

Francis, Ronald - Salt Lake City, UT

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## NRCS CHIEF ARLEN LANCASTER VISITS UTAH

On Monday, March 26, NRCS Chief Arlen Lancaster visited the Utah NRCS state office and toured rangeland rehabilitation work in the Vernon Watershed. He was accompanied by Sara Braasch, NRCS Regional Assistant Chief for the West, who was in town with the chief for a meeting the following day with NRCS state conservationists from the Western states.

NRCS staffers in the state office not only had an opportunity to hear from the Chief at an 8 a.m. meeting, but several of them made presentations highlighting some recent accomplishments in improved customer service. State Agronomist Niels Hansen described two new measures to improve service to underserved fruit growers and poultry producers,



Grants and Agreements Specialists Pam Harvey and Judy Ousley outlined their new recipient grant and agreements handbook, State Economist Julie Nelson showed the chief how the conservation planning and contracting workbook works, GIS Specialist Ryan Pierce described methodology for applying GIS technology to our various NRCS work products, and State Engineer Eric Fleming and Irrigation Engineer Brent Draper described current

efforts to create a new standard for renewable resource energy production. The chief, who spent some time growing up and going to school in Utah, thanked everyone in the state for their excellent level of service and said, "I've fished most of this state and I know the quality of that experience is affected by how those private and public lands are managed."

Assistant State Conservationist for Technology Ron Davidson and Range Conservationist Shane Green organized an afternoon tour of two ranches in the Vernon Watershed near Tooele. They were joined by UDAF Commissioner Leonard Blackham, DWR's Rory Reynolds and other officials as they reviewed range improvement work on the Alan Mitchell ranch near the Vernon Reservoir and Darrel Johnson's ranch in Rush Valley. At both locations, the chief



had an opportunity to see how past and current range work has improved grazing for cattle and wildlife and has improved water production in the area. Chief Lancaster said he was impressed with the level of cooperation that takes place among the various Utah Partners for Conservation and Development.

The top accompanying photo shows State Conservationist Sylvia Gillen, Chief Lancaster and Regional Assistant Chief Braasch being

introduced to the staff; the bottom photo shows Grazing Lands Improvement Program Director Bill Hopkin and Rancher Darrel Johnson (center) showing an old photo of range conditions to Chief Lancaster.

 Periodic news reports from NRCS Utah

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