



COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



THE CONSERVATOR

**Education- The Roots
of Conservation**

Spring 2021 Issue

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Photo Credit: Rita Kleve

Cover Photo: Laurie Cook

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The mission of CACD is to serve as the unified voice for the Conservation Districts of Colorado; facilitating outreach, education, and support of landowners in their stewardship of natural resources.



Photo Credit: Matthew Lahn

A Message from our President

Greetings Everyone,

As we have put 2020 behind us and are already three months into 2021, I would not have thought that we would still be dealing with so many challenges with COVID-19. I stated in my last letter that we have all faced obstacles like no other and we have had to persevere. Well, we persevered and it has brought us to a place of continual adaptation as we continue to face old and new challenges in the world of farming, ranching, and continuing decades of successful conservation practices on our land.

I would like to commend all producers, Conservation Districts, and all the folks who work so hard for conservation for their perseverance and determination in these times. We will continue to adapt, while still holding tight to our values and our way of life. I believe this is important now more than ever.

With that being said, I am excited about this issue of the Conservator and the theme of education. It is critical that we continue to educate our youth and adults on the agricultural industry and the conservation of our natural resources. CACD and the Colorado Conservation Districts have put some great educational programs together, along with our state partners, even in these times of Zoom and social distancing.

Even though last year threw a wrench in these programs, I am very hopeful that we are going to be able to move forward this year with a combination of virtual and in-person programs as we continue to adapt. Keep up the great work and please reach out to CACD as we keep working to grow a stronger statewide partnership toward agricultural conservation efforts that work for our stakeholders.

Before I sign off, I want to extend a sincere “Thank You” to our former CACD Director, Steve McEndree. I know I speak for the entire board when I express appreciation for the work he put into serving CACD and the Districts. We wish him the best!

I would also like to welcome our new CACD Director, Joe Pope, who will represent the Lower Arkansas Watershed. Joe comes from a long history of family farming and ranching. He moved from Missouri in the early 1900’s to farm and raise cattle in the Olney Boone area and has a successful history of implementing best management practices on his land. We look forward to having him join our organization!

Thank you for all that you do for conservation in Colorado.



Sincerely,

Scott Jones, CACD President



Camp Rocky

Since 1963, Camp Rocky has offered a different take on the traditional summer camp experience. A week-long residential program situated at a facility just outside Divide, Camp Rocky offers 14 to 19 year-olds the opportunity to experience the best of a traditional summer camp, while also learning about natural resource careers and working directly with professional staff from various natural resources fields. Students choose to focus on Forestry Management, Soil and Water Management, Rangeland Management or Fish and Wildlife Management track, then engage in hands-on learning, topical volunteer projects, and discussion about how to succeed professionally in the field. Their focus culminates in a practical management project that they engage in with their peers and professional leaders.

CACD believes strongly in developing the next generation of Colorado conservationists, and Camp Rocky plays a critical part in that endeavor. This year, Camp will have a strong focus on the history and importance of Colorado's Conservation Districts.

Our goal is to produce well-informed ambassadors of the Conservation Districts, who can help build connections between the Districts and the community.

While there is a strong educational focus to Camp Rocky, we also recognize the need for students to enjoy their summer and connect with new friends from across Colorado in a social environment. This is especially critical this year, when so many students have experienced changes to their schools and extra-curricular activities. We are proud to offer a well-rounded residential camp experience in a beautiful outdoor setting, where campers participate in hiking, campfires, low-ropes challenge courses, and many more aspects of the traditional camp experience.

Please consider working with your local education partners to highlight Camp Rocky to local students. Getting the word out is critical to ensuring that the next generation of ambassadors for your district are engaged with the broader conservation community. We also encourage Districts to offer scholarships to students to make attendance possible. Marketing materials that can be customized with your District's



information will be shared very soon.

Join the Camp Rocky Team!

Do you know someone who is interested in conservation, education, or is just passionate about working with youth? We are excited to welcome volunteers over the age of 18 who are passionate about working with high school-aged youth for a week of experiential learning combined with traditional summer camp fun! Please contact Noah McCord if you are interested, or visit our staffing page to learn more.

Contact Information:

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- Amy Gossman, Co-Director - amy.camprocky@gmail.com
- Noah McCord, Co-Director - noah.mccord@state.co.us C) 303.947.3334

Camp Rocky SAVE THE DATE: July 11-16, 2021

Camp Rocky is sponsored by the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts and strongly sponsored by the Colorado Conservation Districts; along with additional financial and volunteer help from Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS), Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) and staff and many other natural resource conservation partners.

Colorado Envirothon

Colorado Envirothon is a statewide competition between local teams aimed at encouraging high school students to pursue and expand their interests in natural resources and conservation issues. Winners of the state and provincial competitions are eligible to compete at the North American Envirothon Competition, sponsored by the National Conservation Foundation.

The program aims to offer students interested in conservation a way to engage in a productive co-curricular competition that bolsters their knowledge of conservation practices, encourages a cooperative approach, and enhances their readiness to enter the workforce or pursue relevant education beyond high school. Teams compete in topic areas that include soils, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and a current environmental issue specific to Colorado.

Colorado Envirothon was established in 2012 by representatives of several agencies and organizations throughout Colorado including the West Greeley Conservation District, Center Conservation District, Rio Grande Conservation District, Future Farmers of America, Colorado Association of Conservation Districts and the National Resource Conservation Services (NRCS), the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB). On May 5, 2013, Colorado held its first state competition.

The NCF-Envirothon builds leadership skills for high school students in the United States, Canada and China. The program educates future stewards, promotes E-STEM (environment, science, technology, engineering, and math) education, creates community awareness, and fosters appreciation and respect for the natural world.

Envirothon is a program of the National Conservation Foundation (NCF) and is supported by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). As sister organizations, the NCF and NACD share a common mission of locally led conservation with the NCF focused on developing the next generation of conservation leaders.

A Brief History: In 1979, the Pennsylvania Soil and Water Conservation Districts created an “Environmental Olympics” competition as an approach aimed to encourage high school students to become interested in natural resource conservation and environmental issues. The Environmental Olympics, later shortened to Enviro-Olympics, quickly gained popularity as a hands-on outdoor competition designed to challenge and test each student’s knowledge of soils, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and current environmental issues.

For nearly a decade, the Pennsylvania Enviro-Olympics program demonstrated its ability to promote environmental literacy and supplement education in grades 9-12. The program quickly grew to include participation by 40 conservation district teams at the 1987 Pennsylvania State Enviro-Olympics, providing greater visibility for the program and stimulating the interest of neighboring states.





In 1988 the program became known as the Envirothon. That year, teams from Ohio, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania competed at the first National Envirothon hosted and sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts.

CO Envirothon 2021 Envirothon - Join the Process!

Planning to transition to a virtual Colorado Envirothon for 2021 is well underway. In April, students from around the state will compete against each other in a format designed to resemble previous in-person events while accommodating the changes that schools have had to conform to this year. Experts in each of the topic areas have prepared virtual workshops, where students will be guided through hands-on exercises and evaluated on their application of newly learned practical skills. Understanding that the events of this year have resulted in a significant increase in self-paced studies, the 2021 competition will focus more on the application of skill and the analysis of findings, rather than memorization of facts and figures. In an effort to restore a sense of normalcy after a very abnormal year of education, virtual social gatherings, opening and award ceremonies, and mentoring sessions will be held. Students in most schools will be able to gather in person with their teams, and virtually connect with competing teams from around the state.

As with Camp Rocky; CACD remains as the non-profit sponsor for the Colorado Envirothon, and continues to partner closely with CSCB, NRCS and Conservation Districts in this great educational competition. We are excited to work with Noah McCord from CSCB, who is the new Envirothon Program Manager for CACD.

An in-person event is always preferable, but given the logistical challenges faced by schools and teachers this year, this virtual format will allow CACD to deliver the same top-tier programming to a broader group of students than ever before. Because the cost and logistics of attending a multi-day event have been mitigated, it is easier than ever for teams to participate. Conservation Districts and any friends of the conservation community are encouraged to connect with local educators or other co-curricular programs (4H and FFA, for example) to recruit their participation in this year's program. Interested parties can be directed to the Envirothon website at coloenvirothon.org, or can contact Noah McCord directly to learn more. Sponsoring or even simply organizing an Envirothon team is a great way for Conservation Districts to increase their visibility in their local communities, and cultivate strong and lasting partnerships with key educational organizations.

The Colorado Envirothon committee would like to thank all of the conservation districts, financial sponsors, contest volunteers, instructors, judges, NRCS and the CSCB Board and staff for the continued support over the years, which has made the Colorado Envirothon such a success!

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In Conversation: Educating the Next Generation of Conservationists

We sat down with Bethany Howell and Mendy Stewart to discuss how they develop effective youth education programs and why conservation education is so important. Bethany is the Executive Director for the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation Initiative and Mendy is the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Shavano Conservation District.

What do your programs entail?

Bethany: In a pre-COVID year, we have three main focus areas. 1) Class to Field: We teach lessons in K-12 classrooms then take them on field trips to see the concepts in action. 2) Special programs like Envirothon where we work with high school students on natural resource workshops and introduce them to career paths within the natural resource realm. 3) Summer programs like our youth conservation camp, which is a three day camp for kids 8-12 years old. We partner with a diverse array of organizations who lead lessons and activities at the camp.

