



Colorado CONSERVATOR

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School to Farm Project Hosted by Mancos Conservation District

Edited by Jerry Schwien, CACD from information provided by Laurel Barton, Coordinator of School to Farm Project, a Matching Grant of the Mancos Conservation District

On a breezy, warm morning last Spring 17 Mancos 10th graders and teacher stepped off their school bus at Winter Green Farm in Weber Canyon south of Mancos. This field trip was part of the School to Farm Project (made possible by a grant through the Mancos Conservation Dist. Biology teacher, Cat Fox, worked with Laurel Barton, coordinator of the project, and Peter and Joan Brind A'mour to plan the tour.



Peter and Joan each took half the group on a tour around their ¼ acre farm where students viewed fruit trees nearly 100 years old, learned about the high-tunnel garden under construction, the drip irrigation system, and hoop house with ready-to-eat carrots, beets, and greens. Students sampled these very fresh, very local vegetables. One student who said he “never eats veggies” but “lets the animals eat them first,” then said after eating a carrot, “I like carrots.”

**Students
take part in School to
Farm tour hosted by
Mancos CD**



**10th graders learn
the value of locally
grown produce at Win-
ter Green Farm south
of Mancos**

along the way to tion, chemical make- mentary film, “Dirt” to human, plant, and

Another field trip Barton to the ranch of local “grass farmer”, Jack Burk. This trip, entitled “How to Turn Soil into Food: An Exploration of the Mancos River Watershed,” began at Burk’s farm where students learned about the sustainable techniques Burk uses to grow grass to feed his cows. Students taste-tested Burk beef compared to Walmart beef. Most students could tell the difference: the Burk beef had less grease.

The group then headed to the ditch diversion at Veit’s ditch, and Burk explained the history and current Mancos Valley water rights. Next, to Jackson Gulch, where students did an activity illustrating the scarcity of precious, clean, fresh water that’s available on the planet as compared to salt water, polluted water, and inaccessible sub-surface water. The last stop of the day took the group to the headwaters of Chicken Creek where students excitedly took nets to catch macro-invertebrates, which they would later study back in their classroom.

Barton explained the School to Farm Project is funded by a grant from the Colorado Dept. of Agriculture’s Conservation Matching Grant Program which was awarded to the Mancos Conversation District and is also matched by several private grants including: Ballantine Family Foundation, Kampe Foundation, a Generation Impact Grant, and Live Well Montezuma. The Project will continue into this fall’s harvest season with more field trips. To find out more information you can email: bartonlaurel@gmail.com.

Students observed large manure and compost piles and soils where earthworms were prolific. Their teacher, Mrs. Fox made reference classroom studies about genus, natural selec- up of soil. Barton recommended the docu- which illustrates the necessity of healthy soil animal survival on the planet.

took 9th graders, their teacher Steve Smith, and

CACD President Harley Ernst

As wheat harvest is upon us, I, as are many of our producers, are busy in their fields. On behalf of CACD, I want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the valuable relationship that CACD and NRCS engaged in during the tenure of Allen Green as NRCS State Conservationist.

I have been very active in the meetings of the State Technical Committee as the President of CACD and as the Chairman of the GLCI Committee. It is through Allen's leadership of the State Technical Committee that a venue was provided for input on behalf of the conservation districts and ag producers of Colorado. I and Gary Moyer of the CACD Board attended the recent State Technical Committee this last quarter in Meeker, and were able to again provide our input and gleaned valuable information. Allen has been a strong supporter of locally led conservation and we have greatly appreciated his leadership in

Your input on conservation programs is important: **NRCS Conducting On Line Survey**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NRCSsurvey>

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts and the Colorado State Conservation Board have teamed up to help NRCS gather input on the nature of its conservation programs. This round of input sessions will experiment with new information gathering techniques, using SurveyMonkey, an internet-based survey program. This online information gathering makes better use of participants time during a busy time of the year and conserves limited federal resources, rather than expending funds on costly meetings.

