



Colorado CONSERVATOR

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Water Fests Highlight Conservation Districts Spring-Time Education Activities

By Jerry Schwien, Editor

*Information for this article provided by Barbara Clayburg,
Yuma County CD District Manager, and by Pam Wright, West
Greeley CD Community Outreach/Education Technician*

Some 400 youth descended on Wray, Colorado April 8th for the 20th Northeast Colorado Youth Water Fest. Students from 4th, 5th and 6th grades from eight area schools came to the Wray High School to learn about the use of water in our everyday lives. Students visited the Wray Fish Hatchery for several workshops including fish management and wildlife identification; they learned about electric safety in the bus barn. Other workshops at the high school were aqua flurry-including eating the aquifer!-riparian river that flooded, water in our food, how much water do we use during a day, and how powerful water is. *A big thank you* goes out to the sponsors of the event: Yuma County Conservation District, NRCS-Wray FO and Golden Plains Extension and Wray High School and to all the presenters and high school volunteers who came and spent the day.

*Yuma County CD
Manager Barbara
Clayburg shows 4th
graders how much
water is in food.*



*Students
make an aquifer
to see how water
pollution occurs.*



Greeley celebrates the 20th Anniversary of its Children's Water Festival. This year the Greeley Water Festival was moved to a larger venue, Island Grove Regional Park, in hopes of attracting over 1500 fourth grade students to the festival. The theme for the 2011 Children's Water Festival was World Water, highlighting the importance of water from a global perspective.

The Central Colorado Water Conservancy District created the Children's Water Festival in 1991. This festival is one of the oldest children's water festivals in the nation. In 2006, the City of Greeley Water Conservation and Stormwater programs began co-sponsoring the event. In 2011 the City of Evans also became a partner of the festival. Other Children's Water Festival committee members from Weld Public Health and Environment, University of Northern Colorado, School District 6, Poudre Learning Center, and West Greeley Conservation District give in kind support.

The Children's Water Festival in Greeley is a *free event for 4th grade students* in Weld, Morgan, and Adams Counties. The Water Festival brings water professionals from around Colorado to provide presentations, and activities about water, conservation, human health, and aquatic life, while covering a wide range of curriculum areas including language arts, math, science, social studies, visual arts, and health. The festival goals are to teach the students that water is an essential, limited resource and that they can take action. The event provides teachers with materials and lessons that they can use for years to come.

For more information visit: www.greeleygov.com/cwf

CACD President Harley Ernst

Here we go again. My, how fast time goes as one fourth of the year is almost gone and spring has sprung.

Ag council has meetings every other Tuesday since the first of the year which helps keep us, the ag organizations, together on what bills are moving thru the sessions. We have good discussions amongst the group with the legislators. We can now help one another to understand the needs.

The Ag Forum was held with various speakers starting with Governor John Hickenlooper opening the session. He was then followed with John Salazar, the commissioner of Ag, who is a very dedicated and interesting person. We then recessed for lunch and had four repeat workshops. After that was the FFA Hall of Fame and banquet.

The legislation committee has been busy with lobbyist, Tracee Bentley, doing a great job in promoting two bills with one ready for the governor's signature and another well on its way with an extension of ten years.

GLCI is working with some district employees helping under CACD's supervision to implement



GLCI grant programs which will be sent out in the near future. This will give Darlene Jensen more time for other CACD functions.

NRCS technical meeting was well attended with four CACD board members and Darlene. There was some very good discussion on present and future ag programs. Sub committee reports were given and a new grazing land committee, suggested thru GLCI, is to be established.

The CACD board members are busy with spring watershed meetings.

God bless you all,
Harley L. Ernst

CACD Board of Directors



CACD welcomes Mike Wilde to the Board of Directors. Mike represents the Colorado River Watershed (please see back page for photo and bio of Mike). Board members from L - R: **(Standing)** President, Harley Ernst, former CACD director Larry Sweeney (now a CSCB member), Director Tom Hartnett, Director Bob Warner and Director Lanny Denham.

(Seated) Director Brian Neufeld, Treasurer Vern Vinson, Director JD Wright, Director Brian Starkebaum and Vice-President Gary Moyer.

Watershed & Raffle 2011

By Sally Fosha, CACD Auxiliary President

For the past three years you have listened to me (hopefully) explain how the Silent Auction works at the annual CACD Meeting. But how many of you understand how the Raffle item is selected each year?

In 1997 the CACD, CACD Employees and CACD Auxiliary put their ideas together with the end result being the attached list of Watersheds that are intended to work as partners to provide the raffle item at the Silent Auction each year. This approach spreads the responsibility to everyone and each Watershed would be responsible only once every seven years. At that time, it was suggested three items be donated with a minimum of \$150 total cost.

The ten Watershed Associations have been grouped to work together for their assigned year and in 2008, it was changed to the donation of one item with a value of approximately \$300. As you may recall last November in Colorado Springs, the Lower South Platte and Republican River Watersheds donated the Stihl chainsaw. The \$758 raised from the raffle donations was enough to send two children to Camp Rocky (\$300 per person) in 2011.

This November, the North Platte-White-Yampa River Watersheds, together with the Colorado River and the Gunnison-Dolores Rivers Watersheds will be working together for the donated item for the Silent Auction to be held in Loveland at the Embassy Suites, November 14-17, 2011. If the presidents of the three Watershed districts require any assistance, please give me a call and we can discuss ideas.

