



Colorado Conservator

“Partners in Conservation”



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Bud Mekelburg to Receive NACD's Distinguished Service Award

By Lynda Harper, Manager,
Yuma Conservation District

Milton “Bud” Mekelburg will receive NACD’s top honor (the Distinguished Service Award) Feb. 12, 2008 at the NACD Annual Meeting in Reno, Nevada. Bud was the youngest founding member of the Yuma Soil Conservation District in 1958. In 2008, he will celebrate 50 years of district work at the local, state, and national level. Throughout that time, he has maintained his passion for conservation of our natural resources while protecting productive agricultural lands.

Bud was elected as the first president of the Yuma Conservation District Board of Supervisors. He became a member of the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts and has served as both Vice-President and President. In 1976, he was asked to fill a vacancy on the National Association of Conservation Districts Board of Directors. He served as Vice President, and was NACD President from 1980 - 1984. During that time he was part of a group that helped formulate key pieces of the 1985 Farm Bill, including the first Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

When NACD commissioned R. Neil Sampson to write for the Love of the Land, A History of NACD, Bud wrote in the forward, “Organizations, like people, need a sense of their history in order to move forward with confidence.

Bud reviewed water projects in the USA and has traveled as a People to People tour in other countries. In northern Syria he helped



Bud Mekelburg in Yuma Conservation District Office

an irrigation company switch from flood irrigation to center pivots. He became an honorary member of the Navajo Nation in Arizona, and saw the completion of every acre in a conservation district on the reservation.

Bud returned to his farming and ranching operation and has served on the local district board continuously since then. He is past president of the Republican River Watershed Association, made up of eight conservation districts, and he is a founding and current member of the YW Well Testing Association, which was formed by conservation districts to deliver irrigation water management.

Bud has planted thousands of trees for local cooperators over the last 50 years. He helped design and secure funding for a Section 319 project which implemented Best Management Practices on 45,000 acres to protect ground water in the Ogallala Aquifer. He is overseeing a

\$485,000 federal Conservation Innovation Grant to develop innovations for lower water use crops to protect dwindling water supplies and maintain productive agriculture in the Republican River Basin. The latest program developed under his leadership targets non-traditional constituents including small, minority, and women producers. Bud was elected to a four-year term to represent the Lower South Platte and Republican River Watersheds on the Colorado State Conservation Board and takes office in January 2008.

Under Bud’s leadership staffing has increased from one part-time person to over five employees and consultants. Fee generating programs include seedling tree sales and grass seed sales. When the local USDA service center was closed, Bud was adamant that the district maintain local access to NRCS. The district purchased its own building and provides office space free of charge to NRCS field office personnel.

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



Eric Jessen
As the new president of the CACD, I welcome you to the New Year and encourage you to save the sidebar information containing the names and contact information of the watershed representatives to the CACD and the Colorado State Conservation Board.

I come to you as a retired small business owner living on a small ranch east of Paonia on the Western Slope. I have been Vice President of CACD for two years, President of the Delta Conservation District, and represent the Gunnison/Dolores watershed on the CACD Board. I have a long and varied background in agriculture, the west, and conservation. Time spent working with our Conservation Districts may be the most rewarding, as it offers varied opportunities for making lasting positive changes for agriculture and our communities.

For an organization such as the CACD to remain viable it must be able to change with the times. Regretfully, as we say goodbye to three directors, Larry Hoozee, Randy Loutzenhiser, and Monty Smith, we see a great deal of knowledge, history, and insight leaving the Board. But, I and six other board members are looking forward to working with three new members, Harley Ernst, Brian Neufeld, and Brian Starkebaum, as well as a new Executive Director, Darlene Jensen.

During the past several years, CACD has expended considerable staff and board member time focusing on legislative issues at both the state and federal levels. With the successes of improved state funding opportunities for local Conservation Districts, and the successful passage of the 2007 Farm Bill, CACD is ready to focus on strengthening the fiscal stability of CACD.