Please go to the link above and take this very brief survey. The online survey will close on August 16th. Landowners, conservation partners, cooperators and others using NRCS conservation program assistance are encouraged to take this survey. If you do not have internet and would like to take this survey online please be encouraged to visit your local library to use their public internet system. If you do not have access to internet and would like a copy of the survey mailed to you please contact CACD at 719-686-0020 on or before August 10th. Questions such as "how did you hear of conservation assistance programs" to "is the appropriate level of cost share being offered". Thank you for taking a moment to provide input which is important in carrying out conservation programs.



Colorado. CACD looks forward to working with the new NRCS State Conservationist for Colorado.

I also want to thank Representative Jon Becker and Representative Jerry Sonnenberg for their efforts in the important passage of the ag tax exemption this last general session of the State legislature. Their work on behalf of the ag producers in Colorado is greatly respected.

As we have been challenged statewide with extreme weather conditions from drought to flooding, may the weather be good to you.

Sincerely,
CACD President Harley Ernst

Phyllis Ann Philipps Colorado's New State Conservationist

Phyllis Ann Philipps will become the new State Conservationist for Colorado beginning August 28th. Ms Philipps is currently on detail to the White House Council on Environmental Quality in Washington, D.C. where she is serving as the Deputy Associate Director for Private Lands and Agriculture. Previously she was the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations for NRCS in north central Montana.

Philipps has been in Montana for over 25 years and served in various capacities including Soil Conservationist, District Conservationist, and Natural Resource Team Leader. Philipps started her career nearly 30 years ago in Washington, DC working for the Land Use Division of the Soil Conservation Service. She is a graduate of Humboldt State University with a focus on natural resources planning.

Sponsorships Available for CACD Annual Meeting

Become a Diamond, Platinum, Gold, Silver Bronze, Exhibitor or Break Sponsor for the CACD Annual Meeting. To learn the benefits of being a sponsor and the different levels of contribution go to the CACD website:

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CACD's 67th Annual Meeting is being held at a *wonderful* venue!
Come spend the week with us!

This year's meeting will not only provide great meetings and learning sessions, but you'll also be able to take advantage of luxury accommodations at the Conference rate of just **\$99.00 per night**.

Call before October 31, 2011 to reserve your suite. Be sure to request the CACD Conference Rate!

(Tax Exemption Arrangements must be made directly with the Hotel)



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CACD Executive Vice-President Darlene Jensen

To continue funding to the conservation districts for the matching grants program which assists landowners and producers in putting conservation practices on the ground, CACD was successful in sustaining support of the matching grants program under House Bill 1156. Much thanks to Representative Jon Becker, Representative Jerry Sonnenberg, CACD lobbyist Tracee Bentley and the CACD Board for their efforts in seeing the legislation through to its successful passage. The law provides an extension of the severance tax for a period of ten years in funding of the matching grants program at \$450,000 per year.

CACD continues to administer agreements and contracts for small acreage workshops, 8 digit watershed input sessions, rapid watershed assessments, and Grazing Lands Conservation Initiatives' workshops and demonstrations through agreements with NRCS. Many districts have scheduled to host educational workshops for landowners and producers. For details on these workshops please contact CACD.

CACD representatives addressed federal funding issues in one-on-one conversations with federal legislators in Washington DC and attended the NACD Legislative Conference. Bob Warner of the Upper South Platte River Watershed and Gary Moyer of the North Platte-White-Yampa River Watershed visited with Senator Bennet and congressional staff of legislators on issues regarding wild horse management, Farm Bill Conservation programs, and forest management, among other subjects. The NACD Southwest Region meeting will held September 26th -29th in Taos, New Mexico. For details please visit www.nacd-net.org.

The CACD 67th Annual Meeting will be held at the Embassy Suites in Loveland, Colorado November 14-17, 2011. Ray Ledgerwood will be joining us at the Annual Meeting to provide leadership training. If you are interested in assisting on the numerous planning tasks associated with the CACD Annual Meeting please contact Gary Moyer at gary@whiteriver-



Pipe Springs Ranch

Colorado's Leopold Conservation Award Winner

By Katherine Burse-Johnson, NRCS

In the southeastern-most part of the state, lies the historic town of Springfield, CO, a city known for its farming and cattle ranching communities.

It is also the city that now boasts one of Colorado's exceptional stewards of conservation, Pipe Springs Ranch LLC. This 14,000-acre ranch has been named the 2011 recipient of the Leopold Conservation Award, an award which honors farmers and/or ranchers who demonstrate responsible stewardship and management of natural resources.

