

# FINAL SENT TO NMDOT

## Official Scenic Historic Marker Program



CPRC meeting: April 9, 2010

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**Name of Marker:** Dulcelina Salce Curtis (1904–1995)

**Review:**  Original Text/Replacement Marker  Revised Text  
 Move of Existing Marker  New Marker

**NMDOT District:** 3

**NMDOT Highway:** SANDOVAL COUNTY

**Suggested Site for Installation:** DOT right of way near Corrales.

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**Existing or Proposed Text:**

Teacher, agriculturalist, farmer and conservationist, Dulcelina Curtis led efforts to control flooding of arroyos in Corrales where a flood-control channel is named in her honor. The first woman appointed to a board of the U.S. Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation District, she received the National Endowment for Soil Conservation Award for New Mexico in 1988. She served on the Village Council and helped launch many of the town's civic organizations.

**Word count:** 69

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**Previous Title and Text:**  N/A

**Researcher/author:** Karren Sahler and Tom Chavez

**Source(s):**

- Recollections of Daughter, Evelyn Losack of Corrales.
- Recollections of Granddaughter, Joneve Bender
- Mayfield, Phyllis. "Corrales Farms Harvest Apples in City's Shadow." *Albuquerque Journal*, October 11, 1984.
- Obituary: Dulcelina Salce Curtis Dies: Corrales Matriarch Epitomized Determination to Keep Farming Tradition Alive Here. *Corrales Comment*, April 22, 1995
- Radford, Jeff. "Village Govt. Celebrates 33rd Anniversary This Month." *Corrales Comment*, September 24, 2004.
- Radford, Jeff. "How Corrales Came to Have the Finest Small Library in New Mexico." *Corrales Comment*, August 13, 2007
- Radford, Jeff. "M-Zone Sought for Salce Park." *Corrales Comment*, September 8, 2008.
- Radford, Jeff. "Monument to Dulce Curtis Dedicated." *Corrales Comment*, September 8, 2008.
- Radford, Jeff. "Heritage Day May 17 Features Salce Family." *Corrales Comment*, May 27, 2008.

Schwingendorf, Wende. "Civic Leader in Corrales Dies at 90." Metro Plus, April 19, 1995.

**Text Approved by CPRC on Date:** April 9, 2010

**CPRC Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**For Referral to:** Dee Beingessner, NMDOT

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**From:** JONEVEBEN@aol.com  
**Subject:** Re: HM on NM 448 and NM 22  
**Date:** April 29, 2010 7:53:49 AM MDT  
**To:** k.sahler@comcast.net

Mom said that was fine. But you should maybe call her - 897-3672.  
Joneve

In a message dated 4/23/2010 10:55:03 A.M. Mountain Daylight Time, k.sahler@comcast.net writes:

Dear Joneve and Evelyn,

The Department of Transportation does not have right of way on NM 448 in front of your family's farm. They are proposing a site location further north along NM 448. Please take a look at this site. I know it's not the perfect location, but given the constraints of our project, I hope it will be satisfactory.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Karren

Karren Sahler, Director  
New Mexico Historic Women Marker Initiative  
505-501-1385  
[k.sahler@comcast.net](mailto:k.sahler@comcast.net)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Perea, Nancy, NMDOT" <[Nancy.Perea@state.nm.us](mailto:Nancy.Perea@state.nm.us)>  
**Date:** April 22, 2010 6:20:50 PM MDT  
**To:** <[k.sahler@comcast.net](mailto:k.sahler@comcast.net)>  
**Cc:** "Beingessner, Dee A., NMDOT" <[Dee.Beingessner@state.nm.us](mailto:Dee.Beingessner@state.nm.us)>, "Beverly Duran" <[bduran@gmail.com](mailto:bduran@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** HM on NM 448 and NM 22

