

Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service Employee Newsletter

75
Years

A Legacy of Conservation

Helping People Help the Land

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Highlights

by
Allen Green
State Conservationist

The Importance of Conservation Districts

As most of you should be aware of by now, we are celebrating the 75th anniversary of our agency this year. This is an excellent time for us to reflect on how (and why) our agency was formed and to hopefully make a commitment to our mission of "Helping People Help the Land."

No recognition of our agency's past can be done without also recognizing the unique and important relationship we have with Conservation Districts. During the formation of our agency, and with the foresight of Hugh Hammond Bennet, the first Chief of our agency, there was recognition of the need and value of a local conduit to farmers. The Formulation of Conservation Districts and the Memorandum of Understanding between Districts and USDA has proven to be an effective relationship that keeps us grounded and hopefully responsive to the needs at the local level.

I think this is a good time to recognize that Conservation Districts, in addition to providing leadership and guidance to NRCS, also has the capability to be leaders and advocates of all resources needs. We (NRCS and Districts) often fail to appreciate the level of authority and potential of the Conservation Districts. Districts have the ability to form partnerships, obtain funding, influence policy and legislation, and implement programs. We need to think of our Conservation District Partners as the "hub" for conservation at the local level and we in NRCS are just one of what could be many spokes on the conservation wheel.

The strongest conservation programs that I have had the privilege of working with have consisted of a

balance between local, state, private, and federal funding and support. With growing federal deficits, it is expected that the federal side of the conservation partnership will be limited in the future. The best opportunity for increasing the conservation efforts on private lands in the long term is going to lie with the state, local, and private sectors. I would encourage all NRCS employees and our partners to do our part to support our Conservation Districts and help them find ways to increase their capacity to deal with the conservation needs of the future.

I also want to take this opportunity to personally recognize the accomplishments of our Conservation Districts and to thank all of the District employees and board members for their time and dedication to preserving the natural resources in Colorado.

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Partners Pages

FSA and NRCS People's LASAGNA Garden in Eads

By Nadene L Gaynor, PT, Kiowa County FSA Office, Eads, CO

The Eads Service Center has been busy doing some "Lasagna Gardening" for our contribution to the "People's Garden."

We are late in getting started due to the weather being so cold and windy for an extended period of time. It turned out a little smaller than originally planned due to not knowing exactly what we needed to do the "Lasagna" part, but we feel that even if it doesn't produce well this year, it should be a great bed for next year. We had a good time, and will keep you informed about the results.



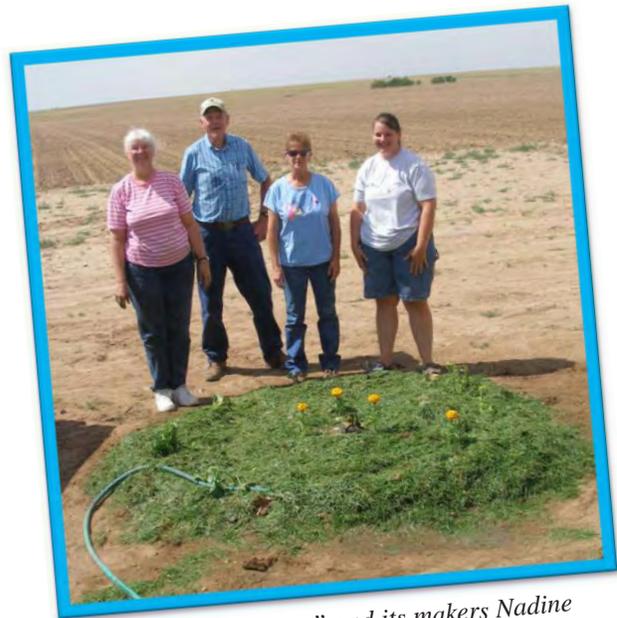
B.J. Jones & Carla Warman of NRCS lay down layers of newspaper.



Nadene Gaynor of FSA and NRCSers B.J. and Carla water down the layers of newspaper.



Everyone shovels on alternating layers of peat moss, manure, dried leaves, potting soil, and grass clippings; Carla Warman, NRCS; Nadene Gaynor, FSA; and B.J. Jones, NRCS.



The finished "Lasagna" and its makers Nadene Gaynor, FSA; Marvin Watson, NRCS; Carla Warman, NRCS, and Gloria Trosper, Nadene's daughter and an Earth Team volunteer.

Partners Pages

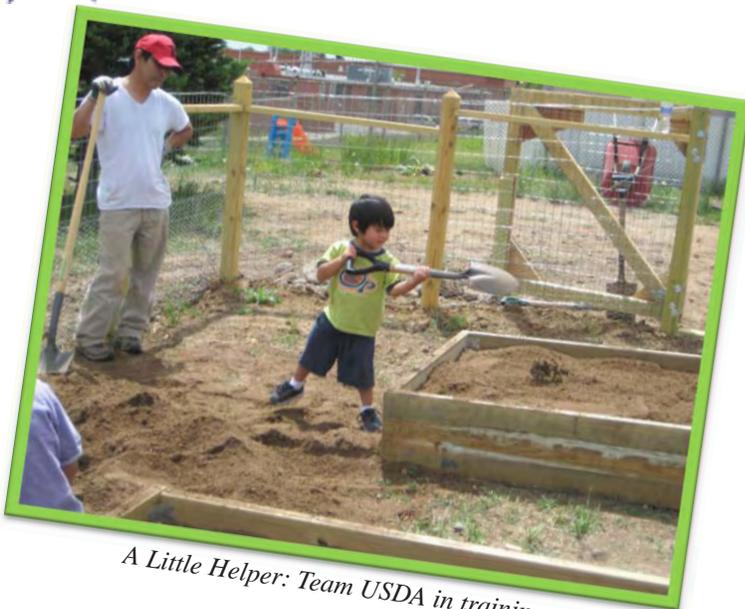
Volunteers from **NRCS, FSA, RD, and Food & Nutrition** Planted a *People's Garden* at the Federal Center in Lakewood



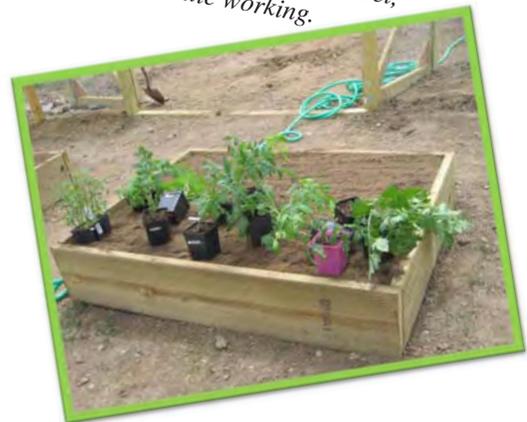
Go Team USDA!



April Dahlager, RD, and Linda Neel, FSA, have fun while working.



A Little Helper: Team USDA in training.



Team USDA!



Petra plants seeds.

GLCI hosts Range Management Schools in Colorado

by Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs Specialist, Lakewood, CO

The Colorado Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) has hosted a series of Range Management Schools throughout Colorado in the past several years. The schools will continue again this year, although the dates and locations have not yet been determined.

Range management is an important aspect of ranching that can determine the quality and quantity of forage for livestock to eat. Colorado's recent bout with drought conditions and shifting plant communities has created a



need for a shift in grazing management planning and monitoring, and for thinking outside the box.

To meet this changing need, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has supported the range management training schools, in cooperation with the Grazing Land Conservation Initiative (GLCI), the livestock industry, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management, and Colorado Association of Conservation Districts.

These schools are directed at landowners, operators, outdoor enthusiasts, hired hands, agency and organization staffs, and others interested in learning rangeland ecology, wildlife, and livestock

management. The principles focus on understanding the basic ecology of Colorado rangelands and the interconnection between a healthy landscape and a healthy, profitable livestock or wildlife enterprise.

The one-day educational program focuses on providing in-depth range information about on-the-ground application for the care and management of rangelands. This is a common-sense, science-based program that

helps participants understand rangeland, plant growth, and the interrelationship with animal nutrition. It also teaches how to implement grazing management decisions to meet the

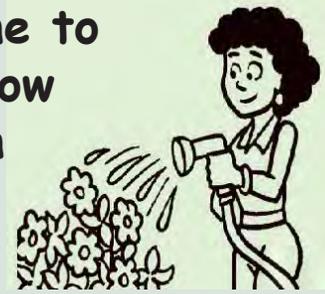
requirements of the range, animals, and profitability.

Some of the topics that are addressed in the schools include grazing management tools and techniques, range nutrition and animal behavior, rangeland monitoring, designing a grazing strategy, riparian area management, plant growth, and fencing techniques, just to name a few.