Pipe Springs Ranch is owned and operated by siblings Jo Ann McEndree, Kaye Kasza, Steve McEndree, and Cathy Tebay. They are



fourth generation ranchers who are committed to leaving a sustainable operation for their descendants.

They inherited the ranch in 1994 and have

worked to improve the ranching enterprise while they improve the ranch's natural habitats. The ranch includes the homesteads of their grandfather, great grandfather, and several uncles and aunts. The siblings all view the land as an invaluable legacy to be maintained and improved.

Despite the ten years of severe drought conditions in their community, the four siblings share a love of the land and remain steadfast in pursuing alternatives which allow the ranch to be a more profitable operation while improving the natural ecosystems for the future. "It's been ten years since we've had good moisture but we've made a lot of improvements to the land within those ten years," said Steve.

A large part of their land stewardship was placing pipelines to distribute water across the vast ranch. As a result, they created smaller pastures and were able to plant two windbreaks to offer protection for both livestock and wildlife. This allows for shorter grazing periods, which increases the productivity of the soil and plants. Other conservation practices on the Pipe Springs Ranch, LLC include installing 20 water tanks, one shallow water habitat for migrating birds, and many, many more.

The McEndree siblings partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on their conservation efforts. "The Natural Resources Conservation Service has played a tremendous role in facilitating educational workshops using our land as a teaching tool," said Kaye.

The Leopold Conservation Award, named in honor of world-renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, is comprised of \$10,000 and a Leopold crystal. The award is presented annually in eight states to private landowners who are doing tremendous work for agriculture and conservation and is presented by the Sand County Foundation in partnership with the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, the Colorado Agricultural Land Trust, Encana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc., and Peabody Energy.

The video can be viewed on YouTube at the following link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_zp2ps0p_o

Wildlife Habitat Partnership Program Awards Grants

By Ken Morgan, Private Lands Coordinator,
Colorado Division of Wildlife

The Colorado Division of Wildlife's Habitat Partnership Program has awarded \$500,000 to five recipients in Colorado that will fund habitat enhancement projects on private and public with the goal of keeping big game animals from coming into conflict with adjacent private agricultural landowners. The recipients this year are:

White River National Forest

Milk Creek Enhancement Project near Meeker

Rio Grande National Forest

San Luis Valley Water Development project near Saguache

Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest =

Uncompahgre Plateau Habitat Restoration project

Uncompahgre Partnerships North Rim Landscape Restoration project near Hotchkiss

Three Rivers Alliances

Russian olive and tamarisk removal project in Yuma County

Landowners will use the funds to launch improvement projects that will include the use of brush manipulation, weed control, water developments and reseeding with a goal of increasing available habitat and forage for big-game animals. The deadline for completing the work is June 2012.

The HPP State Council evaluated each proposal based on several criteria including the size and scale of treatments and the type of improvements proposed. One critical component the Council examined before presenting the awards was the extent of the recipient's partnerships. The selected projects exemplified the partnership component that HPP encourages and develops. "The criteria that the State Council used to evaluate the applicants ensures that we can leverage everyone's limited funds while creating a successful project for both landowners and wildlife," said Division of Wildlife HPP coordinator Pat Tucker.

HPP began these grants in 2009 to encourage larger scale habitat improvement projects and this is the second time that the HPP program has granted funds for them.

By the end of June 2012, an additional \$1 million will have been spent by HPP to improve habitat and reduce conflicts between big game and agricultural operators. This does not include additional money spent by project partners, which can easily double or triple HPP's investment.

The Colorado General Assembly and the Colorado Wildlife Commission established the Habitat Partnership Program in 1990 with a goal to reduce wildlife conflicts by facilitating cooperation between landowners, land managers, sportsmen, the DOW and others to minimize and resolve conflicts between ungulates and agricultural users.

These grants have proven to be a very effective way to help reduce big game conflicts with private landowners," said Northwest Regional Manager Ron Velarde. We appreciate the cooperation with both public and private landowners and their efforts to improve natural habitat for wildlife."