Through CACD efforts, the Colorado State Conservation Board has hired three able conservation specialists. Working as partners with the new conservation specialists the CACD’s new Executive Vice President, Darlene Jensen, and the CACD Board will assist the local Conservation Districts with advancing their respective conservation programs. The first meeting of the new board will be on January 23rd and 24th. With the new talent, on our Board and in our management, we will review successes of the past and begin to develop a revised work plan to guide CACD in the years to come.

I am committed to keeping you informed about activities of the CACD board and, in return, I am asking you to commit to keeping your watershed representative informed about the issues of concern to your District.

The Colorado Conservator

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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 Elects New Officers

The 63rd Annual Meeting of CACD at the Antlers Hilton in Colorado Springs touched upon many topics including Farm Bill briefings, water resources and river basin compacts, NRCS updates, climate change and renewable energy.

The action packed four day meeting recognized many outstanding individuals: NRCS state conservationist Allen Green was honored with the CACD Distinguished Service Award. *“We couldn’t think of a more deserving person to present this to,”* said Darlene Jensen, CACD Executive Vice-President. *“He gives so much of his time and effort in support of Conservation Districts and the conservation of Colorado’s natural resources.”*

Monty Smith from the Costilla Conservation District received the Outstanding District Supervisor of the Year Award. In addition to representing the Rio Grande Watershed

on the CACD Board of Directors, Monty is Vice-President of the Colorado Potato Legislative Assn. and is active on the Sierra Grande School Board.

CACD’s Legislator of the Year Award went to Senator Ken Salazar. The Outstanding Conservation Farmer Award was Presented to Clarence and Jolene Robinson (*Robinson Farms*) of Mosca Hooper CD. The Outstanding Conservation Rancher of the Year was presented to Danny and Denise Temple (*Cloud Crest Ranch*) of Rio Grande CD.

CACD also elected new officers for 2008: Eric Jessen of the Gunnison-Dolores River Watershed was elected President; JD Wright of the Lower Arkansas River Watershed is the new Vice-President; and Vern Vinson of the Upper Arkansas River Watershed was elected Secretary/Treasurer of CACD.

A Message from Darlene Jensen CACD Executive Vice-President

What a whirlwind these first three months have been! Yet, what a pleasure it is to be on board with CACD and to begin my work with a solid Board of Directors at the helm. Most rewarding has been getting to know the various Conservation Districts’ representatives and those folks who make it all happen. I began this journey by seeing firsthand the hard work and dedication put forth by the endless hours of assistance of the volunteers at CACD’s 63rd Annual Meeting in November. With some 230 in attendance from Colorado and beyond, the Annual Meeting was a tremendous success. John Redding, NACD, brought his emcee talents to the 4-day event, to delight all with his shining southern sense of humor.

This year CACD will continue in its support and coordination of the Camp Rocky Youth program, which was so well represented by the presentation of the Camp Rocky youth at the Annual Meeting Banquet. Ashley Vader, Jade Meinzer, Grant Slinger and Austin Major, through the coordination of Ben Berlinger, provided an enjoyable exchange of valuable conservation information.

Through its viable partnership with NRCS, CACD will again be assisting in coordination of the



Grazing Land Conservation Initiative. CACD endeavors to expand as a conservation information resource and increase community awareness and outreach of the Conservation Districts, and to further expand CACD’s partnership with Natural Resources Conservation Service, Colorado State Conservation Board, Colorado State Forest Service and Bureau of Reclamation, among others. My gratitude is extended to Cindy Lair, Janette Terry and especially Callie Hendrickson for making the transition a smoother road.

I look forward to serving the Conservation Districts throughout Colorado. May your 2008 be prosperous!

CACD Honors Allen Green with Distinguished Service Award



President Larry Hoozee presents NRCS State Conservationist Allen Green with CACD’s Distinguished Service Award.

Allen Green Shares NRCS and Partnership Accomplishments at CACD Annual Meeting

This year will likely see Congress pass a new Farm Bill . As the year begins, the 2002 Farm Bill comes to an end, and the conservation efforts made by NRCS and partners in Colorado continues to benefit the state’s natural resources.

Over the past five years, NRCS provided nearly \$200 million through numerous financial assistance and easement programs to Colorado landowners. Programs included the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), the Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program (FRPP), the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP).

“\$200 million is a significant contribution,” states Allen Green, “however, it’s important to note that NRCS conducts the majority of its business through cooperative conservation endeavors and many of our financial assistance programs are delivered on a cost-share basis. Therefore, \$200 million is just a piece of the pie,” says Green.

“NRCS is proud to contribute to sustaining the natural resources in Colorado, but we’re most proud of our relationships and reputation for locally-led conservation partnerships and as a result, the contributions and matches from state, local and private landowners more than double the amount for conservation applied on private lands.”

Noteworthy financial assistance programs that NRCS utilized within

the last five years included the Conservation Security Program (CSP) and numerous grants opportunities.

Green says, “CSP is the only program in U.S. history that recognizes and financially rewards farmers and ranchers for their ongoing high levels of environmental stewardship.”

NRCS awarded \$15 million to Colorado farmers and ranchers through CSP funding and over \$4 million through various grants. NRCS grant opportunities included Conservation Innovative Grants (CIG), Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Grants (GLCI) and the Conservation Partnership Incentives (CPI).

In addition to the financial assistance NRCS provides, the agency also delivers scientifically based technical assistance and resource information through it Soils, Snow Survey and Water Forecasting Supply and Water Resources Programs.

Recently, the Colorado’s soils survey program saw the completion of the initial soil survey of the entire state totaling more than 41 million acres.

NRCS conservation efforts carry on as a new Farm Bill passes providing new opportunities for the agency to continue to help people conserve the land. For additional information about NRCS please visit our website at:

www.co.nrcs.usda.gov

Matching Grant Projects Meet Local Needs

By Pam King, Colorado
State Conservation Board



Tamarisk and Russian olive are being removed along the lower Mancos River. Logs are piled and used for firewood or slashed and chipped.

In 2007 the Colorado legislature, with encouragement from the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts and Conservation District Board members, restored \$600,000 in funding to the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB). These funds enabled the CSCB to re-launch its popular Natural Resources Matching Grants Program. Through this program, eighteen Conservation Districts were able to fund projects in 2007 that they had identified as important to their District. The state funds were leveraged with \$2 million dollars in cash and in-kind partner contributions.

Updating antiquated or improving water delivery systems, tackling noxious weeds, protecting rangeland and small acreage management were the focus of several projects. Conservation education, soil erosion, forest health, wildlife habitat, and water quality were other issues addressed.

Danielle Wollart, District manager for Prowers Conservation District, commented that the project was “one of the most beneficial and successful projects in district history”, and noted that thirteen more producers are lined up for when more funding becomes available.

Seventeen percent of Colorado native plant species have been displaced by noxious weeds (source: Colorado Weed Management Association (CWMA)). Their effects on land productivity, wildlife and other resources can be devastating. It was estimated that just three species (jointed goat grass, volunteer rye and cheatgrass) cost Colorado wheat producers \$24 million in 1989 (Pimental et al., 2000). Colorado leafy spurge infestations have caused cattle to be removed from the range and weed infestation are impacting land values (CWMA). In Montana, farms and ranches have been aban

and Douglas County Districts addressed noxious weeds on small acreages. These two Districts cost-shared noxious weed treatment, along with other grazing management projects, for 39 landowners. Also on the eastern side of the I-25 corridor, Kiowa District cost-shared leafy spurge treatment on 2,000 acres along Running Creek and further northeast, in the Kirk/Joes area, Yuma County District cost-shared with 8 landowners to treat a similar acreage of knapweed infestation.

Tamarisk and it’s partner in river bank robbery - Russian Olive - are expensive to control once established. Considerable labor and machinery is needed to cut the plants down and handle the resulting brush, as well as herbicide treatment of cut stumps. The lower Mancos River valley within the Mancos Conservation District, is upstream of Mesa Verde National Park and the Mountain Ute tribe. Both these entities have had active tamarisk control programs in place. The Mancos Conservation District recognized that as good neighbors, they could initiate a tamarisk/russian olive control effort that would remove the upstream seed bank and contribute to the success of downstream control efforts. In this first year, their NRCS partners tagged Russian olive and tamarisk along 2 miles of the Mancos River. The District used Matching Grants to hire a project manager and a seasonal technician to chainsaw the tagged trees along one mile of the river, with local landowners providing additional labor.

