



# Colorado Conservator

“your voice for locally led conservation”

Vol. 25 No. 2  
Spring 2009

Published quarterly by the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts  
P. O. Box 4138, 901 Rampart Range Road, Woodland Park, CO 80866

## Wilson Ranch Honored for Excellence in Conservation

By Jerry D. Schwien, Editor

When Jay Wilson began college at Montana State University in Bozeman, he had decided to major in agriculture. After his first year, his ag professors tried to talk the students out of majoring in agriculture. “The instructors told us that the day of the ‘Mom and Pop’ ranch or farm was over,” said Wilson. “They said that inheritance taxes or having debt on the land would make it hard to get started.” He sat down with his Dad, George Wilson, and said that he could not afford a ranch that was going to be big enough to support and sustain what he wanted to do and how he wanted to do it.

“Our Chicago business bought the Tri-Lazy W Ranch in the late 1960s because we saw the potential for developing the resources,” said Jay Wilson. Wilson adds that the ranch’s biggest resource is the water rights. Even in a drought



year, the ranch can get two-thirds to three-fourths of the ranch irrigated.

Wilson returned to MSU and changed his majors to business and economics. After graduating and getting out of the military, Wilson became the third generation to run the family commercial painting business whose work included hotels, office buildings, new con-



Photo of Wilson Ranch by Mary Miller, USDA-NRCS

struction, and maintenance painting in Chicago. His goal was to build the business up to one day sell it and return to the ranch.

George Wilson retired to the ranch in the 1970s. Jay sold the family business and moved to the ranch in 1995.

Since the 1970s, the Wilsons have worked with the Upper Arkansas Conservation District and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on developing a long-term, forward-thinking plan for the ranch. Leon Stanton, Don Sanchez, and John Nelson were some of the first SCSers the Wilsons worked with. Wilson now works with Darol Wilson, Bill Gardner, and Kimberly Diller on conservation practices on his land.

One of the first projects that George Wilson and Stanton worked on was looking at alternative irrigation practices. Due to the topography of the ranch, they came up with a design for a gravity-fed sideroll, sprinkler system. Prior to installing this system, Wilson flood irrigated. “We lost a lot of water to seepage and evapotranspiration,” said Wilson. “All of these improvements have made the ranch a

more efficient operation.” To date, the Tri-Lazy W Ranch has 13 sideroll sprinklers that are all fed by underground pipes. There are also two center pivot sprinklers on the ranch. The NRCS helped design all of these.

When deciding on a project, he uses his background in business to evaluate whether it is worth the money. He wants to make sure of the economic and conservation benefits.

Over the years, Wilson has added grazing allotments on US Forest Service (USFS), State Land Board (SLB), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the deeded land on the ranch. He has worked to improve the watering systems which have helped Wilson use a rotational grazing system. One of the newest systems is on Wilson’s State Lease, the Chubb Park allotment. He partnered with the SLB, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Habitat Partnership Program, and USFS on a major water development project. The group dug a well, installed a 38,000-gallon storage system, five and a half miles of underground pipe, and set seven tire tanks. All of this work

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Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Denver, CO  
Permit No. 592

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## President's Message



Harley Ernst

WHAT A YEAR! It is only a forth gone. Starting in January the Board presented the awards for Conservation Farmers of the Year to the Lippis Family and the Conservation Rancher of the Year to the Price Ranch at the National Western Stock Show.

CACD is working on GOCO funds through CDOW with one of the priority's of expiring CRP concerns with both soil and water erosion and wildlife habitats.

The implementation of Farm Bill rules is still a chief concern.

Due to the economy going south we have hired a lobbyist to represent the conservation districts, Tracee Bentley. She is working very well along with the Legislative Committee, members of the CACD Board, Darlene Jensen and staff.

Funding for conservation took a hit, but most dollars were found to backfill money lost. Matching grant programs should be in good shape if nothing else happens before the Session ends.

CACD and CSCB are working with a newly established committee to address direct assistance concerns expressed by the conservation districts.

By the time you read this most conservation districts will be aware of change made on the CACD Board. CACD's staff and the Board continue to deliver quality programs.

God bless and keep you until we meet again.

*On March 31, 2009 the CACD Board of Directors elected Harley Ernst of the Republican River Watershed to serve as CACD Interim President. Harley will serve as President for the balance of the term of former CACD President Eric Jessen, who resigned from the CACD Board.*

## The Colorado Conservator

Providing Colorado With  
Conservation News for 40 Years  
Jerry Schwien, Editor  
(Circulation 8,000)

Printed on Recycled Paper by Signature Offset, Broomfield, CO

GOAL: The Colorado Conservator informs residents of Colorado about natural resources conservation. Information from our sponsors will emphasize natural resources and conservation programs available to landowners.

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The Colorado Conservator is published quarterly by the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) with technical and financial assistance from the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS). The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of these organizations. Email articles for publication to: [jschwien@comcast.net](mailto:jschwien@comcast.net). Deadline for the Summer issue, July 10, 2009

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# Colorado State Land Board Achieves Conservation Through Partnerships

By Jerry D. Schwien, Editor

When thinking about conservation on private agricultural working lands, the Colorado State Land Board (CSLB) probably isn't the first group that comes to mind. However, with approximately three million acres of agricultural land held in trusts for eight beneficiaries, the CSLB and its partners are in fact major conservators of private land and work closely with CACD and Colorado's conservation districts.

Acting as the trustee for its beneficiaries, including the primary beneficiary the K-12 School Trust, the CSLB has a fiduciary responsibility to produce "reasonable and consistent income over time." The CSLB produces this income through agricultural leases including leases for rangeland, dry cropland, irrigated cropland, forestry, as well as commercial, recreational, and mineral leases.