To learn more about the HPP program, contact your local Division of Wildlife office or visit:

[http://wildlife.state.co.us/LandWater/COWildlifeHabitatProtection Program/](http://wildlife.state.co.us/LandWater/COWildlifeHabitatProtectionProgram/)

Enablers for High Altitude Conditions

By Dr. Cindi Schmitt, Gatusi Solutions, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

Since 2008, a small group of researchers with very diverse backgrounds began investigating the use of pyrogenic carbon (“Cpyro”) in small quantities as a soil additive. The ultimate goal is to find a recipe for using this substance along with other products, to enhance small-scale food production. In 2010 and 2011, the author presented technique descriptions to local audiences through the Harvest Center, as a way to move this research out to the general population.

Food plants growing at a high altitude respond unfavorably to a variety of stress factors, including poor soils. By establishing control parameters with the growth media, our investigations are leading to a baseline approximation for lettuces, herbs, and tomatoes. The pictures below represent progress and harvestable produce:



2010 example: these Galina growing at 9800 ft elevation, reached over 12 ft in length and yielded a multitude of yellow, sweet mini tomatoes. Although originally an heirloom type from Siberia, Galina are susceptible to high altitude stresses.

This picture taken on 2 July 2011 shows Roma tomato and lettuces in the left part of the planter are out-performing those on the right, which are in a local soil mixture minus the Cpyro. Seedlings were started 15 April 2011, sown directly into the media.



This picture taken mid July 2011 shows the [left side] Roma at over 11in high, and lettuces about 12in long. The plants on the right are stunted, thin, and typical of plants under stress. The colors are darker on the left which are more appealing to harvest. They also taste sweeter than those on the right.



Gatusi Solutions was granted 501c3 status in February 2011, with the purpose of researching high altitude sustainability solutions. Our investigations are continuing on several fronts, to include dust mitigation /habitat horticulture for space exploration and colonization in the future. A most interesting thing from that research draws a close parallel to re-vegetation of toxic soils: lunar soil is sterile and toxic, similar to highly polluted soils in superfund sites. We found that the addition of Cpyro to this kind of growth media allows plants with tough and rubbery roots, like cacti, to establish and grow.



These two pictures represent our other research aspects. The pressure vessel on the left was opened after a year and several months, by a CO State agriculture representative. We found living cacti and other things that sprouted from seeds in the local soil. The cacti roots were almost 10in long, having grown from cuttings with no roots. Samples were sent for analyses. The mini cacti in the green bowl have been growing for two years in a lunar soil mixture. Although upper plant growth is slow and sparse, the root system fills the bowl.

For high altitude sustainability and the far-reaching dreams of space horticulture, we have many planting moons to cycle our investigations. In the meantime as we discover small pieces to the puzzle, results will be shared with various communities interested in these topics.

Research team website: www.gatusisolutions.org

Darlene Jensen CACD and Dr. Cindi Schmitt, Gatusi Solutions and U of CO Colorado Springs (Adjoint Research position). Her specialized plant research began in 1990 with NASA microgravity projects (NASA MSFC: STS flights /Space Station). cschmitt@gatusisolutions.org

Forestry Fair

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts and the Colorado State Forest Service invite you to bring your family, friends, club or class to the 2011 Forestry Fair and help in celebration of the International Year of Forests. The Forestry Fair will feature forestry equipment demonstrations, facility tours, educational sessions, children’s activities and the latest innovations in forest products. Come learn about the role active forest management plays in the conservation of resources that we all share, including water, wildlife, recreation, wild-land fire and wood.

This free event will take place at the Colorado State Forest Service facilities on the Colorado State University Foothills Campus, 3843 LaPorte Ave., Fort Collins from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. on September 17th. For more information or to register for this no-cost event, contact Jamie Dahl, CSFS experiential learning coordinator, or Sara Colorosa, CSFS recruitment and hiring coordinator, at CSFS_ForestryFair@mail.colostate.edu. We look forward to seeing you on September 17th as we continue to celebrate the International Year of Forests!



Camp Rocky



A record number of students (88) attended the 2011 Camp Rocky.

Camp Rocky, a natural resources management program for teens 14 through 19 years of age, again saw another record number of attendees this year. With the camp completing its 49th year, 88 students engaged in the natural resource management camp in Divide, Colorado. The Camp Rocky natural resource management professional instructors and volunteers helped the students learn about their environment through hands-on experience, with instruction in five principles; rangeland science, fish and wildlife management, forest management, recreation management and soil and water conservation. The students worked in teams implementing their work plans at the end of the program.