Karren,

In reference to the historical marker that we had discussed being placed on NM 448, attached is a map indicating the proposed location along Corrales Road. The right-of-way in that area appears to widen out and there is an area to pull off the roadway. I am still working to get a set of plans for the NM 22 roadway widening project to indicate an area to be utilized. Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

**Nancy R. Perea, P.E.**  
District 3 Assistant Traffic Engineer

New Mexico Department of Transportation - District Three  
7500 Pan American Fwy NE - PO Box 91750 - Albuquerque, NM 87199  
Main: 505.841.2700 - Direct: 505.841.2729 - Fax: 505.841.2790  
[Nancy.Perea@state.nm.us](mailto:Nancy.Perea@state.nm.us)

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Proposed location of Women's  
Historical Marker:  
"DULCELINA CURTIS"  
(At NM 448 Milepost 12)

The proposed area is located near  
Grayhawk Drive. We still need to verify  
the DOT right-of-way line at that area.

Paseo De Dulcelina Rd  
Milepost 9.5

Google

# Official Scenic Historic Marker Program

## The Historic Women Marker Initiative

### Marker Application Form

Name of Marker: \_\_\_\_\_  
 County: SANDOVAL  
 Name of Woman Honored: DULCINEA CURTIS

Review:  New Marker

Request Made By: The Historic Women's Marker Initiative

NMDOT District: \_\_\_\_\_

NMDOT Highway: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Site for Installation: CORRALES

DULCINEA SALCE CURTIS 1904-95

Taught rural Sandoval, Co. schools  
 Ran large Corrales fruit orchard and farm  
 Instrumental in starting 4-H in Corrales, Extension service, PTA, Fire Dept. Growers Market  
 Helped with Village of Corrales Incorporation  
 Served on Village council 7 years  
 Helped get Sandoval Schools into Albuq. Public School System  
 Cemented irrigation ditches for village  
 Awards: National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation 1988  
 \$3 million floodway project in Corrales

Word Count: 55

Researcher/author: M. LIEBERT

Source(s): FILES: SCHO (Sandoval Co. Hist. Soc.)

Text Approved by CPRC on Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For Referral to: \_\_\_\_\_

**From:** Karren Sahler <k.sahler@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** re; curtis  
**Date:** October 31, 2009 2:45:41 PM MDT  
**To:** Karren Home <k.sahler@comcast.net>



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Taught in rural Sandoval County schools; ran large Corrales fruit orchard and farm; instrumental in starting 4-H in Corrales, the County Extension Service, PTA, Fire Department, Growers Market; worked for incorporation of Village of Corrales; served on Village Council for 7 years; cemented irrigation ditches for Village; awarded National Endowment for Soil & Water conservation in 1988 for \$3 million flood way project in Corrales

10/21/09 Called Martha Liebert for info on Dulcinea. She gave me name of Dulcinea's daughter, Evelyn Losack, 5606 Corrales Rd, Corrales, NM 87048-8754. 505-897-3672. Called and left message. KLS

For Sandoval County I was referred to Martha Liebert, who works at the Historical Society and was formerly a librarian. Home phone 867-2755. She is well along in years and very alert. She became very impatient because she said that she had already been contacted by someone with the State and had sent in her nominees. If she can find the package she will fax me a copy and I will send it on to you. Box 223, Bernalillo, NM 87004. Included in her nominees were two names that I came across elsewhere. One was Dulcinea Curtis, whose family was and still is involved in agriculture in Sandoval County. Apparently they were Italian immigrants. She was on the Corrales Board of Trustees and was deeply involved in everything going on during her time. submitted by Janice Women's Forum

*New Mexico Historic Women Marker Initiative — Nominations*

**Name** Dulcinea Salce Curtis

**County** Sandoval

**Birth Dates** 1904-1995

**Categories** Educator, Community activist

**Status** 11/2/2006

**Suggested  
Marker  
Text** Taught in rural Sandoval County schools; ran large Corrales fruit orchard and farm; instrumental in starting 4-H in Corrales, the County Extension Service, PTA, Fire Department, Growers Market; worked for incorporation of Village of Corrales; served on Village Council for 7 years; cemented irrigation ditches for Village; awarded National Endowment for Soil & Water conservation in 1988 for \$3 million flood way project in Corrales