Mendy: For K-5th grade students, we give resource stewardship presentations using our Enviroscape model. Our goal is to get into the classroom every year so every student gets to see a presentation annually. Repetition and familiarity allow us to expand on concepts over time. We host a Natural Resources Festival for our 4th grade students. We keep the festival relevant to the School District by covering an array of topics required in their curriculum standards. We also invite private schools, homeschooled children, and neighboring school districts. Similar to Bethany's camp, we partner with many agencies and organizations who lead activities. We conduct a 6th grade poster contest and a 9th grade Mancos shale soil testing experiment.



Students learn about aquatic ecology from Trout Unlimited at a workshop in the San Luis Valley. **Photo: Bethany Howell**

Can you speak to the importance of working within curriculum guidelines?

Mendy: Activities need to be directly related to a curriculum requirement instead of just a fun day. We revisit the curriculum every year because standards change so often. It is a lot harder to get school administrators to approve guest speakers if they can't point back to a specific learning objective or outcome, particularly one that is STEM related. There is a lot of testing and structure in schools, so there is little room for variance from curriculum. I work to make it as easy as I can for teachers to fit our activities into their lesson plans.

Bethany: During COVID, we revamped our website with activities and resources for teachers and homeschool parents. They are all broken up into age groups and in alignment with Colorado standards and directly point to each standard. Be flexible to what the school needs and don't feel tightly tied to your agenda, while still meeting your own objectives. If we need to shift our objectives a bit, we can do so more easily than a school. Ask them, "What do you need? How can we help you?"

What resources would you recommend for working within curriculums?

Bethany: Project WET, Project WILD, Project Learning Tree, and Colorado Ag in the Classroom are good places to start. Since the pandemic, there are endless lesson plans and activities available online. The state of Utah has a robust pool of water education activities online. I encourage people to explore. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. There's a lot out there.

Mendy: I agree, and I would note that those resources point to exactly which curriculum requirement each activity addresses, making it easy to find relevant material.

How have your programs shifted since COVID?

Mendy: It has been interesting. When schools rapidly shifted to virtual, instead of working to film my own demonstrations with the Enviroscape, I found videos online that were already well made and distributed them to teachers. For our Natural Resource Festival, I tried to connect teachers to high quality resources for them to distribute to their students. I also got a hold of some local beekeepers and did a virtual beehive tour with 5th graders. No matter the circumstances, we weren't going to take 90 students to active beehives, so virtual tours really opened up an opportunity.

Bethany: Our board decided in February to focus on digital strategies to encourage teachers to use them in their classroom since getting kids outside is a bigger commitment. COVID worked out well since we were already on the path of amping up our digital presence. After giving everyone some time to breathe, we revamped our website platform with a lot of resources for teachers and homeschooling parents. We also recorded a beehive video!

Why is conservation education important?

Mendy: Conservation is the wise use of natural resources. We have this concept, students especially, that conservation means not using resources. We have to help them

understand wise use. We are going to use resources. This is not just a philosophical concept, but a daily engagement with the resources we use. If you eat food and use a backpack, you use resources. We must teach them how to view them as such and then use them wisely.

Bethany: When people become aware of things, they're on a spectrum for engagement. The more they know, the more they care, the more they'll take action to get engaged. How do we get our community members engaged? It is a very long process and it begins with education. Starting at a young age is the best way to start the process. Don't ever take for granted what people might know. Everybody starts somewhere.

What makes you hopeful for the future?

Mendy: I think there is a growing awareness that agriculture is a solution, not the problem. We still are fighting the concept that agriculture is the issue, but I think that is shifting.

Bethany: Children. This generation is so smart. They genuinely care about issues, are willing to think critically, and put in the work to fix them. If you're feeling depressed about the state of the world, spend some time around children.



How to Host a Conservation Workshop

By Alyssa Clarida, CSCB

Hosting a workshop is an excellent way for Conservation Districts to disseminate information and skills to their constituents. Workshops tend to be informal and participatory. Discussion and question asking amongst participants is encouraged, which furthers collaboration opportunities and knowledge sharing. Some level of expertise on the subject matter is required and Conservation Districts are in a great position to pull in subject matter experts from their many partners, like CSU Extension, NRCS, and local landowners. There are many possibilities for intriguing and useful workshop topics and Conservation Districts are well suited to host an event.

Being prepared is the best way to ensure the workshop is a success. Here are some considerations for workshop planning and hosting.

Picking a Topic

- What are the needs of your stakeholders?
- Have there been repeated requests for information on a topic?
- Are there any new developments that will impact producers? I.e. Farm Bill changes, water issues, etc.
- Do you have experts available to speak on the subject matter?
- Examples: irrigation efficiency technology, noxious weed management, cover cropping,

rotational grazing, composting, backyard gardening, hemp cultivation, and drought management.