Many thanks to the instructors and partners in conservation who gave of their time and expertise at Camp Rocky--Co-Director Naomi Marcus, Patty Knupp, Jacob McCarthy, Maren Kempton, Leah Fugere, Nick Young, Heather Lindsey, Mark Platten, Vern Vinson, Pam Wright, Jan Manning, Kim Diller, Ben Berlinger, Dan Nosal, Beth Fortman, Karl Mauch, Megan Lowery, Kamie Long, Tad Litwin, Cassie Karley and family, Sarah Letendre, Abbey Neel, Grant Slinger, and Darlene Jensen.

The experiences at Camp Rocky provide many students just
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the catalyst they need to engage in natural resources management in their studies and many seek out careers in related principles. The instructors at Camp Rocky make these experiences possible.

Camp Rocky's record year was attributable to the sponsorships and in-kind contributions of the conservation partners of Camp Rocky. Thank you to the many Conservation Districts within Colorado that provided students with scholarships to attend Camp Rocky. Several of these students would not have been able to attend without scholarships. Also thank you to the Izaak Walton League, the CACD Auxiliary, the Conservation District's Employees Association, and the Grazing Land Conservation Initiative Committee (GLCI) through NRCS for sponsoring students to attend Camp Rocky. Conservation partners provide Camp Rocky the continued support which makes the program tick and without their valuable contributions of funding and in-kind support the program would be limited.

Sincere appreciation is extended to our partners for their funding and in-kind contributions to this valuable conservation education program: Bureau of Reclamation NRCS, CSFS, CACD, Coalition for the Upper South Platte, Colorado Division of Wildlife, USEPA,

CO/WY Society of American Foresters, Larimer County Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resource Ecology Lab, Project Learning Tree, Stagestop Llamas, USFS, CO Section Society for Range Management, GLCI, CSU Extension and Forest Wise Inc., for the invaluable financial and in-kind support of Camp Rocky 2011. Next year Camp Rocky will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. Early applications are encouraged by visiting www.coloradoacd.org/camprocky



Tessa Lindahl takes water sample.

CACD and its partners have had the privilege through the Camp Rocky program to work with students from across Colorado who are exceptional young men and women. The impact of the Camp Rocky program is expressed through the words of two students who participated in the 2011 program.

Camp Rocky and What It Means To Me

By Jordan Lestina

Jordan Lestina is a veteran Camp Rocky student who will be returning for the 2012 Camp Rocky program as a Junior Leader. Jordan will also be entering college at CSU this fall and plans to study soil sciences. He is a recent recipient of a Boettcher scholarship. With 1600 applications, Jordan was one of 40 to be named a Boettcher scholar this year.

Each summer, the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts sponsors a conservation camp called Camp Rocky. Roughly seventy to eighty students attend this camp and each student selects to participate in one of the five disciplines that encompass the field of conservation. This camp can have many different meanings to each camper, but to me, this camp provides a chance for those who attend to learn about conservation and teamwork, while building character at the same time.

This camp provides a fun yet professional setting to assist campers in developing teamwork skills that will be needed for our future. Within each discipline, the campers must work together to find and solve conservation issues located on the camp's property. Professionals in each of the disciplines guide us through this process, and as a result, we each develop teamwork skills that are needed in the professional world. Eventually, all five disciplines have to work together to complete



Camp Rocky students work on slope erosion control.



Students receive instruction in setting check dams from Rick Romano, NRCS.

their management project for the camp. Very few camps for me provide this opportunity to work with others in both small and large group settings, and in my opinion, has been the most effective camp in developing these skills.

Camp Rocky also places all of its campers outside of their normal comfort zones, which to me, is important in building character. This experience taught me how to be more open and friendly to those I may not know and respect those who are different from me. I discovered that each one of us has something special to offer to others and the world and it is these aspects of my character that are of the most importance to me. Without these, the friends I have made and the success that I have had in my life may have not been possible. This camp has had an impact on my life that very few camps before have ever had on me.