With the Silent Auction only seven months away, we encourage all 76 conservation districts to donate one or two items for the fund raising event. Let's work together to make 2011 the best year ever! You can reach me at

foshabsr@calhan.net or 719-347-2785.

WATERSHEDS RESPONSIBLE FOR RAFFLE ITEM

AT THE CACD ANNUAL MEETING SILENT AUCTION

YEAR:

2011	NORTH PLATTE – WHITE – YAMPA COLORADO RIVER GUNNISON – DOLORES RIVERS
2012	UPPER SOUTH PLATTE RIVER
2013	LOWER ARKANSAS RIVER
2014	SAN JUAN RIVER BASIN RIO GRANDE RIVER

Helping Injured Ag Families

The Fremont Conservation District hosted its 65th Annual Meeting in April with 100 in attendance. The keynote speakers were representatives from **Colorado AgrAbility**, a USDA-funded project that works to help agricultural producers and their families remain successful in agriculture.

History: The AgrAbility Project was written into the 1990 Farm Bill. Currently 22 states offer this project.

Mission: Promote Independence in Agriculture

Serve: Any farmer, rancher, or family member who has a disability, injury, or illness who has difficulty with activities in the home or on the farm/ranch and lives within the state of Colorado



AgrAbility services are specifically for those families in which someone has sustained an injury, chronic health condition or other difficulty which interferes with that person's ability to complete necessary chores.

The AgrAbility team travels the entire state to provide **free assistance to farm families**. Individual consultations lead to recommendations on how problematic tasks can be changed or equipment can be modified to make those tasks easier and safer. In addition to these direct services, AgrAbility works with local professionals and service groups to share information and resources.

Provide: On-site assessments from an occupational therapist, make recommendations for assistive technology, home modifications and equipment adaptations, research funding sources, offer peer support through our Neighbor-to-Neighbor Support program, and provide referrals to other professionals that can help with physical, emotional, and mental health needs.

All services from Colorado AgrAbility Project are free of cost!

AgrAbility services are provided through Colorado State University Extension (CSUE) in collaboration with Goodwill Industries of Denver. Dr. Bob Fetsch has directed Colorado AgrAbility at CSUE for over 12 years--he can be reached at 970-491-5648 or robert.fetsch@colostate.edu for additional information.

You may also visit the AgrAbility Colorado website at: www.agrability.caahs.colostate.edu

CACD Mission

CACD serves as the unified voice for the Conservation Districts of Colorado, facilitating outreach, education and support of landowners in their stewardship of natural resources.

Jeanne Segars



CACD Contracted Accountant



CACD Executive Vice-President Darlene Jensen

In these tough budget times and through many challenges, CACD is working hard to make certain funding remains available for the matching grants program which provides funding assistance through the conservation districts for implementation of conservation practices by landowners and producers. CACD introduced House Bill 1156 this year and through the continued lobbying efforts of CACD's highly respected lobbyist, Tracee Bentley, and its committed Board members, this legislation has made it through the House and Senate and is awaiting the Governor's signature. This bill will provide an extension of the severance tax for a period of ten years, for the support of the matching grants program (administered by the Colorado State Conservation Board) for an annual appropriation of \$450,000. It is due to the support of the conservation districts that CACD is able to retain such a qualified lobbyist and to support such a committed Board of Directors in their work on behalf of the districts.

CACD has announced funding opportunities for small acreage workshops, 8 digit watershed input session, and Grazing Lands Conservation Initiatives' workshops and demonstrations through agreements CACD has entered into with NRCS. Many districts have scheduled to host educational workshops for landowners and producers. For details on these workshops please contact CACD.

CACD Board members have been actively participating in State Technical Committee meetings, conservation districts annual meetings, Ag Council meetings, and meetings with federal and state legislators. CACD Vice-President and NACD liaison **Gary Moyer** and NACD liaison **Bob Warner** attended the NACD Annual Meeting and were successful in moving Colorado's resolution through to adoption into national policy. Please see the enclosed article for details on these resolutions.

The CACD 67th Annual Meeting will be held at the Embassy Suites in Loveland, Colorado November 14-18, 2011 and CACD is pleased to announce that **Gary Moyer is serving as the annual meeting chairman**. Gary is busy as chairman of this valuable event coordinating an awards committee and pulling together volunteers to assist in planning the meeting. If you are interested in assisting on the numerous planning tasks associated with the CACD Annual Meeting please contact Gary at gary@whiterivertrees.com.

CACD has had the good fortune of securing the expertise of Jeanne Segars, who is providing accounting and contact management services for CACD. Jeanne has former experience in defense contract management and has been working with CACD since August. Jeanne is an expert in quickbooks, the financial recordkeeping system used by CACD. CACD is grateful to have her on board and for her valued commitment to serving CACD in its service to the conservation districts.

State Conservationist Allen Green Announces Retirement

Since 2001 Allen Green has served Colorado as the NRCS State Conservationist, and after his years of dedication and commitment to conservation, he will be retiring July 1. Allen has been a true friend to the conservation districts of Colorado and has held to the grassroots mission of locally led service to the landowners and producers of Colorado. Thank you Allen for your leadership, mentorship and friendship. We will miss you!



