our staff members have been guiding students through the late summer section of the Ciclos de la Tierra curriculum, engaging them in thoughtful discussions about how they can eat in harmony with Mother Earth and New Mexico's seasonal harvest. By exploring the interconnectedness of food systems and nature, students are learning how to align their eating habits with the rhythms of the land. These conversations encourage them to appreciate local, seasonal foods and understand the importance of sustainable practices in caring for both the Earth and their communities.

We are excited to see what kind of discussion and ideas our future generation has!

**If you are an educator interested in bringing CESOSS and the Ciclos de la Tierra curriculum to your classroom, we would love to connect with you! Please reach out to us at [info@cesoss.org](mailto:info@cesoss.org), and one of our team members will follow up to schedule a meeting at your convenience.**

Together, we can explore how to integrate this place-based curriculum into your teaching and empower students to become thoughtful stewards of their communities and the Earth.

# CICLOS DE LA TIERRA AT VALLE VISTA & LOS RANCHOS



To learn more about Ciclos  
de la Tierra scan this QR  
code.

Or visit:

<https://www.cesoss.org/ciclos-de-la-tierra>



# HELP ACEQUIAS KEEP THE VALLEY GREEN

*By Santiago Maestas, Commissioner Pajarito Acequia*

I oppose the Water Right Transfer SD-07403 to RG-1844ZZ on the following grounds:  
I have a pre-1907 surface water right in the MRGCD SD-06657 and irrigate my orchard with water from the Pajarito Lateral. I am also one of 3 Commissioners of the Pajarito Acequia. We have a agreement since 1035 that the MRGCD will feed our acequia from the Pajarito Lateral at the same level or higher.


The applicants claim that since the management and operation of the ancient acequias were taken over by the MRGCD, the commissions and mayordomos no longer have the right to manage the acequia and cite the 1933 agreement between the Arenal Acequia / MRGCD, and the 1940 MRGCD vs Chavez Supreme Court opinion.

However, they fail to address the Court's findings that the MRGCD did not claim that the laws governing acequias and the water rights of landowners were repealed by the Conservancy Act, but the question of what duties remained for the commissioners was not addressed.

Since 2003 N.M law allows acequias to safeguard against harm that may result from a proposed water transfer when an acequia adopts a bylaw requiring approval. Both the Arenal and Pajarito acequia water right owners have adopted the water transfer bylaw, and the State Engineer is prohibited from considering a transfer into or out of the acequia unless the transfer has been approved by the acequia (Sec. 72-5-24.1).

The Commissioners of the Arenal Acequia denied the transfer after conducting two public hearings. An adjudication of the protests filed with the OSE Hearing Unit is pending while the Applicants continue pumping in violation of Water Use Leasing Act of the overall Water Code. That law requires public notice, opportunity to protest, and public hearing on protested application. To expedite water leases for certain industries, such as oil and gas also recently cannabis farms, the State Engineer has been skipping these vital steps in the process for the past several years, in spite of objections from Acequias, certain irrigation districts, environmental justice groups and conservationists.

Although the OSE Hearing is an administrative procedure, it requires expensive legal representation. CESOSS has started a legal fund with a \$5,000 anonymous donation, but your help is needed to pursue this issue to conclusion. CESOSS is a 501(3)(c) non-profit and your donation is tax deductible.





Our **mission** is to develop sustainable community-based and culturally centered events, programs, and initiatives to empower and preserve the traditions and science-based practices of local and Indigenous communities, related to land and water.

Our **vision** is to create sustainable, healthy, and thriving communities where traditions connected to land and water are protected, preserved, and passed onto future generations.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT

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### Donate via Check

Mailed to  
CESOSS  
211 10th St. SW, Albuquerque, NM

### Donate Online

[Using this link.](#)



# A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS & FUNDERS

Our partners and funders make CESOSS work possible. May we  
continue to work towards a world where land, water, and our Mother  
Earth is honored.

**La Lucha Continúa.**



**LOS JARDINES DE MOCTEZUMA**