Finally, Camp Rocky provides a service that, to me, is important in today's society. This camp educates today's youth about the importance of conservation and it is here that tomorrow's conservationists are created. The natural beauty that we experience today would not have been possible without the work of past conservationists and this is a tradition that needs to be continued. Camp Rocky provides a hope that this tradition will continue and that we can still use and enjoy our world's natural resources for future generations to come."



Forest management activities



Rotational grazing and reseeded area.

Tessa Lindahl resides in the Steamboat Springs area and completed her first year at Camp Rocky this year. Tessa participated in the newest principle at Camp Rocky, recreation management, where students engage in trail management and safety, working in identification of hazard trees and maintaining trails. Tessa is the granddaughter of Bruce Lindahl, a significant partner to CACD for many years through his role on the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Committee. Next year Tessa will be returning to Camp Rocky as junior leader alternate which appointment is exceptional for a second year Camp Rocky student.

What Camp Rocky Means To Me

By Tessa Lindahl

I had never been to Camp Rocky so I was expecting the worst... I would not know anyone, I would be misplaced and I would mess up and have everyone laugh and laugh. Yet the worst did not happen...the best did. I have made friends and people I have only been recently acquainted with say hello to me. I fit in and have found out that everyone here has the same interests that I do. And the information I gain from Camp Rocky will set me apart and open up more doors for careers.

Without Camp Rocky, I would not have these wonderful experiences and friends that I will cherish for the rest of my life. I would not have had more chances to do what I want to and learn more than I would in school. I want to thank Darlene for giving me this chance; the conservation district for sponsoring me, my parents for driving me 8 hours from Steamboat Springs and my Grandfather for encouraging me to try Camp Rocky. I am glad that they helped make this happen for me. "



Students create fire line



Soil studies

Teachers Learn About Fire Ecology, Forest Health at CSFS Workshop

By Courtney Peterson, Colorado State Forest Service

In June, the Colorado State Forest Service hosted a free weeklong Fire Ecology Institute at the Fort Lewis College campus in Durango to educate Colorado teachers about wildfire. At the workshop, attending teachers from across the state learned about the science behind wildfires from biologists, ecologists, firefighters, foresters and hydrologists.

Workshop participants visited forests still recovering from previous wildfires, learned about wildfire as it relates to forest health and obtained materials about fire ecology to use in lesson plans to teach their students this fall.

Shawna Crocker, Project Learning Tree coordinator for the CSFS, was the primary facilitator of the workshop. She said this year's workshop netted a wide range of educators.

Our group was more diverse than usual, with both formal classroom and non-formal educators who have an opportunity to deliver the knowledge gained to a correspondingly diverse audience of learners throughout the state," she said

Others who helped Crocker plan and facilitate the workshop included Lu Boren, a middle school science teacher from Durango; Gabi Morey, education outreach program director for the San Juan Mountain Association; Kent Grant, district forester for the CSFS Durango District; and Craig Goodell, fire mitigation and education specialist for San Juan Public Lands. The facilitators led the teachers on hikes and activities through areas that have experienced wildfires in the past and to communities that are in the process of reducing hazards around their property and homes to mitigate against potential wildfires.

This trip served as a huge eye opener, not only to the complexity of the forested environments we are so seemingly familiar with in this area, but also the possible complexity of the learning experiences we expose to our students," said institute attendee Susan Goddard, an English teacher from Durango.

As part of the curriculum, the Colorado educators travelled to the area around Vallecito and Lemon reservoirs, where the 2002 Missionary Ridge Fire burned more than 70,000 acres. They also learned about fire rules and regulations in Mesa Verde National Park, participated in a fire simulation demonstration and experienced digging a fire line and climbing into a fire shelter.

My mind is still racing through all the material that I learned during this course, thinking of more and better ways to present those concepts to my family, my students and my community," Goddard said.

The educators also received activities they can use to teach their students about fire ecology in Colorado's forests. For example, one activity involved creating matchstick forests on a masonite board – a simulation that demonstrates fire behavior during different upslope and downslope conditions. Teachers removed matches to create their own "forest" fuelbreaks to see how they might affect actual wildfire behavior. Participants were also given the Project Learning Tree curriculum, which provides modules to help their students explore many other environmental issues.

