

SSCAFCA Narrative History

2003

In 2003, SSCAFCA completed construction of the current SSCAFCA office, with the original building footprint only extended to the western wall of the Board room. Prior to this date, SSCAFCA staff had leased office space.

The Board received a presentation on the Indian Bend Wash project in Scottsdale, Arizona. This project transformed a major flood hazard into an innovative recreational area that also addressed the existing flooding risks. This energized the Board to prioritize similar project components for future SSCAFCA projects, similar to what was accomplished at Roskos Pond, which was developed as a wetland project with educational outreach signage installed at the property. The first Visioning meeting on this was held on April 22, 2003.

Preparation for the next Bond Election began in the Spring of 2003, the election was planned for October 23rd, and was set up as a mail-in ballot. Although signs seemed positive leading up to the election, the bond question failed by a margin of just under 300 votes. In the aftermath, the Board decided to wait for the next general election to try again.

2004

In 2004, development activity was increasing, prompting the Board to begin evaluation strategies to encourage on-lot ponding as well as determining ultimate long-term impacts of a fully developed area on flood mitigation. The SSCAFCA Board was greatly concerned about revenue, as the prior two bond elections had both failed. At this time they began discussing alternate funding options, such as seeking federal funds, adding an impact fee to lot development, creating a stormwater utility fee and/or encouraging the City to require on-lot ponding. The recent uptick in development has highlighted the differing level of notice and control between planned developments and individual lot developments.

In November of 2004, the Bond Election questions, as part of the general election ballot, was approved by the voters by a wide margin of approximately 65%.

2005

In 2005, there is an issue with the SSCAFCA boundaries, the metes & bounds don't match description in the Hawk site/Mariposa area. This came to attention because of the proposed developments by AMREP and High Desert Corporation. Further complicating the matter was the change by the Village of Corrales to bring the southern portion of the Village wholly into Sandoval County. This impacted SSCAFCA by potentially adding a small area that had previously been within AMAFCA's jurisdiction. This was resolved in the 2005 Legislature with a bill that passed, amending SSCAFCA's boundaries on the north and south to reflect the corrections.

The Board continues discussions on Quality of Life, including preservation of arroyos as open space, minimizing the hard lining of drainage ways and on-lot ponding. The acquisition of needed real property is also becoming a major concern for the Board and staff, given the rapid

pace of development occurring within the jurisdiction. SSCAFCA moved ahead with developing a Quality of Life Masterplan that is completed and adopted in August 2006.

2006

Using the funds from the recent successful Bond election, SSCAFCA moves forward with planning for several large flood control facilities, including Sportsplex Dam and Lisbon Dam. As SSCAFCA continues to acquire ownership of stretches of the five major arroyo systems, SSCAFCA also inherits two long-standing complaints from the citizens – graffiti and motorcycles/ATVs in the arroyos. These are two chronic issues that will remain with SSCAFCA to address.

In August, SSCAFCA received notification that the rapid pace of development had resulting in a record year of assessed growth of 11.6%, between new development and property reappraisal.

The design and construction of the Sportsplex Dam, the largest drainage facility constructed by SSCAFCA to date, begins in 2005. The project involves multiple partners, the City of Rio Rancho and Pulte Development, and will also require review and approval by the OSE Dam Safety Bureau as it will be a jurisdictional dam. The groundbreaking for construction occurred in June of 2006 and construction was completed in 2008

The increasing pace of development in 2006 has created another complication for SSCAFCA, namely that property is being acquired and constructed on prior to SSCAFCA establishing a footprint for identified flood control needs.

In July of 2006, SSCAFCA experienced a large, approximately 200-year storm event that created significant flooding and caused the bridge over the Harvey Jones Channel in Corrales to be overtopped. The bridge walls were breached to prevent additional flooding. The height of the bridge and capacity of the channel underneath has been a controversial issue.

Following the storms of 2006, the Town of Bernalillo petitions SSCAFCA to expand their jurisdiction to include all of the Town and neighboring Placitas. SSCAFCA declines to support this request at this time, as the Town has virtually no flood control infrastructure and Placitas is unincorporated with no planned development. The Board recommends the Town seek funding for flood control improvements prior to SSCAFCA involvement, but SSCAFCA would support their efforts.