Allen Green shown receiving the CACD Distinguished Service Award in 2007

Bob Warner Honored by NACD at Nashville



Congratulations Bob

Bob Warner, Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) Board Director and a CACD representative to the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) was honored in February at the NACD National Meeting in Tennessee for his many years of service and support to NACD and also for his service over the last few years as a Director for the National Conservation Foundation. Bob (middle) is pictured with Don Spickler (left) of the Foundation and Steve Robinson (right) NACD President receiving the NACD recognition in Nashville.

UPPER ARKANSAS CD GROWS THROUGH DISTRICT MANAGER AND BOARD LEADERSHIP

The Upper Arkansas Conservation District hosted its 68th Annual Meeting in Salida on Saturday April 16 with upwards of 70 folks in attendance. Colorado Cattlemen's Association and CACD were among partners that provided updates at the meeting. This successful meeting of the District was the result of the hard work of their District Manager, Marcella Helton, (pictured) and as well the District's Board of Supervisors. For the work Marcella has put forth over these last several years in helping her District rebuild, Marcella received statewide recognition as the 2010 District Manager of the Year by the Colorado Conservation Districts' Employees Association. The Upper Arkansas Conservation District Board includes: President Jim Clark, Vice-President Brett McMurry, Secretary-Treasurer Casey Everett, Supervisor Brady Everett, Supervisor Nancy Roberts, and appointed Supervisor David Lynch. CACD wishes the District all the best in the development of their programs and service to their landowners.



Marcella Helton

Nonpoint Source Pollution in Colorado

News and Information that you can use about NPS in Colorado and the world



- ✓ Funding
- ✓ Outreach
- ✓ Handouts
- ✓ Agriculture
- ✓ Stormwater
- ✓ Surveys
- ✓ Discussions
- ✓ Much More

This year's proposal deadline is December 15

<http://www.npscolorado.com>

npscolorado.com is supported by a grant from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Leon Kot Retires



The Teller-Park Conservation District celebrated and said farewell to Leon Kot, NRCS District Conservationist, March 29th. Leon retired after 34 years of work with NRCS; 24 of those served in the Teller-Park CD. About 60 people attended Leon's retirement luncheon, sharing special memories, and some laughs, about Leon's love for the land and the people he served, his incredible memory, a special legacy with his year's of instruction at Camp Rocky, and the leadership he brought to the staff in Woodland Park.

We wish Leon and his wife, Darlene, the best as they begin their next journey.

Beaver Creek Natural Resource Camp

Edited by Darlene Jensen

from information provided by Brenda Anderson, Center CD

The Youth Natural Resources Conservation Camp is an outdoor educational opportunity for youth ages 8 through 13 who are looking for an outdoors adventure. The camp is sponsored by Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative, Center Conservation District, with their partners Costilla, Conejos and Mosca-Hooper Conservation Districts; Natural Resources Conservation Service; US Forest Service; Division of Wildlife; Colorado State University Extension Service, San Luis Valley Area Office; parent volunteers as well as many other volunteers. This year's camp will be held May 31 through June 3 at Beaver Creek Youth Camp in South Fork, CO. The camp was established in 1985 and has been an annual event for many of our valley children.

Youth interested in attending camp can go online for application information at www.riograndewatershed.org and follow the Beaver Creek Camp link. If you have questions or need additional information about registration please contact Brenda Anderson at 719.754.3400 x108 or Judy Lopez at 719.580.5300. Due to grant funds received from Saguache County, El Pomar Foundation, Moore Foundation and DOW the cost of camp has been reduced to \$100 per camper for 2011, if ap

ations are received prior to May 10, 2011. Applications received from May 10, 2011 to May 17th, 2011 will be charged a \$120.00 and applications received after May 17th will be charged \$160.00. Please register early to received the EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION FEE. The registration fee includes lodging, meals, and activities for the four day event. Campers will participate in the same workshop track for the entire camp period. Groups are small; usually 12-15 campers in each track and include hunter safety, soil and water, range, forestry and wildlife. There are a few full scholarships available for those who cannot afford the \$100.00 registration fee. Please call for information on the scholarships.

Beaver Creek presenters are professionals in their respective resource fields and help youth learn about their environment while working in teams and meeting other students. Each year, new and returning students choose one of the resource fields for their area of focus. Additional activities this year will include a get acquainted "Luau" dance the first evening, mountain man storyteller with a campfire and smore's, a movie night and an Appreciation BBQ to which all sponsors, presenters and volunteers are invited to thank them for their commitment to our camp,

Seedlings Improve Schools through Class Projects



On April 12th, the Central Colorado Conservation District joined 20 enthusiastic fourth graders, teachers, parents, volunteers, and principle Lynnette Steinhoff in planting a conservation wind break at the Prairie Heights Elementary School. The district sponsored the trees through

the Fourth Grade Forester program. However, instead of sending the kids home with the trees the district board wanted the trees to become a learning experience for the students and a conservation project for the schools. The district originally contacted three schools, but at this time only Prairie Heights and Miami-Yoder elementary schools could commit to doing a class project and to the on-going watering of the trees. The Central Colorado Conservation District board consisting of Duke Phillips, Jay Frost, Ann Hanna, and Sally Miller felt strongly that if the project was worth doing it was worth doing right. So to help the students learn the proper way to plant trees the district also donated polymer and weed barrier. With a little luck and dedication the projects at both schools will be a hands-on learning experience that will benefit the schools and the students for years to come.

Camp Rocky

July 10 - 16, 2011

www.camprocky.colostate.edu



Students and instructors at last year's Camp Rocky at a biomass stockpile near the Hayman Burn area.