The teachers completed the workshop with a deeper understanding of fire ecology in Colorado, and the tremendous work it takes for communities to protect their homes and properties against potential wildfires, according to Crocker. The CSFS has offered the Fire Ecology Institute in eight of the past ten years. Funds from CSFS State Fire Assistance Wildland-Urban Interface grants are used to help cover costs of the workshop.

For more information on the institute, contact Shawna Crocker at (303) 202-4662 or visit www.coloradopl.org.



Above: Teachers clad in fire resistant Nomex shirts learn how to dig fireline. Right: Teachers at the FEI workshop examine cookies cut from trees burned by wildfire.

Photos courtesy of CSFS

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Silent Auction/Revised Forms

By Sally Fosha, President, CACD Auxiliary


The months are coming and going rather quickly and the CACD Annual Meeting is only four months away! If you haven't already, it is time to be thinking about the Silent Auction and Raffle that the Auxiliary and CACD Employees will be hosting.

We are going to use a new format that we hope will be easier on everyone for registering your donated item. The new forms can be found at coloradoacd.org. The Silent Auction form will be printed as page 1; the Bid form will be printed as page 2 on the back of page 1. You will ONLY have to file ONE form for each item donated by filling out the front and back of the one piece of paper.

There are 76 Conservation Districts throughout Colorado and we hope each of you will join us in the endeavor to raise money for educating our youth in agriculture and conservation. The funds raised also go for scholarships to Camp Rocky; distribution of the *Colorado Reader* to all 6th graders who participate; as well as prizes for the 6th grade poster contest. It is a wonderful opportunity for the younger generation to learn about conservation in this beautiful state of ours – Colorado!

Your donations can be for an adult or child; something for any holiday; farm or ranch gadgets; an item that has gently been used but no longer useful in your household; as an artist you can donate your talent with your business card – whatever your imagination comes up with – within reason of course! We will again have a craft corner for those that like to sew, do beading, photography, weaving, carving, canning – so surprise us with your talent and we will make sure this is the best Silent Auction ever!

Please do not hesitate to contact either of us with any questions or concerns about your donated item. Sally Fosha at foshabsr@calhan.net or Val Loose at Val.Loose@co.nacdnet.net




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Colorado Association of Conservation Districts

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1 _____

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White River and Douglas Creek CDs Host Events

Rangeland Health Monitoring Workshop



Robbie LeValley teaches attendees about Rangeland Health Monitoring.

The White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts hosted a CRMI workshop for landowners, BLM/Forest Service permittees, and agency personnel on June 1, 2011. Twenty attendees participated in the workshop and learned about the CRMI and hands on rangeland monitoring. In order to ensure the health of Colorado's natural resources for wildlife and domestic livestock, monitoring needs to be implemented across Colorado's landscape. The *Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative* is a tool that will provide measurable and standardized monitoring information that is needed to address natural resource and rangeland health decisions.

CRMI Background: The *Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative* was developed by a group of stakeholders in order to develop a standardized approach to rangeland monitoring across private, state, and federal lands. This initiative brought stakeholders to the table to delineate common protocols and methods that currently exist between agencies and the range science community. Because the *Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative* was developed through a stakeholder process, this program has broad ownership and acceptance by private landowners, state and federal agencies, and rangeland conservationists throughout the state.

CRMI Assurance Package Benefits for Producers: Preserves the producer's data in a system that can be accessed at any time to extract data or meaningful reports; Online user-friendly format for data entry and access; Multiple monitoring sites can be entered into the database; Database is confidential; Database and program implementation support and technical service assistance; Implementation of rangeland monitoring program that has broad ownership and acceptance; and Increased opportunities and benefits from land management agencies.

For more information on CRMI, please visit the Programs Page on the Colorado Cattlemen's Association's (CCA) web site at <http://www.coloradocattle.org/>.



Attendees get hands on experience in Rangeland Health Monitoring at the Workshop held by White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts.

White River CD Appreciation BBQ



On Friday, July 8th the White River Conservation District hosted their Annual Appreciation BBQ at the Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center. The district board members and staff cooked racks of ribs all day and served homemade pies and watermelon for dessert. The rain stopped just in time for over 120 people to come in and enjoy a good meal and mingle with the Conservation District, FSA and NRCS staff.

