Participants included; John Tunberg-NRCS, Richard Strait-NRCS, Brandon Bestelmeyer- ARS, Jeff Herrick- ARS, Jason Martin – NRCS, Greg Cates – NRCS, Les Owen – NM Dept. Of Agriculture, Leticia Lister – BLM, Noe Gonzales – BLM, Scott Woodall – NRCS, Matt Balmer – NRCS, Kris Havstad – ARS, Joel Brown – NRCS/ARS, Mark Meyers – SLO, Wayne Robbie – FS.

Meeting started at 10am with introductions all around the room. Next item of business was annual status reports. John Tunberg report is a separate attachment.

Richard Strait reported that a new suite of LRU is being proposed for an area starting just south of Taos and proceeding south to an area just south of Albuquerque. The NRCS Resources inventory staff is embarking on a rangeland climate monitoring project that has a goal of putting automated climate stations in every LRU in the state. Initial soil surveys are completed in NM. The White Sands soil survey is completed and is ready for official publication. The Cibolla county survey has been re-correlated and is pending an official Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Control review (QC). Guadalupe ridge SS is will have a final field review in April. Nationally the entire SS function of NRCS has been reorganized and the NM implementation is proceeding. ESD implementation on farmland needs to be further explored.

Kris Havstad reported that the ESD core group has been in operation in NM for approximately 15 years. It serves the essential function of providing a forum where ESD related questions and can be asked and plans for the future can be coordinated and carried out. Jornada is partnered with the Malpais Borderland Project to improve management or this unique and diverse area of NM. Kris shared maps that represent ESD site and state mapping for 3 different ranches in that area. This is a continuation and refinement of site and state mapping conducted with the Las Cruces District Office (LCDO) of BLM. These remotely sensed polygons have been ground truthed and will be attributed with state and transition model information. Uses will be to identify areas where transitions are approaching, areas that are at risk for degradation to undesirable states and areas where treatment is inadvisable. Result will be a powerful graphic tool to communicate management options to decision makers. Monitoring to proof S and T model assumptions will also be facilitated with this data set.

Scott Woodall reported that he has 9 ESD in draft for the Guadalupe ridge area of New Mexico. 6 are re-writes of existing and 3 are new. They are in the QA and QC process of NRCS now. They will be shared with the local tech team in March. It worked out that for the most part, these ESDs have a 1 soil component to 1 ESD relationship. This is the result of having a soil scientist and a range person doing the soils and ESD work on the same ground at the same time. Future for Scott is to work on the FS in-holding project. This is a state wide project to map all private in-holdings in or near FS lands. Along with that the Colorado folks are asking that we begin new ESD work in the San Luis valley volcanic areas. This area begins on the western San Luis valley and proceeds south to the north and west area of Taos county. After that will be the proposed LRU changes for the Rio Grande gorge area.

Matt Ballmer reported that Joint ESD and soils work is continuing for the Santa Fe SS office. He echoed the work plans that Scott laid out and indicated that moving to Santa Fe from Las Angeles has been quite a shift in emphasis. He is catching on fast.

Greg Cates reported that White Sands missile range project is finished. David Anderson has the mapping and the manuscript. They expect to start work on the Otero and Lincoln county lava flow area project. Tech team will be assembled for that. Jornada and Armendaris lava flow

project is in the planning phase. Bluepoint soils along the Rio Grande is another project they are exploring.

Noe Gonzalez reported he has been conducting BLM staff support work for permit renewals. In support of permit renewals, he has undertaken to develop S and T models for ESDs in MLRA 41.1 that are lacking the models. Consultation with Greg Collins, NRCS in Lordsburg is underway and relic areas for sampling are being searched for, a couple has been identified. The S&T model review team consists of the Las Cruces SSO, Brandon Bestelmeyer (JER), BLM range personnel, and the Lordsburg NRCS office staff.

Wayne Robbie report is an attachment to this.

Joel Brown reported that rangeland CEAP uses ESD as a basis for framing hypothesis and data aggregation. He reported Dave Smith is the new Soil Survey national head and has extensive ESD knowledge from California. Joel also reported Dennis Thompson will retire as NRCS national range person as will Pat Shaver as West region NRCS, ESD person.

Jeff Herrick reported he has partnered with Jason Karl to develop tools and apps that can be used in the field to gather and analyze soil stability and other measures. He notes that NRCS and BLM are collecting a standardized set of data. He suggested the group look at the Journal Map online tool. It has the utility of displaying research on a soils and ESD basis.

Leticia Lister reported that BLM remains committed to the ESD development and use process we use here in NM because this is information we use daily. The LCDO has been using the state mapping tool that Jornada has developed for the Malpais Borderland Project. This tool has been excellent not only in designing brush control projects, but designing monitoring programs. BLM benefits greatly from the tools being developed by Jornada. In addition, NRCS has provided us with a quick response when we have requested reference sheets for some ESDs and this kind of support from NRCS is greatly appreciated.

Les Owen representing NM department of agriculture reported that they see value as users of the product. He is glad to be informed of the uses for the product. This helps him communicate with ranchers and others who are concerned about the potential miss-uses of the tool. He considers ESD as an educational tool appropriate for watershed forums and other venu.

Jason Martin bridged off of Greg Cates report indicating that 9 gypsum influenced ESD had their development beginnings under David Trujillo. Jason is now examining what needs to be done to take them to completion. They are needed as part of the WSMR survey.

Brandon Bestelmeyer contributed the “Letters” article on resilience to the group. Summary is that black grama grasslands are more resilient that we have believed to date. Also a counter intuitive result explained in the paper is the heavy, repeat winter grazing of Black grama is very detrimental. Brandon and Laura are test driving a Pedoderm and Pattern class training session soon at Jornada. This will be a test drive of the training class and the publication on this concept. It will be a standard feature of ESD in the future. It builds on Arlene Tugel’s work in this area. In February it will be repeated. A goal is to get soils information into ESD in a more straightforward manner.

Mark Meyers of SLO reported that as users of the ESD product they are pleased with the tool. They especially appreciate the utility the offer in addressing prairie chicken and sand dune lizard issues.

A draft ESD core group work plan was circulated and is attached to these minutes. Edits and additions will be included as the work year progresses.

A workgroup was requested to address the need for a users workshop on ESD for the coming year. Volunteers include Less Owen, John Tunberg, Richard Strait, and Wayne Robbie. A curriculum needs to be developed to provide basic user understanding in a ½ day workshop. Once developed a test workshop must be conducted with improvements incorporated into a more finished reoccurring workshop. Follow-up reports to be provided to the general core team.

Meeting concluded at 2:20pm.