

The Southern NM LandLink project

Executive Summary

As the average age of farmers in the US approaches retirement age, and agricultural lands being lost to extensive real estate development (especially in Western states) members of the Southern New Mexican agricultural and research communities have been discussing ways to address these issues affecting local food security. One approach that is being explored by various groups is that of a land link between growers and landowners.

Greening Gardens is a small, private applied research company located in Las Cruces New Mexico that is spearheading the *Southern New Mexico LandLink* project. The research focus of the company is applied GIS and agricultural research and planning in southern New Mexico and the Mesilla Valley. The company strives to use on-site demonstrations of applied agricultural approaches for improving small scale agriculture in urban and peri-urban environments, and to provide assistance to others to employ these approaches.

The *Southern New Mexico LandLink* was conceived as service which would assist local area growers and agriculturalists in locating local landowners with available agricultural lands. The effort is designed to assist local young people in becoming area farmers and agriculturalists, and to aid local landowners in mitigating the loss of the areas traditional agricultural lands to development.

The *Southern New Mexico LandLink* project has a local focus specifically addressing the needs of Southern New Mexican communities, especially those in the Mesilla Valley. The *Southern New Mexico LandLink* project emphasizes conserving urban agricultural and peri-urban agricultural lands, and the use of sustainable agricultural practices by local growers.

In-kind and project funding

Initial planning and work on the project was made possible through the donations of time, expertise, facilities and equipment by the Greening Gardens. A prototype database was developed with assistance from Dr. Jennifer Kreie's BCIS 350 class at New Mexico State University.

Funding for continued development and maintenance work on the project will be made possible through local interagency cooperation, grant writing and funding, and participant subscription of project services.

Expected outcomes

Initially *Southern New Mexico LandLink* project work will focus on continuing LandLink database development, as well as gathering additional participant client data for analysis and reporting. Efforts will be made to expose the local community to the program through presentations made to local individuals through agricultural and educational venues.

As the project establishes itself in the Mesilla Valley community, efforts will be made to expand the project to include other urban and developing areas in southern New Mexico's agricultural belt.

For additional information contact;

Randy Carr, Greening Gardens

greeninggardens@gmail.com