Established in 1991, GLCI was founded to provide high quality technical assistance/education on privately owned grazing lands on a voluntary basis and to increase the awareness of the importance of grazing land resources.

For more information on the range management schools in Colorado, contact Dan Nosal, GLCI coordinator, at 303-688-3042, or e-mail him at daniel.nosal@co.usda.gov.

One to Grow On



In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.

— Margaret Atwood

The world's favorite season is the spring. All things seem possible in May.

— Edwin Way Teale

Spring: An experience in immortality.

— Henry David Thoreau

If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.

— Anne Bradstreet

No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn.

— Hal Borland

A little Madness in the spring is wholesome even for the King.

— Emily Dickinson

It is only the farmer who faithfully plants seeds in the Spring, who reaps a harvest in the Autumn.

— B. C. Forbes

All through the long winter, I dream of my garden. On the first day of spring, I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth. I can feel its energy, and my spirits soar.

— Helen Hayes

The beautiful spring came; and when Nature resumes her loveliness, the human soul is apt to revive also.

— Harriet Ann Jacobs

If spring came but once a century instead of once a year, or burst forth with the sound of an earthquake and not in silence, what wonder and expectation there would be in all hearts to behold the miraculous change.

— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

By Michael Daskam, District Conservationist and Civil Rights Advisory Committee Member, Holly, CO

Everyday PRIDE

By taking conscious steps each day, Colorado employees can enjoy the benefits of Everyday Pride

P

— Professionalism

Demonstrate goals of the agency by creating a cohesive and productive work environment.

R

— Respect

Be thoughtful and considerate of others' character and values.

I

— Individuality

Celebrate and respect the different traits and personalities that distinguish one another and makes each one unique.

D

— Diversity

We are all accountable to demonstrate Diversity as a core value.

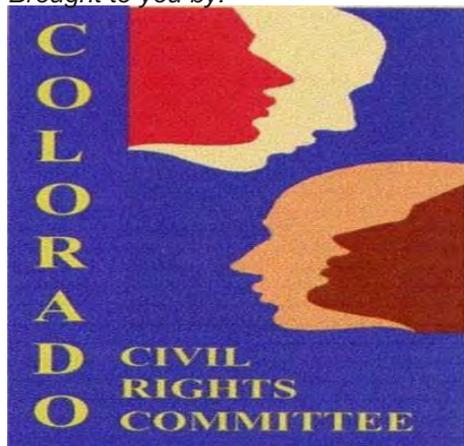
E

— Excel

Ensure that there is equal and equitable opportunity for everyone to have the tools they need to be fully successful.

Take individual responsibility for creating a workplace culture where the uniqueness, background, and experience of every employee is trusted, valued, and respected.

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Colorado's State Conservationist Testifies Before the House Natural Resources Committee

By Petra Barnes Walker, Public Information Officer, Lakewood, CO

The House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources Sub-Committee on Water and Power held a hearing in Greeley, Colorado on Tuesday, May 19, 2010. The hearing, entitled "Managing Water for the Future: How Federal, State and Local Entities are Supporting Agriculture," was held to examine the importance of agriculture in the region, as well as to look at programs and grants available for water conservation and management. Allen Green, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist in Colorado, served as a panelist and provided testimony.

The hearing was held in the South Platte River Basin, which contains a portion of three states: Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado, which hosts 79 percent of the Basin. The wise use of water is a critical issue in the West, but most particularly in this area because of the consumptive and non-consumptive water needs as well as the available water supply demands. Currently agriculture is the predominant use of water in the Basin, already in limited supply. Adding to the Basin's water quantity concerns is the estimation that, by the year 2030, two-thirds of Colorado's increased gross demand for water will occur within this Basin alone because of the rapid population growth along the Front Range.

"Water quality and quantity is one of our more pressing natural resources concerns," states Allen Green. When asked if water conservation in and of itself would be the solution to this increasing problem, he and the other panelists were unanimous in their reply of, "No, water conservation cannot exclusively solve this issues; it is a vital and critical component of the solution, but it must coincide with other management and options."

In order to gain an increased understanding of other ongoing activities that are utilized to help combat water quantity issues within the area, the hearing also highlighted innovative practices of farmers in the region and looked at ongoing water supply studies within Colorado. *"NRCS, much the like other entities that were represented on the panel, offers a variety of approaches to help Colorado landowners and natural resource partners explore opportunities to help resolve this mounting crisis," Green goes on to say. "We partner with many entities represented on the panel in one fashion or another, either through cooperative agreements, or through our various grants or voluntary conservation program opportunities."*

The hearing hosted two panels consisting of a variety of water and agricultural stakeholders. Allen Green testified on the first panel and was accompanied by Trudy Kareus, Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Colorado. Others to serve and testify with Mr. Green included the Regional Director for the Bureau of Reclamation; The Director of Colorado's Water Conservation Board; Colorado's Commissioner of Agriculture; and a Weld County Commissioner who also is a farmer and rancher.

on the pulse State Office News



Colorado NRCS honored 75 years of conservation with a Kickoff Celebration held in the Lakewood State Office April 27. The event was just the beginning of what will be a year-long celebration for NRCS. April 27 marked the 75th Anniversary of the NRCS and the beginning of the federal commitment to conservation of natural resources on private lands.

Comings

Kevin Carey

Starting Date: 2-2010



Title/Responsibilities: Mail Clerk, Admin-Lackey

Previous Job: Sales Services Distribution Clerk w/USPS

Brief Background History: Studied, studied some more, taught, relocated, took work with USPS, ended up here.

College Experience: BA University of Pittsburgh; Graduate School of Education, Univ. of Pittsburgh

Spouse's/Kid's Name: Erin, Ruby Rita

Pets: Neighborhood feral cats, too many to count

Hobbies: Reading, writing, gardening, concertina

Melanie Guinan



Starting Date: 4-11-2010

Title/Responsibilities: Grants and Agreements Specialist

Previous Job: Community Development Specialist

Brief Background History: After college, I worked to administer grants for low-to-moderate income residents to provide affordable housing and services, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses.

College Experience: B.A & M.A. University of Colorado at Denver (Sociology)

Spouse's Name: Paul

Pets: 2 dogs and 1 cat

Hobbies: hiking/camping, knitting

Anything else you would like for people to know about you: I am originally from Germany, became a citizen last December, live in Evergreen and am a vegetarian.

Iris Foster



Starting Date: 3-1-2010

Title/Responsibilities: Leasing Specialist

Previous Job: Chief Operating Officer; Implemented strategic initiatives & developed company business plan for a full-service commercial real estate company.

Brief Background History: I have more than 20 years of private-sector commercial real estate experience.

College Experience: Master of Real Estate and Construction Management, University of Denver; B.S. Business Administration, University of Colorado.

Pets: 3 lb. Yorkie, Itsy.

Hobbies: golf, skiing, biking, concerts and traveling. Teaching graduate students as an adjunct professor at the University of Denver.

Anything else you would like for people to know about you: As a fourth generation Denver native I am very passionate about our great State of Colorado and all it has to offer! I have lived in five States and visited 44 and know this is definitely a great place to be!

on the pulse

Area Office News

Area One

Water Festival was a Big Success in Grand Junction



1,800 students and 86 teachers from 34 schools attended the 17th Annual Children's Water Festival at Mesa State College in Grand Junction.

The NRCS Grand Junction Field Office gave three classes at the festival:

"It's All about Snow," by Lenny Lang and Dennis Gorsett, *"Soil & Water Relationship,"* by Wayne Guccini, and *"A River Runs Through It,"* by David Price, Louis Hartbauer, and Justin Robbins.

Lloyd "Butch" Reed, Soil Conservationist, was in charge of the Exhibit Hall, where the NRCS provided three displays:

"Share of Water," "Conservation In the Grand Valley," and *"Modernized Irrigation"*

The NRCS Exhibitors included Steven Woltjer, Dick Berry, Tracy Shepherd, and Lloyd Reed.

Area Two



Earth team volunteers from Bethune and Burlington schools helped with the Burlington Conservation District annual tree program.

The students helped unload two semi-truckloads of Forest Service seedlings and large trees from the nursery. Thanks to the earth team volunteers for making our job easier and getting conservation on the ground.

NRCS sponsored the annual Colorado Conservation Tillage Association's No-Till Conference for the first time this year. The conference also moved from its traditional location in Greeley out east to Burlington in order to make it more centrally located for producers.

The Conference had many more attendees than averages from several different states. NRCS's informational booth focused on *Conservation Planning, What is in a Conservation Plan, and Farm Bill programs* that are available based on what conservation practice is needed to address the natural resource concern. The conference

was attended by NRCS employees throughout the state as it covers several conservation areas and offers continuing educational credits for Conservation Planner Certification.