SSCAFCA is asked to support the City of Rio Rancho with their redevelopment and eminent domain initiative for blighted land or urban renewal. This is in addition to new drainage impact fees passed by the City. SSCAFCA supports the initiative because it will support planned development with more efficient flood control.

SSCAFCA began preparing for a large bond election. SSCAFCA had received significant support for completing additional flood control improvements following the 2006 storm events. The bond election in November was successful in the amount of \$10 million.

Staff began looking into other funding sources as well, including FEMA and the USACE. In order to assist SSCAFCA with external funding the Board approved hiring a state lobbyist, Mr. Larry Horan in December of 2006.

2007

Sandoval County is supporting the expansion of the SSCAFCA boundaries to include the Town of Bernalillo, Placitas and Algodones. The existing SSCAFCA Board continues to have reservations concerning the unknown level of commitment required. However, the situation is resolved when the Legislature creates the Eastern Sandoval Arroyo Flood Control Authority (ESCAFCA) in the 2007 Legislative Session.

Early in 2007, the development process for the Presbyterian Hospital and associated commercial development within the Black Arroyo begins. The most significant proposal is the realignment of the Black Arroyo into a hard-lined channel. The planning for 19th Avenue Dam is exacerbated by the high cost of real property acquisition for the footprint of the dam.

Development and property value continue to escalate. The assessed valuation for SSCAFCA increased by 47% in FY2007. Unit 17 continues to loom large, as an area of low density, individual lot development, which makes a positive benefit-cost ratio of any needed drainage improvements very difficult to obtain. This problem will continue long into the future.

In October, SSCAFCA had to acquire and demolish a recently constructed home that was built within the footprint for the future Lisbon Pond. SSCAFCA staff began working with City staff to establish better coordination on lot development in the future.

In November, the Board introduced a new strategy to establish a bank of habitat land that SSCAFCA can later ask development projects for reimbursement as an alternative to contributing directly to a specific project.

In December, SSCAFCA enters into a contract with an architect to design an expansion of the current SSCAFCA building, anticipating a need for additional staff.

2008

The Sportsplex Dam was completed, and a dedication was held on 3/21/08. This was the largest flood control project completed by SSCAFCA to date and the first jurisdictional dam as well. SSCAFCA also completed the construction of the Sunset Dam and the Aldaba Storm drain system.

In April, SSCAFCA joined the Storm Water Quality Team, which promoted public outreach and water quality education for storm water. This will be included in the NMDES MS4 Phase II permitting.

Due to the rapid increase in assessed valuation, along with the increased costs of real property acquisition, SSCAFCA was faced with higher project costs but a higher capacity for bonding. SSCAFCA decided to pursue its largest bond election to date and seek approval of \$18 million in bonds in the November election, which was successful.

2009

As another alternative to address the high cost of real property acquisition in the current market, in May the Board adopts a strategy of leasing needed properties, in order to protect needed property for flood control without the large capital expenditure of a full purchase.

Based on this large increase in valuation and associated debt capacity, the SSCAFCA Board pursues a legislative request to increase the bonding capacity of SSCAFCA. The 2009 Legislature approves a Bill increase SSCAFCA's bonding capacity to \$60 million, up from \$30 million previously.

2010

Early in the year, SSCAFCA starts preparing for the retirement of David Stoliker as Executive Engineer. In lieu of replacing Mr. Stoliker, he is rehired following retirement in July of 2010.

SSCAFCA was also notified by EPA that they are looking at doing a watershed-based permit to replace the Phase I and Phase II permits.

In March, SSCAFCA updates its Investment Policy to allow bond funds to be invested with local banks. \$1 million was invested in 6 and 7 month CDs at two local banks.

In May, SSCAFCA completed the expansion of the office building, adding the entire west side of the building, along with a large photovoltaic system to defray electrical costs. The building is certified as a Platinum LEED building, the first government building in New Mexico to achieve this status.

