



Colorado Conservator

“your voice for locally led conservation”

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In This Issue

Honoring Conservation Families
page 1

Senate Bill 98 Passes Legislature
page 4

**Advanced Irrigation System
Saving Water and Money**
page 6

**Support for Conservation
Continues in Hard Times**
page 8

Inspiration in Poetry
page 9

Camp Rocky Filling Up
page 10

Conservation Hall of Fame
page 11

Honoring Conservationists of the Year

Conservation Districts are in the process of selecting their Districts' conservationists of the year in farming and ranching. After the conservationists of the year are selected by their local conservation districts, the districts forward their conservationist of the year to their Watershed (there are 10 major watersheds in Colorado). Each of the Watersheds review the submittals by the Conservation Districts and make a selection as to the conservationists of the year representing their Watershed. The Watersheds may select conservationists of the year in two categories, ranching and farming. The selection is then forwarded to the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) for consideration as Colorado's conservationists of the year, in either the ranching division or farming division. The CACD conservationists of the year review committee meets in person and reviews the applications submitted by the watersheds.

CACD award selection criteria include but are not limited to:

- Conservation (traditional and non-traditional) practices implemented on entire operation
- Community Outreach and Education (e.g., tours, school field days, etc.)
- Length of time operation (with current owner) has utilized land steward and sound conservation methods.
- Size of operation
- Any long term conservation goals and plans



Four generations of the Cooksey family: (l-r) Evelyn, Vernon, Lyle, Jerry, Paul, Damaris, Dustin, Pauline, Jim, Kathy, Kaytlyn, Molly, Amy, Sarah and Jeff.

The nomination forms for the conservationists of the year rancher and farmer may be found on the CACD website at www.cacd.us, nominations are due into CACD by the end of September 2010.

To provide an example of a conservationist of the year selected by a local conservation district in 2010 the Southeast Weld Conservation District has shared their recent selection and the conservation practices of the Cooksey Farms.

The Southeast Weld Conservation District has selected Cooksey Farms of Roggen, Colorado, as their Farming Conservationist of the Year. Cooksey Farms is five generation farming and ranching operation located approximately eight miles east of Prospect Valley. They farm ground from Prospect Valley to Hoyt in Weld, Adams, and Morgan Counties. The Cooksey's have demonstrated how hard work, dedication to farming, and many conservation efforts have led to the success of their operation. It is with great pleasure we introduce you to Cooksey Farms.

In 1990 Vernon and his three sons formed a partnership known as Cooksey Farms. In 2005 Jim's son, Dustin, joined the operation.

They have 6,795 acres of dryland, 1,189 acres of irrigated crop land, 1,340 acres of native range land, 436 acres of pasture ground, and 643 acres of leased state ground of which 110 acres are native pasture.

The Cooksey's have instituted many conservation practices on the farm:

- planted tree wind breaks
- planted cover crops
- shifted from conventional tillage to minimum or no till
- installed grass waterways and water storage ponds
- farmed on the contour to reduce water erosion
- used soil tests to determine proper amounts of nutrients for maximum production without losing them to runoff or leaching
- installed 1320 ft of concrete ditch
- converted nearly all of their irrigated acres to efficient sprinkler irrigation systems using EQIP dollars
- updated 9 pivots to more efficient LEPA systems
- row crops are in a strip-till system

In addition, 2,910 acres are enrolled in the EQIP program. The Cooksey's use EQIP cost-share to improve irrigation efficiency, save water and reduce pollution.

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President's Message



Harley Ernst

We are back in the saddle or maybe flying high would be a better way of saying it. Bob Warner, Gary Moyer and myself from the CACD Board, and Darlene Jensen, CACD Executive Vice-President, and Janice Ernst, representing the CACD Auxiliary attended the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting in February.

Colorado took six resolutions to the national meeting and all of them were adopted. Some had small changes made to them, and some were more controversial than others (see next page for details).

Back home at the State Capitol we worked on Senate Bill 98 taking much time and effort with CACD lobbyist, Tracee Bentley and the CACD Legislative Committee. We had much support from Representative Jerry Sonnenberg and others. We will be working with local counties and weed districts and the bill should be passed and signed into law by the time you read this. It is not all that we hoped for, but a step in the right direction.

CACD partners with many agriculture organizations to make up the Ag Council which meets bi-weekly at the State Capitol to keep up with bills and legislation pertaining to agriculture concerns and stewards.

The Ag Council helped with the Agriculture Day at the State Capitol in March with news reporters covering and learning the importance of agriculture for food, fiber, shelter and stewardship.

Several of the GLCI Committee members attended the annual meeting of the Society of Range Management, (SRM) in Denver. There were over 2000 people in attendance. We partner with SRM and NRCS through Grazing Land Conservation Initiative (GLCI). I wish all a good and safe planting season. God bless.

The Colorado Conservator

Providing Colorado With
Conservation News for 40 Years

Jerry Schwien, Editor
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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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CACD Resolutions

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) is involved with local, state and federal partners, as CACD represents the 76 conservation districts in Colorado. CACD is called upon to take positions on issues involving natural resource management, funding for conservation activities, and sustainability of agricultural production. Each year the conservation districts through their local watersheds bring forth resolutions to CACD on issues they feel are important enough to bring to the state level, (or to NACD at the national level). From these resolutions policies are created and made a part of CACD Policy. The CACD 2010 resolution submittal form may be found on the CACD website at www.cacd.us

At the CACD Annual Meeting in November 2009 the Conservation Districts adopted 15 resolutions. Of those resolutions six went onto the National Association of Conservation Districts, all of which were adopted into national policy with minor amendments, after national committees' considered. Once in NACD policy, NACD representatives move into action on the national policy through their efforts in Washington D.C.