The CSLB, like most family owned and operated farms and ranches, believes that responsible environmental stewardship is necessary to provide sustainable use and long-term economic values. With a relatively small, self funded staff, the State Land Board utilizes conservation partnerships to accomplish on the ground conservation. First and foremost the CSLB partners with its leasees who agree to maintain the properties and provide sound stewardship.



John Valentine, CSLB Southeast District Manager, identifies favorable grasses on the Chico Basin Ranch.

John Valentine, Southeast District Manager for the CSLB, explains that leasees "take care of the land like it is their own property." To help leasees with this responsibility, the CSLB provides technical assistance, incentives, and or cost-share to implement conser-



Helicopter sprays Tamarisk for conservation partnership.

vation practices. Valentine identifies invasive species control, grazing systems, water development, stock tanks, and pipelines as some of the most common practices cost-shared by the CSLB in Southeastern Colorado.

As proven grass-roots conservation leaders, some of Colorado's Conservation Districts are effectively partnering with the CSLB to get conservation on the ground. A great example of this is the cooperative effort between the West Otero-Timpas Conservation District and the State Land Board to treat Tamarisk on multiple State Land Board properties. This summer these two agencies teamed up with a broad based partnership to treat Tamarisk along the Apishapa River. The additional partners included the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW), the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners for Fish and Wildlife, the NRCS, the Fremont County Weed Coalition, and the South Pueblo Conservation District. This project treated over 600 acres of Tamarisk, including treatments on State Land Board properties. By providing local administrative services, the West Otero-Timpas Conservation District helped get conservation practices off of paper and on to the ground. The West-Otero Conservation District isn't alone, the East Otero, Prairie, High Plains, Fremont , and other Districts are partnering with the CSLB in similar ways. In addition to partnering on conservation practices such as invasive species control and grazing system



Tamarisk treated in partnership with the West Otero-Timpas CD.

improvements, Conservation Districts are assisting the Natural Resource Conservation Service with conservation plans for State Land Board properties.

Another conservation partner that works closely with the CSLB is the Colorado Division of Wildlife. The CSLB and its leasees collaborate with the DOW and other wildlife organizations, such as the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, on implementing conservation practices that will have wildlife benefits. Additionally, the DOW leases approximately 500,000 acres of CSLB land for recreational purposes. These leases are layered over agriculture leases to provide hunting and fishing access to the public.

Finally, in 1996 Colorado voters created the Stewardship Trust, which requires the CSLB to designate between 295,000 to 300,000 acres for special management attention to preserve the natural values of the resources and thereby protect the economic

values of the land. This special management approach includes baseline inventories of the resources, regular monitoring, resource management plans, and many times long-term leases. Establishing long-term relationships with private leasees or non-profit organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, builds strong partnerships that focus on implementing sustainable stewardship strategies that benefit the resources as well as both parties. While touring part of the Chico Basin Ranch, a Stewardship Trust property 35 minutes southeast of Colorado Springs, John Valentine explains how Duke Phillips, the property manager, has operated based on a comprehensive conservation plan. "Because of what Duke has been able to accomplish, we are seeing a lot of favorable plants come back and the condition of the range improve." For more info on the State Land Board visit [www.trustlands.state.co.us](http://www.trustlands.state.co.us)



Stock tank installed on the Chico Basin Ranch.

Thanks to Scott Shirola, CSCB, for providing much of the material for this article.



# Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Summits

By Darlene Jensen, CACD Executive Director

## Hold these Dates

**May 14, 2009: Fort Morgan, Colorado**  
**Morgan Community College, 1 pm to 5 pm**

**May 15, 2009: Lamar, Colorado**  
**Lamar Community College, 1 pm to 5 pm**

Thanks to Mark Cronquist, CSCB, for providing material for this article.

Over the last 35 years, CACD and conservation districts have assisted landowners in retiring millions of acres of cropland in Colorado under the Conservation Reserve Program in 10 or 15 year contracts. During this time, large conservation benefits have accrued including reduced soil erosion, improved water quality, increased carbon sequestration, and improved wildlife habitat.

Between 2009 and 2013, over two million acres of CRP contracts will expire in Colorado. Because the 2008 Farm Bill has a national acreage cap that is several million acres lower than the previous Farm Bill, Farm Service Agency will not likely offer another sign up. Farmers will have little chance to re-enroll their land in the CRP.

In addition, high commodity prices may further encourage farmers to grow crops on this land once again.

If a large portion of these expiring CRP acres go back into cropland, Colorado will lose many of the conservation benefits accrued over the lifetimes of the contracts. However, if some of the expiring CRP lands were kept in grass and managed as grazing land, either permanently or temporarily, many of the conservation benefits accrued over the lifetime of the contracts could be kept or even enhanced during this time period.

Please plan to attend either of the scheduled summits to learn what options you may have. The summits are free. For details please call your local conservation district or CACD.

# Executive Director's Message



By Darlene Jensen, CACD

The first quarter of 2009 has brought with it turbulent times with respect to budgets, yet through the extended efforts of the CACD Board and CACD's lobbyist, Tracee Bentley, conservation districts should weather the storm. With only a short while to go in State Budget debates, we are not completely out of the woods, yet efforts continue in shoring up our position on behalf of the conservation districts.

CACD has been active in GLCI grant management and responses to the GLCI Committee's request for proposals were unprecedented this year. To assist in providing technical support to the GLCI Committee, CACD has entered into a contract with Range Specialist Ben Berlinger who has provided technical input and review of the applications. With Ben's technical expertise and through the exceptional attention to detail of GLCI's new liaison, Dan Nosal of NRCS, the work of GLCI will continue to be successful in Colorado.