In August, SSCAFCA saw another large storm event. As with the event in 2006, sanitary sewer lines that were adjacent to the arroyo were exposed and breached by the lateral movement of the arroyo, releasing sewage into the stormwater flows, potentially contaminating sediment deposited in the Harvey Jones Channel. In September, the City of Rio Rancho begins installing sanitary sewer lines within the Barrancas arroyo. This is seen as a safer option than installation within the LEE lines. SSCAFCA had been negotiating the inclusion of quality of life elements, but those negotiations were ultimately unsuccessful. Additional sewer lines will also be installed in the Montoyas arroyo in the near future.

In September, SSCAFCA, in cooperation with the Ciudad Soil & Water Conservation District, began sponsoring and working with the River Xchange program, a program connecting elementary school children nationally and internationally, using rivers as a common thread.

2011

The year begins with a strained relationship between the City and SSCAFCA. This is driven by many factors, including the recent sanitary sewer line breaks, disagreements on the Dos Amigos JPA and the use of SSCAFCA funds and the ongoing development of the new Presbyterian hospital and associated commercial property at Unser & Westside Blvd.

In April, SSCAFCA launches the “Recycle Roundup with Plastic Pete”, a public outreach program targeted at reducing the amount of plastic bottles littering roadways and other areas that end up in the flood control facilities.

In June, the SSCAFCA Board interviewed multiple candidates for the Executive Engineer position as David Stoliker’s contract was not being renewed past June of 2011. Charles Thomas was hired as the new Executive Engineer effective July 19th.

In October, the Gateway Pond is completed. This is a unique project that included a jack & bore underneath Unser Blvd, a floodwall that incorporated public art, partially paid for by SSCAFCA, and incorporates a park in the upper flood pool. SSCAFCA also begins participation in the Rio Rancho Children’s Water Festival.

2012

In the next step of the watershed based MS4 permit, SSCAFCA hosted EPA Region 6 representatives on a tour of the SSCAFCA watersheds in January. In related efforts, SSCAFCA expands the River Xchange Program to include Corrales Elementary School.

Unlike in the mid-2000s, the assessed valuation of SSCAFCA has peaked and is dropping. In 2010 the growth was 0%, in 2011 it was -5% and in 2012 it is estimated at -3%. This is negatively impacting SSCAFCA’s ability to issue any new bonds. The current projection is no bond issues until 2019. The only silver lining is that the property values have dropped significantly, reducing the cost of acquisition of real property. With the drop in property values, SSCAFCA begins an aggressive real property acquisition program while values are low.

At the Board’s direction a design engineer was hired to begin completing in-house design projects. The first project was the Gateway Pond Parking Lot and the second is the Montoyas Bank Stabilization project. Staff are also proceeding on completing the Willow Creek and Calabacillas Watershed Management Plans in-house.

2013

In February, SSCAFCA accepts an agreement with the EPA CWSRF for \$750,000 in grant and \$1.25 Million in loan. This funding will be used to help address the chronic sediment and flow capacity issues at the outlet of the Harvey Jones Channel.

In March, SSCAFCA staff presented the first of many studies on changes to the SSCAFCA Hydrology and the impacts from development. SSCAFCA also hired a Federal lobbyist for the first time. The hiring of the lobbyist paid off quickly during a trip to Washington, D.C. that resulted in \$600,000 for SSCAFCA for the HJC project.

An evaluation of the Roskos Pond & Wetland in fall of 2012 revealed that the wetland concept was no longer functioning, due to intrusion of cattails, non-native fish species and excessive oils and greases. The facility was re-purposed to be a water harvesting demonstration project, which was completed in March.

In April, there was an unexpected finding from work developing the Calabacillas WMP. During the topographic mapping, a series of large natural playas were discovered. The Board took action to include the playas and their contributing watersheds into SSCAFCA's property acquisition plan.

The Chamisa Hills golf course, a private golf club, recently went bankrupt and was put up for private auction. At the request of the Board, SSCAFCA staff did an evaluation of the potential impacts of development of the golf course property. SSCAFCA staff identified significant negative drainage impacts in three watersheds, the Black, Montoyas and NM-528 Watersheds.

In July, SSCAFCA was again hit by two large storm events, with the second storm ranking as a 1,000 year event in the Corrales area.

In August, SSCAFCA begins working with other middle Rio Grande Valley entities on the Watershed based permit.

In September, SSCAFCA was hit with another series of intense storms that dropped rainfall ranging from 3-5 inches total over 5 days. Another sewer line in the Montoyas Arroyo was breached and spilled untreated sewage.