Range Call Fourth of July Parade



The Douglas Creek and White River Conservation Districts participated in the Annual Range Call 4th of July parade in Meeker, CO.

Upper Huerfano CD's Cost-Share History Impressive

By Carol Sirko-Dunn, Upper Huerfano Conservation District

The Upper Huerfano Conservation District in Walsenburg has been sponsoring a cost-share program for on-the-ground conservation projects for the past four years. In that time, 50 projects have been completed at a total value of \$232,829, saving over 10,000 tons of soil. A significant number of the landowners served were women, disadvantaged or limited-resource producers.

To kick-start the program, the District received funding from the Colorado State Conservation Board in the form of a matching grant. The State provided funding, and the requirement was that the District had to match that with cash from its own budget or from program participants. In the Huerfano program, participants pay half the cost of their project, and the District matches that up to a maximum of \$3,000. The cost-share program was so successful that, when the District was turned down for matching grant funding in 2010, the Board of Supervisors decided to continue to fund the program from its mill levy tax revenues.

The 2011 program funded 14 projects worth a total of \$59,441.68: a 500 foot well; a headgate; pumping plant solar panels; a stockwater pit; a sediment basin; solar panels with pipeline and tank; 1500 feet of irrigation pipeline; two inlet structures; 16 water control structures; and 4300 linear feet of pipeline and a 1691 gallon tank. The District invested over \$25,000 in the program this



Conservation Technician Don Sanchez (right) and local rancher Bill Riggins with cost-share project near La Veta.

year, and the completed projects are checked periodically to ensure that they are maintained and working properly.

The cost-share program is coordinated by the District's Conservation Technician, Donald Sanchez. Sanchez retired from the Natural Resources Conservation Service as a Soil Conservation Technician, and with over 40 years of experience, he was a natural fit for the program. Sanchez lives locally and already had a working relationship with a majority of the ag producers in Huerfano County. The District Board attributes a great portion of the cost-share program's success to Sanchez and his knowledge of the conservation needs and opportunities in Huerfano County.

Renewable Energy Project Free Technical Assistance

By Jerry Schwen, CACD

The Colorado Governor's Energy Office's Renewable Energy Development Team (REDT) has a program available to provide 120 hours of FREE technical assistance to support renewable energy projects that do not have the financial capabilities to move forward to an investor and/or project developer review stage without additional assistance.

A link to the application, application questions and a list of eligible projects is available on the Colorado Governor's Energy Office Recharge Colorado web site:

http://rechargecolorado.com/index.php/programs_overview/renewable_energy/renewable_energy_development_team/

Mesa CD and Bureau of Reclamation Assist Landowners

When Clarence Wood bought his 227 acre irrigated farm in the Grand Valley of Western Colorado, he quickly found out that the labor involved in irrigating was more than he and his family had time for. Although he has good water rights, the old broken concrete ditches and dirt ditches were difficult to clean and maintain. The main canal and the group lateral pipeline that serves his property had been improved many years ago through the Grand Valley Salinity Control Program, so getting water to the farm was no problem. But getting the water to the fields was a different matter.



Clarence Wood next to BOR turn out delivering water to his new pipeline. Louis Hartbauer, Mesa CD technician inspecting Wood pipeline.

About two years ago Clarence decided to request assistance from the Mesa Conservation District and the local Natural Resources



Conservation Service Field Office to see what could be done. As a result, over the last two years Clarence installed a complete irrigation system on the entire 227 acres with financial assistance from the Basin States Parallel Program funds administered by the Mesa Conservation District and provided by the Bureau of Reclamation. Clarence installed 16,200 feet of underground pipeline delivering water to 9365 ft of gated pipeline. Clarence says that time savings is a large part of what he likes about the system, saving as much as 65% of the time previously spent irrigating with his old system. Clarence was also impressed with the amount of coordination between the NRCS, Mesa CD, the canal company and the contractor, allowing the project to "fall together nicely".

Clarence's project is typical of the over 1200 individual irrigation projects completed in the Grand Valley Salinity Control Project area over the last thirty years. With funding from the Bureau of Reclamation, NRCS, and the Mesa Conservation District, a true team effort, the Grand Valley project is very nearly complete.



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