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SSCAFCA breaks ground on cleaner Rio Grande project

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Project heads and community leaders broke ground March 26 for the Tortugas Arroyo Improvements Project on Don Julio Road in Corrales.

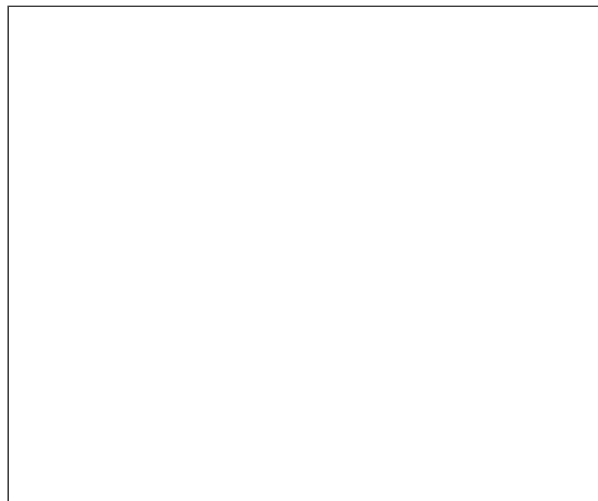
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CORRALES — The Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority broke ground March 26 on a project geared toward keeping the Rio Grande clean.

The project on Don Julio Road, named Tortugas Arroyo Improvements, was done by SSSCAFCA working in tandem with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Compass Engineering. SSSCAFCA’s Executive Engineer Dave Gatterman, who took hold of a shovel at the ground breaking, explained the project’s value.

“We are working on the Tortugas Arroyo Improvement project, which is essentially a water quality project where we’re taking water that comes off of the industrial park, Rio Rancho, and we’re mounting it through a water quality treatment system,” he said.



He said while there isn’t a threat right now, there is potential for future industrial activity to create more water quality issues.

“So we’re trying to deal with that up front, and we’ve been working in partnership with the Corps of Engineers now for a very long time to kind of get this project up and moving,” Gatterman said.

He was joined by contractors and community leaders to celebrate the ground breaking, including Compass Engineering Project Manager Shane Meihaus, USACE District Commander Lt. Col. Matthew Miller, USACE ABQ District Deputy District Engineer Jacob Pauley, SSCAFCA board of directors secretary/treasurer Ron Abramshe, Corrales Mayor James Fahey Jr. M.D., HDR Senior Project Manager Alex Coronel, and New Mexico state Rep. Kathleen Cates.

According to a contract agreement for the project, urban stormwater runoff is the largest contributor to pollutants in the nation’s waters. The Tortugas Arroyo project is designed to protect the Rio Grande from pollutants running off a Rio Rancho industrial park. It will remove floatable debris and sediment from the upstream industrial park. Sediment reduction will not only prevent urban runoff pollutants in sediment from reaching the river but will also allow for better downstream hydraulics by limiting sediment accumulation.

Miller has been present for many similar projects with SSCAFCA.

“I think we really cracked the code and set the path for a continued partnership and many successful projects,” he said.

He added that he was very excited about what the project will do for the river.

“Anything we can do to prevent contaminants from making their way to the river is something we can all get behind,” Miller said.

Cates said she was impressed with the project.

“I’m very impressed and so happy to see Sandoval grab these opportunities, maximize our federal dollars. Just all the opportunities small and large, just to access our very limited water source that we need,” she said.

Coronel stated that it was an interesting and exciting project.

“Like everybody has said, whenever we can put in something that we know is going to benefit water quality and benefit in the water as a resource,” he said.

He added that getting water to go a way it doesn’t normally is for good reason.

According to Meihaus, the project will be quick with an approximate end date in July.

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