2014

In February, Mr. Schoener gave a presentation to the National Groundwater Association on quantification of infiltration within arroyo bottoms.

In June, the Lomitas Negras Water Quality Facility was completed, increasing the sediment storage and preventing sediment from entering the HJC. In July, after meeting with FEMA in Washington D.C., FEMA issued a clarification that flood control dams are eligible for HMGP and Flood Mitigation funds.

In September, SSCAFCA was able to host the EPA Administrator, Gina McCarthy, for a ribbon cutting at the Lower Montoyas Water Quality project. This project, funded by EPA CWSRF funds, incorporated green infrastructure throughout the project and minimized traditional gray infrastructure, while greatly increasing the sediment and debris storage just upstream of the HJC. The project was completed in September of 2015.

2015

In February, the SSCAFCA Board signed a JPA with the Town of Bernalillo to complete the Calle Baack Road and Drainage Improvements. The Town had received capital outlay funds for the improvements and wanted to partner with SSCAFCA to complete the project.

In March, Sandoval County completes the Rio Rancho Estates Action Plan. This study evaluated the far west portion of the SSCAFCA jurisdiction and determined that potable water sources could only serve 50% of the parcels in the area. Part of the plan was a recommendation for SSCAFCA to accept donations or acquisitions of all of the flood impacted property within the LEE lines as part of a strategy to remove 50% of the real property from development to match available water sources. The Board agreed to support this plan.

In support of a new off-channel design concept, SSCAFCA worked with the UNM Hydraulics Lab to complete a physical model of the proposed off-channel lateral weir to be used as part of the Lomitas Negras Phase 2 project. During the modelling effort, it was determined that the lateral concept was not very efficient and was modified to include a constriction downstream to reduce the overall length of the weir. This option appeared successful and was incorporated into the design of the project.

ATV and motorcycle traffic in arroyos continues to be a problem. Staff learned that wire rope is a more effective barrier, being difficult to break or cut.

In June, the modifications to the outlet channel of the HJC were completed. These changes increased the upstream hydraulic capacity of the Corrales Road crossing and reduced the chance of overtopping at the bridge.

In July, SSCAFCA began partnering with the Ciudad Soil & Water Conservation District on the education and outreach to school students, as the previous private firm has ceased operations. In other public outreach efforts, in September SSCAFCA began partnering with the Arid LID Low Impact Development Conference, an outgrowth of a similar conference supported by SSCAFCA initially in the early 2000s.

With the completion of the Lower Montoyas Water Quality Project in September, the three projects identified to protect the Corrales Rd. crossing of the HJC are complete. With the incorporation of green infrastructure, including plants, into the Lower Montoyas project, SSCAFCA includes a 2-year landscape watering and maintenance contract.

The last item of note in 2015 is the addition of a CAD designer, Kathy Fournier, to the staff at SSCAFCA. This position will provide a significant increase in production of plan sheets to complement the in-house design team.

2016

Early in the year, SSCAFCA received notice of guidance release from FEMA that indicated that projects incorporating off-channel concepts and addressing infiltration are eligible activities that will be credited in the benefit cost analysis process. This is a result of efforts from staff and the federal lobbyist.

In early 2016, SSCAFCA received approval of the watershed based MS4 Permit, as well as adopting the Compliance Monitoring Cooperative, which greatly reduces the sampling frequency and cost.

The Lower Montoyas WQ projects was completed in May, and the ribbon cutting was attended by US Senator Udall and US Congressman Lujan, in addition to several state legislators and local elected officials.

SSCAFCA received a scare from the Legislative Session, the capital outlay for the Alberta Rd. drainage project was included in a sweep bill. Staff worked with our state lobbyist to have the item line-item vetoed by the Governor.

For the 2016 Bond Election, SSCAFCA hires a consultant to re-brand the election, but chooses not to complete any rebranding of the Agency at this time.