Before the workshop

- 1) Define the goals: What is the purpose of this workshop? What information or skills will participants take away from the event?
- 2) Decide who will attend: What is the target audience? What do they already know? What information will serve them best?
- 3) Choose a location and time: Pick a time and place that is accessible to the participants and is mindful of the availability of participants. Is it calving, harvest, planting, irrigation season? Will more people be available in the morning or at night? When in the year is the information most relevant? Will the event be in-person or online? It is best to avoid a post-lunch workshop since people tend to get sleepy.
- 4) Create an agenda: Consider the flow of events and how to create and maintain engagement.





5) Appoint a facilitator: Select someone to introduce speakers, facilitate conversations, ask prepared questions, and stick to the agenda. Choose a person who is dynamic, engaging, relatable to the participants, and skilled at creating dialogue.

6) Identify speakers: Who is a subject matter expert that will present the information well? Consider using a collaborative approach. For example, visit a ranch to look at their irrigation system and bring an NRCS expert to speak about irrigation assistance programs and a CSU Extension agent to discuss the science of soil moisture monitoring.

7) Consider physical needs: Will participants be fed? Will they get coffee or water? Is there a bathroom accessible? If a field tour is involved, will there be transportation provided or will people drive themselves? If there are pandemic guidelines, can the event be held in accordance to them?

8) Develop a follow up plan: Collect contact information from willing participants and follow up to ensure they are engaged in further Conservation District events and outreach. Consider giving participants a short survey to help create useful events in the future.

During the Workshop

- Participatory: Get people involved with hands-on activities. For example, if the topic is soil health, consider getting into the field and digging around in the soil. Have questions prepared for the participants. Ask them about their own practices. Workshops can be an excellent opportunity

for not only the hosts to share information, but participants as well.

- Record ideas: If there are input, brainstorming, or discussion sessions, have someone ready to record the outcomes of those. There may be valuable tidbits worth reviewing after the event.
- Keep it moving: The facilitator should make sure the conversation and agenda keeps flowing. There is an art to allowing side conversations to develop when it serves the group and knowing when to redirect back to the subject at hand.
- Provide materials: Consider having printed material available with relevant information. For example, agendas, noxious weed booklets, flyers for EQIP programs, the speakers' business cards, Conservation District flyers, upcoming events, etc.
- Stick around after: People will often mill about after a workshop to ask further questions and talk to other participants. Be available to talk about the Conservation District, partner programs, and other relevant information that will help promote the District and its partners.

With preparation and the right topic, any Conservation District can host a fruitful workshop. For assistance on hosting a workshop, contact your local CSCB Regional Field Specialist, conservation partners, or other Conservation Districts throughout the state or country.

2021 CACD Educational and Speakership Program

In cooperation with our Federal Partner, NRCS, CACD is pleased to be able to continue to offer funding for the 2021 District Education/Outreach Workshops & Speakership Programs!

These programs will continue to provide funding to assist Conservation Districts and Watershed Associations with educational workshops, outreach, video productions, and speakership programs. Eligible projects and programs provide education and outreach at the local level to children and adults pertaining to natural resource conservation issues. Relevant topics will be identified by CACD to NRCS based on the wants and needs of Districts through their projects and District or Watershed meetings.

The purpose of the speakership program for Watershed meetings and Conservation District annual meetings is to enhance education and outreach through improved quality and attendance. Doing so is in the best interest of Conservation Districts, CACD, and NRCS.

Education Workshops, Video Production & Speakership Program Details:

Districts are eligible to apply for up to \$3,000 depending on the project. All natural resource and conservation related topics are eligible.

Districts will need to fill out the application with a brief narrative and budget information and submit to CACD for approval. Once approved, the District is able to submit a reimbursement request for the project through CACD after the event or project is completed. Required match is 50/50. Districts will need to match the amount of funds requested from CACD 100% through District, state, and other non-federal funding sources. Documentation of receipts and invoices will be required of all expenses.

District Manager or Employee pay for coordinating the event is 50% reimbursable, as long as it is not matched in another NRCS agreement of any type.

Pre-approved travel expenses, contractual expenses, printing (as long as materials are not printed from an NRCS printer), publication expenses, and supplies are eligible up to 50% reimbursement. The sponsorship award will also help cover expenses related to speaker fees, travel, lodging, AV equipment, venue costs, printing materials, publication costs and supplies up to 50%. All virtual workshops and meetings are eligible.

CACD will be required to pre-approve the speaker(s) and topic(s) prior to the event in order to be eligible for program expense reimbursement.

The cost of food or admin fees outside of aforementioned staff time are not eligible for reimbursement or qualified match.

All Colorado Conservation Districts are eligible to apply regardless of CACD dues payment status.

For more information please contact CACD by email: bobbi@coloradoacd.org



Success Story:

Mt. Sopris Conservation District

The Missouri Heights - Mountain Meadow Irrigation Company (MMIC) is an incorporated ditch company in the Roaring Fork Valley of Colorado, and a cooperator with the Mount Sopris Conservation District. The ditch is approximately 6 miles long and provides irrigation water to 54 users on a total of 2,000 acres, of which, approximately 65% to 75% are considered agricultural. Missouri Heights, like all of Garfield and Eagle County, has seen rapid population growth and development in recent years. This growth puts increased demand on the water in the Roaring Fork River.



New Ditch Lining product used on this project called “Smart Ditch”

With planning and technical assistance through the Conservation District, the MMIC installed practices to correct or improve identified water issues along the ditch. The pipeline reduced water loss to evaporation and water seepage and lowered salts and other contaminants. The goal was to promote sustaining agriculture by reducing water loss with proper use and application of water, and reduce erosion in the irrigation ditches. MMIC retained an engineering firm to complete an inventory of the entire ditch. This inventory has been used to help prioritize the highest need segments of the ditch and assisted in funding and phasing of the projects over the last five years.

In the first phase, completed spring of 2014, MMIC installed 3,500 feet of “Smart Ditch” plastic lining to stop water seepage through the ditch section just below the reservoir. Engineering and design assistance was provided by the NRCS. In the second phase, MMIC lined 5750 of open ditch with plastic pipe and installed inlet, cleaning, and diversion structures. In the next phase, MMIC installed 4280 ft of pipe along with a concrete headwall. In the final phase, completed in the spring of 2020, 1960 ft of ditch were piped and a concrete headwall, box, and turnout were installed.

The completed pipeline is 14,640 feet long with an additional 3,500 feet of lining in the Smart Ditch. The total cost of this pipeline project was \$1,728,000.00. It is important to note that these improvements protect two pre-1922 water rights totaling 53 cfs.

The Missouri Heights – Mountain Meadows Irrigation Ditch Company would like to thank the assistance of the Mount Sopris Conservation District, NRCS, CWCB, Colorado River Water Conservation District, Dennis Davidson, Mike Kishimoto, and Sharie Prow for their assistance throughout the entire project.

The MMIC users have completed this project to protect and restore healthy streams, rivers, lakes, and riparian areas by reducing erosion and salinity for now, and for the future.

The Colorado First Conservation District Develops Programs Based on Local Needs

By Kacey Green, Colorado First Conservation District Manager

Moffat County, Colorado, is located in the northwest corner of the state and is the 2nd largest County in Colorado. According to the 2014 Census, Moffat County has a population density of 2.9 persons per square mile. The wide open spaces of Moffat County provide habitat for abundant wildlife and production agriculture. The Colorado First Conservation District (CFCD), the first Conservation District to establish in Colorado, has been a key player in promoting thriving working landscapes and educating the District's constituents about the benefits and necessity of conservation practices.

CFCD has worked to develop programs that address a variety of local resource concerns. The top three focus areas are:

- 1) CFCD will work with partnering agencies to develop a program to support landowners in the renovation of fields, pastures, and released CRP lands to a more desirable mix of plants in order to benefit soil health, wildlife, and livestock.
- 2) CFCD will increase public awareness and education for the purpose of showcasing our mission and activities, and further develop community partners through urban ag and educational outreach.
- 3) Colorado First Conservation District will continue working with partners and collaborate on noxious weed and pest control.

It is with these District goals in mind that CFCD is moving forward into 2021 with renewed energy to provide agricultural education and technical assistance to our community, both rural and urban. The District recently obtained a micro-grant through the Colorado State Internet Portal Authority (SIPA) to build a website in order to deliver education and

information through a digital platform, and we have embraced social media as a means to deliver education and outreach to a broader audience than ever before. CFCD is also pursuing a grant through the NACD Urban Ag Initiative to turn an empty city lot into an outdoor learning and demonstration site where we will showcase innovative agricultural and conservation practices for both urban and rural agriculturalists.

The citizens of our area face an uncertain economic future as our top energy industry, coal, will be leaving within the next decade. Energy industries are among Moffat County's largest employers, and as our population shifts away from fossil fuel jobs, our community recognizes the need to develop innovative economic alternatives to help our citizens prosper. The community roots of Moffat County are firmly planted in agriculture, and as our economic focus shifts, the ag community will continue to be the backbone of our economy. Connecting with urban agriculture, niche markets, expanding existing wildlife opportunities and agri-tourism have all been addressed as possible ways to help our community thrive.