The six Colorado resolutions passed by NACD this year are:

Resolution #1 Carbon Sequestration, policy and action, assigned to CACD Director Gary Moyer *CACD and NACD believes it is premature for any government agency to promote or move forward on a carbon reduction program for the United States without sound scientific data and information clarifying the result of a percentage reduction of carbon output. This information is necessary to make a clear cost vs. benefit decision of the proposed carbon-reduction program.*

CACD Director Gary Moyer arranged for testimony by the Heartland Institute at NACD annual meeting in support of this resolution. The resolution received significant debate in Committee and was amended, as above, on the floor of the General Assembly and adopted.

Resolution #2 Plant Materials Program Funding, action item, assigned to CACD Director Gary Moyer

Moyer was present at the National Legislative Committee for discussion on Colorado's resolution regarding Plant Material Centers' funding. The resolution was adopted as amended:

NACD will lobby Congress for increased funding for the Plant Materials Program nationwide, and work with NRCS to support and encourage fair and equitable allocation of funding for all Plant Material Centers regardless of operation and ownership. Background on the resolution: Overall the national Plant Materials Program is under funded. For FY2009, the national Plant Materials Program budget is \$7.9 million, of which \$7.7 million is allocated to NRCS staff salaries and benefits. (In the case of the Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center, there is one NRCS employee, yet the Center produces foundation seed for several NRCS releases.

Resolution #3 Waterway Maintenance on Public Lands, CACD President Harley Ernst was present for the discussion of this resolution before the Natural Resource Policy Committee. Resolution adopted as amended: *NACD will work with state and national legislators as well as agencies having governing authority over public lands (local, state and federal) to direct that rivers and riparian areas be kept clear of detrimental vegetation, invasive and noxious weeds, that restricts and depletes the flow of water.*

Background on the resolution: While private landowners are expected and/or required to keep the riparian areas free from restricting the stream flow, publicly owned riparian lands that are up stream and down stream require maintenance to keep waterways consistently clear of debris. Goals cannot be accomplished without both public and private landowners' cooperation.

Resolution #4 Forest Management; CACD Directors Gary Moyer and Don Foth. Don Foth provided his expertise in forestry in discussions with Gary prior to the NACD annual meeting.

Gary Moyer was in attendance at the Natural Resource Committee discussion on this resolution. The resolution was adopted into national policy:

NACD recognizes the value of managing public and private forests as an important natural

resource for maximum economic (wood products for human use) and environmental benefit through strategic silvicultural treatment. NACD supports silviculture techniques and advanced, scientifically proven forest management practices to promote the growth and maintenance of a healthy, multi-aged forest reducing the susceptibility to widespread insect or disease outbreaks, wildfire danger, and soil erosion. These practices will provide for improved water quality, bio-diversity, increased carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, recreation, and wood products.*

NACD promote silvicultural training and education at universities for better understanding of forest health and management and better training for future forest managers. NACD promote qualified federal and state forest agency managers with silviculture training and education in each U.S. Forest Service district office. NACD support immediate strategic removal of located standing dead and dying timber with reforestation efforts following.

**Silviculture is the art and science of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health and quality of forests to meet diverse needs and values of the many landowners, societies and cultures over the parts of the globe that are covered by dry land."*

Resolution #5 CACD Director Brian Neufeld, Conservation Education Standards; The resolution went before the NACD Legislative Committee.

The resolution was amended at national to have the resolution support Boards of Education nationwide. Bob Warner, CACD Director and Darlene Jensen, Executive Director CACD were in attendance at the national Legislative Committee, and spoke to Colorado's resolution. The resolution supports pending federal legislation, "No Child Left Inside Act" which will bring additional federal funding into states for conservation education. The resolution was adopted at national as amended.

NACD supports the concepts of the national "No Child Left Inside Act" and encourages state associations to work with their State Boards of Education to include natural resources conservation in education standards. The resolution as passed by CACD: CACD

supports the Colorado Board of Education inclusion of Conservation of Natural Resources in the various standards of education and urges the Colorado Board of Education and Colorado legislators to pass the No Child Left Inside initiative.

Resolution #6: Bob Warner, Harley Ernst, Brian Starkebaum: Colorado Resolution – Conservation Reserve Program Lost Acres Remediation.

Bob Warner, Harley Ernst and Joyce Wallace (of West Greeley CD) attended the discussion of the Natural Resource Committee on Colorado's CRP Resolution. The resolution was adopted into NACD policy without amendments.

Acres of CRP ground should not be further reduced and every effort should be made to maintain current acre allotments within the next farm bill. USDA and Conservation Districts are asked to promote practices that will limit resource concerns lost by CRP contracts expiring and find financial resources to support the efforts as soon as possible. USDA and Conservation Districts are asked to promote and provide support for practices that benefit resource concerns and provide financial support for such practices such as modified tillage or prescribed grazing. CRP program was set up to meet the following goals: reduction of production of commodity crops which would pay for itself in the reduction of commodity payments; and erosion reduction by taking highly erodible land out of production. Benefits from CRP include: increased wildlife habitats and sustainability; increased water quality; increased commodity values; decreased erosion.

With the removal of 18% of the total national acres of CRP land, because of the provision limitations and requirements of the current farm bill, a need has arisen. NACD shall work with national legislators and any other organizations with similar interests, to provide incentives, such as cost sharing, well drilling and exterior fencing, encouraging owners with acres coming out of CRP to keep those acres in range land. Conservation Districts are encouraged to develop their own programs, and in partnership with other organizations of similar interest, that will cost-share drilling of livestock wells and exterior fences, exclusively for expiring CRP acres.

The 2009 CACD Policy Book is available at the CACD website: www.cacd.us.

Executive Director's Message

By Darlene Jensen

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

CACD has worked with the Colorado State Forest Service, U.S. Forest Service and NRCS in the development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU). CACD Board members Don Foth and Gary Moyer brought their expertise in forest management to the discussions in the development of this MOU. The health of Colorado's forests is important to the economic and natural resource landscapes throughout the State. These partners engaged in this MOU recognize that forest health issues are not confined or defined by ownership and administrative boundaries.



