



Gunnison-Dolores Rivers Watershed

The Gunnison-Dolores Rivers Watershed totals 6,014,600 acres.

It includes all or portions of Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, Saguache, and San Miguel Counties.

NRCS natural resource specialists are staffed at the Delta, Gunnison, and Montrose USDA Field Service Centers to provide technical assistance to watershed residents.

NRCS Vision
Productive Lands -
Healthy Environment

NRCS Mission
Helping People
Help the Land

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Resources at work from October 1, 2010 - September 30, 2011

The Colorado Watershed Approach

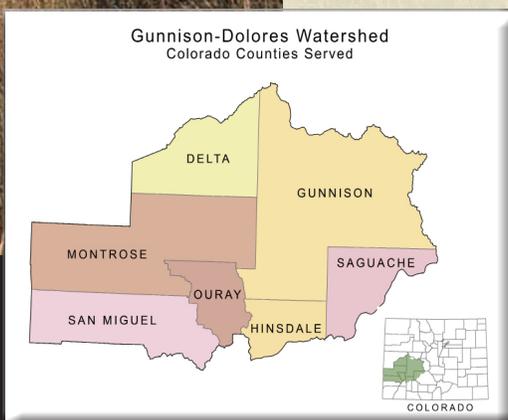
Instead of the traditional statewide approach in addressing priority resource issues like soil erosion, water quality, grazing lands, wildlife, and animal waste, NRCS looks to Colorado's ten watersheds to identify their particular local resource needs and priorities.

Watershed work groups meet annually to determine which natural resource concerns are most prevalent in their communities.

In turn, Colorado NRCS focuses its resources on addressing those concerns. Colorado's local conservation districts provide leadership in this effort to foster increased decision making at the local level.

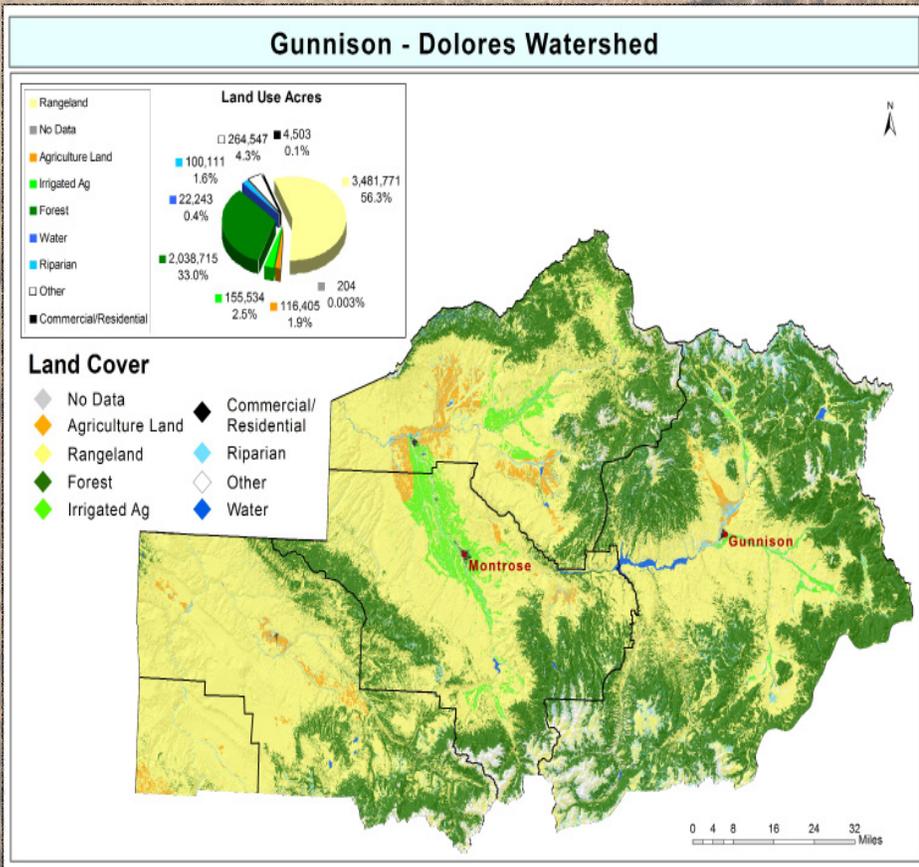
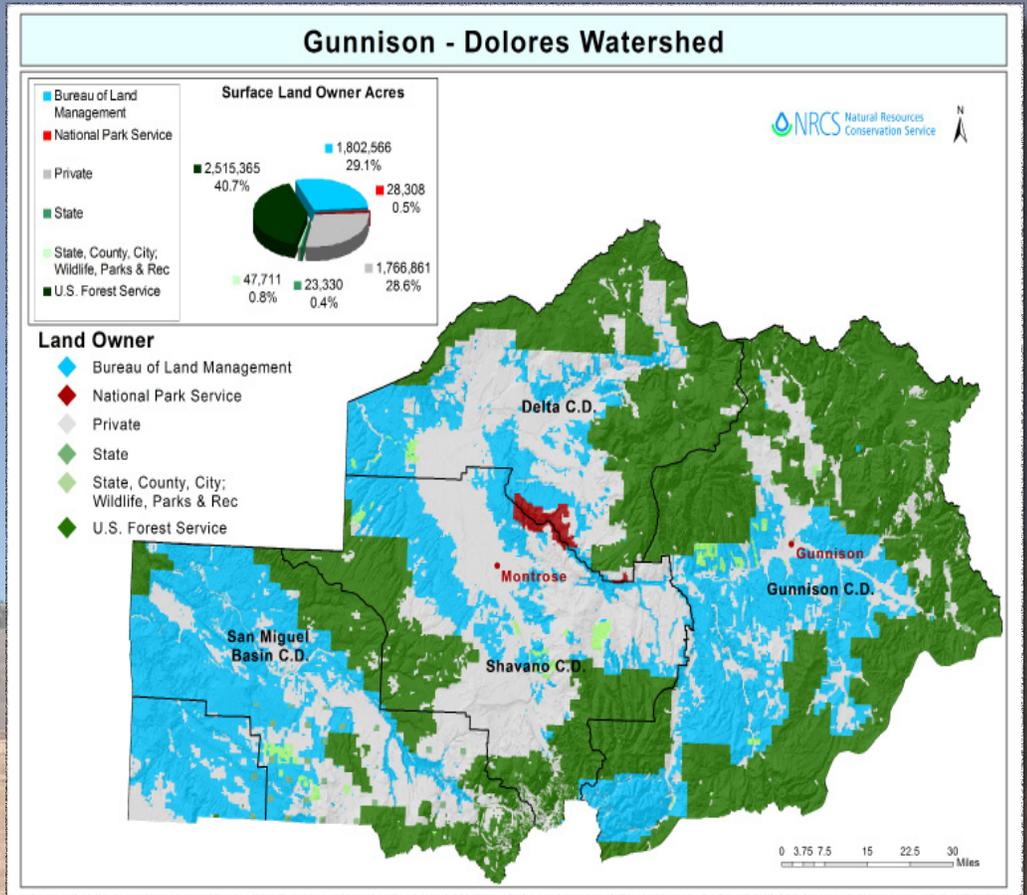
High Priority Resource Concerns in the Gunnison-Dolores Rivers Watershed

