USDA NRCS
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

RECOVERY.GOV

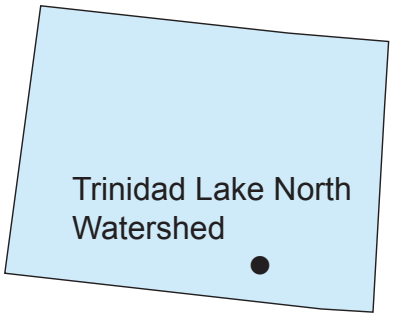
Watershed Operations

August 2009

Investing in the Trinidad Lake North Watershed, Colorado

Introduction

This watershed project will help landowners improve management strategies and install erosion control practices on cropland, grazing land, and adjacent properties in the Trinidad Lake Watershed. There are 135 local property owners and 180,000 annual visitors who will benefit from the project.



The Trinidad Lake North Watershed is located in southeastern Colorado in Las Animas County.

Funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, this project is part of the Obama Administration's plans to modernize the nation's infrastructure, jump-start the economy, and create jobs. NRCS is using Recovery Act dollars to update aging flood control structures, protect and maintain water supplies, improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands. NRCS acquires easements and restores floodplains to safeguard lives and property in areas along streams and rivers that have experienced flooding.

Project Description

- **Location:** Las Animas County, 3rd Congressional District
- **Federal Funding:** $79,000

This project will fund contracts with mostly family-owned farms that will reduce contaminant and sediment deposits to the Trinidad Lake Reservoir, thereby prolonging its life and improving the water quality delivered to the lake.

Partners

- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Spanish Peaks Purgatoire River Conservation District
- Purgatoire River Conservancy District
- Las Animas County
- City of Trinidad
- Colorado State Conservation Board

Benefits

When this project is complete, the benefits will include reduced erosion of agricultural land and sediment deposits in Trinidad Lake, improving grazing values, and significant habitat improvement for the Trinidad Lake fishery.

This gully erosion in the Trinidad Lake North Watershed will be addressed by the project.

Investing in the Trinidad Lake North Watershed, Colorado

Economic Opportunities

The economy of the watershed is primarily based on agriculture (ranching). Improving and sustaining the condition of the natural resources within the watershed is critical. Recreational income centered on the lake makes a significant contribution to the local economy, with an estimated value in excess of $10,000,000 per year. Once completed, this project will provide $211,000 in average annual benefits.

Statewide Perspective

Trinidad Lake is a multipurpose reservoir completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1976. Out-of-state residents account for 82 percent of the visitors annually.

For More Information

USDA, NRCS
655 Parfet Street, Room E200C
Lakewood, Colorado 80215
Phone: 720-544-2810
Fax: 720-544-2965
www.co.nrcs.usda.gov

The project has been underway for 17 years and is documented in photographs. Shown here is gully erosion in the watershed before treatment.

The same scene shown after critical planting and treatment.

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer