



Colorado Conservator

“your voice for locally led conservation”

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Voters Approve Mill Levy Increase for Upper Huerfano Conservation District

By Jerry D. Schwien, Editor

The question of increasing the mill levy of the Upper Huerfano Conservation District was answered with a definite “Yes” by landowners on Tuesday. Of the 509 ballots, 281 were “yes” and 228 were “no.” Voter turnout was about thirty percent among voters with addresses in Huerfano County. The District has been receiving about \$5,000 annually from its mill levy, which was originally passed in 1982. It is estimated that the increase will raise an additional \$28,609 annually for the District’s general fund. “This mill levy increase will really benefit the District in providing technical and other assistance to small- and large-acreage landowners,” said Jim Hribar, District Board president.

Board openings were also filled by Ron Busch, Walsenburg, and Bill Riggins, La Veta. Each will be serving a four-year term.

The District held a landowner meeting in June with over 40 landowners participating to give input into future programs and natural resource issues that need to be addressed in Huerfano County.

The landowners selected two issues for major consideration in the District’s long-range planning. They were noxious weed control and education for small tract landowners. Almost 75 percent of Huerfano County is sub-divided into 35 acre plots and many of these landowners are only on-site for maybe one week a year, creating a tough natural



Tourism, rural living and agriculture co-exist in Huerfano County. Each makes its own demands on the natural resources. Educational tours are part of the District’s Long Range Plan.



resource management issue.

With the increased funding, the Board is considering an increase in the District’s cost-share program. They are also considering establishing a weed management cost-share program, and they will conduct workshops for small acreage landowners.

Note of Interest

Carol Dunn has resigned as District Manager to take a full-time job working at home. The Board has asked Carol to fill an opening on the board of supervisors beginning August 1. Mollie Fuller has been hired as the new District Manager.

In This Issue

Voters Approve Mill Levy
page 1

Camp Rocky Tops Record
page 6

San Luis Valley Educ. Workshop
page 7

Forest Steward of the Year
page 8

CCA and GLCI Team Up for
Rangeland Monitoring
page 9

Rio Grande Watershed
Conservation Tour
page 12

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President's Message



Eric Jessen

The past three months have been extremely busy with many exciting things going on. At the Federal level the legislature was successful in passing the 2008 Farm Bill over President Bush's veto. The "conservation" title survived as a strong part of the overall bill. We can thank Senator Salazar for his powerful leadership and extensive efforts to strengthen rural America. As with any piece of legislation, the next crucial stage in the implementation is in the

rules making process. During this process the powers in the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture review the bill and write the rules, regulations, and guidelines as to how the actual programs are administered at our level. It is very important that we keep abreast of this process and not allow rules to be made that do not work in the field. Both the CACD and the NACD are closely following this process and will keep you posted on the outcome.

On the local level, and thanks to the hard work of CACD board member Brian Starkebaum (Lower South Platte Watershed), the Colorado State Legislature adopted the Unclaimed Property Bill HB1399. This bill provides funding to the Colorado Dept. of Agriculture to address several needs one, of which, was the designation of up to \$200,000 to be directed to the Conservation Districts to help them fund their activities of leveraging grants and placing conservation on the ground. Here we come back to the *rule making* process. The Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) intends to establish the parameters (rules) on how these funds will be distributed.

Personally, I am very concerned with this process. We want to make sure that these funds go directly to the Districts and are not waylaid at the state office for other conservation uses such as person-

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Resolution Process

By Eric Jessen

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) is frequently involved with Local, State, and Federal partners and, since we represent all 77 conservation districts in Colorado, we are called upon to take positions on any number of issues. In order to be certain that we voice a position in common with the Districts, the CACD Board relies on the “CACD Policy Book” (2007 edition).

Although that makes sense, you now might be asking, “How is ‘policy’ developed?” In 2006, the CACD Board initiated a process to update and revise the policy development process. At the annual meeting in 2007 the revised Policy Book and policy development procedures were reviewed and approved by the membership.

The process starts when the Districts determine that there is an issue important enough that it should be addressed by the CACD or the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).

Step 1: At the District level.

Review the current policy book which has been recently emailed to each District.

Determine if your issue is a “Policy” or an “Action” issue.

Definition: Policy - a long term/ongoing plan or course of action which may require a series of actions, such as supporting legislation to enhance funding for the operations of the Districts. Action – a request for CACD to take an action to address or act upon a specific issue. This is usually short term action such as writing a letter in support or opposition. Once the action is taken the resolution is retired.

- (A) Determine if there is an existing policy that addresses your important issue.
 - (1) If no policy exists go to step B.
 - (2) If policy exists please continue
 - (a) If the existing policy does exactly what you want than

no new policy is needed. It is still advisable that you inform the CACD of what is happening in your area that is causing you concern.

- (b) If the existing policy does not exactly address your concerns consider preparing an amendment to the existing policy. The amendment may consist of a few word changes or the addition of a sentence. This suggested amendment will continue through the process as if it were an independent resolution.

- (B) If there is no existing policy
 - (1) Prepare a resolution on the form provided by the CACD via email. Keep it brief and to the point. If you wish you can include an attachment outlining the justification for the resolution. *Remember* that the resolutions need to be of state or national significance, not local.
 - (2) Have the resolution reviewed and approved by your Board.
 - (3) The resolution is then passed on to the Watershed Annual Meeting for approval or denial.

Step 2: At the Watershed level - Annual Meeting

- (A) The resolution is denied. If the resolution is denied by the Watershed membership it can be submitted later in the process although this option is highly discouraged.

- (B) The resolution is approved. The Watershed secretary will forward the approved resolution onto the CACD.

Step 3: CACD level - the Resolution committee

The resolutions will be directed to the appropriate resolution committee for review. Any individual who is interested in participation in one of the committees is welcome to. Relay your interest to Darlene at the CACD office.

The committees will review the resolutions in categories. In some cases the resolutions may be combined if two or more similar resolutions are submitted by more than one watershed. In addition, the committees may do some rewording of your resolution. In order for resolutions to be of value they need to be short and to the point without ambiguities.

The various committees will meet in October via conference call to review and approve or deny the resolutions. At this time the resolutions are passed on to Step 4 which is back to the Districts.

Step 4: Final review at District level.

In Early November each District will have the opportunity to review the resolutions in final form, and the respective boards will have the opportunity to provide guidance to their representatives on how to vote at the annual meeting in Estes Park.

Step 5: Individual resolution committee meetings. Estes Park, Monday Nov.13 @ 5-7pm

At these meetings each committee will do a final review, hear comments from the membership, make any last minute adjustments to the resolutions, and vote to pass it on to the General Meeting (Tuesday, Nov. 14th,

8-12 AM) with the recommendation of “Approval” or “Denial.”

Although it is a long process, the CACD Board of Directors takes it very seriously and looks forward to the grass root input addressing how the CACD can better serve each District.



Resolutions being considered in committee at CACD Annual Meeting.

President’s Message continued from page 2

nel, matching grants, or to fund efforts to leverage grants at the state level. If the funds are indeed passed on directly to the Districts, I do not want to see a lengthy, convoluted application process, such as the current matching grant applications. In 2007 the CACD worked very hard to obtain funding for the CSCB to place three very competent conservation specialists in the field to work directly with the Districts with the intent of increasing their ability to place conservation on the ground. I believe that it is extremely important to get the HB1399 funds into the hands of the Districts in order for the states conservation specialist and the districts to have something to work with in the future. I also support the lower tier districts receiving more funding than the top tier. Regardless of how these funds are distributed, they will not be available to the districts until late fall or early winter.

Rest assured that I, my fellow board members. and the CACD staff will continue to work diligently to help you put conservation on the ground. This can only be done with strong well funded Districts, dedicated supervisors, and competent staff.

See you at the CACD Annual Meeting in Estes Park.

Executive Director's Message

By Darlene Jensen

I want to thank the conservation districts which have stepped up to host 8-digit watershed meetings. Last year, the Morgan Conservation District hosted a very successful 8-digit watershed meeting. Val Loose, the District Manager, provided an excellent accounting at a recent NRCS leadership meeting of what is involved in the preparation and presentation of an 8-digit watershed meeting. Thanks to CSCB Conservation Specialists, Scott Shirola, Callie Hendrickson and Mark Cronquist who have done a fine job in facilitating the 8-digit watershed meetings held this year.

Among the conservation districts hosting the meetings this year are South Pueblo, Upper Huerfano, Dove Creek, North Park, Teller-Park, Center, North Prowers, Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River, Sedgwick County and Haxtun. I have attended several of these meetings and have found the comments from landowners to be specific in nature. The comments targeting their concerns and areas of interest will be compiled by CACD and subsequently turned into NRCS, which will use this information to help in the review and prioritizing of its programs.

Camp Rocky 2008 was an incredible success. The students released their enthusiasm for learning about conservation earlier this month. Camp Rocky hosted a record 64 students, almost all of whom received scholarships from either their local conservation districts, Grazing Land Conserva-



Darlene Jensen

tion Initiative Committee, Izaak Walton League, Wild Turkey Federation, District Employees Association, and El Pomar Foundation, among others. Thank you to all of the conservation districts which sponsored the students.

The volunteer professional staff were inspirational in their instruction. Thank you to Leon Kot, Vern Vinson, Beth Fortman, Dan Nosal, Ben Berlinger, Amanda Bucknam, Naomi Marcus, Jeff Burns, Mark Platten, Jan Manning, Raquel Wertsbaugh and Bob Sturtevant, among others for their instruction and for keeping the students engaged, even through the thunderstorms. The campers took a day out to visit the Victor – Cripple Creek Gold Mine, where they learned of the reclamation taking place at the Mine, as well as the use of cyanide in the processing of gold. The day of the tour gold was selling at \$932 per ounce, an approximate annual profit of \$50 million for the mine. Pictured are the students and instructors in the active Gold Mine quarry.

The Leadership Program plans for the second round of instruction are being finalized for the July 28 and 29 program in Glenwood Springs. Callie Hendrickson has been busy planning this instructional program.

In addition to program development, CACD has been working to assist landowners on important issues impacting their operations. Several concerns are facing landowners on two pressing issues, one of which involves CRP grazing and the other, conservation easements. CACD is taking an active role in providing assistance to landowners on both subjects. A recent Temporary Restraining Order to Suspend Authority for Critical Feed Use on CRP acreage impacts producers that have already fenced and developed water supply on CRP acreage, which they need to utilize given the continued dry conditions. (For a copy of the Temporary Restraining Order please contact CACD or your local conservation district.) At this time CACD is generating position statements in opposition to the Temporary Restraining Order.

The inability for landowners to sell their conservation easement tax credits remains and the IRS audits some 300 landowners statewide are subjected to at this time remains a pressing concern. Landowner groups are forming to address the concerns and provide education. CACD is assisting landowners in the facilitation of meetings and providing educational material for the landowners.

If you have concerns you would like to express on either of these two issues please email CACD at Darlene@cacd.us or call the CACD office at 719-686-0020. Your input is welcome.

CACD Annual Meeting Plans

The Planning Committee is working hard on the 2008 CACD Annual Meeting, to be held November 17-20, in Estes Park. The Committee made its first site visit to the Rocky Mountain Conference Center recently to discuss exhibit set up, conference room assignments and the unique opportunity the Conference Center's atmosphere will provide for the meeting.

A special thanks to the Planning Committee members who spent a Friday afternoon going over the particulars. Pictured: Brian Starkebaum (CACD), Darlene Jensen (CACD), Erin Ballard (CACD), Mark Cronquist (CSCB), Nancy McIntyre (Boulder Conservation District), Janette Terry (CSCB), Cindy Lair (CSCB), Vern Vinson (CACD), Conference Direct Meeting Planners, and Rocky Mountain Conference Center staff.

The Annual Meeting will feature sessions on mining, irrigation rules, and forest health among other subjects. A unique piece to this Annual Meeting will be the showcasing by Conservation Districts of their unique programs and projects. Several conservation districts have already stepped up and volunteered to showcase their work. CACD invites all conservation districts to submit their request to present either power points, or any type of presentations that will best define their programs. Please contact Darlene at Darlene@cacd.us if you are interested in showcasing your conservation district's work.



Partners in Conservation



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

Cooperative Sagebrush Project Approved for \$2 Million

By Katherine Burse-Johnson, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) this week announced approval of a \$2 million project by the Cooperative Sagebrush Initiative (CSI) to develop a market-based approach for restoring rangelands and critical wildlife habitat in the sagebrush region of the western U.S.

The \$1 million Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) will be matched by \$1 million non-federal funds to pilot test a sagebrush habitat credit banking system on large landscapes in four western states: California, Colorado, Idaho and Wyoming. This project seeks to greatly expand incentives for private sector investment in conserving and restoring habitat for many at-risk sagebrush dependent species.

CSI is an award-winning partnership of landowners, industries, conservation groups, states, and federal agencies formed in 2006 to develop lasting solutions to

the challenges of conserving wildlife in a rapidly developing western landscape.

The sagebrush biome covers parts or all of 11 western states and two Canadian provinces. It spans an estimated 66 million acres of public and private land. The western sagebrush biome is a national treasure and is home to a bounty of wildlife, scenic attractions, and abundant energy resources. Concern for its future integrity is underscored by more than a dozen federal, state and tribal sagebrush and sage grouse conservation plans.

“Agricultural producers and other private landowners can play a significant role in improving and protecting these critical habitats along with providing off-site mitigation for development activities in grass and shrub ecosystems,” said Allen Green, State Conservationist for Colorado NRCS. “As primary users and managers of

USDA Deputy Secretary Rey Honors San Isabel Land Protection Trust

USDA’s Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and the Environment Mark Rey honored the San Isabel Land Protection Trust for achieving 10,000 acres or working agricultural land under conservation easements in Wet Mountain Valley at a celebration in Westcliffe, Colorado on May 23.

The celebration was held on the Rusk Ranch, owned by Randy Rusk, in honor of the Rusk family being the first to step forward to protect their land through the use of a conservation easement, a legal tool that acquires development rights while allowing landowners to retain ownership.



L-R: Randy Rusk, USDA Deputy Under Secretary Mark Rey, Jim Sperry, NRCS District Conservationist, and Jeff Othier, U.S. Forest Service.

A branding and barbecue event was held to mark the seven years of work it took to preserve those acres. Around the table were local ranchers and officials from the San Isabel Land Protection Trust, Great Outdoors Colorado, other land trust partners, and the USDA.

I would like to acknowledge Great Outdoors Colorado, all the local individuals, land trust partners, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service for the contributions they have made to the Wet Mountain Valley Project,” Rey said. “What we’re doing is celebrating.”

many of these lands, they, along with agency land managers, can improve wildlife habitats at the scale needed.”

Energy producers are interested in finding ways to make off-site mitigation possible.

“For off-site mitigation to work effectively, a transparent and broadly accepted measurement

After the Rusks placed the easement on their property, at least five other ranches decided to join them to keep their ranches and the Wet Mountain Valley in continued productive agriculture. Funding for the conservation easements came from a combination of local landowner financial and in-kind contributions, land trust organization funds, Great Outdoors Colorado, and the USDA-NRCS Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.

Approximately 75 ranchers, land trust individuals, and government agency representatives attended the celebration.

system is needed. This will allow equitable transactions and ensure that overall landscape integrity is maintained over time,” said CSI President Kevin McAleese. “That’s what this project will produce.”

For more information, please visit www.sage-wise.com or contact Kevin McAleese, 608-663-4605 x23.

Camp Rocky Provides Learning and Adventure for record 64 Students

Camp Rocky was a huge success hosting a record 64 students, July at Divide, Colorado. The students completed work in the four principles, soil and water conservation, range science, forest management, and fish and wildlife management. Students cleared and chipped trees, creating mulch which they applied to trails for erosion control. They installed water bars along trails, constructed fences,



6 Conservator

identified fish, among other conservation activities, and basically got really dirty.

CACD would like to thank the following partners for their professional and exceptional instruction to the students during the week of activities:

**Natural Resources
Conservation Service**

Colorado State Forest Service

**Colorado State University
Extension**

Colorado Division of Wildlife

Colorado conservation districts

**Rocky Mountain Bird
Observatory**



Photo Captions:
*(Far left - top to bottom)
RMBO assists with bird
observation. Students shock
and identify fish. Forest
clearing and management.
(Above) Installing water bars
on trails. (Below) GPS
education. Victor-Cripple
Creek Gold Mine reclamation.*



San Luis Valley Teachers Workshop a Big Success

By Judy Lopez, San Luis Valley Conservation Districts



Thirty teachers from across the state attended the 2008 Teacher workshop, titled *From Watershed to Cup – Following Water through the Curriculum*. Teachers were able to experience hands on the dynamics of water movement through a watershed. The workshop was held at the beautiful Trinchera Ranch east of Fort Garland, Colorado from June 16-20.

The Rio Grande Watershed Association of Conservation Districts (RGWACD) served as co-sponsors for the five day event, which took teachers to the top of the watershed (at the base of 14,000 foot Mt. Blanca) where the water first enters the system down to the valley floor where it gets used by agriculture, domestic, and industrial users.

Lodging and Meals for the five days were provided by Trinchera Ranch and their staff. The usual presenters, from (RGWSACD, NRCS, DOW, Center Conservation district, NPS, CSFS, were joined by a new group of experts, the attending teachers who were able to put into play the myriad of activities they learned at the workshop.

This year’s much anticipated workshop, filled within 5 days of publication. Because of the great response, the Watershed will sponsor a second level workshop for the first year participants; in addition to the CACD event.

If you would like more information about next year’s workshop please contact Judy Lopez at 719-589-3907 X 117.



(Left) Grass and Riparian: Teachers learn to study multi-culture habitats to maintain riparian and meadow health. (Above) Teachers learn about macro-invertebrates.



Hydrophobic Soils: Teachers see how disturbance affects a watershed.



(Left) Teacher reflects in riparian habitat. (Above) Soil/Water —Teachers having fun while looking at sediment movement at the great Sand Dunes.

Colorado’s Forest Steward of the Year “made of Steele”

By GayLene Rossiter and Katherine Timm
Colorado State Forest Service

Ruth Ann Steele, long-time Black Forest, Colo., resident, has been named the 2007 Outstanding Forest Steward of the Year. The Colorado State Forest Service recognized Steele for her contributions to forest management at an award ceremony held in conjunction with the annual spring community meeting for the Black Forest Slash and Mulch Program.



Jeff Jahnke (left) talks about Ruth Ann Steele’s (far right) many accomplishments at the Forest Steward of the Year Award ceremony in Black Forest.

Colorado State Forest Service Director Jeff Jahnke selects the recipient each year based on recommendations by the Colorado Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee. The committee is comprised of representatives from natural resource agencies and organizations to help guide funding and programmatic efforts of the Forest Stewardship Program.

To be nominated for the award, an individual must be recognized as a Colorado forest stewardship landowner who has a forest stewardship plan. Homeowners’ associations also are eligible if they have an approved HOA stewardship plan. In addition to developing a plan, forest stewards must demonstrate that they are actively managing their land according to their stewardship plan.

Steele, an active leader and member of the Black Forest slash and mulch committee, received the award for her exemplary commit-

ment to forest stewardship and supportive forest management in the Black Forest community. Steele believes that forest management activities lead to healthy forest ecosystems by improving wildlife habitat, establishing diversity among plant and tree species, eliminating noxious weeds, and reducing wildfire hazards.

Steele and her late husband,

Jim, first developed their Forest Stewardship Plan in 1997. She not only continues to actively manage her 305-acre property, she still operates a tractor-mounted wood splitter and helps engage her neighbors in forest management practices at the community level. Her knowledge about forestry issues makes her a reliable — and frequently sought-after — source of forest management information for her community. In addition to her involvement in local forest stewardship, Steele has been a member of the Colorado Forestry Association since 1982 and a certified American Tree Farmer since 1987.

“Ruth Ann lives and breathes stewardship at home, across the Black Forest, and along the Front Range,” said Jan Hackett, Forest Stewardship Program manager for the Colorado State Forest Service. “She openly expresses the responsibility we all have to improve our forests for the future if we want

them to be in better condition than they are today.”

Now in her 80s, Steele’s commitment to forest stewardship is something she shares passionately with adults and children alike. For years, she was involved with CLAW (Clean, Land, Air and Water) at Cherry Hills Village Elementary and with School in the Woods’ 4th grade students in Black Forest.

Ask those who know Steele best, and they will tell you that she provides the motivation for others to engage in forest management in her community. Anyone who visits her will see that she manages all aspects of the land — from mountain pine beetle-infested trees to dog-hair thickets, erosion, noxious weeds and more.

“Ruth Ann has inspired many people in her community to become active forest stewards,” Jahnke said. “She has demonstrated her commitment to improving the health of the land, and does so in a compassionate, knowledgeable and precise manner.”

Dave Root, assistant district forester, Colorado State Forest Service – Woodland Park District, has worked extensively with Steele for years and says that her passion for stewardship of the land extends to many other aspects of her life. “Ruth Ann approaches everything she does with vigor and enthusiasm, such that no one can spend any time with her without discovering the great breadth of her many interests and knowledge. Besides her passion for all things in nature, her other great love is music. When she is not busy with the slash-mulch site, or managing her own



forest, or being a Master Gardener, she is making music. She leads the Forest Chorus, plays for weddings and writes songs. Sometimes, Ruth Ann can combine her love for nature and music; as anyone who has heard her composition ‘Moonbeams over the Mulch Pile’ knows.



Ruth Ann Steele, at piano, accompanies other musicians at the Black Forest Slash and Mulch annual meeting, which includes a forestry-themed melodrama.



Black Forest Slash&Mulch Collection Site (Photo courtesy of Ruth Ann Steele) — Landowners line-up to deposit slash and mulch at the Black Forest collection site.



Ruth Ann Steele (fourth from right) and some of her fellow Black Forest landowners listen to a presentation on fire mitigation practices by Kristin Garrison (fourth from left), Franktown District forester, at Colorado State Forest Service Firewise Workshop.

CCA and GLCI Team up to Implement Rangeland Monitoring

By Beka Gill-Colorado Cattlemen's Association and
Robbie LeValley-Colorado State University Extension

Rangelands are a critical resource world wide, accounting for approximately 50% of the earth's land surface. In Colorado, rangelands make up about 2/3 of the State's land area.

Rangelands are complex ecosystems, and good management of rangelands requires landowners, lessees, permittees and managers to consider all the factors that influence these landscapes. Monitoring provides facts to back-up management decisions - and, without data, you are just another person with an opinion. Rangeland-monitoring workshops can provide you with examples of how to implement and maintain a credible monitoring program on your allotment, state or private land".

After numerous range monitoring workshops, field days and sessions that have been held over the years, monitoring is still implemented at a very low level. There are many reasons for the low participation but the need for sound rangeland monitoring continues to increase. Rangeland monitoring and the awareness it provides is critical to making long term management decisions.

Project funded by GLCI

How to actually obtain increased rangeland monitoring participation is the basis for a project being funded by GLCI and implemented by the Colorado Cattlemen's Association (CCA) in partnership with our producer members. The project proposes to determine the barriers to participating in a monitoring program, develop methodology to overcome these barriers and determine the most appropriate action item for increasing the participation of rangeland monitoring programs.

The problem is not the number of workshops that have presented, manuals written or methodology that has been developed, it is the actual on-the-ground implementation that is very low. The project will determine why monitoring participation is low and what is preventing rangeland monitoring from being implemented on private and public ground. Based on the results of our study, CCA and partners will implement a specific plan to increase the number of producers implementing an active monitoring plan on their private and public lands.

Grazing is an important component of western rural economies. Continuation of sustainable ranching operations helps prevent the conversion of open space and working landscapes to subdivisions. Science based grazing management practices can maintain and improve rangeland health and watershed function. Targeted grazing is a beneficial tool for rangeland conservation, fuels management and increasing plant diversity. One way to determine proper grazing management and watershed function is through a sound monitoring program.

Although the need for rangeland monitoring is present, questions remain unanswered as to why rangeland monitoring implementation levels are low. In an effort to answer these questions, CCA, in conjunction with a group of stakeholders, has compiled a survey. Through this survey, we will be able to obtain information that will help us determine the barriers that keep people from participating in rangeland monitoring programs. CCA encourages all users of public and private lands to fill out this survey. The survey is available on the CCA website (www.coloradocattle.org) and it will be in our July issue of the Cattle Guard.

The Colorado Cattlemen's Association realizes that caring for public and private lands is a task shared by many individuals, organizations, and government agencies. It is widely recognized that rangeland monitoring is a management tool that can achieve a variety of goals. Implementation is necessary, yet isn't being accomplished.



Field days and seminars can be useful in training for rangeland monitoring.

Therefore, your INPUT through this survey is imperative in determining how monitoring can enhance and protect the future of livestock grazing on public and private lands in Colorado.

For further information, contact the CCA office at 303-431-6422 or visit our website at www.coloradocattle.org. CCA would like to thank the GLCI State Committee for helping fund this survey and related plan of action to improve the monitoring across the state.



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Northeast Prowers CD Annual Meeting and Bus Tour

By Sheri Moorman,
District Manager

The Northeast Prowers Conservation District held its Annual Meeting and Bus Tour on June 4. The tour featured sites of tamarisk removal, riparian restoration, an ag-waste treatment system, and irrigation water management farming.



Tamarisk removal site at Rick Enstrom’s wetlands. Rick has completed Tamarisk removal on 120 acres, either with cost-share or on his own.

The farming sites of Robert Jensen Farms were first on the tour. Robert Jensen informed the group about his use of subsurface irrigation and how he utilizes an irrigation regulating reservoir for irrigating from a center pivot sprinkler. Robert Jensen Farms are conscientious soil and water conservators. In the last two years, they have installed approximately 330 acres with subsurface drip irrigation. Robert is trying to make the most production per gallon of water on the crops he produces. With some of his subsurface drip irrigation cantaloupe, he is using weed barrier, while on the other, he is not. He’s testing as to whether the extra cost will get him enough in return to justify using it on all the melons.

The tour group actually saw three different projects of tamarisk removal; however, two were seen on a “drive by”. The main touring site was at Rick Enstrom’s place. He has a Wetland Wildlife Restora-

tion Project. We first looked at his spraying equipment. Spot spraying is done by going around to the areas via a 4-wheeler. He told about different chemicals he had experimented with to find the best.

The group went by bus and walked to the Arkansas River Bottom tamarisk removal site. The tamarisk trees were removed by grinding (although at first he also bull-dozed trees) and followed up by spot spraying later on where needed because of new growth coming up. Different size grinders were tried to find which was best. The ground up trees and some dirt are ground together making a

mulch layer. The grass comes up through the mulch layer. The project has been pretty successful and has improved habitat for many animals, including upland birds, water fowl, deer, turkey, bobcat, etc. Fish habitat has also been improved, including for the Arkansas Darter fish. Rick has accomplished tamarisk removal of 120 acres by cost-share and by his own efforts.

Tamarisk beetles were released last September at a test site on Rick Enstrom’s land. The beetles were sent from the Palisade Insectary. (Recently, more tamarisk beetles have been sent to the Holly office and released on Enstrom land.) Rick thought this method has much promise for the future.

The bus drove by the Tamarisk Project of John Allen. He has had 26 acres sprayed by aerial spraying from a fixed wing. The cost per acre included the plane and application.



(Above): Cantaloupe grown with subsurface drip irrigation on the Robert Jensen farm. (Below): Jensen Farms irrigation regulating reservoir.

The attendees were also treated to lunch, tire bingo, and door prizes. Among those attending was Doris Morgan, an aide to Senator Ken Allard. The lunch time included a short meeting and presentation of the District’s Conservation of the Year Awards. Robert Jensen Farms was recognized for Farmer of the Year, Jim Harper Family Ranch for Rancher of the Year, and Rick Enstrom for Wildlife Conservationist of the Year.



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10 Conservator

“Fountain Creek” editorial: Appeared in the *Pueblo Chieftain* April 13, 2008, Submitted by Bill Alt, Turkey Creek Conservation District and reprinted with permission by Tom Mcavoy of the *Pueblo Chieftain*

“While the Department of Reclamation recommendations, listed in their nearly complete Environmental Impact Statement regarding Colorado Spring’s SDS project are distressing they are far from surprising. Three generations of Fountain River watchers have experienced the exasperation and chagrin of seeing Colorado Springs successfully achieve federal and state policy decisions contrary to the interests of people living in the lower reaches of the Fountain.

I have set through a myriad of public SDS information meetings hosted by both Department of Reclamation and Colorado Springs Utilities designed to gather public input on the SDS project. During these meetings I have made numerous vocal statements, filled out a hand full of comment cards and mailed comments protesting that the environmental study was ignoring the impact that additional water, generated by a new pipeline would have on the lower Fountain.

I didn’t stand alone in these protests as other landowners, the Pueblo Chieftain, and the Sierra Club, to name but a few, voiced similar concerns. Despite these protests the study now recommends the most environmentally unfavorable solution of transporting the water to Colorado Springs and releasing the increased sewage back into the Fountain. Makes one wonder if the decision was made before the 3,000 page study was done and the whole thing was a waste of taxpayer money. Sadly, this is but one of a long line of events that have taken place making the Fountain River a victim of the mindless growth of Colorado Springs and its suburbs.

Let’s take a moment and review the history of the Fountain for the past 50 years or so. I’m doing this from memory so the dates are general but if someone cares enough the exact times are public record.

In the late 1950’s or early 1960’s, as the growth giant sleeping at the foot of Pikes Peak began to stir, Colorado Springs purchased the most senior water rights on the Fountain basically making it a Colorado Springs river. As you drive to Colorado Springs traveling on I-25 you pass by the coal fired electric plant that sits on what was at one time a cattle ranch owning these senior water rights. What you can’t see from the highway is the huge dunes of silica ash that cover ever increasing acres of the old pasture. No vegetation will ever grow on these mounds as the ash has no nutrients to support life. On other reaches of the old pasture, Colorado Springs spreads acres of sludge from their sewage disposal facilities that they claim will never harm the environment. Maybe so, but you can sure smell it as you travel along.

The next scene in this drama was the 1972 implementation of EPA’s Clean Water Act. Part of this process was to put labels on all of the streams and rivers in the US. Among other things, these labels defined what levels of aquatic life were supported by each waterway. Colorado Springs cleverly convinced EPA that the Fountain was a non-aqueous stream. You may ask, why would they go to all that trouble to forever deny the existence of a wide variety of small fish, frogs, salamanders and other aquatic creatures that survived in the pools and springs in the watershed? As is usually the case, it boiled down to money. If the waterway a municipality is releasing effluent from its waste water treatment plants into is defined as non-aqueous then the quality of that water can be much dirtier. This means the city can save millions of dollars in construction costs for its waste disposal plants, since they can reduce the amount of cleansing required to meet EPA specifications.”

Costilla CD Goat Grazing a Success

By Katey Byrd, Costilla CD Conservation Technician

The Costilla Conservation District purchased 201 goats this May in an effort to control noxious weeds and other unwanted vegetation within the District. To date, the goats have grazed over 55 acres of Russian knapweed, Canada thistle, Musk thistle, Leafy spurge, and other noxious weeds on county and private lands, as well as willow infestations and over-vegetated areas along acequia ditch banks. Landowners are thrilled with the work the goats have done.



BEFORE: Costilla County goat herders set up fence panels along Acequia de San Francisco east of San Luis, Colo.



AFTER: Unwanted vegetation is diminished, providing more efficient water flow for acequia users.

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Rio Grande Watershed Holds Conservation Tour and Golf Tournament for Education

By Judy Lopez, SLV Conservation Education Specialist

The Rio Grande Watershed held its third annual conservation tour and tourney on June 27th and 28th. The focus of the tour this year was the watersheds two conservationists of the year : Robinson Farms and Cloud Crest Ranch.

Tour participants were able to see the conservation practices put into place by these area farmers and ranchers and how these practices affect their long term sustainability. Overall 45 participants attended the tour and barbeque.

The “Pound your Ball” Tourney is no ordinary golfing event - since its inception it has brought an awareness about water issues and conservation education throughout the San Luis Valley and an end to two very long dry spells -it has had rain delays the past two years.

The golf tourney “tee’d – off “ at high noon on the 28th and brought in 70 players from all across the upper reaches of the Rio Grande Basin. The tournament, also in its third year, provides funding for the watersheds Conservation Education program and provides an enormous amount of visibility to the participating districts. The tourney offers a \$2000.00 jackpot to the winning team, along with several jackpot holes and “the Highest Score” consolation and even with all this competition, the overall goal for most players is to have a great time, play golf and support conservation education for kids.

If you would like more information about next years tour or tourney please contact: Judy Lopez at 719-589-3907 X 117 or Brenda Anderson, 719-754-3400 X108

Obituary



George Korrey

George Korrey, 93, of Iliff, died June 28, 2008 in Sterling. George was a long time member of the Padroni Soil Conservation District Board which later became the Centennial Conservation District. In all, he was a district board member for 54 years. In 2001, after his 54th year, Centennial made George an honorary lifetime board member.

George was born Aug. 31, 1914, in Gothenburg, Neb., to John and Mable Korrey. The family moved to Logan County in 1918.

On Dec. 12, 1946, he married Minnie Abood in Kearney, Neb. George is survived by his wife Minnie, two daughters, Janet and Shirley, one son, John, and seven grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

George was a lifelong farmer in Iliff, and served as Mayor of Iliff from 1948 to 1954. He also served as Logan County commissioner from 1972 to 1976.

In 1980, he started the Logan County Farmers Market. He received an award for 20 years of service as Market Master.

George won a number of community awards. In 1984, he was given the Friend of 4-H Award. He was chosen as the Grand Marshall of the Logan County Fair Parade in 1988, and he was given the Pioneer Award at the Cowboy Breakfast in 2000. He received the Friend of Education Award from RE-1 Valley School District in 1989. Oct. 31, 1997, was proclaimed George and Minnie Korrey Day by the Mayor of Sterling for the Korrey’s commitment to education and Pumpkin Heroes of the community.

George was also active in many community clubs and organizations. He was a lifetime member of BPO Elks Lodge No. 1336. He was chosen as Elk of the Year in 1984, and the Elks Citizen of the Year in 1986. He was also a lifetime member of the Iliff Lions Men’s Club, and a member of the Prince of Peace Episcopal Church.

George was chosen to carry the Olympic Torch in 1996 and was honored to represent his community.

His many friends in conservation districts miss and remember George Korrey.



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