Don Foth

The partners will address forest management practices and policies, forest-related education and conservation. The purpose of this MOU is intended to facilitate the CSFS, CACD, NRCS, and USFS in working together to ensure that respective program resources are used in the most effective way, with a focus on improving service to private forest landowners.

CACD Board members have been actively participating in State Technical Committee meetings, conservation districts annual meetings, Ag Council meetings, and meetings with federal and state legislators. CACD Vice-President

Brian Starkebaum met with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to discuss the work of the conservation districts in Colorado, the needs of the ag community, and conservation program initiatives. The benefits of these communications and the participation by the Board, expands partnerships in conservation and assists in bringing funding to landowners' conservation projects.

CACD has been very busy in grant and contract management. CACD is pleased to have received a grant from USEPA and Bureau of Reclamation for its conservation education programs. Camp Rocky, a youth natural resource program, is the recipient of some of these funds. This year Camp Rocky will feature a tour of the Hayman Fire Burn area for the teens attending camp.



Jim Isgar and Darlene Jensen

Jim Isgar, Rural Development Director for Colorado, stopped by the CACD office in Woodland Park after making a presentation on Rural Development program opportunities at Senator Mark Udall's grant workshop in Woodland Park.

CACD Director Don Foth has announced that he is term limited from his local conservation district board, Dolores Conservation District, and as such will be leaving the CACD Board of Directors. To have had the opportunity to work with Don has been an extreme pleasure. Don has addressed challenging issues with a thoughtful, yet deliberate approach. His experience in forest management and policy brought much to the table. At the 65th CACD annual meeting Don gave a presentation on forestry that fully engaged everyone in the room.

However, it is not just Don that CACD will miss, but the support and presence of his wife, Carol. Carol has always been there in support of Don's work for CACD and the conservation districts. CACD extends a warm welcome to Tom Hartnett, of Hesperus, Colorado, as its representative of the San Juan Basin Watershed representative to the CACD Board.

Senate Bill 98 Passes Legislature



CACD President Harley Ernst, Brian Allmer of The Barn broadcast radio, Representative Jerry Sonnenberg, and CACD Vice-President Brian Starkebaum speaking to Senate Bill 98 at the Stockshow earlier this year.

Senate Bill 98 was brought by the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts and the Weed Management Association to request funding from the Conservation Trust Fund (State fund) for conservation work in Colorado.

The bill has passed the House and Senate and has been sent onto the Governor for signing. With the passage of SB 98, Conservation Districts and Pest Control Districts now have the opportunity to work with their local County Commissioners to further advance locally led conservation efforts.

County Commissioners now have much greater flexibility in how they appropriate Conservation Trust Fund dollars that they receive. Local Districts need to approach their County Commissioners and submit proposals for partnering on conservation projects. The Commissioners can then decide the level of funding that they can commit to the projects.

A summary of the amount of Conservation Trust Fund dollars that each county received over the last five years is available by contacting CACD at 719-686-0020 or emailing cacd@cacd.us. Districts can use these numbers as a base line for drafting their project requests.

CACD extends its sincere appreciation to the bill sponsors, Senator Lois Tochtrop and Representative Jerry Sonnenberg, CACD lobbyist Tracee Bentley, CACD Board for Directors, the Weed Management Association Board of Directors and the many conservation partners who provided support for the senate bill through this legislative session. A full reading of the bill may be found on the www.leg.state.co.us

Term Limit Retirements

Vern Vinson has served on the Teller Park Conservation District Board for 10 years and due to term limits will be retiring from his local board. Vern serves on the CACD Board as Secretary/Treasurer and has volunteered to continue serving in that capacity.

Brian Starkebaum has served on the Haxtun CD Board and is also term limited. Brian is Vice-President of CACD representing the Lower South Platte Watershed and will continue to serve on the CACD Board.

Don Foth has served on the Dolores CD Board and is now term limited. Don also served on the CACD Board representing the San Juan Basin Watershed. has been appointed to replace Don on the CACD Board.

Bob Warner has served on the West Adams CD Board and is also term limited. Prior to that Bob served on the Platte Valley CD Board for 26 years. Bob will

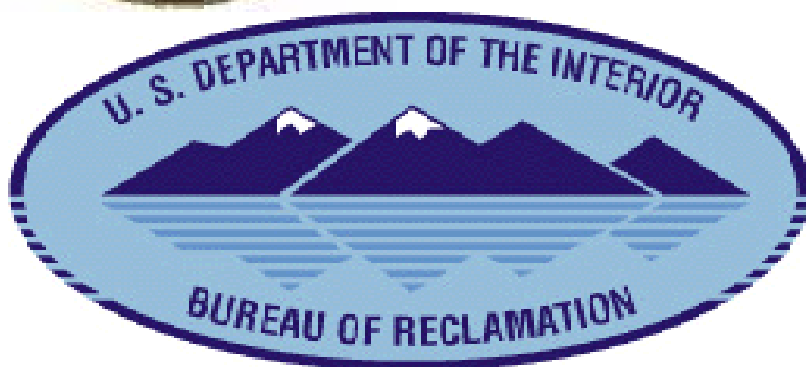


Vern Vinson with Angela Jensen (Darlene's daughter) at the National Western Stockshow.

also be reaching term limits from the CACD Board. At the end of 2011, Bob will have completed his 4th consecutive three year term for CACD and will be term limited.

To these Directors/Supervisors, thank you for your invaluable years of service to conservation districts and CACD.

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.

USDA Funding Available for Water Conservation Projects

The US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced the availability of funding that will help producers conserve surface and ground water and improve water quality on agricultural land through its Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP). Some \$20 million in financial assistance for new AWEP projects is now available and proposal must be submitted by May 17, 2010.

NRCS implements the AWEP program through project areas identified and proposed by eligible partners. Eligible partners include federally recognized Indian Tribes; States; units of local government; agricultural associations, and other groups of producers--such as irrigation associations, agricultural land trusts, or other nongovernmental organizations that have experience working with agricultural producers. Upon a project area being approved and announced by NRCS, individual producers within the project area can then apply for as

sistance through their local NRCS field office.

The focus of water enhancement activities within the program includes water quality or water conservation plan development; water conservation restoration or enhancement projects; water quality or quantity restoration or enhancement projects; irrigation system improvements; irrigation efficiency enhancements; activities designed to mitigate the effects of drought, and; related activities determined to help achieve water quality or water conservation benefits on agricultural land.

Eligible partners have until May 17, 2010 to submit a proposal. To view the full request for proposals, or for additional AWEP information about how to apply, please visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/AWEP.

For additional information about NRCS and the conservation programs that may be available for you, please visit: www.co.nrcs.usda.gov.

CACD Annual Meeting, Nov. 15-18



Be sure to mark your calendars for the 66th CACD Annual Meeting, Nov. 15-18, 2010 to be held in Colorado Springs at the Crowne Plaza. The Annual Meeting Planning Committee (pictured above) has been busy. Training and conservation partner sessions will again be on the agenda along with time for networking.

Auxiliary Notes

In about 200 days, we'll all be gathered at the Crowne Plaza in Colorado Springs for the annual meeting. As a reminder to all Conservation Districts, *spouses* of all District Supervisors are automatically members of the CACD Auxiliary. We meet once a year at the annual meeting. Our main project is hosting the "Silent Auction". The money raised is used to support scholarships to Camp Rocky, the annual poster contest and other agricultural beneficiaries. We also sponsor a raffle at the banquet. The raffle item is donated each year by one of the Watershed Associations – The Lower South Platte & Republican River will be donating an item this year.

We encourage every CD to donate at least one item (and more if possible) to the Silent Auction. If you need additional information, please contact Sally Fosha: Tel. (719) 347-2785; E-mail: fosha-bsr@att.net

Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management

Colorado Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society



Summer Tour of J&L Farms Partnership – recipient of the SRM Excellence in Rangeland Conservation Award

When? **Friday, June 11 @ 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

Where? **Meet at the ranch headquarters located 13 miles south of Eads**

CO Section SRM Board Meeting June 10 @ La Junta NRCS Area Office from 6-9 PM

RSVP by June 4 to:

Ben Berlinger, 318 Lacey Ave., La Junta, CO 81050 719-384-5408

For information call 719-384-5408 ext 104

Advanced Water Delivery System Saving Southwestern Colorado Irrigators Water and Money

State-of-the-Art Technology Incorporated in \$2.9M Pipeline Project

CORTEZ, Colo. – Below the rugged pinon and juniper-clad hills surrounding Cortez, Colorado, a new five (5) mile pipeline and automated water control and distribution system has virtually eliminated water losses and improved delivery efficiency.



Solar-powered, digital flow monitor with wireless communication, and covered manholes housing ultrasonic flow meter unit and remote-controlled valve

Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company (MVIC), Cortez, Co., which serves 1,400 customers spanning an area of 37,500 square miles, has historically delivered water via miles of open canals and ditches. In 2008, with funding assistance provided by a Conservation Innovation Grant from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), MVIC initiated a ditch-to-pipeline conversion project designed to reduce its water losses and increase operational efficiency.

A five-mile ditch section called the May Lateral was transformed from an open, unlined ditch into a five-mile long buried pipeline. The pipeline is made of High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) ranging from 36" to 12" in diameter. The elevational decline of the pipeline creates sufficient hydraulic head pressure to power shareholder sprinkler irrigation systems.

Original weir or flume water measurement devices at turnouts were replaced with pipes equipped with butterfly control valves. And some of the large turnouts were fitted with ultrasonic

flow meters. The highly accurate flow meters mount as paired units on the outside of a pipe, which eliminates impeller plugging and minimizes maintenance. A flow meter unit is comprised of two identical transducers and the meter. Flow is measured by alternately

transmitting and receiving bursts of sound energy between the two transducers. The meter analyzes the signals and calculates flow velocity and volume based on the pipe size. The external mounting feature enables MVIC to use one model of flow meter to measure flow in pipes of different sizes.

Solar panels were installed to power a portion of the flow meters and butterfly valves. Using solar power eliminated costs associated with running ground-based electrical

wire to the isolated turnout locations, and it was better for the environment.

Flow meters and valves at key locations are equipped with electronic controllers and transmitter / receivers and can wirelessly communicate their status using radio telemetry to a receiver and master control center at the MVIC office. The two-way wireless communication system is expandable and provides a framework for automation of other parts of the MVIC system.



Control system and monitor in MVIC office

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Call 303-697-2123 or visit www.agritechconsulting.com

There are USDA programs that can reimburse producers for this assistance.

AgriTech Consulting will work with you to maximize the use of numerous programs to meet your individual needs.



LET US HELP YOU WITH YOUR PLANNING NEEDS!

The software that manages the new system has an integrated geographic information system (GIS) component which displays the new automated system as a map on the control computer monitor "Combining our new radio telemetry-control system with GIS has created a powerful management tool that allows us to keep tabs on this section of our water delivery system in real time" says Jim Siscoe, Executive Director at MVIC. At any moment of the day,

Siscoe and his staff can view the control system monitor and determine the flow rate in the main pipeline and at the larger turnouts. They can also open and close valves to adjust flow at two demonstration turnouts - all without leaving the office. "It is truly a quantum leap forward" says Siscoe. "Our hearty forbearers who built the original ditch system would be amazed at how far technology has taken water delivery."

Automating the delivery of program water has saved MVIC staff time and equipment - which translates into lower operating costs. But the largest cost savings has come through water conservation. By eliminating ditch-related water losses, Mr. Siscoe estimates that MVIC saved 1,200 acre-feet last year. At \$2,000 per

acre-foot downstream value, the savings amounted to \$2.4 million.

