



2011 Annual Report Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

This report contains fiscal year activity for the state of Colorado from the time period of October 2010 to September 2011.

Who We Are

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and others care for the land. NRCS has six mission goals that include high quality, productive soils; clean and abundant water; healthy plant and animal communities; clean air; an adequate energy supply; and working farms and ranchlands.

Vision

Productive Lands -
Healthy Environment

Mission

Helping People Help the Land

“Year after year, WRP has delivered benefits to both the individual participating and the American public from the services WRP wetlands provide.”

NRCS District Conservationist



www.co.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Fiscal Year 2011 Wetlands Reserve Program Statewide Activities

Number of Applications Approved	2
Dollar Amount Approved	\$1.4 Million
Acres Enrolled	463

The Program

WRP is a voluntary land-retirement program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private lands.

The Partnership

The program provides landowners and Tribes an opportunity to receive financial incentives to restore and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring this land from agriculture.

Landowners and Tribes may file an application for a conservation easement or a cost-share restoration agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to restore and protect wetlands.

The Assistance

Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land, but retain private ownership. WRP offers landowners three enrollment options:

- Permanent Easement
- 30-year Easement
- Restoration Cost-Share Agreement
- 30-year Restoration Agreement (tribes only)

Permanent Easements

Permanent Easement is a conservation easement in perpetuity. USDA pays 100 percent of the easement value and up to 100 percent of the restoration costs.

30-Year Easements

30-Year Easement is an easement that expires after 30 years. USDA pays up to

- 75 percent of the easement value and up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.
- For both permanent and 30-year easements, USDA pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees, and title insurance

Restoration Cost-Share Agreements

A Restoration Cost-Share Agreement is an agreement to restore or enhance the wetland functions and values without placing an easement on the enrolled acres. USDA pays up to 75 percent of the restoration costs. Duration of the agreement is 10 years plus restoration period.

For More Information

Visit our web site at www.co.nrcs.usda.gov.

NRCS CONSERVATION PROGRAM SUCCESS STORIES

Protecting Sage Grouse Habitat

Issue:

Protecting strutting grounds and other habitat for the Gunnison and Greater Sage-grouse

What NRCS CO is Doing:

The only two places in the world the Gunnison Sage-grouse can be found are on the Western slope of Colorado and in a small portion of Southeastern Utah. Colorado, however, hosts the largest population of the species. The protection of sage-grouse habitat has been one of NRCS in Colorado's highest priorities for nearly a decade. The state hosts two species in the Sage-grouse family including the Gunnison as well as the Greater. Over the past 10 years, the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CDPW) placed the sage-grouse on its "species of concern list," and as a result, NRCS strengthened its partnerships with the agency to help support efforts to conserve sage-grouse habitat. NRCS has not only partnered with CDPW, but also Partners in Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Wild Turkey Federation, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), local Conservation Districts, landowners and numerous other stakeholders to map and enhance habitat as well as conserve it through easements. NRCS conservation efforts to improve habitat for sage-grouse include the use and implementation of prescribed grazing systems, range planting, brush/pinon-juniper management, cross fencing and fence marking. NRCS efforts in 2010 and 2011 alone saw the treatment of nearly 40,000 acres. **Programs used: EQIP, WHIP, FRPP, GRP**



Escape ramp installed in watering tank to assist sage grouse out of structure.



Center pivot irrigation allows producers to irrigate with a higher application efficiency and uniformity, minimizing runoff from the field or water moving below the root zone where it is unavailable for the crop.

The Ogallala Aquifer & Colorado's Water

Issue:

The Ogallala Initiative proves vital to Water Quality and Quantity issues in Colorado

What NRCS CO is Doing:

Much of the High Plains region of Colorado relies on the Ogallala for water but the water in the Ogallala Aquifer is diminishing because of widespread irrigation use. NRCS in Colorado places special emphasis on land use conversion from irrigated to non-irrigated cropland, and conversion to perennial vegetation and managed for livestock. In 2011, it is estimated that Colorado awarded nearly \$800,000 in contracts for the Ogallala Initiative, resulting in resource conservation plans on approximately 5,000 acres and although this is a new initiative in the State, the plans impacted the aquifer by increasingly improving residue and reducing tillage on 1,218 acres of cropland. Also, better irrigation water management will be implemented on approximately 4,042 acres, as well as nutrient management plans on 400 which can positively impact water quality irrigation efficiency of water delivery systems has been improved on 1,949 acres. **Program used: EQIP**

Soil Surveys and the Once Over in Colorado

Issue:

Appropriate land use is greatly determined by the condition of its soil.

What NRCS CO is Doing:

Colorado recently saw the completion of its initial soil survey (often referred to as the "once over"). This is a tremendous milestone not only for NRCS but also for the state as Colorado's soil survey efforts began with a Reconnaissance Soil Survey of the Cache La Poudre Valley in 1899. Since then, soil scientists have walked Colorado's landscapes digging holes and collecting information on the more than 5,000 soil map units and 1,500 unique soil types. Colorado consistently ranks in the top five states for customer downloads from Web Soil Survey. **Program used: CTA**



MLRA Soil Survey Leader examines soil for categorization and data collection.