The Colorado Agriculture "Big & Small" and Small Acreage Conference was held this year from February 25th-27th at the Adams County Fairgrounds in Brighton. NRCS offered an informational booth focusing on Conservation Technical Assistance and Small Acreage Management.

The conference is a premier educational agriculture event for the front range. It offered great speakers on topics related to alternative crop and livestock producers, including market and organic growers, as well as small acreage landowners. Approximately 90 people per day attended this year's conference.

Pheasants Forever and the Colorado Division of Wildlife joined forces on January 29th and 30th in Stratton, Colorado to host a landowner workshop and first ever Colorado State Habitat Meeting. The NRCS and Burlington Conservation District also supported the event with logistics and advertising. Approximately 25 landowners, Pheasants Forever chapter members and agency

Continued from previous page

personnel attended to learn about managing upland game birds in eastern Colorado.



Presenters touched on topics ranging from CRP mid-contract management, to pheasant and quail biology, the use of strip-per headers, and even youth educational opportunities.

Look for next year's PF State Habitat Meeting in the state's pheasant capital, Holyoke.

Gary Campfield, DC, and Jake Prather, SCT, Wray, gave presentations about soil to three Wray 3rd grade classes on April 5th, 6th, and 7th during their science periods. Students got hands-on knowledge about the different sizes and textures of soil particles and how cover impacts soil erosion. The Yuma County Conservation District provided the supplies for the soils table.

The Northeast Colorado Water Fest held at the Wray High School hosted 299 4th, 5th, and 6th graders from 19 area schools on April 9th.

Students attended a variety of workshops through the day ranging from severe weather, water safety, a "Jeopardy"-style water trivia game, hypothermia, water in a cheeseburger, earth parfaits, water use in a day, fishing

techniques, and more. Some students spent part of the day at the fish hatchery learning about raising fish.

In addition to NRCS and District staff from the Holyoke, Burlington and Wray Field Offices, presenters came from Wray FSA, Colorado State Parks, Colo. Div. of Wildlife, Nat'l. Weather Service, CSU Extension, Colorado Climate Center, Garbage Busters, Highline Electric, retired NRCS staff, and Yuma County Cattlewomen.



Joe Crowder, Soil Conservationist in Holyoke, talks about severe weather and prepares the students to make a tornado.

Barbara Clayburg, Yuma County Conservation District Manager, organized the water fest with support from the Wray NRCS staff.

NRCS shared a booth with partners FSA and West Greeley Conservation District (WGCD) at the annual Weld County Farm Show held in Greeley January 26-28, 2010. The display presented written material on USDA programs offered by FSA and NRCS. The Earth Team offered information on volunteer opportunities in the conservation community. WGCD displayed and handed out information on their programs that provide education, project cost-sharing, and seedlings for conservation.

All partners shared the responsibility of working in the booth, with one person from each partner group present at all times. The three-day show was attended



Ray Mowery, DC and Ellen Nelson WGCD, and producer Frank Jones.

by over 30,000 visitors from around Colorado and the neighboring states. Visitors represented the diverse population living in Weld County and the surrounding area. Approximately 25% were Hispanic or Latino and 5% other minority races or ethnicity, and around 50% of the total were females.

Franktown NRCS, Kiowa Conservation District, Elbert County, Don Moore Tree Planting Service, and private land owners built living snow fences on three sites in Elizabeth on April 19, 2010.

Elbert County Commissioners Del Schwab, Hope Goetz, and John Shipper were on site to help with the planting of 292 Rocky Mountain Junipers.

Many hands were involved with the project, which produced a total of 2,300 feet of living snow fence. This project is an ongoing cooperative agreement in which the goal is to establish 1,000 feet of living snow fence each year.



Continued from previous page

Harvey Sprock, Area Range Conservationist, was honored with the Outstanding Achievement Award for Stewardship by the Society of Range Management. His achievements in his 40-year pursuit of sustainable rangelands include the writing of many Range Site Descriptions, the development of Ecological Site Descriptions, and the mentoring of NRCS employees.

Area Three

One of Our Own is Honored



At the recent Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS)-sponsored "Managing Ag Landscapes II" conference in Denver, the Society recognized **Mary Miller** for her service on the SWCS Board of Directors. Mary served on the board from 2007 to 2010.

Jim Gulliford, SWCS Executive Director, presented Mary with a plaque from her fellow board members. The plaque read:

"To: Mary Miller

Whereas; Mary Miller has served with distinction on the Board of Directors from 2007 to 2010, and

Whereas; Mary Miller has provided consistent and effective leadership as the Northern

Plains Region Director, and Whereas; Mary Miller has served admirably as the Vice President and Chair of the Marketing and Membership Development Committee of the Society.

Be it Resolved; that the meritorious service of Mary Miller is hereby recognized by the Board of Directors this March 17, 2010 with gratitude and appreciation.

Further, it is requested that Mary Miller, as a distinguished leader of the Society, continue to serve the Society in the future in a capacity that she is most willing and able."

Congratulations to Mary!



On April 21, nearly 50 people gathered from ranches and agencies all across southeastern Colorado on the Bader Ranch north of Kim. This is one of the producer-driven tours and seminars that are starting in the area.

Randy and Kelly Bader discussed with attendees the basics of their operation, the challenges they face in the area, and how they have had to adjust management to make it work for them. They also showed the crowd uncontrolled, mechanically controlled, and fire controlled cedars. The Baders showed how controlling the cedars increased their grass production, and decreased bare ground. They also pointed out some of the successes they have had with wildlife plantings in controlled areas.

Later in the day, we discussed how grazing management has changed the composition of canyon bottoms and stream beds. Lunch was provided by Baca County and Branson Trinchera Conservation Districts. Everyone in attendance seemed to enjoy the beautiful day and learned a lot.

On April 14, the Custer County 4th Graders participated in an Arbor Day Celebration sponsored by the NRCS and the Custer County Conservation District.

The students were greeted by Smokey Bear and had a discussion about forest fires, both good and bad. Then the students were told about the



importance of Arbor Day and how trees clean the air we breathe.

Each was given a bare-root Colorado Blue Spruce tree purchased from the Colorado State Forest Service Seedling program. The students were taught about the root systems and were able to see the tap, secondary, and lateral roots. After the lesson on roots, the students planted the trees in pots to take home with them.

It was a great afternoon of learning about why we celebrate Arbor Day.

Continued from previous page

Rich Rhoades, DC, Pueblo, is working with CSU Extension, Colorado Building Farmers Program, and The Western Center for Risk Management Education on the *2010 Pueblo County Building Farmers and Ranchers Program*. The program builds farm community and farmer capacity through classroom and experiential learning for beginning and experienced farmers and ranchers.

The Custer County-Divide Conservation District, Silver Cliff field office, the Colorado GLCI Committee, and many other partners sponsored a Range Management School. The purpose of the school was to provide the best available science and information about on-the-ground application for the care and management of rangelands. Some of the topics covered were plant growth, designing the grazing strategy, and timing of grazing. Retired NRCSers John Murray and Ben Berlinger were two of the instructors.

Rich Rhoades, DC, Pueblo field office, spoke on re-vegetation and dust blowing at a recent small-acreage workshop held in Pueblo.



The Hugo field office honored its ET volunteer. Kurt Ashmore has been volunteering for a year, helping with field day, mapping, and other projects. Kurt will graduate at the end of May.



The La Junta Area 3 Office held a "Pizza Luncheon" in honor of their Earth Team Volunteers and NRCS Area Office staff on April 20th, 2010, in commemoration of Earth Day during National Volunteer Week, the week of April 18th-24th. Recognition awards were presented to Earth Team Volunteers, Shyla Valencia and Joel King. Earth Day trivia games were played by all who attended, with prizes for the winners during the luncheon.



Recently the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) awarded grants to 18 community partners across Colorado to develop local strategies for saving energy and creating jobs in the state's rural, agricultural and mountainous regions. Southeast Colorado Resource Conservation and Development Inc. (SEC RC&D) in Lamar was one of the award recipients. These grants are funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide local Community Energy Coordinators (CECs) who will assist towns, counties, residents, and businesses with becoming more energy efficient.

SEC RC&D has hired two part-time CECs to serve their six-county region in southeast Colorado. Judy Fosdick from Fowler will assist Crowley, Otero, and Bent counties. Misty George from Walsh will provide assistance to Kiowa, Prowers, and Baca counties.



Misty and Judy will be building local capacity, helping position the region for future New Energy Economy activities, and contributing to the development of the region's strategic sustainability plan and related action plans. They will also keep the communities apprised of GEO programs and incentives related to energy efficiency and renewable energy as they become available.