At a total project cost of \$2.9 million, the new system would normally pay for itself in two irrigation seasons. However, for MVIC, the system has already returned its investment, thanks to partial funding from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and a grant from the Colorado River salinity program.

Engineering and design of the pipeline system was handled by AgriTech, an agricultural engineering firm based in Morrison, Colorado. "This project brings together a variety of technologies - radio telemetry, ultrasonic flow measurement, solar power generation, and hardware and software control systems, even installation-friendly HDPE pipe - to create one integrated system that has reduced MVIC's costs and increased efficiency," says AgriTech General Manager Gerald Knudsen, P.E.

Based on the success of the project, the US Bureau of Reclamation is providing a \$2.1 million ARRA grant to MVIC to install a similar pipeline and automated control system in another area of their water delivery network. ☞

Colorado Conservator Available by Email

If you would like to receive your edition of the Colorado Conservator by email, please contact CACD (719-686-0020) or by email: cacd@cacd.us

Thank you to readers who have responded with your emails to receive the Conservator by email to help reduce the cost of printing and mailing. All recent issues of the Conservator are available on the CACD website at www.cacd.us

Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative

The Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative is a new approach to rangeland monitoring as it standardizes how monitoring is implemented on private, state, and federal lands. Developing this standardized approach is a Colorado Cattlemen’s Association (CCA) membership directive that is based on previous research. In February of 2009, CCA finished research on a project that was funded by the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI). This project provided insight as to why individuals monitor, why they don’t monitor, what monitoring programs they utilize, and what are some of the biggest obstacles associated with monitoring, etc. Additionally, state agencies were also asked to provide information as to how they communicate monitoring needs to permittees/lessees, their acceptance of producer-derived data, the need for cooperative monitoring, and if there is value in developing a standardized approach.

The GLCI-funded project found that both producers and agency personnel see value in developing a standardized approach to monitoring. There is also value in developing a database where monitoring information can be recorded and stored for future use. Based on these conclusions, CCA began working on the Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative and the program’s objectives are as follows:

- 1. **Develop** a standardized approach to rangeland/resource monitoring
- 2. **Design** a resource database
- 3. **Implement** the monitoring program

This innovative approach to monitoring is being accomplished through an open and transparent stakeholder process. Ownership and acceptance of this program will be integral in making it a state-wide success. We don’t want this to be the “CCA Monitoring Program,” but rather a program that has broad recognition from private landowners, state and federal agencies, and rangeland conservationists throughout the state. The stakeholder group consisted of one individual from each of the follow-

ing organizations/operations:

Organizations

- Bureau of Land Management
- Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
- Colorado Cattlemen’s Association
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
- Colorado State Land Board
- Colorado State University Extension
- Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Public Lands Council
- United States Forest Service

Operations

- Private landowner
- Public permittee/lessee

The stakeholder process began in August of 2009. Since that time, the stakeholders have had several meetings where they have helped develop the standardized approach by providing the foundation for the program. The stakeholder group has made tremendous progress as they have delineated a list of rangeland health indicators and methods that are common among their respective monitoring programs and protocols. The focus among all individuals of the stakeholder group was to develop a program that is simple, functional, and credible.

Currently, the agency stakeholders involved in this process are working to approve an MOU within their respective agencies. The MOU is another unique aspect of this program. The MOU signifies that the Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative is a cooperative monitoring plan and corresponding processes between consenting landowners and/or permittees/lessees and the state and federal agency signatories.

To assist in implementation of the Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative, a handbook is being developed. The *Colorado Rangeland Monitoring Guide* is the official handbook for the Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative. The stakeholders have provided input

and feedback as the efforts and goals of the stakeholder group are illustrated in this handbook. The *Colorado Rangeland Monitoring Guide* will be vetted through the stakeholder group for final approval before being distributed.

Along with developing the standardized approach, a major component of the Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative is the database. Rangeland monitoring data is valuable to this and future generations, so the ability to store and utilize rangeland data is extremely important. Thus, CCA is currently working on the design, framework, and structure for the database. This is an important process as this database needs to provide service and functionality to all of those who will use it.

The Colorado Cattlemen’s Association is committed to this program’s success because rangeland monitoring is extremely important to the future of our industry. Our current President Tim Canterbury recognizes the importance of monitoring by stating:

“We as producers claim to be good stewards of the land. I believe this to be true, but if we don’t take the time to actually go out

and do on-the-ground monitoring, we can’t know the true health of the resource. With the knowledge gained from monitoring-be it photo points, hoop readings, transects, or any of the myriad of other forms of monitoring-we are better able to understand the impact we have on the range. This information will allow us to make better management decisions, and allow us to defend our position to the public at large. If we are truly stewards of the land, the our ultimate goal should be to ensure that both the resource and our way of life continues to remain in place for generations”

CCA and those involved in the stakeholder process will be rolling out the Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative this summer. CCA board and staff will be presenting the details of the Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative at the 2010 Annual Convention in Pueblo. If you are interested in learning more about this program, please join us at the 2010 Annual Convention or call the CCA office at 303-431-6422.



Nonpoint Source Pollution in Colorado

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npscolorado.com is supported by a Colorado NPS Project from the Water Quality Control Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Support for Conservation Continues

...despite state budget setbacks

The Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB), an arm of state government, provides funding to conservation districts through direct assistance, limited salinity program funds and two grant programs that provide matching funds open to all conservation districts in Colorado. The District Conservation Technician (DCT) program provides a 75% cost-share from federal and state funds for districts to hire technical staff to assist landowners, especially for assistance with Farm Bill programs. The Matching Grant program provides a 50% state cost-share for on-the-ground local conservation projects identified by the districts. From 2007 to 2009 \$1.8 million dollars of state funding has been distributed to the conservation districts for these two programs – along with \$1 million of Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) funds for the DCT program. While this state grant funding level to conservation districts may be regarded as small potatoes compared with many states, nevertheless it has benefitted around half of Colorado districts. Around 29 districts have participated in the DCT program every year since 2003 and 72 Matching Grant projects were funded from 2007-2008 with a further 23 approved for 2010.

In 2009 fifty-seven Matching Grant Program projects requesting over \$1.2 million in funding were submitted and twenty-eight projects were funded with the approximately \$425,000 available. Although it became necessary for the Legislature to cut some funding to the CSCB for 2009, Colorado Agriculture Commissioner John Stulp allocated Colorado Department of Agriculture (Ag Management) funds to ensure neither CSCB direct assistance nor matching grants programs suffered any decrease in funding. With the overall state budget in dire straits and cuts being made throughout state departments, it was very encouraging that the work of conservation districts received such strong support from the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA). The 2010 legislative session will be every bit as difficult for state departmental budgets and it is too early to under

stand whether cuts will be felt by the conservation program or not.

The CSCB web site shows cases completed Matching Grant Program projects all across the Colorado landscape. The program is particularly for innovative or seed-money projects, or to combat an urgent/critical conservation need. Often the funds go directly to landowners to cost-share conservation practices for priority natural resource issues. At other times the districts work with various partners to address a local concern such as repairing ailing community water management structures or restoring a river corridor.

An exciting success story for 2009 was Turkey Creek Conservation District working in partnership with Pueblo County to establish a noxious weed management program for the county. Where there was no county-wide noxious weed program now there is one thanks to the Turkey Creek Conservation District. This is a great example of how Matching Grant Funds can be used as seed-money for a new district enterprise. The district and the county both have a vested interest in controlling noxious weeds and the county provided funds for a staff while the Turkey Creek district set up the program and pursued other funding options – including a CSCB Matching Grant - for landowner education and weed control cost cost-share services. By the end of 2009, fifty-three landowners had committed to integrated pest management contracts and 13,400 acres were enrolled in the district weed control program. Along with the hired program administrator, board members donated over 600 hours of their time to launch and build the program. 2010 activities will include increased educational outreach, continued landowner cost-share opportunities, the inclusion of South Pueblo Conservation District in the effort and strategizing for continuing funding and long term viability. Check out the Pueblo County Weed Program web site at www.pueblo-weeds.com.

Under ever-changing natural resource uses and values, conservation is necessarily a dynamic, adaptable activity. For example,



Water facilities are critical to enable good grazing management. The High Plains and Prairie conservation districts used Matching Grant funds to cost-share solar powered water pumps to provide water tanks in remote areas.

today Colorado is experiencing hundreds of thousands of acres of grassland expiring from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) in the next few years. As it expires from CRP, landowners may choose to revert to plowing and cropping that land – especially if the market price of crop commodities is attractive. Because of the soil types of CRP land, removal of vegetation during cropping rotations exposes the soil to very high erosion potential – resulting in loss of fertile topsoil and increased sediment loadings of water courses and systems. Wildlife food and shelter may also be lost. Several districts have used Matching Grant funds to provide options to landowners to keep fragile land under grass rather than plow up for cropping. During the last 3 years Prowers, Northeast Prowers, Agate, Baca County, Upper Huerfano, High Plains/Prairie, East Adams/Deer Trail, Yuma and Double El conservation districts have provided cost-share for range-land conservation practices such as stock watering facilities and fencing for more efficient managed grazing. This can help make the difference in the landowner's decision that grazing rather than cropping is a viable option on these highly erodible soils. In Baca County for example, 153,361 CRP acres were scheduled to expire in 2009 – in 2008 Matching Grants funds installed stock-watering facilities serving 1,801 acres of expiring CRP land.

If Colorado was once driven by a gold rush, nowadays the natural resource generating most

competition is water. With the majority of Colorado citizens living in the cities, the importance of water for agriculture is sometimes misunderstood by the general populace. While there is sometimes a suspicious eye cast on agricultural irrigation because of the significant quantities of water it uses, farmers are acutely aware of the value of water and the need to use it wisely. Matching Grants have been used by districts as widespread as Debeque-Plateau Valley, San Juan, Upper Huerfano, Middle Park, Bookcliff and Flagler to improve agricultural water delivery systems.

In 2010 Yuma Conservation District was awarded Matching Grant Program funds to bring high-tech innovation to landowners by cost-sharing Computer Assisted Management (CAM) Panels as a pilot project. These panels will allow very precise water, fertilizer and chemical application to crops with reduced water, energy and labor demands. Conserving the dwindling Ogallala aquifer water reserves and meeting the Republican River Water Compact are both key water issues within the Yuma Conservation District. In a focus group meeting of area irrigators, interest was expressed in the CAM panels but cost was a prohibitive factor. If the panels demonstrate the expected economic benefits, the district believes area irrigators will adopt them without the need for additional cost-share. Data gathered from producers during the pilot project will be entered on an on-line database for use in decision making about the technology.

CACD announces the 2010 Poster Contest theme:

2010 "Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats" Poster Contest



COLORADO POSTER CONTEST OPEN TO ALL 6TH GRADERS IN COLORADO

CACD is pleased to announce that Joyce Wallace, District Manager with the West Greeley Conservation District will be coordinating the 6th grade poster contest for Colorado. Details on the poster contest will be available through your local conservation district and on the CACD website at www.cacd.us as they become available. Posters will be judged at the local conservation district level and winners submitted to the state contest at the CACD annual meeting in November 2010.

Shavano CD Donates Quilt to CACD



At its annual meeting, The Shavano Conservation District Board, presented the Colorado Assn. of Conservation Districts with a quilt of the conservation districts of Colorado. Shown presenting are: Supervisors Lanny Denham, Ken Greenhill, Richard St. Jean and accepting CACD Executive Director, Darlene Jensen. The quilt was handcrafted by Sharon Ragsdale and Gussie Bolton of the Delta Conservation District and purchased by the Shavano CD at the 59th CACD Annual Meeting in 2003.

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Inspiration

John Cooley is a potato producer on the western slope, Austin, Colorado, and is a poet and story teller. John's *inspiration* came through his Great Uncle, John Hunter Wickersham, also a poet. Beginning with this edition of the *Colorado Conservator*, Spring 2010, poems and works of John will be featured each edition under a new column entitled "Inspiration." His poems speak to the work of the farmers.

"BEGINNINGS"

Make ready:

The openers, drillers, eveners, hillers,
markers, seed plates, harrows
and ditches.

Tune the sweeps, listers, spaders
and pruners.

Lubricate the linkage, balls and
hitches.

How I have missed you.
Those gifts of hope and surprises.
I love that feeling of new.
Long apart from a friend.
Trying to remember how it grew.

Once again we start.
The seeds we inventory, look and
feel.

The warmin' of the earth
With the warmin' of the heart.

Wake up and take pride.
So large but so small
Plant a line in the sand,
The drama of a new season
The power of the land.

- by John Cooley 1-7-2010

John also shares with us a poem by his Great Uncle, written in the World War I era by John Hunter Wickersham. "If you can imagine sitting in the trenches of WWI with the rain, bombs and gas all around. 18 years old and first time away from home. Lt. Wickersham was a good boy. He was gentle, a leader, handsome and had the respect of his men. He was jovial and caring, intelligent, and wholesome. He was one of only a few in the country at that time to receive the Medal of Honor, the highest award in the country. An American Legion Post

in Denver bears his name." Sadly, Lt. Wickersham was killed while helping his men, taking a bullet in his chest. To this day John Cooley has his Great Uncle's notebook that was in his chest pocket, with a bullet hole in it. John's Great Uncle wrote this poem when he was on the battlefield in France in 1913.

"RAIN ON YOUR OLD TIN HAT"

The midst hangs low and quiet on a
ragged line of hills.

There is a whispering of wind
across the flat.

You'd be feeling kind of lonesome
if it wasn't for one thing,

The pattern of the rain drops on
your little Old Tin Hat.

And you just can't help a figuring-
sitting there all alone,
About this war and hero stuff and
that,

And you wonder if they hav'nt sort
of got things twisted up,
While the rain keeps up the pattern
on your Old Tin Hat.

And you just can't help a figuring
sitting there all alone,
When you step off with the outfit to
do your little bit,
You're simply doing what you're
supposed to do,
And you don't take time to figure
what you gain or what you loose,
It's the spirit of the game that
brings you through.

But back at home she is waiting,
Writing little cheerful notes,
And every night she offers up a
prayer,

And just keeps on hoping that her
soldier boy who's over there-

And fellows, she's the hero of this
great ugly war,

And her prayer is on that wind
across the flat,

And don't you know maybe its her
tears, and not the rain,
That's keeping up the pattern on
your Old Tin Hat.

by John Hunter Wickersham

[All rights reserved
by John Cooley]

Camp Rocky Expecting Full Complement of Students

We would like to introduce you to **Camp Rocky!** An outdoor natural resource camp for kids in its 48th year. Are your youth into hands-on learning about the Environment? Do they like to spend time outdoors and learn about wildlife, forestry...if so Camp Rocky may be the place for them! **July 4 - 10, 2010.** If you would like more info, please contact Darlene Jensen at CACD: 719-686-0020 or email: darlene@cacd.us

Students report on Camp Rocky at Lake County CD's Annual Meeting

Camp Rocky 2009 saw a record attendance. Many students received sponsorships from their local conservation district. At the annual meeting of the Lake County Conservation District students Kyle Burke, Mariel Ritacco and Erica Wuenschel prepared and presented power points of their experience at camp last year, recalling some of what they learned.

The rangeland science group learned about the "fitness" of the rangeland and the forage it provides. They saw how rangelands provide food for animals, habitat for wildlife, and open space with natural beauty for humans to enjoy, and clean water for drinking and recreation.

The soil and water team learned about the primary components of a watershed. They created a river and learned how different types of soil affect plants, wildlife, water and humans

The wildlife biology team tracked a radio-collared animal, went electro-fishing, learned how Colorado wildlife adapts to their surroundings and completed a habitat enhancement project.

The forest management team learned about different forest types, how to determine the overall health of the forest, how to find a tree's age without cutting it down, different insects and diseases that affect trees and how fire can be beneficial to forest health and safety.

In their power point presentations the students explained how to measure the circumference and height of a tree, without having to cut it down. When finding the circumference of a tree always measure it from about 4.5 feet above the ground. For a single trunk, find the 4.5 feet mark and push the edge

of the tape measure into the trunk. Walk around the trunk wrapping the tape measure around it tightly. Now, you can record the data. For a trunk split below 4.5 feet you should find the skinniest part of the trunk and continue to measure.

To measure the height of a tree the students used a clinometer and looked through the glass meter. Then they walked away from the tree 50 feet. Pointing the clinometer at the top of the tree they looked through the instrument and recorded the number that corresponded with the top of the tree. Without moving their head, they tilted the clinometer down to the base of the tree. They repeated the procedure at the bottom level. They added those numbers and divided it by two. "That's how you get the height of a tree!"

The students also explained:

A) How to determine the different layers of soil and whether it is good soil if it drains well, does not crust after planting, soaks up heavy rains with little runoff, stores moisture for drought periods, resists erosion and nutrient loss, produces healthy and high quality crops.

B) That there are three types of water Erosion

- Sheet-Removal of the top layer soil from raindrop splash or water runoff
- Rill-Most common form. When soil is removed for small streams running through land with poor surface draining
- Gully- The removal of soil along drainage lines by surface water runoff

C) And the sources of water and moisture:

Ocean's and Seas consists of 97.2% of the worlds water.

Frozen, non-accessible water like Icecaps and Glaciers consist of 2.15% of our water

Ground Water 0.62%

Lakes consist of 0.017%;

Fresh Water 0.009%

Inland seas/salt water 0.008%

Soil Moisture has 0.005%

Atmospheric Water 0.001%

Rivers and Streams 0.0001%

Lastly, Mariel, Kyle and Erica described the conservation project they completed while at camp.