CFCD understands the importance of our organization in bridging the knowledge gap between rural and urban agriculture to help our community increase capacity for food security and continue to thrive economically. Expansion and innovation in Agriculture has great potential to provide new opportunities for job growth and economic security.

CFCD is excited to forge new partnerships between our rural and urban citizens, and be proactive in moving agriculture and conservation of natural resources forward for generations to come.

Colorado State Conservation Board Updates



Please welcome Ryan Taylor to the CSCB Team!

The State Conservation Board (CSCB) Team and the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) are happy to introduce Ryan Taylor as the new Soil Health Specialist to lead CDA's voluntary Soil Health Program. Ryan is about ready to finish his Ph.D. through the Soil and Crop Science Department at CSU. A native resident of Fort Collins, Ryan is passionate about teaching people about soil science. He has managed the biogeochemistry lab for Dr. Eugene Kelly since 2012 and taught the Introduction to soil lab since 2013, he is excited to

put his academic experience to work in the field to support agricultural producers' interests in improving soil function. Ryan's first work with the Soil Health Program has been as part of the team that is building the STAR questionnaires and scoresheets for local conservation district involvement. In his personal time, Ryan is an industrial hemp farmer, beer brewer, and dedicated family man. He loves any kind of fishing that can be imagined, as well as camping, hiking, hunting, basketball AND COOKING. Before becoming a soil geek, Ryan ran his own log home construction business and built homes all over the western U.S.

Ryan's first tasks are to finish the STAR framework for local implementation and seek feedback from conservation districts, producers and other stakeholders. As travel opens, he is excited to get out to meet with our conservation partners throughout the state. Ryan can be reached at ryan.taylor@state.co.us.

CONSERVATION CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Have you recently welcomed a new Supervisor to your District board or have affiliates who would benefit from learning about the history of Colorado's Soil Conservation movement? CSCB's voluntary District Supervisor Certification Program is a great way for new or seasoned Supervisors, staff, and partners to learn about the history of local and national conservation efforts, the fundamental logistics of operating a District, and ideas for building partnerships and programming.

CSCB has re-imagined the District Supervisor Certification program and is pleased to now offer an improved online training option. Districts can still complete 'offline' versions of the program as a group at Board meetings or workshops, or new Supervisors can complete the training at their own pace and convenience. As a reminder, if all of your District Supervisors have completed the Certification Program, they will all receive a vest recognizing their commitment to conservation efforts. DCTs and other partners of your District who complete the Certification Program along with your board will also receive a gift recognizing their commitment to Colorado's Conservation Districts. Visit cscbtraining.state.co.us to explore the revised Certification Program today!

Funding Available for Post-Wildfire Impact Evaluation and Recovery

Phil Brink, CCA Ag Water NetWORK Consulting Coordinator

spurred by rainfall over the burn scar. The team is also

Colorado experienced the three largest fires in its recorded history in 2020. The Pine Gulch fire north of Grand Junction burned 139,007 acres and was the largest – until the Troublesome and Cameron Peak fires eclipsed it by burning more than a combined 400,000 acres. All told, wildfires have burned over 620,000 acres in Colorado so far this year. (sources: BLM, The Coloradoan, National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)).

Wildfires result in the loss of vegetation, exposure of soil to erosion, and increased water runoff that may lead to flooding, increased sediment, debris flows, and damage to critical natural resources, including water supplies (source: NWCG).

Water resource stakeholders, including agricultural groups that have been affected by wildfire can apply for a Watershed Restoration Grant and receive help to assess and prioritize where actions on the ground are needed to remove safety hazards, mitigate erosion and debris flows, protect infrastructure and support NRCS in preparing a Detailed Damage Survey Report (DSR).

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) recently contracted with a group of environmental and engineering professionals to help local stakeholders evaluate and respond to post-wildfire impacts that threaten public health, infrastructure, land and water resources. The Technical Assistance Team will provide support to Watershed Restoration Grant applicants and grantees for post-wildfire hazard mitigation and recovery. Services can include rapid assessment of burned watersheds, mitigation design review, engineering analysis, and construction oversight.

Other services available include baseline conditions assessment, post-burn hydraulics analysis to determine increased flood risk, data collection, and fluvial hazard zone (FHZ) delineation to identify areas vulnerable to sediment and debris flows

approved to facilitate stakeholder meetings and help align projects with appropriate funding.


For non-disaster related proposals, the application deadline for Watershed Restoration Grant funding was November 5, 2020. However, the deadline is waived for applicants with disaster recovery-related project proposals, which includes wildfire recovery. The grant can also be used for pre-wildfire risk assessment and planning, however pre-impact planning is not eligible for the application deadline waiver.

Grant applicants must demonstrate:

- A collaborative approach that involves all stakeholders within the area of interest and is open to all interested persons in the watershed. Basin roundtable support is encouraged but not required;
- A commitment to restoring or protecting ecological processes that connect land and water while protecting life and property from flood hazards, and integrate a multiple objective approach;
- A broad based involvement in or support for the grant application, including relevant local, state, or federal governmental entities; and
- An ability to provide the appropriate in-kind and cash match for the activities proposed.

Apply at <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/colorado-watershed-restoration-grants> and contact Chris Sturm, Watershed Program Director at 303-866-3441 x3236 with any questions.

Phil Brink, Brink, Inc, is the Consulting Coordinator of Colorado Cattlemen's Ag Water NetWORK. The mission of Colorado Cattlemen's Ag Water NetWORK is to help 'keep ag water connected with ag land.' Phil can be reached at phil@brinkinc.biz or 720-887-9944.



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NRCS Energy Conservation Survey

NRCS partners and customers, we would like to hear from you on how NRCS can improve on delivering energy conservation-related conservation practices. To take our 11-Question Survey, visit the website: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2PTWCQX>

It is important to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to continue to support energy conservation activities on ag lands. Oklahoma, Colorado and New Mexico joined together to study energy conservation opportunities and paths for producer adoption of energy-related conservation practices. Our goal is to become more informed and focused on the need to conserve and use energy in a more productive way.

Thank you for input and participation.



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CACD Congratulates our 2020 Poster Contest Winners!

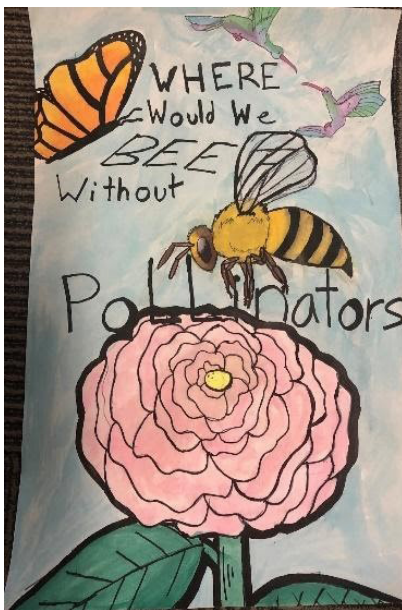
On Thursday November 19th, the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD), officially announced the winners of the 2020 Poster Contest during the 76th CACD Virtual Annual Meeting.

CACD commends the efforts of the Colorado Conservation Districts and their efforts each year in working with their local schools and students on the CACD State Poster Contest. The Districts of Colorado go out of their way to work with and engage with the youth of our state, creating interest and teaching them how to become good stewards of the land. This year

was most challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each District faced their own set of challenges with some offices being closed and limited ability to work with the schools. Many Districts were able to press through these challenges. CACD received 35 entries. The posters were put on virtual display and shared all around Colorado for anyone to view and participate in voting.

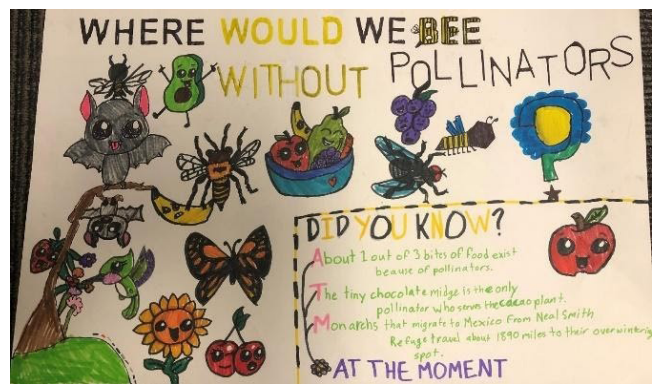
It was with great pleasure to award our top three who have done a remarkable job in capturing the theme of the 2020 Poster Contest: "Where would we BEE without Pollinators?"



FIRST PLACE - Ray Watson - Windsor Middle School (6th Grade), Windsor, Colorado - West Greeley Conservation District

The top three posters in the Colorado state contest received monetary prizes. The first-place winner received \$100, the second-place winner received \$75, and the third-place winner received \$50.

The poster from our first-place winner, Ray Watson, was submitted to NACD as the Colorado nominee in the 2021 NACD 75th Annual Meeting national poster contest, which was held virtually in February 2021.



SECOND PLACE - Kevin Hart - Windsor Middle School (6th Grade), Windsor, Colorado - West Greeley Conservation District



THIRD PLACE - Syriah Analeigh Alvarez - Fowler Elementary School (6th grade), Ordway, Colorado - Olney Boone Conservation District

NACD's 66th Stewardship Week April 25th - May 2nd, 2021

Education is a critical element of the conservation effort at the local, state and national levels. Educating young people about the benefits of conservation helps to ensure the next generation will be wise stewards of America's natural resources.