- Water Quantity
- Water Quality
- Rangeland Health
- Invasive Species
- Erosion



Helping People Help the Land

Watershed Profile



Fiscal Year 2011 Environmental Quality Incentives Program Summary

Gunnison-Dolores River	Applications Received	Contracts Approved	Dollars Approved	Acres Treated
Gunnison-Dolores - All Lands/Wildlife	1	1	\$6,555	110
Gunnison-Dolores - Cropland/Water Quality/Quantity	6	3	\$54,686	22
Gunnison-Dolores - Forestry	1	1	\$23,530	13
Gunnison-Dolores - Grazingland	4	3	\$78,751	2,725
Organic - Certified	3	3	\$18,938	1.1
CCPI - Uncompahgre Soil and Water Quality	15	9	\$18,800	1,230
Salinity - Greater Colorado River Basin	4	3	\$200,996	1,058
Salinity - Delta	17	13	\$1,002,404	390
Salinity - Montrose	39	23	\$900,405	791
Salinity - Wildlife	8	4	\$80,921	33
CO Seasonal High Tunnels Pilot	9	7	\$45,480	1
Totals	107	70	\$2,431,466	6,375

Farm Bill Program Activities Summary Gunnison-Dolores River

NRCS Program	Applications Received	Contracts Approved	Dollars Approved	Acres Treated
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	3	1	\$15,409	1,633

Farm Bill Program Activities Statewide Summary

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

*Contracts: 789
Acres: 335,000
Financial Assistance: \$26 Million*

Agricultural Water Enhancement Program

*Contracts: 19
Acres: 3,461
Financial Assistance: \$1 Million*

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

*Contracts: 12
Acres: 15,656
Financial Assistance: \$421,303*

Grasslands Reserve Program

*Easements: 3
Acres: 6,185
Financial Assistance: \$1.2 Million*

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

*Properties/Entities: 33
Acres: 9,467
Financial Assistance: \$8.4 Million*

Wetlands Reserve Program

*Easements: 2
Acres: 463
Financial Assistance: \$1.4 Million*

Conservation Stewardship Program

*Applications: 331
Acres: 800,859
Financial Assistance: \$7.8 Million*

Disclaimer: All data was retrieved from Protracts and funding manager's records for easements on October 4, 2011.

2011 Conservation Success:

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 U.S. 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.



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

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.

Program(s) used: EQIP, WHIP, FRPP, GRP

Natural Resource Benefits and Impacts

In 2011, conservation practices were applied by farmers and ranchers in Colorado through various NRCS programs. Conservation practices work to improve farmland, soil, water quality, air, plants, forestland, and wildlife habitat.

Through practices such as nutrient management, landowners were able to improve soil quality and plant health; and through irrigation water management, they were able to improve water quality delivery, thereby improving crop production on their working lands.

Many Farm Bill conservation practices apply to rangelands, such as prescribed grazing. Through installation of water developments, pasture division fences, wells and water pipelines, these practices focus on maintaining, enhancing, and restoring needed plant communities and habitat conditions.

Throughout fiscal year 2011, landowners worked with NRCS staff to develop a good, sound conservation plan to identify and address natural resource concerns on their land.

Conservation Program Descriptions

Environmental Quality Incentives

Program (EQIP) provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers, ranchers and owners of private, non-industrial forest land that promotes agricultural production, forest management and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible producers install or implement conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program offering cost-share incentives to landowners to voluntarily develop and improve wildlife habitat on private lands.

Agricultural Water Enhancement

Program (AWEP) A voluntary conservation initiative that provides financial and

technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program to restore former wetlands, re-establish native wetland wildlife habitat and retire marginal land from agricultural production.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program

(CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities; and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is a voluntary program that helps landowners keep their productive farm and ranch land in agriculture. USDA provides matching funds to state, local, or tribal government entities and nongovernmental organizations with existing farm and ranch lands protection programs to purchase conservation easements.