Retired NRCSer Ben Berlinger was presented with the W. R. Chapline Land Stewardship Award. Among his many accomplishments, Ben has provided hundreds of trainings, workshops, and technical references such as ESDs to private land managers and agency representatives. He also initiated and supported CSSRM success in having Blue Grama recognized as the official State Grass for Colorado.

Ben retired this past year with 34 years and still works as a Certified Professional in Rangeland Management.

"Our Multifaceted Gem"

By Mary Miller, Area PAS, La Junta, CO

The 2010 Arkansas River Basin Water Forum featured the theme, **"Our Multifaceted Gem."** It took place at The Abbey in Canon City, Colorado, April 6th and 7th.

Keynote speaker Doug Kemper, Director of the Colorado Water Congress, kicked off the conference designed to promote a greater understanding of water issues affecting the Arkansas River watershed from the headwaters to the state line.

Along with updates on the Arkansas Basin Round Table and the various Water Conservancy Districts along the river, presentation topics included:

- * Planning for future impacts on water availability & timing in the Arkansas River basin
- * Economic Benefits of irrigated agriculture & water-based recreation in the Upper Arkansas basin
- * Small municipal water provider panel
- * Water quality issues in the Upper Basin
- * Updates on Lower Basin major projects
- * Announcement of the annual Bob Appel award

In addition, Thursday's luncheon speaker was Ken Baker, one of the original organizers of the Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District, who provided a unique perspective on the history of water issues in the basin.

Participants chose from among three different field trips on Tuesday afternoon of the conference:

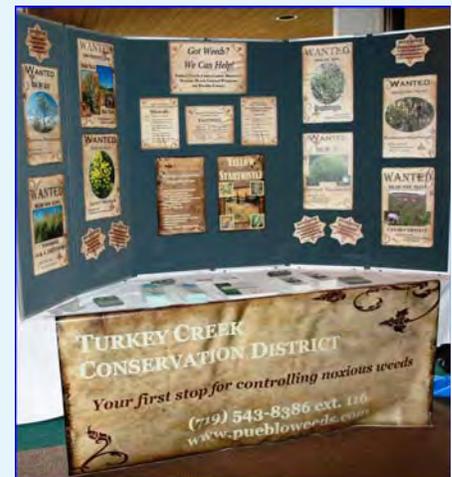
- * Canon City Municipal Water Plant Tour
- * Historic Gothic Abbey Tour
- * Fourmile Creek Watershed Invasive Weeds Project

The Forum provides a friendly, constructive atmosphere in which individuals and organizations explain their views and engage in open dialogue with other water users from all parts of the basin including agricultural, municipal, industrial, environmental, recreational and governmental interests.

Past Forums have resulted in a wider understanding of water issues, contributing to wise decision-making that serves the common good for all who call the Arkansas River Basin their home.



"Tradition of Excellence" display.



Turkey Creek CD Weed Program poster display.



UACWMA Tamarisk poster display.

Sixth Annual Arkansas Valley Farm/Ranch/Water Symposium and Trade Show Held

By Mary Miller, Area PAS, La Junta, CO

The sixth annual Arkansas Valley Farm/Ranch/Water Symposium and Trade Show, was held in Rocky Ford, Colo.

This year's topics included bio-diesel, renewable energy, and drain tile repair and cleaning. Symposium speakers also provided a marketing outlook on corn, hay and cattle, updates on livestock health issues, brand laws, and livestock transport. The water topics included operation of the Pueblo Reservoir and an update on the irrigation efficiency rules.

Hal Holder, Big Squeeze LLC, discussed producing bio-diesel from oil seed crops. Fred Hefley discussed utilizing wind for irrigation systems. Doug Tecklenburg provided information on the use of solar power to operate livestock wells. Cody Ridennoure enlightened the group on the use of solar energy in the home. A panel outlined the various financial incentives available to producers that utilize renewable energy alternatives. The panel consisted of Judy Fosdick, Solarway LLC; Joe Kost, Rural Development; Jack Wolfe, Southeast Colorado Power Association; Rhonda Venditti, Black Hills Energy; and Bob Mailander, Governor's Energy Office.

An update on the Arkansas Valley Drainage Assessment Project was presented by John Wilkins-Wells, a senior research scientist in the Department of Sociology, Colorado State University.



Short update sessions covered topics affecting today's farmers and ranchers. Dr. Stephen Koontz, Economist/Commodity Trading Associate Professor, Colorado State University, presented a marketing outlook for corn, hay and cattle. Dr. Nick Striegel, Assistant State Veterinarian, provided updates on livestock health and proposed changes to the Trichomoniasis rules. Roy Vaughan, Bureau of Reclamation, presented Fry-Ark 101 – Operation of the Pueblo Reservoir. Rick Wahlert, Colorado Brand Inspection Division Director, provided an update on Colorado brand and livestock transport laws. As a follow-up to last year's symposium, Steve Witte, the Division 2 Engineer with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, outlined the newly passed irrigation efficiency rules.

Area 2 NRCS Conducted Watershed Input Forums for Three Watersheds in Northeast Colorado

By Donna Goodsell, Area 2 Admin. Coordinator, Greeley, CO



Stratton Forum



Haxtun Forum



Castle Rock Forum



Longmont Forum

Area 2 NRCS held four Watershed Input Forums this spring in order to gather information and concerns from the three watersheds located in Northeast Colorado.

The first meeting was held on March 24th for the Republican Watershed at the Community Center in Stratton. The main focus points of concern were Water Quality and Quantity, Soil Management, and Grassland Management. These focal points were identified by approximately 38 attendees, which included districts, CDOW, Pheasants Forever, Colorado Wheat Growers, Nature Conservancy, Three Rivers Alliance, Ground Water District, and others.

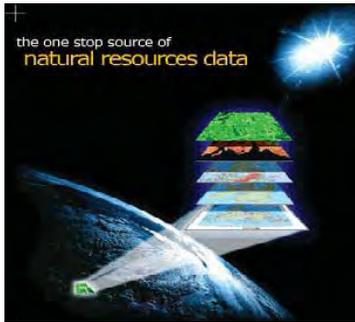
The second meeting was held on March 30th for the Lower South Platte Watershed at the Community Center in Haxtun. During the course of the afternoon there were over 35 attendees: landowners, districts, and various partners. The top focal points for this watershed included Water Quality and Quantity, Soil Erosion, and Grassland Management with a lot of specific emphasis on the EPA-driven National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, and the need to do something immediately to keep CRP going and maintain unbroken lands under CRP.

Due to the wide range of area it covers, two meetings were held for the final watershed, the Upper South Platte. The first meeting was held on

April 27 at the Douglas County Fairgrounds in Castle Rock. About 30 attendees came to the Castle Rock meeting, including County Commissioners and TSPs in addition to the usual land owners, districts, and regular partners. The participant focus changed toward Small Acreage Needs and Forest Health, as well as Water Quality and Quantity as the top three concerns.

The second meeting for the Upper South Platte Watershed was held on the 29th of April at the Southwest Weld County Service Center in Longmont. Another 30 people attended, including partners, districts, county commissioners, open space workers, and the Colorado Dept. of Public Health. This meeting again focused on Water Quality and Quantity as the top interest and included Forest Health and Sustainable Agricultural Enterprises as the other top focus areas.

Overall the attendance at the meetings included traditional and nontraditional landowners, partners and districts; the majority of the focus was on Water Quality and Quantity. As this is only a summary, more information can be found from Roy Hall, Area Conservationist and lead on the Input Forums, and from Mark Cronquist, Facilitator.



TECHNO TIPS

Colorado's NRCS Uses SPARROW to Help Guide Water Quality Efforts

By Petra Barnes Walker, Public Information Officer, Lakewood, CO

The Colorado River Salinity Control Forum has been blazing the trail to reduce and prevent salts from dissolving and entering into the Colorado River since 1973. The Forum is composed of representatives of the seven states within the Colorado River

Basin: Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, California, New Mexico, Nevada, and Arizona. The Forum was instrumental in developing an integrated and regional approach to salinity control that assisted in the enactment of the Salinity Control Act of 1974.

Through the years, many strides have been made to protect the water quality of the Colorado River including one of the most recent, the use of U.S. Geological Survey SPARROW data (**SP**atially **R**eferenced **R**egressions **O**n **W**atershed attributes) that models and quantifies salt loading for all basins in the Colorado River Basin.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) began using SPARROW technology in its efforts to control salinity. In addition to the appointed members of the Forum, the salinity control efforts are supported by various Federal agencies including NRCS, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Bureau of Land Management. Each agency implements its own strategy and activities to help mitigate this natural resource concern. As a result of the combined efforts of those agencies, the Forum credits them with the annual reduction of 1,126,800 tons of salt load from the Colorado River.