2017

In January, the defunct golf course is acquired by Josh Skarsgard from the previous owner. Unlike the previous owner, who tried to revive the golf course and club house, Mr. Skarsgard is intent on developing the property with a mix of residential and commercial and is seeking to donate or sell portions of the course to SSCAFCA. Staff review and update the hydrology for the Board. In February, Mr. Skarsgard presents the concept of a conservation easement under which property from the golf course would be donated to SSCAFCA. During the meetings there is significant public comment not supporting the redevelopment of the golf course. The Rio Rancho Mayor also provides commentary regarding the ultimate disposition of the golf course, and reminds everyone it is currently private property.

In May, SSCAFCA hired a second design engineer, Junko Boat, to assist with in-house design services.

In June, SSCAFCA takes the unprecedented step of enacting a Reduction in Force (RIF). One fulltime FTE and two temporary FTEs were affected. This drastic measure was required due to seven years of flat or declining revenues for the operating budget and a personnel budget that had increased by 35% during that same timeframe. With no expectation that revenues would be increasing in the near future, SSCAFCA was required to take this controversial step to preserve the Agency's viability.

Also in June, the Bosque de Bernalillo project was completed. This project was designed in-house and featured a low flow meander channel to capture first-flush flows and divert them to capture debris, oils and greases.

In September, SSCAFCA was hit with large storm event in Unit 11 that created significant flooding due to the intensity of the rainfall, with over 0.5 inches in just five minutes. Although the overall size of the storm was not significant, this storm gave a real-world example of the impacts of soil saturation, as this storm generated much more runoff than originally predicted. This storm also highlighted the significant disrepair of drainage facilities in the Unit 11 area, originally developed in the late 1970s.

2018

The year started with more meetings and investigations into a conservation easement on the golf course being offered by Mr. Skarsgard. Unfortunately, no significant process is being made and it is determined that the golf course ponds are still encumbered by an existing Discharge Permit in place because of the use of recycled wastewater for irrigation.

In June, SSCAFCA completes a comprehensive Maintenance Access & Trails Masterplan for the jurisdiction, at the request of the Quality of Life Committee. This is the first step in updating the Quality of Life Plan originally completed in 2006. Preferred trail routes were identified within each watershed park as well as an Outer Loop Trail extending around the jurisdiction.

In development news, SSCAFCA staff attend a work study with the City and RRPS on the Los Diamantes Development, which will be coordinated with the future Joe Harris Elementary School, to be located adjacent to the development. The developer is interested in a public-private partnership with both the school and SSCAFCA for installation of needed utilities in the area. SSCAFCA also hires a public relations firm to assist with outreach to the golf course residents on their interest in SSCAFCA's involvement.

Numerous storms affecting the Venada watershed highlighted existing deficiencies within the lower Venada, namely that the grade of the channel, altered when the Saltillo subdivision was constructed, is creating excessive sedimentation in the channel, reducing effective flow capacity and clogging inlets into the channel. SSCAFCA staff begin investigating the channel and identifying short and long term solutions.

In September, David Gatterman expands the public outreach program to include Senior Citizens. It is hoped that this expansion will extend to the entire MS4 permit group. In other good news, the middle Rio Grande was de-listed for E.Coli.

In September, Jim Service retired after 16 years of service to SSCAFCA and Andy Edmondson was hired to replace him in December. Staff begin looking into expanding and creating and internal maintenance field operation.

2019

In response to concerns from residents, SSCAFCA staff evaluated the proposed zoning changes for Mariposa and provided comments to the Planning & Zoning Board that the drainage requirements still needed to be addressed and that Mariposa discharged to three separate watersheds. The discharges could not be shifted from one basin to another.

SSCAFCA was very successful in the legislative session, largely due to the high oil prices driving an increase of available funds. In addition to the funding requested, SSCAFCA received an additional \$200,000 for completion of improvements to Rio Mora Rd. Representative Powdrell had unsuccessfully tried to get the City to accept the funds, so SSCAFCA agreed to take on the situation created when flow from under NM528 was routed down a dirt road and eroded a channel preventing all access.

With funding received from FEMA in 2018, SSCAFCA was able to use consultants to create arroyo safety videos and shorts developed by middle school and high school students.

During 2019, the new Field Engineer, Andy Edmondson and staff did a comprehensive review of all SSCAFCA facilities and created an update list of maintenance needs throughout the jurisdiction. Staff prepared a plan to expand SSCAFCA staff by hiring a two person work crew and began buying the necessary equipment, such as a Dump Truck, Skid Steer, Dump Trailer, etc. The two field crew were hired in November. This fulfilled another goal of the Board to have an internal work crew.

