



Conserving water - Acequia liner at MMS completed

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Courtesy photo

Martina Tapia, Memorial Middle School principal, surveys the completed agricultural ditch at her school. Construction cost was \$36,000, 80 percent of which was covered by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission with the remaining amount paid by Las Vegas City Schools.

Construction of a concrete acequia liner was completed recently at Memorial Middle School. The concrete liner will help conserve water and prevent damage to school property from soil erosion and water leaks.

The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission funded 80 percent of the project, while the Las Vegas City Schools contributed the remaining 20 percent.

The joint project of the Romero Ditch Association, the Interstate Stream Commission and Las Vegas City Schools was completed June 28.

The \$36,000 construction project was designed by Art Ariaz and engineering consultation was provided by Delia Pastran-Garcia, Phillip Estrada and intern Amy Chavez of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, who estimate their in-kind services at more than \$20,000.

Half of the acequia at Memorial Middle School had been lined with concrete several years ago with state funding. The school district is a parciante of the Acequia Madre de los Romero and over the last few years, serious leaks developed in the schools section of the ditch.

During drought years, agricultural ditches can develop fissures and soil weakness. When water was allowed to flow in the middle school acequia last year, water leaks and breaks occurred. The fruit orchard that is part of the NMSU Agricultural Program at the middle school and some school property were damaged. The new concrete liner will prevent future damage and will help conserve water loss from seepage.

According to the Romero Ditch Association, the project could not have been completed without the cooperation and commitment of Ray Acosta and Beatriz Vigil at the Interstate Stream Commission, LVCS board member Felix Alderete, acequia commissioners Hank Tapia, Linda Tapia and Clarence Aragon, mayordomo Richard Cousins and the engineers of NRCS.

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