NRCS efforts are managed and administered through its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that offers farmers and ranchers technical and financial assistance to address natural resource concerns, while achieving the environmental benefits. Through EQIP, NRCS is able to assist with on-farm and off-farm salinity control projects to manage and reduce salinity in the river to the benefit of Upper and Lower Basin municipalities, agricultural and industrial water users,

and to comply with international agreements to meet water quality standards for water delivered to Mexico.

The projects involve the voluntary implementation of land management and irrigation practices.

"NRCS supports salinity control through EQIP by identifying areas within the river basin that have the most concentrated amounts of salt that, if leached into the river, would have the most detrimental impact on water quality," states Travis James, NRCS Salinity Coordinator, Salt Lake City, UT. *"Landowners within the identified project areas receive cost-share assistance to implement improved management and install more effective irrigation systems. This is why we were so excited to see the advent of the SPARROW technology."* NRCS originally saw SPARROW demonstrated in 2005, and since that time has been considering how to use the data to assess and direct NRCS salinity program work.

SPARROW is a modeling tool that scientifically identifies predominant salt load sources within a particular boundary. As a result, NRCS uses the technology to establish EQIP salinity control program project areas. *"Prior to SPARROW, NRCS determined salinity project areas through a series of actual costly and laborious measurements and estimations,"* James goes on to say. *"We looked at which areas were the most intensively irrigated, particularly those on salt-bearing marine sediments such as Mancos, Shale as well as how the area was being irrigated and the number of irrigation systems within a particular boundary. If an area had a high concentration of systems that were not as efficient as they could be, and were being utilized frequently, then there was high probability, confirmed by in-field and off-site measurements, that significant salt mobilization and transport was occurring. SPARROW allows us to rapidly assess salt loads in areas with sparse data and quantify the resource effects of the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program."*

SPARROW data refers to (**SP**atially **R**eferenced **R**egressions **O**n **W**atershed attributes)



Solar Photovoltaic Installation on Center Pivot Corners in the San Luis Valley

by Tim Garcia, RC&D Coordinator, Alamosa, CO

The San Luis Valley boasts an average of 320 days of sunshine per year, and its average daily insolation (solar radiation intensity) is one of the highest in the nation. This leads to a big opportunity for local communities to develop photovoltaic arrays to help to defray energy costs. One of the biggest consumers of electric energy in the valley are center pivot irrigation system operators.

The San Luis Valley RC&D Council teamed up with the International Center for Appropriate & Sustainable Technology (ICAST), XCEL Energy, and six local farmers to install six 10 kW Solar PV systems in center pivot corners.



The financial side of the installations came from a \$75,000.00 Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) that San Luis Valley RC&D procured from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, as well as rebates from XCEL energy, and a percentage was cost-shared by each farmer. This allows each farmer to not only defray their irrigation system energy costs, but also to secure a profit from the unused land taken up by center pivot corners.

San Juan RC&D Applies GIS to Weed Management



By Doug Ramsey, RC&D Coordinator, Durango, CO

San Juan Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) have partnered with the San Juan National Forest (NF) and the local weed programs of four counties to provide efficient weed management in Southwest Colorado. With noxious weeds located in remote corners of our national forests, we are working together to better manage and control these invasive weeds that negatively affect our natural resources.

The San Juan NF has received funding for a 3-year program to help them inventory and manage invasive weeds on the National Forest lands, and has partnered with the local counties and the San Juan RC&D to put local people to work while improving our public lands. The San Juan RC&D will receive \$187,000 over 3 years to hire staff to provide quality control and manage the weed geodatabase data from the four counties.

During this program, Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, and Montezuma Counties will expand their local weed control programs by hiring additional employees and purchasing new equipment to expand their service areas. The San Juan RC&D will provide quality control of the GIS/GPS data collected from this program; they also will hire a Program Manager and GIS Field Technician to work with the counties to provide training and assure the field employees record and document weed inventories and treatments. Providing quality control, the RC&D will gather and process the collected data and prepare a geodatabase. This geodatabase will allow the San Juan NF to document the locations of noxious weeds, what treatments have been completed along with treatment type, and herbicide rates. Other important data will also be gathered to allow for future monitoring and evaluation of these areas.

The San Juan RC&D is working with its partners to help improve our community and environment while putting local citizens to work.



Employee Spotlight

Brandon Miller, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist Area 1, Steamboat Springs, CO

What is a wildlife biologist and what are your job responsibilities with the Agency?

A wildlife biologist is someone with the education, background, or knowledge to recognize how wildlife interact with their environment and what resources they require to do so. My responsibilities are to provide biological, technical, and program support so that landowners and land managers can fully incorporate wildlife management as part of their conservation efforts.



When did you begin your career with NRCS Colorado?
November, 2008.

Were you previously employed with NRCS? No.

How did you hear about the Agency?

I first heard about the NRCS when I was still in college and researching potential employers. More recently, I learned about the NRCS through the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory as this is a joint position through the RMBO.

What do you enjoy the most about your job?

I most enjoy meeting new and interesting people and being able to help landowners who are interested in addressing wildlife related resource concerns.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

The most challenging aspect of my job is learning and understanding the complexity of Farm Bill programs and what it takes to implement them.

How does wildlife biology benefit conservation?

Wildlife biology is the heart of conservation. As conservation aims to sustain or prevent loss, wildlife, in essence, can be the indicators of loss or change in our environment. The study of wildlife biology allows us to understand what wildlife species require and how best to sustain these requirements through conservation.

Tell us about one of your most interesting projects or activities that you have been involved with for NRCS:

So far, my favorite activity was a Stream Corridor Workshop I attended early this spring in Dillon, CO. It was great to meet NRCS people from all around the state and listen to

all the different ideas and experiences that people brought to the table.

What other agencies do you work with in your job?

I work and collaborate with the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and Partners for Fish and Wildlife.

List some of your major professional accomplishments:

Some of my accomplishments include designing and implementing a mule-deer habitat restoration project on the Gila National Forest in New Mexico, and leading a sage-grouse research project on the Roan Plateau in Colorado.

What is your college experience?

Hocking College; Associates in Wildlife, 1999
University of Idaho; B.S. Wildlife, 2003

Do you have any pets?

A Black Labrador Retriever named Rhino (*see photo*).

What are your interests or hobbies?

Hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, canoeing, rafting, backpacking, cooking, reading, live music, and just being outdoors.

Anything else you would like for people to know about you and/or what you do?

I am in the early stages of my career with this agency and I still have a lot to learn. I appreciate all the support I have received in helping me to become successful in my career, and I look forward to the many challenges ahead as a Private Lands Wildlife Biologist.

Reaching Out for Conservation

By Rod Clark, Asian American/Pacific Islander Special Emphasis Program Manager, Alamosa, CO

How far will you go to get conservation on the ground? Outreach efforts are typically used to reach out to historically underserved communities or groups in order to ensure all potential program participants have access to USDA programs. But how exactly do you carry out such an activity? The definition of outreach, according to Wikipedia.org, is as follows, "Outreach is an effort by individuals in an organization or group to connect its ideas or practices to the efforts of other organizations, groups, specific audiences or the general public. Outreach often takes on an educational component (i.e., the dissemination of ideas)."



First you must determine a need for outreach activities. Ask yourself if there are groups in your area that have traditionally not participated in USDA programs. These groups may be minority, socially disadvantaged, or may have cultural characteristics that have hindered their efforts to participate in agricultural programs.

Then you must identify their needs and the barriers that have limited the group(s) participation. Understanding the culture of a group can help to formulate an effective method or technique to communicate and establish a relationship with a group. Some problems minority groups may have that inhibit their participation are:

- * limited resources
- * poor educational backgrounds

- * discrimination
- * distrust of government assistance
- * lack of equipment
- * differences in language and culture which inhibit communication
- * poor access to private and public loans
- * poor access to Conservation District/ USDA programs and services

These problems have created social disadvantages for agricultural producer minority groups, which have resulted in a low participation in conservation programs.

The United States has witnessed significant demographic changes in rural areas in the last few decades. At a time when the country has experienced a national decline in the number of citizens who choose farming as a profession, the U.S. has also seen a dramatic change in the number of those farmers belonging to ethnic and racial minorities.

Paralleling the decline in agriculture producers are decreases in the number of farmers from some minority groups. However, some minority groups have maintained roughly the same numbers of agricultural producers, while others have even increased their numbers.

The NRCS Social Science Institute has a great deal of information regarding outreach activities, including guidebooks that provide valuable insight to minority groups and how to build relationships with minority communities. Check out their marketing publications available on the website: www.ssi.nrcs.usda.gov. Also, your Special Emphasis Program Managers are available to assist with outreach efforts, so do not hesitate to contact one of them for assistance.

PERSONNEL TRACKS

By Sarah Belt, Human Resources Specialist, Lakewood, CO

1.) Where are we sending our SCEPs?

- Anthony Garcia: *Monte Vista*
- Victoria Turnipseed-Henderson: *Cheyenne Wells*
- Courtney Iuppa: *Fort Morgan*
- Scot Knutson: *Cortez*
- Crystal Manzanares: *Lakewood*
- Kirsten Melvin: *Grand Junction*
- Kelsey Ridenoure: *Gunnison*
- Justin Robins: *Springfield*
- Dustin Urban: *Longmont*
- Elyssa Duran: *Durango*
- Joshua Tashiro: *Fort Collins*
- Ryan Wattles: *Craig*
- Chayla Rowley: *Alamosa*
- Will Owsey: *Greeley*
- Tyler Gilbert: *Pueblo*
- Tommy Taylor: *Cortez*

2.) Where are we sending our STEPs?

- Donald Valdez: *Alamosa*
- Nakayla Lestina: *Cortez*
- Kaili Wait: *Springfield*
- Ben Armstrong: *Alamosa*
- Johanna Phillips: *Monte Vista*
- Blake Emerick: *Lakewood Metro Office*
- Chad Keizer: *Grand Junction Soils*

3.) Two SCEP students have been converted:

- Amber Freouf: *Lamar*
- Jennifer Griffin: *Burlington*

From Our Lands to Your Hands Expo

By Sylvia Hickenlooper, Soil Conservationist, Longmont, CO



“Where does the food you eat come from?” The majority of our youth today, when asked this question, will simply state, “the grocery store!” Although partially true, it does not depict the full travel of our food from the farmer’s land to our plates. With only 2% of Americans responsible for raising the food we eat today, it is only natural that the mainstream population is far removed from agriculture and the important role it plays in our daily lives. Not only does farming and ranching provide us food to eat, but many of the everyday items we depend upon are derived from some agriculture product base.

In recent years agriculture has also taken on a new implied perception of large, corporate farmers who devoid the land of life with the use of pesticides and fertilizers. This is not the image that we want portrayed to our youth of today. The fact is, over 98% of farms today are still operated under individuals and families. Their land is their livelihood and they treat it with great care, usually over a span of several generations.

The Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts, as well as the Longmont NRCS, wanted to provide local youth a first-hand

experience of how valuable agriculture is in their daily lives and the conservation that takes place in the process. Equally important was to put a face with local farmers and ranchers. As a result, “*From Our Lands to Your Hands: Teaching Youth Today the Importance of Agriculture and Conservation*” was created. “*From Our Lands*” started out as a novel idea with hopes that

a few students and a few producers would partake in the first annual event. However, response from the agriculture community to participate was phenomenal, as well as a diverse representation. Local school teachers realized the immense importance of exposing their students to an interactive agriculture education experience and were quick to sign up their classes to attend this event.

On February 11, 2010, over 350 students attended at the Expo with 30 different presentations from local producers such as Jules Van Thuyne, St. Vrain Valley Progressive Farmers, Labor Farms, Kim Houston Natural Beef, Full Circle Farms, and Miller Farms. Other organizations that provided valuable information include the Colorado Corn Growers Association, Colorado Beef Council, Colorado Wheat Council, Colorado Egg Producers, Colorado State University Extension Boulder County 4-H, Rocky Mountain Bee Keepers, Hand Weavers Guild, Central Water Conservancy District, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Colorado State Forest Service, Cal-Wood Education Center, Growing Gardens, Colorado Department of Agriculture, Western Dairy Association, Weld County Weed District, King Soopers, Kaiser Permanente, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Colorado Department of Health and Safety Agriculture Division, Zeb Dennis

Horseshoeing, Western Sugar Beet Growers, Farm Service Agency, and Boulder County Parks and Open Space Heritage Center.

The presenters provided interactive 15-minute presentations on the several different components of agriculture and conservation that takes place before food arrives on our plates. Zeb Dennis, local cowboy poet, opened the event with an interactive detail of the history of agriculture along the Front Range. The local Future Farmers of America (FFA) students provided invaluable assistance as they led each school group through the multitude of presentations.

Students were equipped with enthusiasm and a multitude of questions. The event was the first time for many students to see a



tractor up close or to learn where an egg comes from, how seeds are planted, where sugar is made, how much a cow eats, that wool from sheep is used to make clothes, where our water comes from, etc. One student enthusiastically said, “*This is the best day ever!*”

The goal of the Conservation Districts and the local Longmont NRCS office is to have the “*From Our Lands to Your Hands*” become an annual event.

SCEP Colorado Tour

By Carla Green Adams, Editor, Lakewood, CO

15 SCEPs, along with Allen Green, STC, and Frank Riggle, ASTC, went on a Colorado Tour June 23 and 24.

They began in Longmont and went to the Cal-Wood Ranch, where they listened to a discussion on stand improvement and forest conservation; then to nearby Jamestown, for a look at the EWP Overland Fire site and a tour of post-fire restoration activities; and then on to Johnson's Corner, where they met Ft. Collins FO Staff.

From there, the SCEPs listened to a presentation on the Big Thompson River Streambank Restoration. Topics included planning, interagency cooperation, and "When the Unexpected Occurs." Then it was off to Seaworth Farms, where they were greeted by Troy Seaworth. There they learned about strip tillage, cover crops, IWM, LEPA, and nutrient management.

The tour continued on to Roberts Ranch for a discussion on proper grazing use, stock water development, fencing, and "Foothills to Plains" cooperation; and then to Sterling, where they spent the night, having finished Day One.

Day Two began at the Sterling FO. Topics included grazing management, riparian fencing, WRP and wetlands, center pivot/linear sprinklers, strip till/rich till/no till. The SCEPs traveled next to the Ft. Morgan FO for more learning. Topics there included ARRA irrigation project, augmentation ponds, and CO water law. Last on the agenda was a tour of Midcap Farm to see innovative farming techniques.



"Forestry, and forest management stewardship, is not just about cutting down trees to reduce destructive fires or stop beetles: it is a value-added proposition. Value-added in the way that good stewardship provides for a wide array of ecosystem services, services that landowners, wildlife, and society as a whole benefit from and depend on. Services that include everything from improving understory forage production for grazing animals and wildlife, to increasing water yield from protected watersheds, to improving aesthetics and recreational opportunities. Planning sound and effective forest stewardship ought to be multi-resource based, with a wide array of issues, opportunities, and benefits that extend beyond the initial scope and single need that initially brought attention to the conservation planning process." - Jonas Feinstein, Forester and Presenter



The NRCS PRESENTERS included:
 Boyd Byelich, DC, Longmont
 Jonas Feinstein, Forester, Lakewood
 Todd Boldt, DC, Ft. Collins
 John Fusaro, RMS, Ft. Collins
 Andy Piszkin, SCT, Ft. Collins
 Travis McKay, SC, Sterling
 Danny Moreno, CET, Sterling
 CW Scott, DC, Ft. Morgan



*"The presentations were excellent, and our employees exhibited dedication and passion for their work."
 - Allen Green, STC*

SCEP Colorado Tour



The SCEP tour enriched the intern experience a great deal. It provided us with many different NRCS learning sites concerning riparian restoration, farming techniques, reforestation, and other practices. It was beneficial to see not only the different NRCS projects, but to meet with a wide array of employees and customers; by and large offering an excellent overview of the NRCS. I am thankful to have experienced the different sides of the NRCS and to have gotten to know my fellow SCEPs.

- SCEP Chayla Rowly, Alamosa



"I'm impressed with this group of students: the future of our Agency is in good hands with them." - **Allen Green, STC**



Coordinator's Corner

Honoring an Earth Team Volunteer

By Colleen McCleary, Colorado State Earth Team Coordinator, La Junta, CO

Our wonderful Earth Team Volunteer at the La Junta Area Office is **Shyla Valencia**. Shyla is a young Earth Team volunteer who has worked in our office for quite some time and we are honoring her during National Volunteer Week.

Shyla was born in La Junta, CO, in 1988 to Floyd and Frances Valencia and was raised in Swink, CO. She graduated from high school in May 2007. The Valencia family moved to La Junta, where Shyla attended Otero Junior College and graduated in July of 2008 with her cosmetology certificate. Although she finished and passed all courses, she is not certified until she take her state board exams.

Shyla says she enjoys being an Earth Team Volunteer. She has been able to meet many new people who all are very nice and pleasant to be around. She hopes to be an Earth Team Volunteer for many years to come.

When asked about her future plans, Shyla replied, "After working in an office for so long as an Earth Team Volunteer, I realized it's something I've become more interested in. I can see myself

doing office/clerical work, possibly with the NRCS. Not just standing behind a barber chair or in front of a manicure/pedicure station for the rest of my life."



Earth Day Coloring Contest Winners!

By Colleen McCleary, Colorado State Earth Team Coordinator, La Junta, CO

The 2010 Earth Day Coloring Contest winners have been chosen by the Colorado Earth Team Coordinators during their recent meeting at the Grand Junction Area Office. I am very pleased to announce the Colorado student winners are as follows:

State Winner, K-2 Grade Category:

Alissa Y., Holy Family Catholic School, Grand Junction

State Winner, 3-5 Grade Category:

Keanna B., Holy Family Catholic School, Grand Junction

Kindergarten Winner:

Geovanna M., La Jara Elementary, La Jara

1st Grade Winner:

Allisa Y., Holy Family Catholic School, Grand Junction

2nd Grade Winner:

Jazmin G., Thunder Mountain Elementary, Grand Junction

3rd Grade Winner:

Morlen M.P., Eastridge Elementary, Aurora

4th Grade Winner:

Keanna B., Holy Family Catholic School, Grand Junction

5th Grade Winner:

Arielle S., Manassa Elementary, Manassa

CONGRATULATIONS to all the winners of the annual coloring contest...there were many wonderful entries from elementary students throughout Colorado!!

On behalf of the Colorado Area Earth Team Coordinators, many thanks to everyone for helping make the Earth Day Coloring Contest a great success again this year!!



Coordinator's Corner

2nd Annual *Trash Treasure Hunt* Yields Fun & Prizes

By Colleen McCleary, ET Coordinator, La Junta, CO

On Saturday, April 24th, 2010, the Keep Colorado Beautiful Committee, under the direction of local leader Beverly Babb and a group of La Junta, CO, high school students, partnered up with NRCS Earth Team volunteers for the second annual "Trash Treasure Hunt." Beverly and Earth Team volunteers demonstrated immense dedication to keeping the community clean, and organizing a fun way to get involved, despite horrific winds in the area.

The purpose of the "Trash Treasure Hunt" was to promote trash collection, recycling, and other environmentally friendly actions. In addition to spreading the cause, the group made tireless plans preparing for the hunt that was held the Saturday following Earth Day, during National Volunteer Week. From 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., approximately 45 participants met at the La Junta City Park to distribute free trash bags for the clean-up. The participating groups were assigned an area of La Junta to collect trash from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Earth Team volunteers and La Junta Area Office staff participated on their designated route along east State Highway 50 for trash collection. Vouchers were attached to pieces of trash along the trash collection routes the night before by Beverly and the students, giving participants the opportunity to obtain redeemable prizes from local businesses after being found. Earth Team Volunteers assisting with the clean-up were Joel King, Donovan Ramirez, Julia Ramirez, Mike Taylor, and Colleen McCleary.

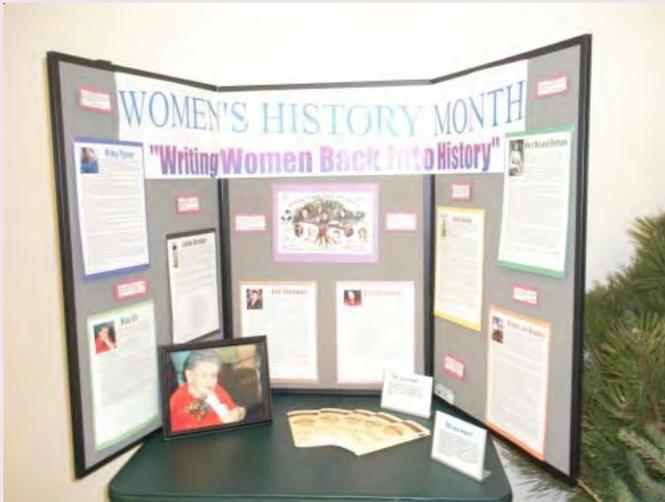
Participants were treated to a celebratory potluck lunch in the Koshare Kiva at 12 p.m. after the clean up.



It was a good way to have some fun helping the community out in celebration of Earth Day and National Volunteer Week!

NRCS OFFICES AROUND COLORADO CELEBRATE WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

By Sherri Brandt, Soil Conservationist/CO Federal Women's Program Manager, Akron, CO



Akron FO WHM display honoring local and national women of history.

March of 2010 marked the 30th year of celebrating Women's History Month in the United States. Several NRCS offices in Colorado held celebrations of their own to mark this great event.

The **Pagosa Springs Field Office** celebrated by having a potluck hosted by Soil Conservationist, Kari Eden. Their celebration incorporated Women's History Month, St. Patrick's Day and National Nutrition Month. The office dined on green, healthy foods and tried their hand at the crossword puzzle Kari created. A good time was had by all!

Marianna Young, Resources Conservationist for Technology, organized a potluck for the **Alamosa Area and Field Offices**. Everyone that wanted to participate was asked to bring a dish that commemorates a woman in your family. Participants were also asked to be environmentally friendly and bring non-disposable plates and utensils.

The **Akron Field Office** held a potluck celebration by bringing food that was inspired by a significant woman in their lives such as wife, mother, grandmother and etc. Everyone

was asked to also bring the recipe for their dish and a recipe booklet was put together for everyone. Dishes ranging from Mexican food to carrot salad to fried chicken were enjoyed by the office. Two trivia questions were presented after lunch and prizes give out for the closest answers. The Akron Field Office also put up a display in the Service Center lobby honoring some Women of History including 3 local women who were/are very influential members of the agricultural community in Washington County. Good food and good stories were enjoyed by all.

Julie Elliot, Range Management Specialist, organized a potluck lunch for the **Wray Field Office**. Each member of the office brought a dish that has been prepared by their mother or wife. Everyone enjoyed a wide array of dishes including vegetable soup, beef and noodles, fruit salad and even mountain lion!!

The **Franktown Field Office** celebrated Women's History Month by having a potluck lunch also. The office also created some fill-in-the-blank and crossword puzzles to challenge their knowledge of women's history. Everyone enjoyed the celebration!

Other celebrations of Women's History Month included sending out biographies of some very influential women of history, a Women's History Month "Test Your Knowledge Quiz" and a wonderful article titled "A Tribute to America's "Women Airforce Service Pilots" (WASPs) provided by Leon Kot, District Conservationist, **Woodland Park Field Office**.

Thank you to all who celebrated Women's History Month and provided articles and other bits of information!

Colorado NRCS Participates in Rapid Assessment of U.S. Soil Carbon for Climate Change and Conservation Planning

By Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs Specialist, Lakewood, CO

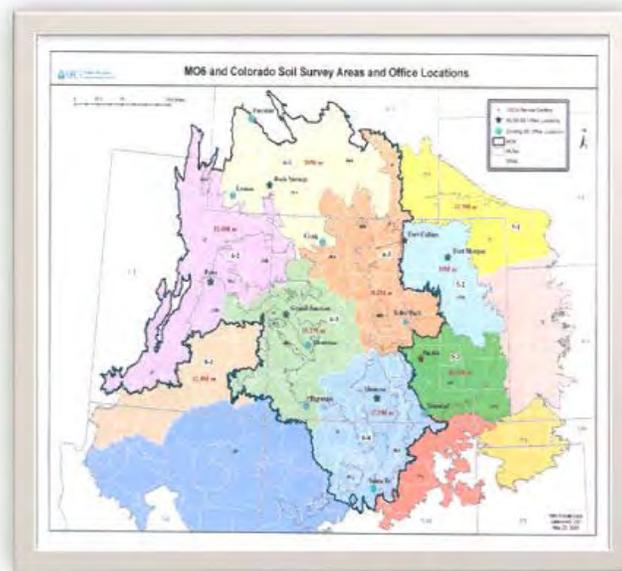
The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Colorado will be participating in the nationwide rapid assessment of U.S. Soil Carbon for Climate Change and Conservation Planning initiative.

The purpose of this program, initiated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, NRCS Soil Survey Division, is to evaluate differences in soil carbon associated with ecosystems, agricultural management systems, and land uses.

Soil carbon and related data will be collected for benchmark and other important soils in fiscal year 2010 and 2011. These data will be used to help in making decision on land use and management by conservation planners, land managers, and policymakers, and will also be used to compare results from decision support tools.

One soil scientist in each MLRA region will be designated to have overall responsibility for data collection. Assistance from field office staff to secure permission to access sites and to help document agricultural management and states of ecological sites will be essential in expediting the assessment and sampling effort.

John Norman and Kari Sever, Soil Scientists with the Fort Collins Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Soil



Survey Office, will share as technical soils leads in this effort. They will also consult with field office staff in site selection, sampling, gaining landowner permission and cropping and management history.