INVITE TEENS TO THIS EXCITING AND INSPIRING OUTDOOR CONSERVATION EDUCATION EXPERIENCE. Camp Rocky is for youth ages 14 through 19 who are looking for an outdoors adventure. Camp Rocky, sponsored by the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD), the Conservation Districts of Colorado, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado State University Extension Office, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Environmental Protection Agency, and other partners, will be held July 10-16, 2011 in a mountain setting above Colorado Springs near Divide at the foot of Pikes Peak. The camp provides a great opportunity for teens that enjoy the outdoors and are interested in learning more about Colorado's natural resources. The program is entering its 49th year!

Camp Rocky staff members are professionals in their respective resource fields. Each year, new and returning students choose one of the following resource fields for their area of focus:

- **Forest Management:** The forestry team learns about different forest types, how to determine the overall health of the forest, and how fire can be "good" for forest health and safety.
- **Soil and Water Conservation:** This team learns about two primary components of nature – soil and water. They will "create" a river and learn how different types of soil affect plants, wildlife, and humans.
- **Rangeland Science:** The rangeland science team learns how rangelands provide a healthy environment through sustainable grazing lands conservation, habitat for wildlife, and clean water for drinking and recreation.
- **Fish and Wildlife Management:** The wildlife biology team identify fish, track radio-collared animal and learn how different types of Colorado wildlife survive the elements.
- **Recreation Management:** Leave no trace techniques and interaction with nature are being taught in this newest principle

Please see the Camp Rocky website at www.coloradoacd.org/camprocky for applications and further details on this exceptional outdoor environmental camp and program.

CACD's Resolution Process Important to Districts

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) is involved with local, state and federal partners, as CACD represents the 76 conservation districts in Colorado. CACD is called upon to take positions on issues involving natural resource management, funding for conservation activities, and sustainability of agricultural production. Each year the conservation districts through their local watersheds bring forth resolutions to the CACD annual meeting on issues they feel are important at the state or national level. From these resolutions policies are created and made a part of CACD Policy. The resolution process has tremendous importance as it establishes both the state and national policy for the management of our natural resources by the conservation districts.

The following are the steps in the resolution process.

At the local level, the District reviews the current CACD policy book, found on the CACD website at www.cacd.us. Determines if the issue is a policy or action item. Resolutions adopted by the conservation district(s) are then sent onto their local watershed for consideration. If the watershed is in agreement with the resolution and wants to see it advanced, the resolution is forwarded onto CACD. At the CACD level the resolutions are directed to appropriate committees for review and are either amended, rejected or submitted for consideration by the conservation districts at the General Assembly and Business Meeting of CACD. Resolutions that have national impact are submitted to the National Association of Conservation Districts for consideration as a national policy and are first brought through assigned national committees.

At the 66th CACD Annual Meeting in November the Conservation Districts of Colorado adopted six resolutions. Of those resolutions four were sent onto NACD, all of which were adopted into national policy with minor amendments. Once in NACD policy, NACD representatives move into action on the national policy through their efforts in Washington D.C. and across the United States.

ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS OUT OF COLORADO

The six resolutions passed by CACD and incorporated in CACD Policy:

Resolution 1 Title: Equal Access to Justice Act

The Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA) was created to establish reimbursement from the federal government for the attorney's fees related to cases brought against the government. There is apparent abuse of EAJA by certain organizations and a lack of accountability and transparency in the operation and distribution of funds. There is a lack of government oversight of EAJA that allows groups to circumvent Congressional intent with respect to the law. The agencies expenditures of funds for reimbursement under EAJA result in less resources being available for on-the-ground natural resource improvements. CACD and NACD shall ask Congress to provide the general public full access to data giving accurate representation of the Administration of EAJA, allowing tracking of EAJA disbursements, with information regarding plaintiff organization, attorney's fees and monetary awards distributed as a result of actions undertaken on EAJA and fully fund and staff the Administrative Conference of the U.S. CACD and NACD feel that the EAJA should be amended to disallow reimbursement of legal expenses to any party that does not have permanent residence in the immediate affected area and is not personally impacted.

NACD resolution as amended and adopted: The Equal Access to Justice Act should be amended to disallow reimbursement of legal expenses to any party that does not have permanent residence in the immediate affected area or is not personally impacted.

Resolution 2/ Title: Rangeland Health / New Policy

CACD and NACD support any and all efforts, with whatever actions are required, to ensure BLM maintains horse population numbers in designated Horse Management Area's (HMA) within the levels outlined in their own Resource Management Plans and the immediate removal of all wild horses and burros found outside of the designated HMA's. CACD and NACD insist on wild horse and burro population numbers being managed based on sound scientific rangeland health practices to ensure protection and preservation of critical sage grouse habitat, other wildlife habitat and multiple land use.

CACD and NACD support civil action pertaining to the management of wild horses and burros on private lands be held at a local court in the state where the issue develops. When federal lands are involved, action should be heard in the nearest federal court to the lands where the issue arose.

NACD resolution as amended and adopted: Horses and burros grazing habits (biting off at dirt level, pawing grass roots out of ground when grass is short or under snow) are detrimental to rangeland. Horse and burro numbers are excessively exceeding BLM's Resource Management Plans within the Horse Management Areas (HMA); and large numbers of horses and burros are occupying private and federal lands outside of the HMAs. NACD supports any and all efforts, with whatever actions are required, to ensure BLM maintains horse population numbers in designated Horse Management Area's (HMA) within the levels outlined in their own Resource Management Plans and the immediate removal of all wild horses and burros found outside of the designated HMA's. NACD insists on wild horse and burro population numbers being managed based on sound scientific rangeland health practices to ensure protection and preservation of critical sage grouse habitat, other wildlife habitat and multiple land use. NACD supports that civil action pertaining to the management of wild horses and burros on private lands be held at a local court in the state where the issue develops. When federal lands are involved, action should be heard in the nearest federal court to the lands where the issue arose.

Resolution 3/ Title: Wild Horse Numbers/ New Policy

CACD and NACD insist wild horses and burros should not be classified as a threatened, endangered species, or treasured herds status and CACD and NACD support humane disposal of excess wild horses and burros for possible use as a protein source in the U.S. or other countries.

Resolution 4 Title: Environmental Literacy/New Policy

CACD will work with State legislators as well as agencies having authority over education strategies to help support efforts in the development of Colorado's environmental literacy plan insuring education standards that adhere to the wise use of Colorado's natural resource base and moving further in the future to support the plan after adoption.

Resolution 5 Title: CACD Annual Dues

Passed as amended; striking second paragraph re: late payments. CACD Board of Directors supports and recommends that the CACD Annual Dues rate of \$1000 per Conservation District remain in place for the next fiscal/calendar year, effective January 1; and, further that individual membership dues of \$35 continue to be encouraged.

Resolution 6/ Title: Policy Update and Revisions

CACD and NACD policy shall be updated to reflect the most current resolutions approved by the membership of the organization. Any and all legislative activities such as, lobbying issues, talking points, white papers, positions, etc. shall be based on resolutions approved by the membership. CACD and NACD shall, within 60 days following the annual meeting, review and compare any new resolution approved with previously established policy. Previously established policy shall be amended to reflect the new resolution. In the event that a new resolution is in conflict with previously established policy, the new resolution will replace previously established policy.

Conservation Districts Deliver Services in Hard Economic Times

Edited by Darlene Jensen, CACD
from information provided by Pam King, CSCB

Districts continue to enthusiastically embrace the Colorado State Conservation Board District Conservation Technician Program and the Matching Grants Program to help them achieve their conservation goals. Districts from every watershed have participated – 66% of Colorado conservation districts have participated in one, or quite often, both programs.

District conservation technicians have provided almost 40,000 hours per-year of technical assistance to landowners and 94 locally-identified projects for on-the ground conservation have been implemented from 2007-10. In 2011, a further 40,000 hours of conservation technical assistance will be provided and a further 25 on-the-ground conservation projects will be realized. Beyond the district commitment to the work of hiring employees and implementing projects, districts raise matching funds using their own resources, landowner cost-share, county and other partner funds. Around three-quarters of a million dollars per year is provided or solicited by districts as cash and in-kind matching funds.

Over the five-year period 2007-2011, \$1.9 million USDA- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) dollars and \$0.95 million Colorado Department of Agriculture State Conservation Board (CDA-CSCB) dollars have been allocated to districts to employ conservation technicians for Farm Bill and other technical assistance to landowners. A further \$1.45 million in CDA-CSCB dollars was allocated to districts for on-the ground conservation projects in the Matching Grants program. These government funding sources have been made available by the strong commitment of the NRCS State Conservationist, the energetic lobbying efforts of the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, supportive state legislators, and allocation of funds by the CDA Commissioner of Agriculture. This dedicated local, state and federal partnership has benefited hundreds of landowners, thousands of acres, and conserved critical natural resources for present and future use of all Colorado citizens. Every member of this conservation partnership is facing financial challenges. Yet in 2011 districts have largely retained their district technicians and Matching Grants funds were over-subscribed by \$226,300. The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts has been lobbying hard to renew the expiring legislation that provides 70% of the state funds for these programs. The message is clear - there is still plenty to be done and districts and their partners are fighting determinedly to deliver conservation services to local landowners.

Matching Grant Applications Due July 1st

The Colorado State Conservation Board's (CSCB) Matching Grants are open to all Colorado Conservation Districts for locally driven conservation projects. The application materials and guidelines for 2012 participation are on the CSCB Matching Grants Web Site under the 2012 Program Page. Information about previously funded projects is also on the Matching Grants Web Site.

Deadline for 2012 applications is **JULY 1st 2011**

Please see the Colorado State Conservation Board for the matching grants program <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/Agriculture-Main/CDAG/1185266446824>

Note there are some changes to the 2012 program (see program guidelines for more details):

- Focused approach is a favorable factor
- Landowner labor may be used as match but not paid from award funds
- Projects that are eligible for EQIP must be first submitted to that program
- Award levels are \$2,000 - \$25,000

Contact Pam King or your CSCB Regional Field Specialist with any questions or for assistance. (303) 232-4112

Prowers CD Matching Grant Projects



The Weed Rack (above) was constructed with matching grant funds secured through the efforts of the Prowers Conservation District. The weed rack collects debris from an irrigation ditch and redirects it into a stock pile.

The pond at left was a recent demonstration tour of the Prowers CD. The District has installed remote flow measurement and data management technology on irrigation systems. Donnie McBee, a Prowers CD supervisor, is shown speaking to 50 attendees. The project was funded through the NRCS Conservation Innovative Grants program.