**History**

**Sources** M. Liebert, Sandoval Cty Hist. Soc.

**Nominating Party** Sandoval County Mgr

**Ranking by county** 2

**Resolution** County e-mail, resolution to follow via post

## Monument to Dulce Curtis Dedicated



Written by Jeff Radford

Corrales Comment

Monday, 08 September 2008

Filled glasses were raised and a toast given to Dulcelina Salce Curtis at the dedication ceremony August 22 for the arroyo flood control channel that bears her name on the escarpment at the north end of Corrales.

Dozens of officials and wellwishers gathered at a mini-park beside the channel at Rio Rancho's Rio Vista Drive where a monument bearing a photograph of Dulce Curtis was unveiled.

"Let us raise our glasses and toast the memory of a dedicated woman, Dulcelina Curtis. Dulce was indeed a visionary activist, a hard-working and tireless advocate of public safety, and in spite of her crippling arthritis, continued working every day to bring safety to the village of Corrales," said Mark Conkling, a board member of the Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA) which erected the monument and now manages the channel.

"We are proud of this monument to her name. May it be a daily reminder of her dedication and commitment to others. As the rains come, or as you walk the trails, may the memory of Dulce Curtis always be present."

Her daughters, Evelyn Losack and Dorothy Trafton, offered memories of the woman many villagers considered Corrales' matriarch until her death in April 1995.

The concrete channel captures flood water coursing through the Lomitas Negras Arroyo at the north end of the Corrales Valley and directs water into the larger Harvey Jones Flood Control channel in the nearby Montoyas Arroyo. The channel was completed October 19, 1991 at a cost of \$4,235,000, most of which was raised by property tax imposed by the Corrales Watershed Board.

Curtis had been a driving force for the watershed board since the 1950s, along with Harvey Jones. The board, its structures and taxing authority were taken over by SSCAFCA in the late 1980s.

Another long-time member of the Corrales Watershed Board and SSCAFCA, Dub Yarbrough, recalled that flood control was just one of the issues to which Curtis dedicated her efforts.

She and her husband, Vincent Curtis, had Corrales' first fire truck. She started the first 4-H club here, as well as the school's Parent-Teacher Association.

Curtis was a prime mover for the community incorporating as a municipality in 1971. She served seven years on the precursor Corrales Community Council.

Dorothy Curtis Trafton spoke at the dedication ceremony, noting "Her many accomplishments and interests are well-documented. They are easily found around the community and state. She always said if it wasn't for a hard-working group, none of these structures to control water would be here.

"The real person was a true gem. She was priceless... her strong, forceful, fearless spirit with attention to the human element; her concern for fairness was paramount as it pertained to her family. She felt every person in the community deserved this also.

Trafton recalled "her passion for farming and her appreciation of water with its best uses, its treacherous rage, and how the people of the area could harness the ebb and flow of this powerful friend and at times, dangerous foe."

Trafton concluded by noting that Curtis "stressed the importance of keeping the land for agriculture, but also advocated the importance of change."



Evelyn Losack referred to her mother as a “hard-working visionary who spent her time in wise pursuits. She was, indeed, the soul of Corrales, and a mentor to all of us.”

Losack offered a brief biography of her mother. “The newly-built home of her birth was washed away with the flood of 1904 when she was a month old. She was 14 and the eldest of six siblings when her mother, a mail-order bride from Italy, died during the 1918 pandemic. “She went beyond grammar boarding school with the Sisters of Loretto in Bernalillo to the Normal School in Las Vegas, New Mexico, from age 14 to 17. She became a teacher at age 17, and taught for one year in Corrales and six years in Placitas. She bought the first Model T Ford in Corrales, and shoes for the remaining four siblings, on an \$80 a month salary.”

Dulcelina Salce met and married cowboy Vincent Curtis in 1928. “During the 1929 Depression, Corraleños were fortunate enough to grow their own food. As a community, they hand-shoveled the Acequia Madre in proportion to the number of acres that the ditch water serviced each landowner.

“In isolated Corrales, no one had a job other than farming on irrigated land and /or ranching livestock on the foothills that are now Rio Rancho,” Curtis explained. “Then in the 1930s, President Roosevelt started the Reclamation Bureau and the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Rio Grande Valley needed protection from the frequent floods. The men of the village could work only three days a week. This provided more men a job....Dad worked on the Rio Grande projects, the levees and the bosque Clear Ditch. The Sandoval Lateral was dug with equipment, probably in the late 1940s.

“Soil and water conservation were always foremost in their minds and lives. This was the beginning of mother’s work, for which she received the National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation Award for New Mexico in 1988.”

She recalled that her father died in 1962, “leaving Mom alone to manage the farm and orchards of apple crops while Dorothy and I were teachers in other states due to following our husbands’ employments. But the floods kept coming, mostly from the Montoyas Arroyo. In 1971, Corrales was really flooded from five poorly-built AMREP dams. This was a wake-up for Corraleños. As Harvey Jones was a bridge builder and well-acquainted with the force of run-off water, he became the ‘know how’ backbone forming the Corrales Watershed Board. “Naturally, funds were imperative to plan and execute protective measures. Finally, after many political hurdles, the SSCAFCA was formed in 1988 under the work of my Johnnie as its first chairperson.”

She acknowledged others, such as Bob McCormick, Sam Spitz, Harold Christ, George Manierre, Annette Jones, Richard Farmer, John Werner and Dub Yarbrough who played essential roles in achieving flood protection for Corrales.

Former Mayor Gary Kanin spoke briefly at the monument dedication, explaining, “For those of you who never knew Dulce Curtis, you missed a great experience.”

Close Window

**Dulcelina Salce Curtis  
1904-1995**

**by Joneve Bender**

I slept and dreamt that life was joy.

I awoke and saw that life was service.

I acted and, behold, service was joy!

-Rabindranath Tagore

Dulcelina Salce Curtis was a hard-working visionary who spent her time in wise pursuits-teacher, agriculturalist, farmer, orchardist, conservationist in flood control and surface water protection. Dulcelina, a lifelong resident of Corrales, gave generously of herself by providing the support and influence necessary for development of organized flood control for Corrales. She organized the Corrales P.T.A., for the many facets of community progress in schools, youth programs and mentoring; the Extension Club to promote advanced methods of agricultural, animal and dairy use and preservation; raised most of the money to build a church; organized the 4-H Club in Corrales; and was instrumental in the incorporation of Corrales in 1971, serving on the Village Council for 7 years. She and her husband, Vincent, assembled and owned the first fire truck in Corrales. She started the Corrales Senior Center in the 1970s and was on the board for more than 20 years.

She helped to organize the Sandoval Elementary School system in the early 1950s into the Albuquerque Public Schools. In 1961, the Village of Sandoval and the school were renamed the Village of Corrales and Corrales Elementary School.

In her own words, "I've worked all my life, hopefully, for the betterment of the Corrales community, agriculture, schools, youth groups, church historical and civic programs, flood control and politics."

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The newly built home of her birth was washed away in a flood in 1904 when she was a month old. Dulce was the daughter of Italian immigrant parents. One of 6 children, her mail-order bride mother die during the 1918 flu pandemic when Dulcelina was 14 years old. She went beyond grammar boarding school with the Sisters of Loretto in Bernalillo to the Normal school in Las Vegas, New Mexico, from age 14 to age 17. She became a teacher at age 17 and taught for one year in Corrales and 6 years in Placitas. She bought the first Model T Ford in Corrales and shoes for her surviving four siblings on her salary of \$80 per month.

Dulcelina met Vincent Curtis in 1928 and, after a short three-month courtship, married him. During the 1929 depression, Corraleños were fortunate enough to grow their own food. As a community, they hand-shoveled the Acequia Madre in proportion to the number of acres that the ditch water serviced each landowner.

From this situation Dulcelina and Vincent, by necessity, had to learn to develop ways to build on their livelihood and survival. Soil and water conservation were always foremost in their minds and lives. This concern was the beginning of a lifetime's work in flood control and soil conservation for which Dulce received the National Endowment for Soil Conservation Award for New Mexico in 1988.

Vincent became a lumberman as a sawfiller of the mills in Bernalillo in the 30s. With his income and Dulcelina's management, they cleared, leveled, built irrigation ditches, and later cemented them to save water. They build their home out of terrones, constructed their large barn, bought land (other than the inherited portion), bought machinery, 2500 apple trees, and an apple sorter. Vincent and Johnnie Losack built the apple press in the early '50s and started an apple co-op in Albuquerque for the surrounding area, which eventually became the Apple Council of New Mexico.

Vincent died in 1962 leaving Dulcelina alone to manage the farm and orchards of apple crops. Their daughters, Dorothy and Evelyn, were teachers in other states due to following their husbands' employments.

The floods kept coming. Mostly from the Los Montoyas Arroyo. In 1971 Corrales was really flooded from five poorly built Amrep dams. This was a wake-up call for Corraleños. As Harvey Jones was a bridge builder and well acquainted with the force of run-off water he became the "know how" backbone forming the Corrales Water Shed board. Naturally, funds were imperative to plan and execute protective measures. Finally, after many political hurdles, SSCAFCA was formed in 1988 under the leadership of Johnnie Losack as its first chairperson.

The Village was incorporated in 1971. Dulcelina served for seven years as a councilor. Throughout the 1980s and the 1990 floods continued to take their toll on the area causing deep erosion as well as sand deposits. This continued flooding led to the necessity of building protective flood control measures that are ongoing today.

Dulce died in 1995 and is buried beside Vincent. Their gravestone are engraved with the words, "Here lie the souls of Corrales." It is easy to understand why.

From: Karren Sahler <k.sahler@comcast.net>  
Subject: re; curtis  
Date: October 31, 2009 2:45:41 PM MDT  
To: Karren Home <k.sahler@comcast.net>



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Taught in rural Sandoval County schools; ran large Corrales fruit orchard and farm; instrumental in starting 4-H in Corrales, the County Extension Service, PTA, Fire Department, Growers Market; worked for incorporation of Village of Corrales; served on Village Council for 7 years; cemented irrigation ditches for Village; awarded National Endowment for Soil & Water conservation in 1988 for \$3 million flood way project in Corrales

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**Dulcelina Salce Curtis**  
**1904-1995**

Born in Corrales, she was a visionary for the betterment of Corrales and Sandoval County living.

As an agriculturalist, orchardist and conservationist, she was awarded the National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation. For her years of attentive work in the Corrales Watershed Board the Southern Sandoval County Flood Control Authority honored her. She was given the Governor's Award for her positive support through the political system.

For 20 years she was selected to represent the chili grower's at the New Mexico State Fair.

A co-founder of the 4-H Club and the PTA, she worked with disadvantaged youth.

She and her husband helped build the library and assembled the first Corrales Fire Truck.

She was a seven-year Council Member of the 1971 incorporated Village of Corrales and co-organizer of the Corrales Historical Society. She was on the county's Senior Citizen Advisory Board for many years and advanced the formation of the county's and Corrales' Senior Citizens' group.

She did much fund raising for all of the aforementioned undertakings.

Her seven-year early teaching experience (1921-1928) in Corrales and Placitas served as a springboard for all of her visionary involvements.