

TOP STORY

Officials mark completion of flood control project to protect Corrales

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The new flood control project is designed to prevent sand accumulation and overflow using a “living screen” plant colony

Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., joined local government officials Thursday to commemorate completion of the Lower Montoyas Water Quality Feature, a flood control waterway in the sandy desert hills between Rio Rancho and Corrales.

The first of its kind in the United States, the structure is designed to prevent sand accumulation and overflow using all-natural elements, including a “living screen” plant colony to filter out debris from storm water and barrier rocks to prevent sediment buildup.

It is intended to protect Corrales from floods during the upcoming summer rainy season.

The structure will preserve plant life and wildlife, preventing flooding while leaving the arroyo in its natural state. The area remains a functional open space for the surrounding community.

The Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority project cost \$2.1 million.

SSCAFCA received a combination grant and loan award totaling \$2 million for the project from the Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water State Revolving Fund. SSCAFCA funds for the project totaled \$1.3 million, most of which were to guarantee the loan portion of the award (\$1.2 million), SSCAFCA Executive Engineer Chuck Thomas said.

Other officials involved in the project included Rio Rancho Mayor Gregg Hull, Corrales Mayor Scott Kominiak, and U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M.

“I just want to commit to all of you, that if you have projects like this ... we will work with you,” Udall said. He said he and Lujan are committed to assisting with future infrastructure projects and will ensure that adequate investments are made in the EPA Clean Water Revolving Fund.

Attendees recalled destructive instances of flooding in 2006 and 2013, which posed a danger to those living in the area.

“As we all know, drainage is a major issue throughout the area ... We saw what destructive power it can have in the desert,” Hull said. “I really appreciate the natural look of it (the new feature) and the attention to detail when it comes to green infrastructure. It just really looks nice and really blends well with the environment.”