As CRP expiring contracts are ever present in many landowners' minds, the State Conservation Board and CACD are joining together in scheduling two CRP Summits; May 14 in Fort Morgan and May 15 in Lamar. Please mark these dates and look for details from CACD and CSCB. The concentrated efforts of Mark Cronquist and Scott Shirola, both of CSCB, are assuring the summits will bring speakers with helpful information to landowners needing

to know what options they have at this time.

CACD is moving into agreements with NRCS to provide assistance to the conservation districts in conservation planning and to secure funding to those districts interested in hosting an 8-digit watershed meeting.

Plans have already begun for the 2009 CACD Annual Meeting, with members of the Planning Committee having put together an agenda with a theme of "Conservation Boot Camp." The hope is to provide attendees with training and forums to interact with one another and with conservation partners, so supervisors, employees and conservation partners take away something which can be applied in their work. The meeting will be November 16-19, 2009 at the Beaver Run Resort in Breckenridge, Colorado.

CACD is also looking to work with iCAST, a nonprofit organization working in renewable energy, to bring a rural enterprise grant through the watersheds to provide outreach and information to landowners in energy efficiency. Please see the article in this edition of the Conservator for more details.

Camp Rocky 2009 is gearing up. If you have a youth who is interested in attending Camp Rocky, CACD has received scholarships from the GLCI Committee to assist in the attendance of seven youths interested in the Rangeland Science principle. Please contact the CACD office for details. Scholarships in other principles are also available, and many conservation districts throughout Colorado provide Camp Rocky scholarships. For information please contact your local conservation district or again the CACD office.

Under the fine direction of Callie Hendrickson, the 2008-2009 Conservation Leadership Class will graduate this spring and take the valuable education they have received in leadership and conservation back to their districts and watersheds.

Congratulations to Bonnie Koblitz, Sharie Prow, Shannon Castrodale, Jim Cazer, Brenda Anderson, Forrest Towns, Bill Noble, Val Loose, Danielle Wollert, Judy Davies, Brendon Rockey and Larry Sweeney, the newest Colorado Conservation Leadership Program graduates.

# CACD Conservation Leadership Graduates



**Graduating class (R - L):** Back row - Callie Hendrickson, Program Director, Danielle Wollert, Prowers CD, Bonnie Koblitz, Middle Park CD, Brendon Rockey, Center CD, Jim Cazer, Delta CD. Front row - Judy Davies, Delta CD, Shannon Castrodale, Shavano CD, Sharie Prow, Bookcliff CD, Brenda Anderson, Center CD, Larry Sweeney, Bookcliff, Mount Sopris and South Side CDs, and Darlene Jensen, CACD. Not pictured/Val Loose, Bill Noble and Forrest Towns.



## Partners in Conservation



CACD is proud to have these state and federal agencies as contributing sponsors to our newsletter. The following pages are dedicated to conservation programs of the sponsors.

## Colorado Division of Wildlife to Sponsor Workshops on Conservation

By Darlene Jensen, CACD Executive Director

The Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW) will be sponsoring four landowner workshops in May and June. The purpose of the workshops will be to give landowners an opportunity to receive all current information regarding wildlife/conservation value added opportunities for their operations.

Topics will include: Wildlife Habitat Conservation Program, Hunting Access Programs, Habitat Partnership Program, Partners for Fish & Wildlife, USFWS programs, updates regarding the conservation title of the Farm Bill by NRCS representatives and conservation districts, program opportunities from NGO's such as Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Ducks Unlimited, etc.

All workshops will occur on a host family ranch and will

include a tour of the ranch showcasing conservation programs applied to the property. A Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.

**Dates and locations:**  
**May 2 – Swedlund Ranch, Sterling**  
**May 26 – Reeder Creek Ranch, Hot Sulphur Springs**  
**June 18 – Wallace Ranch, Bent/Baca County**  
**June TBA – Zech Ranch, Delta**

All workshops are free. For more information, please contact Ken Morgan, Private Lands Coordinator, Colorado Division of Wildlife at: [ken.morgan@state.co.us](mailto:ken.morgan@state.co.us), or call 303-291-7404.

## One Million Available in Colorado NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants

### APPLY TODAY

CACD has learned that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced the availability of up to \$1 million for proposed projects in Colorado through the 2009 Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Program. **Applications must be received by 4:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time on May 18, 2009. Please visit [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/cig.htm](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/cig.htm) for additional information.**

Individual applications will be awarded through a statewide competitive grants process for improving conservation practices in Colorado. Applications will be accepted from eligible entities, including Federally-recognized Indian Tribes, State and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals for competitive consideration of grant awards for single or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years. Grants under the Colorado state component will not exceed \$75,000 from NRCS.

*“These grants provide an excellent opportunity to demonstrate new conservation technologies that will address one or more of the seven priority natural resource concern areas in Colorado, which are: Water Resources, Soil Resources, Atmospheric Resources, Grazing Land, Forest Health, Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Sources, and Wildlife Habitat,”* said Tim Carney, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, NRCS.

The purpose of CIG, a component of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, is to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production.

Selected applicants may receive grants of up to 50 percent

of the total project cost. Applicants must provide non-Federal matching funds for at least 50 percent of the project cost, of which up to 50 percent may be from in-kind contributions.

An exception regarding matching funds is made for projects funded that benefit beginning and limited resource farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers, and Indian Tribes. Seventy-five (75) percent of the required matching funds for such projects may be derived from in-kind contributions to help these entities meet the statutory requirements for receiving a CIG.