MLRAs are geographically associated land resource units, usually encompassing several thousand acres. They are characterized by particular patterns of soils, geology, climate,

water resources, and land use. A unit may be one continuous area or several separate nearby areas.

The Southern Rocky Mountain Region, MLRA Office #6, in Lakewood, Colorado, is one of eighteen MLRA regional offices serving the United States and the Caribbean area. This office provides assistance to soil survey project offices located in portions of Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Utah.

Colorado has five MLRA offices located in Alamosa, Ft. Collins, Grand Junction, Pueblo, and Fort Morgan.

For more information about this assessment, please contact Steve Park, MLRA Team Leader, at 720-544-2841 or email steve.park@co.usda.gov. Contact John Norman or Kari Sever at 970-491-1072, or email john.norman@co.usda.gov or kari.sever@co.usda.gov.

AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN OPENS A NEW CHAPTER HERE IN COLORADO

By Deborah Clairmont, Soil Conservationist, Brighton, CO

The American Agri-Women (AAW) held a luncheon at Bennett's BarBQ Pit in January of this year. National President of the AAW, Chris Wilson from Manhattan, KS, gave a presentation to Colorado agricultural women about the benefits of becoming a member and beginning a new chapter in Colorado. The American Agri-Women Association is a volunteer organization working to provide true information about agriculture to the public since 1974.

The open forum created a home-style feeling and welcomed all participants. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Conservationist Deborah Clairmont provided a brief presentation of the programs and technical assistance available, and provided printed materials. One of the American Agri-Women's goals is to educate their members about agriculture. The AAW states, *"The purpose of AAW is to unite women's agricultural organizations and individuals to communicate with one another and with other consumers to promote agriculture for the benefit of the American people and the world."*

The first President of the new Colorado Chapter of AAW is Danell Kalcevic of Bennett. She represents a 4th-generation farm family in Eastern Colorado that raises wheat, millet, sunflowers, and cattle. Janelle Reid of Ordway, past president of the Colorado Independent Cattle Growers Association, was elected Vice-President. Becky RavenKamp of Hugo, a working professional as a Special Education Teacher, was elected first Secretary. Korry Lewis from La Junta, now living on the family Muddy Valley Ranch and a senior at Texas A&M, was elected Treasurer.

Chris Wilson, National President of the AAW, states, *"We're excited to have this lively group of women join us in Agri-Women. They will be strong advocates for agriculture and capable of meeting the challenges we know lie ahead."*

For more information, contact Danell Kalcevic at 303-644-3443 or president@americanagriwomen.org.



Top left: National AAW President Chris Wilson and The Colorado AAW Chapter. Bottom row center: Newly elected President Danell Kalcevic.



REMEMBERING...**ROBERT F. PARKER**

JULY 24, 1920 – JANUARY 31, 2010

Submitted by C.W. Scott, District Conservationist, Ft. Morgan, CO and Donna Goodsell, Area Administrative Coordinator/ Area Earth Team Coordinator, Greeley, CO
Background materials from *The Fence Post*, Greeley, CO

Colorado lost a lifetime conservationist this year.

Robert F. Parker was born in 1920 in Joseph, Utah. He married Ilona Wiebke in 1945. The Parkers purchased land in Brush, Colorado, in 1965 and moved there full-time in 1985.

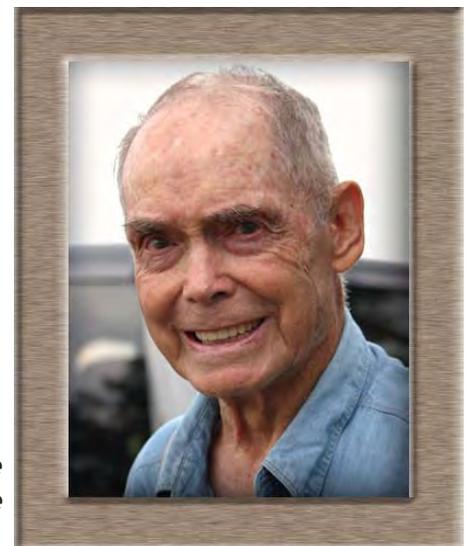
Mr. Parker earned a B.Se. in Forestry from the University of Montana in 1942, an M.A. in Forestry from Yale University in 1947, and another B.Se. in Geological Engineering from the University of Utah in 1954. He was in the Army Air Corps in WWII as a B-24 Pilot in the South Pacific, and flew 30 combat missions, and was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses and three Air Medals.

Over the course of his lifetime, Mr. Parker had many different and interesting jobs in Colorado, Montana, Arizona, Wyoming, and Hawaii. A brief CV includes forest ranger; loan officer, business management specialist, and real property officer; pineapple field superintendent in Hawaii; mine owner/operator; stock broker/owner; and Colorado ranch owner with 7,000+ acres for wheat, corn, and cattle. He was a multipurpose engineer: geological, evaluation, mining, contract, and industrial.



Mr. Parker was happiest spending time on his land, being active and planting trees: he and his wife planted 80,000 trees over his lifetime. C.W. Scott, District Conservationist in Ft. Morgan, commented, *"He had ordered an additional 4,000 trees for 2010. He'll probably be supervising the plantings in heaven."* Mr. Parker earned several awards, including Land Stewardship Awards – 80,000 Trees Planted; Colorado State "Landowner of the Year;" Colorado Congress Special Commendation "Tree Plan;" and the National Arbor Society "Tree Planter of the Year."

Mr. Parker developed his farms for a natural habitat for pheasants, doves, quail, deer, antelope, snakes, and other wildlife, supporting 600+ hunters every year. He also was an avid supporter of the local chapter of Pheasants Forever. *"He was one of our most active clients. Robert developed wildlife habitat south of Brush up until his death,"* said C.W. Scott.



Robert F. Parker is survived by his wife of 64 years, Ilona, his five children, 14 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, and two siblings. He was a lifelong member of the LDS Church.

NRCS Conducts Carbon Study on Expiring CRP

by Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs Specialist, Lakewood, CO

Rangelands can play a constructive role in sequestering atmospheric carbon because grasses convert atmospheric carbon into soil organic matter.

Stored carbon is easily lost when soil is disturbed. Where our natural lands are intact, it is important to keep them healthy. Vigorous grasses will sequester more carbon for many years.

To help many Colorado farmers keep their lands healthy and vibrant, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers technical and financial assistance through its Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

CRP protects millions of acres of American topsoil from erosion and is designed to safeguard the Nation's natural resources.

Acreage enrolled in the CRP is planted to resource-conserving vegetative covers, making the program a major contributor to increased wildlife populations in many parts of the country.

In Colorado, more than two million acres of land are enrolled in CRP.

Due to changes in the 2008 Farm Bill, grassland owners may find

little opportunity to re-enroll their land in the CRP. According to the Colorado Department of Agriculture, if a large portion of expiring CRP acres returns to cropland, Colorado will lose many of the important conservation benefits accrued over the lifetime of the contracts that established these grasslands, including reduced soil erosion and improved wildlife habitat.

“The goal of this dynamic carbon study is to follow changes in soil over a three- to five-year period on CRP lands,” said Steve Park, NRCS State Soil Scientist in Colorado.

However, if some of the expiring CRP lands are kept in grass and managed for other uses, many of the conservation benefits realized during the CRP contracts could be maintained or enhanced.

According to Dr. Ron Follet, Supervisory Resource Soil Scientist, Agriculture Research Service (ARS) in Fort Collins, CO, approximately 80 percent of CRP land will be expired by 2013.

Before this happens, the ARS and the NRCS in Colorado, Texas, and North Dakota is conducting a joint study intended to look at the long-term effects for changing land uses on expiring CRP lands in the Great Plains.

“The goal of this dynamic carbon study is to follow changes in soil over a three- to five-year

period on CRP lands,” said Steve Park, NRCS State Soil Scientist in Colorado.

In Colorado, four soils samples per county will be gathered in Baca, Kit Carson, and Morgan counties. These samples will be tested each year over the next three to five years to look at any changes to soil properties.

The hypothesis of this study is that the properties of the soil will remain in the same condition over the years but ARS and NRCS are working to disprove this assumption.

The study is scheduled to begin in 2010 and end in either 2013 or 2015. Data will be collected and findings will be documented about this benchmark study.

The prediction is that this study will show the return of soil erosion problems to lands coming out of CRP that must be addressed and evaluated in the future. Perhaps conservation practices will have to be re-instituted, and conversion to no-till could be a worthwhile option that will allow land to be out of CRP.

All in all, carbon sequestration, like so many natural phenomena, works best when natural resources are managed using sound science.

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Mary Miller, Area PAS, La Junta, CO
...Thank you, Mary!