Cooperators Reduce Wildfire Risk in Pueblo Mountain Park

*edited by Jerry Schwien, CACD
from information provided by Ryan Lockwood, CSFS*

Drive a half-hour southwest of Pueblo, Colo., and you'll begin to see the charred hillsides left by the 12,000-acre Mason Gulch Fire. The fire, which burned in July 2005, forced the evacuation of 5,000 nearby residents before a fortunate shift in the wind ended its run. Approximately five miles south of the burn area, in the path where the fire was headed, you'll find Pueblo Mountain Park. The forests here escaped the 2005 fire, but have forest conditions that could support a similar blaze.

Pueblo Mountain Park provides city dwellers the opportunity to hike, watch wildlife and picnic in native ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests. The park also is home to a valuable educational program for Pueblo's fifth-graders. Until recent efforts to address forest health in the 600-acre park, the landscape was slowly becoming overgrown with a dense understory of vegetation that increased the risk of a dangerous crown fire. Thanks to a forest-thinning project started by a retired Pueblo County emergency management official, the park's director and the Colorado State Forest Service, the culturally valuable park, its visitors and surrounding communities soon will be safer from wildfire.



John Grieve, CSFS, Steve-Douglas, Pueblo County and Park Maintenance Assistant John Oribello examine a tree infested by mountain pine beetles.

When this project is complete, the community will have a park that is much less vulnerable to fire, according to Director Dave Van Manen of the Mountain Park Environmental Center, a non-profit that manages the park. MPEC's current work with cooperators will create fuelbreaks to reduce fire risk, help protect improvements in the park, and enhance firefighter and visitor safety.

Park Provides Unparalleled Opportunity for City Kids

Dedicated to cultivating an understanding of nature, MPEC has managed Pueblo Mountain Park since 2008. Throughout the year, the nonprofit offers programs for all ages, including educational retreats, summer camps, yoga classes, horseback riding and guided hikes. However, the primary users of Pueblo Mountain Park are the fifth-grade students from the city's public schools, who participate in the outdoor-based Earth Studies Program.

The first ongoing fuels mitigation work in the park began in 2002, when then-Pueblo County Emergency Management Director Steve Douglas approached the park with concerns about mountain pine beetle activity in its ponderosa pines. Having had extensive past experience as a wildland firefighter and an active interest in fire mitigation, he offered to coordinate removal of the infested trees.

After a discussion with the Pueblo City Council, MPEC and the CSFS Cañon City District, which serves Pueblo, Fremont and Custer counties, the city granted Douglas permission to organize the removal of approximately 300 beetle-kill trees. But beetles weren't the only problem. A lack of natural, low-intensity ground fires over several decades had resulted in dense stands that could fuel a dangerous wildfire, as evidenced by the nearby Mason Gulch Fire.

The park had become so overgrown that there were trails you couldn't even walk down, said Grieve, referring to a thick understory of Gambel oak, juniper and mountain mahogany. Grieve developed a forest stewardship plan for the park, which addressed such things as tree and stand structure, fuel loading, wildlife habitat and the presence of insect and disease activity. The CSFS also helped design and implement projects consistent with the plan, and administered grants that the park received to help with forest management efforts.

Douglas has been the primary workhorse on the projects. Using the CSFS forest management plan for guidance, he has led efforts to make the park's forest healthier. Over the last decade, the scope of his and the park's efforts has been expanded because of State Fire Assistance grant funds. SFA grants, administered by the CSFS and issued through a competitive process, are used to create more resilient forests and mitigate wildfire risk. In 2009, on behalf of MPEC, Douglas applied for an SFA grant to help the park further its efforts; a \$50,000 matching grant was awarded by the CSFS in July 2010.

Slash from thinning efforts in park is stockpiled for burning in winter.



2010 CSFS Grant Funding Boosts Accomplishments

The park successfully treated more than 60 acres from 2002-2009, but the 2010 SFA grant award made it possible to treat even more forested acreage, and faster. The grant funds meant the park could employ the use of a Colorado Department of Corrections crew to treat an additional 94 acres in 2010-2012. "This grant was what we needed to get this phase of the job done," Douglas said.

The park committed \$88,000 in matching funds to the 2010 grant in the form of MPEC staff salaries, equipment and volunteer hours. The plan is to create fuelbreaks and remove excess fuels along critical park boundaries, roadways and potential paths for intense fires. Grieve says the 300-foot-wide shaded fuelbreaks they are creating should keep fires on the forest floor and out of the tree crowns – without clearing all existing brush and timber. "We identified likely paths for a wildfire to travel, and our efforts are taking place with the specific intent of creating significant breaks in these paths," Van Manen said.

The CSFS coached Douglas and park staff on how to correctly identify and mark the best trees for removal. Next, a Colorado Correctional Industries State Wildland Inmate Fire Team (SWIFT), composed of 20 inmates from the Four Mile Correctional Center in Cañon City who are trained as wildland firefighters, began removing the marked trees. To date, more than 20 acres have been completed.

The SFA grant money and matching contributions should allow the park to build fuelbreaks along 2.7 miles of roads, trails and park boundary. This includes areas near roads, barbecue pits and picnic tables, which are more likely to have an ignition source. The fuelbreaks are primarily intended to protect the park and its visitors, but if a fire starts in the park or to the west, subdivisions to the east of the park also should benefit. "Looking at it from a firefighter's perspective, I want to provide safe routes," said Douglas. He says the fuelbreaks not only will slow down a wildfire, but will allow park visitors to safely escape and provide safe access to firefighters.

In addition to the primary goal of wildfire hazard mitigation, forest thinning efforts in the park also should improve tree health and vigor, the park's aesthetic value and wildlife habitat. Everyone involved with the project says that so far they have gotten only positive feedback from the public.

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AGENDA

10:00 a.m. Welcome

CRMI Introduction & Overview

Colorado's approach to a standardized rangeland monitoring program

Stakeholder process

Components of CRMI

10:45 a.m. Monitoring: Your Return on Investment

Importance to the natural resource

Importance to your overall business and operation

Importance of cooperative monitoring

11:45 a.m. Lunch

12:30 p.m. CRMI and the Colorado Rangeland

Monitoring Guide

Colorado Rangeland Monitoring Guide introduction

Connecting the Colorado Rangeland Monitoring Guide to CRMI

1:30 p.m. CRMI and Cooperative Monitoring

Hands-on demonstrations of how to begin implementing preferred monitoring

2:30 p.m. CRMI Database

Online CRMI Database demonstration

3:00 p.m. Get Ready to Monitor

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Resources from NACD's 2011 Annual Meeting are now available online:

Presentations covering the breakout sessions are available on NACD's website and include the following:

Disaster Response	Water Management
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Herbicide Resistance	The Future of Conservation
State Wildlife Agencies	Stewardship and Education
Soil Health	Business Opportunities
Rain Gardens	Technical Standards
Energy	Effective Communication
Partnership Opportunities	

Access these resources at: <http://www.nacdnet.org/events/annualmeeting2011/resources/index.shtml>.

Colorado Youth Present Papers at SRM Youth Forum

Edited by Jerry Schwien, CACD, from information provided
by Ben Berlinger, Society for Range Management

The Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) was well represented at the 2011 High School Youth Forum (HSYF) held in Billings, MT on February 6-9, 2011. The HSYF is an integral part of the SRM annual meeting. This year there were 31 delegates representing 13 of the SRM Sections. During the Forum, high school youth from all part of the western United States and Canada are invited to participate and interact among the various professionals and college students attending the meeting. Each of SRM's 21 Sections is allowed to send up to three youth delegates to this program that provides a high quality learning experience.

This year the Colorado Section sponsored three delegates to Billings. Jessica Harris of Manzanola, Jordan Lestina of Dove Creek and Kyle Hartshorn of Granada were selected to participate in the Forum. All three delegates were chosen based on the high level of achievement in FFA rangeland judging as well as exceptional participation at the Colorado Association of Conservation District's (CACD) Camp Rocky, Colorado's premier natural resource youth camp.

The goals of the HSYF are to recognize youth for outstanding accomplishments in rangeland activities and to provide young people the opportunity to discuss rangelands, career options, and meet with leaders in the field of range management. One requirement of the HSYF is that each delegate must present an illustrated talk on some aspect of rangeland conservation or management.

Jessica's presentation was titled **Important: Rangeland Monitoring!** During her presentation she discussed the different monitoring methods used by ranchers in south-east Colorado and presented the advantages and drawbacks of each. Jessica also highlighted the intensive monitoring methods being successfully used on the Negley Ranch in Kiowa County where she had the opportunity to assist with rangeland monitoring activities this past summer.



(L-R) Colorado High School Youth Forum speakers, Kyle Hartshorn, Granada High School, Jordan Lestina, Dove Creek High School, and Jessica Harris, Manzanola High School.

Jordan presented his talk on the control of rabbitbrush on the rangelands of southwest Colorado using biological techniques. His talk was titled **Rubber Rabbitbrush: Controlling a Native Shrub**. Jordan highlighted the conventional methods of controlling rubber rabbitbrush as contrasted with biological control using the rabbitbrush beetle. He found that biological control of rubber rabbitbrush appeared to be an effective and economical alternative over the conventional treatments of herbicides and prescribed fire when coupled with prescribed grazing management.

Kyle's presentation was about rangeland education and our youth. His title was **Educating the Next Generation of Range Managers**. Kyle discussed how he put together a workshop/clinic on his family's ranch this past summer to motivate his FFA Chapter and the other local FFA Chapters to participate in the Rangeland Judging Career Development Exercise (CDE). Kyle concluded that the workshop was successful by encouraging more students to pursue rangeland judging in the future and to hopefully go on to careers in rangeland science.

The Colorado Section SRM and CACD congratulate Jessica, Jordan and Kyle for their outstanding achievements in rangeland management and wish them the best of luck as they further pursue their ambitions in the field of Natural Resource Management.

Abstract Rangeland Monitoring

By Jessica Harris

Rangeland monitoring is an essential part of Range Management. There are many reasons to practice rangeland monitoring but one of the most significant objectives is that land managers must keep track of how the land is affected by different management strategies.

There are numerous methods of rangeland monitoring. Land EKG™ is a technique used on many ranches, specifically J&L Farms, owned and operated by John and Laura Negley located in Kiowa County, Colorado. Land EKG™ considers all four ecosystem foundation functions of mineral cycle, water cycle, living community succession, and energy flow. This method evaluates how these four systems are functioning on the rangeland. The beginning of the land monitoring process involves locating the beginning and ending points of the transect line. After locating the transect points, a two hundred foot tape is stretched between the two points.