Written applications must be sent to USDA-NRCS c/o Dollie Gonzales, Resource Conservationist, 655 Parfet Street, Room E200C, Lakewood, CO 80215, and received no later than **Monday, May 18, 2009 by 4:30 p.m. Mountain Standard Time.**

For additional information on CIG, please contact Gonzales at 720-544-2821 or via email at [dollie.gonzales@co.usda.gov](mailto:dollie.gonzales@co.usda.gov) or you can contact Carney at 720-544-2805 or via email at [tim.carney@co.usda.gov](mailto:tim.carney@co.usda.gov).

### Arkansas River Basin Water Forum

The 2009 Arkansas River Basin Water Forum took place in Pueblo, Colo., March 31 – April 1.

Keynote speaker Jennifer Gimbel, Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, kicked off the conference designed to create a greater understanding of water issues affecting the Arkansas River watershed from the headwaters to the state line.

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



# CACD to Sponsor Teachers' Workshops in Collaboration with the Rio Grande Watershed Association

By Judy Lopez, CACD Teachers' Workshop Coordinator

The teachers workshopS are here! CACD in collaboration with the Rio Grande Watershed Association of Conservation Districts and its group of great partners bring you the 2009 teacher workshop series. For teachers attending their second workshop there is the "From Watershed to Sustainability: Building a "Stream" of Consciousness" workshop from June 8 – 13. For the first time teacher there is "From Watershed to Cup – Following Water Through the Creekulum" June 15 – 18.

Both workshops are designed for K-12 educators, who are interested in getting kids outdoors and incorporating those themes into the Colorado Content Standards in their classroom, whether rural or urban.

Held on the beautiful Trinchera Ranch outside Fort Garland, Colorado, participating teachers receive five star accommodations, the latest in outdoor, hands-on teaching, over \$400 in take home classroom ready goodies and three graduate credit hours from Adams State College.

All for a \$100 refundable attendance deposit. To send teachers from your districts contact Judy Lopez at 719-589-3907 X 117.



Teachers learning about Wetlands.



Teachers learning about stream ecology.



Instruction includes soils and soil texture.



Teachers learn about fisheries management.

## Camp Rocky Expecting a Full House



AwardWinning  
**Camp Rocky**  
[www.camprocky.colostate.edu](http://www.camprocky.colostate.edu)

**Outdoor Environmental Adventures For Youth**  
(Ages 14-19)  
**July 5-11 2009**  
Near Divide, Colorado

Camp Rocky is CACD's week long, residential camp for **14 through 19 year olds** who enjoy the outdoors and are interested in natural resources. Darlene Jensen, CACD's Executive Director, says this year's camp is filling up rapidly. So interested campers should submit their reservations ASAP.

Applications should be sent to the **CACD office, P.O. Box 4138, Woodland Park, CO 80866**. A \$75.00 non-refundable deposit is required by July 1.



# Science Fairs Afford Opportunities for Districts

“Kids say the darndest things!” Well its true, and if you have attended your local, regional or state science fair lately, you will find that it is not what you might expect. As conservation districts look for more ways to reach out to their local communities and involve them in the passion of conservation, they often overlook what is right under their noses. Approximately two-thirds of the projects that are done by over 7500 students statewide had some application to agriculture, conservation, natural resources, or the environmental sciences. As each student from grades 4 through 12 competed at their local science and engineering fairs in their category, they looked for mentors, sponsors, judges and advisors for their projects.



Johanna Phillips with her science project: Infested forests and evapotranspiration.

Here is where the conservation districts come in, as many of you already know, a great way to get your name out there and get a lot of recognition for very little time commitment, is to give an award in your district s name to a student in the elementary, junior, and or senior divisions for the student with the best conservation project. The amount of the award can vary from as low as five dollars to as high as one hundred and may include a certificate. Districts often write the criteria to include the preservation of soil and water or any of our natural resources – it’s great because you decide!



Trisha Wakasugi, Studying macro-invertebrates to better understand stream quality.

Academic sponsorship of kids is the best publicity that your district can get! There are so many groups that refuse to sponsor kids academically, but put a ball in there hand and it is a different story. People within districts are the most knowledgeable family conscious group that I have ever been around. You know more about crops, noxious weeds, range, water, fertilizers, soils, livestock, engineering, wildlife wetlands, technology and about a hundred things that I can’t remember and all of these area’s are science worthy - child worthy.

I encourage each of you to take a look and while I’m at the I-SWEEP and the International Science Fair with the kids who great conservation projects I’ll be thinking about all of our districts and what great things we do for kids and conservation!

If you would like more information about contacting your local regional science fair Contact Judy

## Wildlife Escape Ladders Available

In an arid West, wildlife in order to survive, rely increasingly on livestock troughs, tanks and ponds. But without properly placed escape ladders, these water supplies of last resort become deadly traps for a wide variety of wildlife.

Wildlife Escape ladders are a required specification for the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (code 614). The Custer County CD encourages landowners to place ladders inside steel and fiberglass stock tanks. These ladders allow small animals and birds, after falling into the tank, to crawl out alive. For more information on wildlife escape ladders, contact the Custer County Conservation District at [Jennifer.filbrun@nacdn.net](mailto:Jennifer.filbrun@nacdn.net) or call the district office at 719-783-2481.

# High School Youth Benefit from Rangeland Management Forum

By Jerry D. Schwien, Editor



Avery Hollingsworth, Jessica Gutierrez and Lyndee Charles represented the Colorado Section of SRM in the High School Youth Forum in Albuquerque.

The Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) was well represented at the 2009 High School Youth Forum (HSYF) in Albuquerque, February 8-12. The HSYF is an integral part of the SRM annual meeting. During the Forum, high school youth from all parts of the western United States and Canada are invited to participate and interact among themselves and the various professionals. Each of SRM’s 21 Sections is allowed to send up to three youth delegates to this program.

This year the Colorado Section, along with the Branson-Trinchera and Flagler Conservation Districts, sponsored **three** delegates to Albuquerque. **Lyndee Charles** of Flagler, **Avery Hollingsworth** of Kim and **Jessica Gutierrez** also of Kim were selected to participate in the Forum. All three delegates were chosen based on the high level of achievement in **FFA rangeland judging** (see related article) as well as exceptional participation at **CACD’s Camp Rocky**, Colorado’s premier natural resource youth camp.

Lyndee’s presentation was titled, **Switching to Switchgrass**. She discussed the significance of utilizing switchgrass for the production of biofuels, and how this would affect the agricultural community in her home county of Kit

Carson.

Avery presented his talk on the proposed expansion of the Pinyon Canyon Maneuver Site located in Las Animas County. His talk was titled, **Range Wars: Cattlemen versus Cannons**. Avery expounded on how the expansion of the site would dramatically affect the ranching economy in southeastern Colorado, both from the stand point of the natural resource base and the sociologic impacts.

Jessica’s presentation was on African rue, an extremely important noxious weed in Las Animas county where her family ranches. Her title was, **African rue: An Unwanted Invader**. Jessica discussed the many aspect of this noxious invader including plant characteristics, identification, control options, and implications for grazing management.

The Colorado Section SRM and CACD congratulate Lyndee, Avery and Jessica 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. Contact Ben Berlinger (719-384-5408), or Darlene Jenson (719-686-0020), for more information about the SRM High School Youth Forum or Camp Rocky.



# Brenda Chavez Wins 2009 Colorado Arbor Day Poster Contest

By Jerry D. Schwien, Editor

CACD is pleased to recognize Brenda Chavez, daughter of Ramon and Juanita Aguilar, and a fifth-grade student at Greenwood K-8 School in Denver. She is the Colorado winner of the 2009 Arbor Day National Poster Contest. More than 2,000 posters, created by fifth-graders throughout Colorado, were submitted for this year's poster contest, and the winner was selected from 56 school finalists.

Chavez' poster was selected by a panel of judges from across the state, including private, municipal and Colorado State Forest Service foresters. The state contest is part of an annual program sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation, the Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC) and the Colorado State Forest Service. The theme of this year's contest was *Trees are Terrific...in Cities and Towns!*

On April 13, Chavez was recognized for her accomplishment during a presentation in front of the poster contest display at the Colorado State Capitol. Rep. Terrance Carroll, Speaker of the House, recognized Chavez for her award, and Chavez presented a framed copy of her winning poster depicting a tree-lined city to Rep. Carroll.

In addition to Rep. Carroll, Chavez' parents and Brian Reming, Chavez' art teacher, several other dignitaries were present for the ceremony, including Tom Wells, chairman of the Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC); Douglas Schoch, arboreal inspector with the Division of Forestry for the City of Denver; Ralph Campbell, Community Forestry Division supervisor, Colorado State Forest Service; Keith Wood, staff forester, Colorado State Forest Service; and Donna Davis, Colorado coordinator for the CTC/National Arbor Day Foundation fifth-grade poster contest.

During the ceremony, Chavez commented that she had to compete three times before winning the poster contest — once for the Greenwood School competition, once for the Denver City Forestry Division competition, which included students from 22 schools,



*Brenda Chavez presents a framed copy of her award-winning poster to Rep. Terrance Carroll in front of the poster display at the Colorado State Capitol.*

and finally the state competition. As the state poster contest winner, Chavez also advanced as a finalist in the national contest; the national winner was announced on National Arbor Day, April 24.

Following the formal presentation ceremony at the capitol, Rep. Carroll had Chavez, her family and teacher escorted into the House Assembly where they were formally introduced and recognized on the floor. Chavez then received a written resolution from Rep. Carroll honoring her for her accomplishment.

After the presentation in front of the House Assembly, Edna Pelzmann, manager of Visitor Services and the Tour Desk, treated Brenda and her guests to a personal tour of the dome and capitol.

Chavez' poster, accompanied by the other 55 posters that competed for the state award, were on display at the capitol from April 6-16, and then were transported to the Bear Creek Nature Center in Colorado Springs where they remained on display until May 1.

In addition to the recognition ceremony at the Colorado State Capitol, the City of Denver recognized Chavez' accomplishments at a ceremony in front of her entire school. In addition to family members, Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, representatives from the Denver Forestry Division,

Colorado Tree Coalition, Colorado State Forest Service and Project Learning Tree were on hand to celebrate Chavez' award. In addition, Mayor Hickenlooper and the Denver Forestry Division presented Chavez with a framed copy of her poster.

In addition to holding the boasting rights for the state poster contest winner, Greenwood School also was the first school in the metro-Denver area to plant a tree in 2009 as part of Denver's Million Tree Program.

"I hope all Coloradans will join me in congratulating Brenda on her accomplishment," said Davis, who also is the La Junta district forester for the Colorado State Forest Service. "The National Arbor Day Foundation Poster Contest is a great way to engage students in learning about trees and the many unspoken benefits they provide our urban and rural communities, and the quality of the posters exhibited the knowledge of each contestant, which represents the hope of the future.

"One glimpse outside the capitol building, and we could easily see what past and present planners had envisioned — elegant greenery draping our byways and parks — each tree's branch of growth and each season's renewal paralleling our state's vitality, prosperity, energy and future — a



reflection of all of us — Colorado's citizens. We look to Brenda and other young people to carry on that tradition," Davis said.

The National Arbor Day Foundation mission is dedicated to tree planting and environmental stewardship; the Colorado Tree Coalition mission is preserving, renewing and enhancing community trees; and the Colorado State Forest Service mission is to provide for the stewardship of forest resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

The fifth-grade Arbor Day Poster Contest Guide will be available in hard-copy or pdf format in mid-August. To obtain a copy, contact Donna Davis at [donna.davis@colostate.edu](mailto:donna.davis@colostate.edu).

**The photograph and information for this article were prepared for CACD by Katherine Timm, CSFS.**

## Conservation Districts Consolidate

*The* Centennial Conservation District and South Platte Conservation District are joining forces to meet the natural resource conservation needs of landowners throughout Logan County and northeastern Weld County. A special election was held in December; landowners from the two districts voted to consolidate the districts, forming the new district, which will be known as "Centennial Conservation District."

The creation of the new conservation district will help in a variety of ways, including:

- bringing more resources to area-wide conservation problems,
- and a greater consistency of programs offered by the conservation district.



# Water Management Plans

## Roadmap to Success

To achieve efficient water management, entities need a roadmap to reach their destination. Conservation districts can help these entities by referring them to the Bureau of Reclamation. When planning a coast-to-coast trip, it would be easy to get lost, turn onto dead-end streets, or lose time due to road construction without proper planning. The same is true for entities wanting to manage their water organization in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Your roadmap is a Water Management/Conservation Plan (Plan). This Plan develops the history of your organization, provides concise maps of your distribution system, provides data for your water budget, identifies problems and sets priorities for solving these problems, and may contain copies of contracts, bylaws, etc. The Plan should be designed to address the needs of your organization. It will be a living historic document to pass on from one management team to another.

Water organizations that have developed Plans. Has it been a benefit to them?

- **Tri-County Water Conservancy District**  
**Mike Berry, Manager**  
“Tri-County is in the middle of writing our latest and greatest water conservation plan (WCP). A couple of things come to mind when you ask how this plan will be useful to our organization. First, this effort has given staff and the Board an opportunity to review the water conservation and management goals for the District and allowed us to align our implementation strategies with our visions and missions as well as giving us a tool to review and track our accomplishments. Secondly, the WCP will give us another written tool to orient new Board members as to our plans for water conservation and management. Last but not least, it helps the District show our constituency (not to mention the Front Range crowd) that this District is

actively engaged in working toward a solution to the State’s water resources problems.”

- **The Overland Ditch and Reservoir Company**  
**Philip Ceriani, Board Member**

“We put two management plans together that have dramatically changed how our company operates. The plan contents have been published in electronic format and are available on the company website: ([www.overlandditch.com](http://www.overlandditch.com)) to new shareholders or interested parties. We got very interested in GIS (geographic information systems) along the way as a result of the map requirement of the grant, and now have built a GIS for our small company that is being refined on a continuing basis. That would never have been done without the stimulus provided by the process of developing a water management plan. In our experience the ready availability of information reduces the time, effort and expense of dispute resolution either in or out of the company.”

The Bureau of Reclamation offers assistance in developing these Plans by providing a guidebook, “Achieving Efficient Water Management,” for preparing these Plans. There are also individuals and companies that will work with you to complete your Plan.

When funding is available, the Bureau of Reclamation, through its “Water Conservation Field Service Program,” will offer grants ([www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)) to fund the development of water management plans. For assistance, please contact Dan Crabtree, Bureau of Reclamation, 2764 Compass Drive Suite 106, Grand Junction Colorado 81506. He may also be reached by e-mail at: [dcrabtree@usbr.gov](mailto:dcrabtree@usbr.gov) or telephone (970) 248-0652.

# Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Opportunities Now Available for Rural Producers

By Ashley Pryor, International Center for Appropriate & Sustainable Technology (iCAST)

The spring of 2009 has brought ample opportunity for rural producers to increase efficiency and implement renewable energy solutions through the continuation of USDA’s Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG) and Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG), as well as the expansion of the Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP). Each opportunity can be used to provide grants for energy audits and renewable energy development assistance, including feasibility studies, equipment purchase, and installation.

Up to \$50,000 is available for producers or rural small businesses through the RBEG and RBOG opportunities with no cost share. The REAP opportunities require the applicant to provide 25% cost share in cash, but awards of up to \$500,000 are available for renewable energy implementation.

Projects that will receive the most favorable consideration are those that are located in a community where the unemployment rate exceeds the state rate and/or the median income is less than the state average. Projects that

include a commitment of funds from non-federal sources will also be favorably rated. All projects are expected to demonstrate a firm commitment to community economic development including elements such as job creation or implementing energy efficiency or renewable energy systems.

If producers are looking to explore the feasibility of renewable energy systems for their facilities, these funding opportunities are currently welcoming applications.

For project assistance including grant application preparation, energy auditing services, feasibility studies, or renewable energy or efficiency implementations, the Colorado-based nonprofit, iCAST is available to answer any questions, as well as performs all such services at reasonable rates for producers, businesses or local governments representing rural communities. If you have any questions or to find out which services would be most appropriate for your organization or operation, please contact iCAST staff at 1-866-590-4377 ext. 804, e-mail [info@icastusa.org](mailto:info@icastusa.org), or visit iCAST’s website at [www.icastusa.org](http://www.icastusa.org).

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# Stellar Year for State Grant Programs

By Jerry D. Schwien, Editor  
Material provided by Pam King

It was a stellar year in 2008 for the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) District Conservation Technician (DCT) Program and the Matching Grant Program. CACD actively supports these two programs that are sponsored by funding from Colorado state government and, for the DCT program, by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Of course, they are also funded by the conservation districts and their local partners providing matching funds.

The DCT program allows districts to place more technical expertise at the disposal of landowners who want conservation plans and to implement conservation practices on their land. It also provides additional assistance to landowners in applying for federal cost-share dollars to install those conservation practices. Where the need for assistance is greater than NRCS field staff can provide, Districts can hire one or more technicians to provide additional technical services. It is not often easy for Districts to find the 25% cash match needed for this program, but many are very dedicated in ensuring their landowners have



District conservation technicians plan and ensure correct installation of conservation practices. Here, Don Sanchez, Upper Huerfano technician, checks out proper installation of a stock watering facility.

access to this additional technical help. After all, it is landowners who get the conservation done, and by helping them Districts provide the local support to impact natural resources concerns in their community.

The DCT program began in 2003 and 36 Districts currently participate in the program with around a third sharing technicians across District boundaries. Technicians may be full-time, part-time or seasonal and in there are approximately 28 technician positions. Many hundreds of landowners and many thousands of acres of land have benefited from the services of these folk. Technician positions also provide skilled career opportunities in rural areas where employment options may be limited.

The CSCB Matching Grants program continues to be very popular with conservation districts. It is a locally driven on-the-ground program that Districts can use to address their community's most important natural resource priorities. With around half a million dollars to apply for, grant awards are capped and 25+ projects a year funded. Projects are generally

expected to complete in one and are selected by a committee which assesses each project based on feasibility and natural resource outcomes. A minimum of dollar-for-dollar match must be provided by the District or their partners, and typically significantly more local match is raised. This is great news for Colorado tax payers, whose dollars are being leveraged for benefits that protect Colorado's land, water and wildlife resources for use by all citizens. The projects can also provide economic stimulus benefits by supporting good natural resource stewardship and resulting productivity within Colorado's agriculture industry – the third biggest economy in the state.

Districts submit project proposals based on what they have identified as locally important natural resource issues in their community, and so are wide-ranging. Noxious weeds are a common concern, as are water efficiency, soil erosion and range-land health. The increasing number of small-acreage landowners is a target audience for many districts and the expiring of Conservation Reserve Program contracts result

ing in plowing of fragile soils is a concern for others. The I-70 traffic pile up earlier this year due to blowing soil was a grim reminder of the perpetual relevance of conservation practices in land management.

In 2008 or early 2009, Districts completed 27 Matching Grant projects and raised \$913,800 in matching funds for the \$534,800 of state dollars spent. Later in 2009, a further 29 projects are scheduled for completion – selected from a pool of 57 applications. The Matching Grants page on the CSCB web site contains summaries of completed projects and outlines of on-going projects from 2007 to 2009. The CSCB web site address is: <http://www.colorado.gov/ag/CSCB>

With the state and federal budget in crises for 2010 we do not know at the time of publication what the future holds for these government programs. But we are hopeful that funds will still be available to provide support at the local level for conservation technical assistance and on-the-ground conservation projects. The local jobs and financial assistance that these programs offer may be even more important to rural Colorado citizens in these difficult economic times. With matching state dollars 3:1 overall, countless volunteer hours, and protection of our natural resource heritage, conservation districts can surely offer a good return on investment to Colorado taxpayers.

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# Conservation Hall of Fame



Gerald Mathes family being recognized at the CACD Annual Meeting for founding the Conservation Hall of Fame. L-R Garth Mathes, Mrs. Gerald Mathes, and former CACD President Eric Jessen.

CACD is proud to recognize outstanding conservationists who have passed through nomination to the Conservation Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame was suggested by the Gerald Mathes family as a way of honoring outstanding servants to conservation. The following individuals were nominated and selected by CACD to the 2008 Conservation Hall of Fame. Nominations for the 2009 Hall of Fame should be submitted to CACD.

**Gerald Mathes**

Gerald Mathes served on the Costilla Conservation District board for more than 40 years before being elected as President in 1993. The last two years of his service, Mr. Mathes was in exceedingly poor health. There were many times when he was in so much pain that it wasn't thought that he could attend. But attent, he did! He had a sharp mind and even sharper wit to the end of his life. His dying wish was that his son, Garth, take his place on the board. Garth was sworn in one month after his father's passing and remains an active and valuable board member today.

**Edgar Cannon**

Edgar Cannon was a quiet champion for the conservation movement. A founding member of the Olney-Boone Conservation District, he served for 52 years. He was so serious about preventing the soil from moving that he successfully took the County Commissioners to court when they ignored State Dust Blowing Laws. He was influential in getting "No Plow" ordinances passed in Otero and

Crowley counties. He documented the adverse affects of plowing out native range in a 10" precipitation zone and demonstrated it to the County Commissioners. Colorado is fortunate to have had a quiet champion in Edgar Cannon.

**Glen Anderson**

Glen Anderson served as Executive Vice-President of CASCD from 1992 - 1997. Glen was involved with many community organizations. He served as president of the Colorado Cattle Feeders Association and was awarded an Honorary Lifetime Membership. He was president of the CSU Alumni Association and received the Charles A. Lory award and Honorary Alumni Award from CSU. Glen also served as president of the Highland Ditch Board. Glen was a friend to everyone who knew him and is missed by all of us.

**George Korrey**

George Korrey was a long time member of the Padroni Soil Conservation District Board which later became the Centennial CD. In all, he was a conservation district board member for 54 years. In 2001, after his 54th year, Centennial made George an honorary lifetime board member.

**Paul Pierson**

Paul Pierson joined the Prowers CD board in 1974 and became President in 1975. He contiued to serve in that capacity until his retirement from the board in 2007. He also served at the state level as CACD President. Paul was always an active supporter of conservation in southeastern Colorado. He will be missed.

# Bang for Your Buck ...from Direct Assistance

By Danny Neufeld, Colorado State Conservation Board

Why do we have the direct assistance [DA] process that is in place now? What can we do as supervisors to get the most "bang for our buck"? How can this information be used to the advantage of your conservation district? These questions will be looked at and answered in this article.

First, it was brought to the attention of Colorado State Conservation Board [CSCB] back in 2004 there was a lack of accountability from CSCB where direct assistance was concerned. A committee was therefore formed with members from Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, [CACD], CSCB and district managers. The job of this committee was to prove the conservation districts were using tax payer money properly. The focus of the committee was the supervisors, the elected officials, being the most important factor with the new direct assistance process. Supervisor involvement is the key for having a strong DA application. Keep in mind we are not judging NRCS, but the district in it's own right. What projects were completed and how were the supervisors involved? One must keep in mind supervisor involvement. To maximize DA points, districts must have supervisors help with every factor in the DA application.

A good example of a "maxed out" project would be a conservation project with three or more supervisors doing work on the project. All factors in the DA application, education, grants, revenue generating, conservation projects and all others will benefit with strong supervisor involvement. Always keep in mind that when starting a project using our district employees, we include supervisors in all phases of planning and as much work as possible. We all must decide at what level we can offer our help to the district. It is hard for all supervisors to do all projects all the time, this is understandable. A project with no involvement from supervisors, no matter how great it is, will not be awarded maximum points. To get all the points we can, please in-

volve as many supervisors as possible. Look at the factors that are "A" categories, as these are weighted more than "B" and "C" categories. It is most important to pay careful attention and try to do our best here. The "A" factor categories are a great place to check the progress of your district. Look at the points for all categories; are you satisfied with the point totals or can we improve with more supervisor input. Is there a project we can do, a grant we are missing, or an education program that will change the point total? DA is a great way to judge the progress of a district. We all should use DA as a tool to make our communities and cooperators stronger.

With all that has happened with the State budget as far as cuts, accountability is more important now than ever. With DA applications, CACD has a very strong tool to use in lobbying at the Capitol for conservation districts. We have proven to the Colorado tax payer we are using general fund tax monies wisely and for the benefit of all Colorado.

**Jay Wilson Honored, con't. from page 1**

made a previously unusable allotment functional again.

In addition to being a working ranch, the Tri-Lazy W Ranch hosts multiple camps for 4-H kids. They also host bird watching and shooting sports events and the "Bug and Fish" camp.

The Wilsons have been honored by the Upper Arkansas Conservation District as a "Take Pride in America" ranch for its soil and water conservation practices. In 2006, Tri-Lazy W Ranch was honored by the State Land Board with its Public Access Lessee of the Year Award. In 2008, the Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management honored the Tri-Lazy W Ranch for its innovative, and successful management of rangelands, livestock, and finances with its 2008 Excellence in Rangeland Conservation Award.





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## CACD Individual Memberships

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts provides guidance for individual conservation districts and promotes conservation at state and national levels. Today there 76 conservation districts in Colorado.

We hear from our members that the many programs and activities of CACD are essential to supporting the Conservation movement, yet we realize it cannot be done alone. CACD is working to attract corporate and foundation sponsorships and individual members. CACD is working toward increasing sponsorship for the CACD Annual Meeting, Camp Rocky, and other programs, and is active in communicating with your legislators on issues important to the districts.

As you know, there is a cost

for development of these programs and CACD is asking for your help to move forward. A \$35.00 individual membership from you, your neighbor, and conservation partners will assist in funding this new and exciting opportunity to improve the Association. You can play an important leadership role at this time by becoming an individual 2009 CACD member yourself and making a \$35.00 investment into an organization which has provided an independent voice for the conservation districts since 1945.

CACD is a 501c3 non-profit organization so we encourage you to complete the form for you individual membership or sponsorship to CACD, if you are not already a member, and become a part of the natural resource conservation movement in Colorado.

## Join the newest 2009 members in their support of CACD

Allen Green  
Bethleen McCall  
Bill Lake  
Bill Ulfelder  
Bob Barlow  
Bob Warner  
Bob and Betha Zebroski  
Bonnie Koblitz  
Brenda Anderson  
Callie Hendrickson  
Charles and Anita King  
Cindy Lair  
Clarence Robinson  
Clinton Mehl  
Danny Neufeld  
Dirk Banks  
Don Hajar  
Elisabeth Kautsky  
Ellen Nelson  
Eric Jessen  
Fred Vollbracht  
Garth Mathes  
Harold Anderson  
Jack Burk  
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JB Martin  
JD Wright  
Jimmie Brewer  
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Judy Lopez  
Katey Byrd  
Ken Morgan  
Larry Sweeney  
Levi Sievers  
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Patricia Meakins  
Petra Barnes Walker  
Rachael Dilka  
Randy Ristau  
Rick Romano  
Robert Burry  
Robert Cordova  
Roy Hall  
Sandy Jackson  
Shannon Castrodale  
Sharie Prow  
Sharon Pattee  
Tom Campion  
Travis Casey  
Verly Eschen

## CACD Ladies Auxiliary



*Sitting: Newly elected Donna Butler with retiring Secretary/Treasurer Jolene Robinson. 2nd row: President Sally Fosha and Vice-President Darlene Lucore. Back row: Past-President Jean Taylor, Carol Foth, Jean Campion and Esther Mehl.*

## New Book: Effects of Ag Conservation Practices on Fish & Wildlife

CACD has learned that the USDA Agricultural Research Service has published a bibliography of publications documenting the effect of agricultural practices on wildlife. Titled "Effects of Agricultural Conservation Practices on Fish and Wildlife: A Conservation Effects Assessment Project Bibliography". It includes more than 2,000 citations, plus a search tool to help viewers navigate favorite topics.