In August, during the construction of Lomitas Negras Ph. 2/Saratoga Dam, the contractor discovered an approximately 15,000 cubic yards of trash and debris buried on-site, that turned

out to be an unpermitted illegal landfill operated some time prior to SSCAFCA acquiring the property.

While the design of long-term improvements to the Venada Channel were underway, SSCAFCA was made aware of a project adjacent to the Venada Channel being completed by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau was creating low flow channels paralleling the Rio Grande to improve habitat. SSCAFCA entered into an agreement with the Bureau to allow our improved outlet of the Venada to be incorporated into their low flow channel.

2020

In March, SSCAFCA was approached by the Nature Conservancy to partner on a project that would improve water quality and habitat. SSCAFCA staff provided details on a project to remove the siphon at the HJC outlet and distribute the City's treated wastewater return water as well as storm water runoff more effectively to improved habitat. The Nature Conservancy was successful in receiving a \$100,000 grant based on this proposal. The City agreed to partner, as well as the Village of Corrales and AMREP.

In March, the COVID pandemic struck. The COVID-19 Pandemic had a significant impact on daily SSCAFCA operations, but a fairly muted impact on overall productivity of the agency. Immediately after the issuance of the State Emergency Health Order, SSCAFCA transitioned all meetings to a virtual platform, including Board Meetings, to ensure compliance with the health orders issued by Governor Lujan-Grisham's administration.

Through the use of Zoom, Microsoft Teams and cell phones, staff remained in robust communication on daily tasks. To encourage remote work, staff computers were converted to laptops where possible and equipped with virtual network access to enable staff to be fully productive. For the aspects of our work that still require a physical presence, policies were adopted to allow these functions to be completed in compliance with COVID-safe practices, including a vehicle use policy requiring single occupancy and pre/post disinfection, daily office sanitation, mandatory mask wearing in the office and mandatory COVID symptom monitoring daily.

In April, staff presented, and the Board adopted, a new hydrology methodology for SSCAFCA. This new methodology was simpler to use, incorporated model calibration and study results completed by Mr. Schoener and removed the use of AHYMO, an obsolete method previously used.

In July, the Board interviews candidates to replace Steve House, who resigned from the Board earlier in the year due to moving out of state.

In September, there was movement on the golf course, with the developer submitting a new masterplan to the City for consideration. In November, staff gave a detailed presentation on the information submitted as part of the new masterplan and analyzed all of the areas proposed to be donated to SSCAFCA. There was a large presence of interested homeowners from the golf course area in attendance. In December, the Board authorized the expenditure of funds for SSCAFCA staff to complete a detailed on-site investigation of the parcels proposed to be

donated, including the old golf course maintenance yard. Moving into the following year, the Board held a Work Study on accepting golf course property in February.

2021

In June, following public outreach efforts, staff presented the finding of a public survey on the golf course acquisition. The Board also approved a resolution outlining conditions that would need to be met for acceptance of any of the golf course parcels. After a question was raised about the current zoning requirements in effect, staff scheduled a follow up meeting with the City of Rio Rancho. During the meeting, it was discovered that the City had imposed very specific requirements on the golf course property that would transfer to SSCAFCA if SSCAFCA accepted ownership. Based on those requirements and risk to SSCAFCA, the Board declined any further consideration of accepting parcels from the golf course at this time.

In September, information was presented on the Papillon Village development near Mariposa. The developer is requesting SSCAFCA's consideration to vacate several arroyos that flow through the proposed area of development and allow them to be converted to piped systems.

In October, public bidding of the HJC outlet project with the Nature Conservancy was unsuccessful as the bids were double the available funds. Staff worked diligently with the City and their on-call contractors to determine a path forward that would fit into the budget.

In December, the Drainage Policy was updated to reflect the changes in hydrology as well as clarify significant areas where the previous policy contain overlapping elements that were specific to the City's drainage ordinance requirements.

2022

In January, the interview and selection process for a new Executive Engineer began, following two months of advertising. At the end of January, the Board selected David Gatterman as the new Executive Engineer, effective as of the regular February Board Meeting.