Four observation plots are predetermined points along the transect line. Photographs of the current conditions at the site are taken for documentation. Photographs are taken in both directions of the transect lines and at each of the four observation plots. Indicators of each of the four ecosystem functions are then evaluated and ranked according to the EKG™ evaluation scorecard. Data from the scorecard is then transferred to the EKG™ summary sheet. Plotting the value of each indicator, a chart similar to a human's heart EKG readout is created. By comparing different year's summary charts from the same transect location, the trend in rangeland health can be determined.

From that comparison, ranchers can determine if their management goals are being obtained or if necessary changes need to be made. Rangeland monitoring has shown improving conditions on the pastures of J&L Farms since their monitoring program began in 2003. Range monitoring is an important part of rangeland management. If the land isn't monitored, vital feedback information is missing. Ranchers can practice a range management plan on their ranch but if they don't watch to see how it affects the rangeland, the manager may never know whether or not the range management plan is improving or diminishing the health of the ecosystem. It's very important to monitor how management decisions influence rangeland health and sustain the many resource values derived from the land.

Educating the Next Generation of Range Managers

Abstract by Kyle Hartshorn

In order to overcome the challenges of the past, we must educate our next generations of range managers, who will decide the future of Range Management. In present days we have concerns such as: over-grazing, exposed soil, and diminishing plant species, but as progressive range managers we are always implementing new methods, such as the various rotational grazing systems which allow greater recovery time for pastures resulting in a return of various plant species. The process of educating our next generation starts early, and there are many organizations that have already done quite well at appealing to the next generation such as 4-H, FFA, and NRCS just to name a few with each organization offering its own various camps, competitions, and workshops. The students who take full advantage of these opportunities are most likely to become involved in Range Management in the future. In August of 2010 I organized and hosted a Range Evaluation Clinic with those interested FFA members from my district. All seven chapters were invited, and over sixty students were in attendance. The event was hosted on my family's ranch, and by the end of the day we had educated both FFA members and advisors alike. The clinic encouraged more students to pursue this in the future, and with what they learned that day, those students just may have a part in preventing the next Dust Bowl.

Abstract: Rubber Rabbitbrush: Controlling a Native Shrub By Jordan Lestina

In recent years, rubber rabbitbrush has become a major problem on rangelands in Southwest Colorado. Its ability to spread quickly and out compete other native plants has decreased the health of local rangelands. Rubber rabbitbrush is a native species stretching from the cold desert ecosystems of the Colorado Plateau, across the Great Basin, into the warm deserts of the Southwest. Rangelands that have experienced recent fires, over grazing, or other disturbances are often taken over by dense stands of rabbitbrush. Conventional methods of controlling the shrub have been ineffective, so recent research has now been focused on finding a biological control. The rabbitbrush beetle (*Trirhabda nitidicollis*) is considered to be the most effective insect although there are also two fruit flies that use rabbitbrush as their host. Biological control of rubber rabbitbrush appears to be an effective and economical alternative over the conventional treatments of herbicides and prescribed fire. Complete eradication of rabbitbrush is not a realistic and intended goal. Proper grazing management must be practiced on all lands where rabbitbrush control is applied in order for the benefits from the rangeland to be sustained. Rubber rabbitbrush is a native shrub that does fit a niche in western rangeland and soils. The goal of biological control is to check the spread and reduce the amount of plants most to open it up for native grass production and improved rangeland health.



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Big T and Fort Collins CDs Pilot Irrigation Scheduling Program

Edited by Jerry Schwien, CACD, from information provided by
Gordon Gilstrap, President, Big Thompson Conservation District

A key question in agriculture is when to irrigate. The answer depends on the crop being grown, the soil moisture and the weather. Soil moisture monitors coupled with soil, crop and weather data plus irrigation scheduling software can answer the question more accurately.

With a very large helping hand from the Northern Water Conservancy District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Big Thompson and Fort Collins Conservation Districts piloted a program in 2010 to provide irrigation scheduling equipment and software to local producers.

The success of the program has led us to formalize the program as a product to producers for the 2011 growing season. We will be hiring a field technician to gather soil and crop data, install and monitor the sensors, and operate the irrigation scheduling software to provide irrigation advice reports to the producers.

Our two districts are also working with CSU Agricultural Experiment Station, NRCS and local producers in using test plots to compare crop yield, production costs and water efficiency for traditional tillage and strip tillage. The goal is to provide more complete data for producers to use in determining which tillage methodology to use in future crops.

More information on these programs and other news in our districts is available at our website www.nococd.org.

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New Board Member

I hold two degrees from Colorado State University, a B. S. in Natural Resource Management and an M. Ed. in Science Instruction. My current home is in Glenwood Springs, where I have spent the last 29 years working with our future generations as a high school science teacher. I retired from full-time classroom teaching in 2007. Over the years, I attempted to open the eyes of students to the need to be good stewards of their planet. During the latter half of my career I became involved in the Colorado Division of Wildlife's "River-Watch" program. This program currently has over 200 volunteer groups in middle schools, high schools and communities who

Hello! My name is **Mike Wilde**. As the newest member of your CACD Board I would like to introduce myself. I am looking forward to serving all of you on a statewide level, as well as representing my constituents from the Colorado River Watershed. I have lived and worked in Colorado since 1973.

monitor the water quality in Colorado's rivers and streams. I have also had the opportunity to contribute to International Project WET's (Water Education for Teachers) newest curriculum guide "Discover a Watershed: The Colorado River" I am looking forward to bringing my skills and background to this board to serve you!