In 1955, the National Association of Conservation Districts began a national program to encourage Americans to focus on stewardship. Stewardship Week is officially celebrated from the last Sunday in April to the first Sunday in May. It is one of the world's largest conservation-related observances.

The program relies on Conservation Districts sharing and promoting stewardship and conservation through field days, educational programming, and workshops to educate citizens about the need to care for our natural resources. Many district activities extend

beyond the one-week observance to include an entire year of outreach. Stewardship Week helps to remind us all of the power each person has to conserve natural resources and improve the world. When everyone works together with their local Conservation District, that power continuously grows.

The stewardship and conservation educational materials provided during the Stewardship Week are encouraged to be used all year long and shared with everyone, especially parents who are homeschooling right now!

For access to NACD stewardship educational materials please visit the CACD website at <https://www.coloradoacd.org/nacds-66th-stewardship-week.html> For more information about NACD's Stewardship Program, email stewardship@nacdn.net.

2021 POSTER CONTEST THEME: "Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities."

The CACD Colorado State Poster Contest is open to Conservation District's fifth and sixth-grade students. Each District may choose one or both grades to compete at the state level, but only two posters per District may be submitted to CACD.

District posters are to be given to CACD at the 2021 Annual Meeting for judging. First, Second, & Third place winners will be announced at the CACD Awards Luncheon in November. The First place winner at the state level will be entered into the NACD national competition.

Visit the CACD 2021 poster contest page at: coloradoacd.org/poster-contest1.html



CACD 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting

Wrap-Up “Conservation: Together Towards Tomorrow”

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) wrapped up its 76th Annual Meeting on November 19th, 2020. The conference was held over the course of two weeks and was full of meetings, speakers, break-out sessions, and great collaboration between Conservation District managers, staff, and Supervisors, partners, and producers. CACD and CSCB held a joint board meeting prior to the conference kick-off.

The resource committee meetings took place during each of the evening sessions. Unlike previous years, the committee meetings did not overlap, which allowed participants to attend all five meetings for review, discussion, and to vote on the 2020 resolutions. This year, (8) resolutions were presented. (7) passed in committee and (1) failed. During the General Membership Meeting, all (7) resolutions that passed committee were passed by the membership as well. The CACD Board of Directors and Legislative Committee would like to thank all of those who served on the 2018 Resource Committees.

Our meeting this year focused on what was most important to our Colorado Conservation Districts and stakeholders. Our themes included Water, Soil, Energy, Education/Outreach, and District Outlook.

During each daytime and evening session we offered a variety of speakers including Scott Jones (CACD), Randy Randall (NRCS), Alex Funk (CWCB), Les Owen (CDA), Dannelle Peck (USDA Northern Plains Climate Hub), Steve Stierwalt (Illinois STAR Program), Dianne Criswell (Special Districts Association), Paul Kehmeier (Delta Conservation District), Kate Greenberg (CDA Commissioner), Cindy Lair (CSCB), Brett Moore (CACD), Noah McCord (CSCB), and Charlie Holtz (Pheasants Forever). Thank you to all of our speakers for helping us create an engaging event.

CSCB held a District Staff Session where District

Managers and staff shared about their programs throughout the state. The Colorado Employees Association also held a daytime meeting session.

To watch videos of the Annual Meeting presentations, please see the CACD website.

Congratulations to all CACD 2020 Award Recipients!

Conservationist of the Year: Farming

- Matthew Heimerich
- Nominated by: West Otero Timpas Conservation District

Conservationist of the Year: Ranching

- Mike & Donna Camblin
- Nominated by: Colorado First Conservation District

Conservationist of the Year: Forestry

- Jamie and Stephen Bernstein
- Nominated by: Jefferson Conservation District

Conservationist of the Year: Small Acreage

- Long's Gardens & Growing Gardens
- Nominated by: Boulder Valley Conservation District

Educator of the Year

- Jan Congour
- Nominated by: Shavano Conservation District

Hall of Fame Recipient

- Karen Berry
- Nominated by: Jefferson Conservation District

Legislators of the Year

- Representative Barbara McLachlan
- Senator Larry Crowder

While we all missed being together, the virtual meetings proved to be the next best thing and allowed for even more folks to have the opportunity

to participate with a cheaper cost of registration and no required travel. CACD extends sincere thanks and appreciation to our state partners, CSCB, NRCS, and the Colorado Conservation Districts and individuals who helped make this virtual event a great success. CACD also extends a heartfelt “Thank You” to all of our 2020 sponsors! We look forward to seeing you all in November of 2021

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