"The entire camp got together to work on and repair a trail. Each person was assigned a task to help out with building the trail. My group was assigned building steps for easier hiking on the trail. We had to find just the right size rocks to fit and sturdy them to make sure that went it rained and snowed there would be no erosion underneath the rocks. Other groups did tasks like building a new bridge, redirecting the trail, and fixing areas in the stream so that that running water would no longer erode the edges. We chopped down unwanted trees, shredded them and then carried them back up the trail, creating a nice path to follow. At the end of the day, the trail was finished with a new path and a new bridge."

The students expressed their sincere appreciation to the Lake County Conservation District for sending to Camp Rocky. Many conservation districts are providing sponsorships for students for the 2010 Camp Rocky program. Please contact CACD at cacd@cacd.us or call 719-686-0020, or



Kyle Burke and Mariel Ritacco reported on Camp Rocky along with Erica Wuenschel at the Lake County CD's Annual Meeting.



Jan Manning, Mountain Man, has been instructing at Camp Rocky for 30 years.



Beth Fortman, NRCS, instructs students on soil quality at Camp Rocky 2009.

Teachers' Workshops Filling Up



(Left) Teachers learning about ecosystems.

(Below) Teachers learning about stream ecology.

It's that time of year 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 2010 teacher workshop series. For the third year teachers from across the state of Colorado are back to experience conservation at its best! The two workshops "From Watershed to Sustainability: Building a "Stream" of Consciousness" June 7 – 12, and for the first time teacher there is "From Watershed to Cup – Following Water Through the Creekulum" June 14 – 18th.

Both workshops are designed for K-12 educators, who are interested in getting kids outdoors and incorporating those themes into the Colorado Content Standards and their classrooms 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 3 graduate credit hours from Adams State College.



By popular demand the watershed will be expanding the workshop next year to include a third in the series "From Watershed to Circle – Following Soils Downstream Journey" and in 2012 the 4th in the series will come on line "From Watershed to Table – Understanding the Importance of Agriculture"

Remember all workshops are available for a \$100 refundable attendance deposit. To get teachers from your districts involved contact Judy Lopez at 719-589-3907 X 117.

Conservation Hall of Fame

Dr. Bernard J. Smith is honored at the Lake County Conservation District Annual Meeting. Dr Smith has served his Conservation District for 57 years and is one of the 11 conservation district representatives that have been inducted into the Colorado Conservation Hall of Fame since its inception in 2008. Darlene Jensen and Vern Vinson of CACD presented Dr. Smith with his award. Bernie was nominated by his District for the Hall of Fame. He has been instrumental in several key issues, in-

cluding a massive restoration plan to clean up heavy metals contaminating 11 miles of the Arkansas River in Lake County, which led to the creation of the Upper Arkansas River Restoration project in 1996. "Doc" also served on the CSCB for several years, and has dedicated his life to conservation throughout the State of Colorado.

If your District would like to nominate an individual for induction into the Colorado Conservation Hall of Fame please contact CACD for details at cacd@cacd.us

Turkey Creek Weed Program a Success



The Turkey Creek CD held a "Weed Wrap Up" dinner to celebrate the success of their first year as the Pueblo County Weed Management Agency. It was an event long on fun and short on business. Board supervisors, volunteers, contractors, state agencies and NRCS folks were rewarded with monogrammed hard hats for their 2009 efforts. Pink for the ladies and yellow for the guys. Bill Alt handed out the hats, which had a "handle name" for each along with cartoons of what that individual's particular action or personality played in the Turkey Creek CD Incentive Weed Program. The program evaluated over 3,500 acres on 100 properties. Some 750 weed acres were treated.



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CACD Benefits You You Can Help Us!

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) provides guidance for individual conservation districts and promotes conservation at local, state and national levels. In 2010 CACD continues its work to maintain and secure funding for the work of the conservation districts. Today there are 76 conservation districts in Colorado which represent the landowners and ag producers statewide in natural resources management matters. CACD is a member of the National Association of Conservation Districts, representing 3,000 conservation districts nationwide.

We hear from landowners 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 membership to CACD. 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 conservation districts and landowners on the wise use of

natural resources in Colorado.

As you know, there is a cost for management of these programs and CACD is asking for your help to continue in its efforts on behalf of the conservation districts and landowners of Colorado. A **\$35 individual membership** from you and your conservation partners will assist in funding the long-standing work of this organization. You can play an important leadership role by becoming an individual CACD member and making an investment and by publishing your information in the *Colorado Conservator*, with 8,000 recipients statewide. CACD has provided an independent voice for conservation districts since 1945 and will strongly continue to do so.

CACD is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We encourage you to complete the form for your individual membership or sponsorship to CACD and become a part of the natural resource conservation movement in Colorado. For further details on CACD please visit www.cacd.us. Membership is open to all. Your membership in this fine organization is greatly appreciated.

From Our Lands to Your Hands

"Where does the food you eat come from?" The majority of our youth today when asked this question will simply state, "the grocery store!" Although partially true it does not depict the full travel of our food from the farmer's land to our plates.

The Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation District, as well as the Longmont Natural Resources Conservation Service office wanted to provide local youth a first hand experience of how valuable agriculture is in their daily lives. As a result the "From Our Lands to Your Hands: Teaching youth today the importance of agriculture and conservation" was created.

On February 11, 2010 over 350 students were in attendance at the expo with 30 different presentations from local producers.



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



COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
2010 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Thank you for your support of the work of CACD
on behalf of the Conservation Districts of Colorado.

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Allen Green	Don Foth	Joyce Wallace	Richard Romano
Bill Lake	Ellen Nelson	Judy Lopez	Robin Young
Bill Midcap	Frank Riggle	Lana Pearson	Seth Gallagher
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