Water issues are always high on the list of priorities for rural Colorado. Matching Grants funds enabled three landowners in the Upper Huerfano Conservation District to improve inlet

structures and install a headgate. Shavano and Mesa Districts used Matching Grants to contribute to practices that will reduce salt entering the Colorado River by over 1,000 tons annually. Some water projects are still in the pipeline, so to speak. These will improve water delivery systems on Silt Mesa and on the North Fork of the Gunnison River, and offer landowners opportunities for irrigation improvements in Grand/Summit counties.



Stock tank installation in the Northeast Prowers CD improves range management and supports producers keeping fragile land under grass once CRP expires.

In south east Colorado there is an uneasy feeling about what will happen to fragile soils as many CRP contracts end in the next two years. Memories of the dust-bowl era still linger in that part of the state and drought is never quite a memory. Prowers and Northeast Prowers Conservation Districts reasoned that cost-sharing of stock watering facilities on CRP land could provide an additional incentive for producers to keep the grass cover for livestock grazing rather than plowing for crops. Stock watering tanks would help maximize the productivity of rangeland by enabling better grazing management. The Districts applied 50% cost-share to install 5 water tanks, 11 hydrants and over 39,000 feet of pipeline for five landowners.

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done due to knapweed infestations (USDA, 1998). The Tamarisk Coalition estimates that Colorado tamarisk infestations along rivers suck up 170,000 more acre feet of water than if native species were present. Along the lower Colorado River, tamarisk areas have been reported as having 41% fewer birds than nearby native plant communities (source: CWMA). Every Conservation District in Colorado has it’s noxious weed problems. Eight Conservation Districts used Matching Grants to attack noxious weed issues, often working with their county weed programs for the most effective approach. Center Conservation District aggressively targeted emerging Black Henbane populations in order to stall its spread. Double El



Improvements to water inlet systems improved delivery efficiency and reduced sediment load in the Upper Huerfano CD.

The San Juan Conservation District, like many others, faces the challenge of an influx of people new to land management as small-acreage sub-divisions replace farms and ranches. In the late 1990s Colorado was losing 90,000 acres per year along the eastern front range alone to development. The San Juan CD organized two workshops to educate landowners about managing small acreages and on ditch erosion control. They followed the workshops with cost-share opportunities to install conservation practices.

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.



Weed barrier and drip irrigation improves windbreak tree establishment and growth.

Forty landowners participated in the workshops and this resulted in seven projects that increased water use efficiency and reduced sediment loading.

Soil conservation was achieved through the Burlington and Double El Conservation Districts cost-share projects. Some 60,000 feet of windbreaks were planted or renovated by landowners to control soil erosion. These windbreaks also offer protection to livestock and wildlife and reduce energy use.

The leadership of the Districts, investment of landowners, contributions by partners and funding restoration by the state legislature has together made these conservation benefits possible. CSCB has twenty-five newly selected projects enrolled in the 2008 Matching Grants program and looks forward to funding more projects in the years beyond. If you have any questions you may call Pam King at the Colorado State Conservation Board: Tel: 303-239-4170.

New Era for Soil Surveys

**By Petra Barnes Walker,
NRCS Public Affairs Specialist**

As the initial survey of U.S. soil conditions and resources nears completion, the National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) program is shifting its resources to updating and enhancing existing soil resource information. This new era will focus on improving the consistency of soils information on a Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) basis, ignoring political boundaries, and promoting and providing technical assistance and education to our customers and land use decision makers. Leading this new effort are the newly created Major Land Resource Area Soil Survey Offices (MLRA SSOs). While Colorado will eventually host five, three are already up and open for business.

The three operating MLRA SSOs in Colorado are located in Alamosa, Ft. Morgan, and Pueblo. The remaining two will be located in Ft. Collins and Grand Junction. In addition to the five Colorado locations, MLRA SSOs in Rock Springs, Wyoming; Price, Utah; Scotts Bluff, Nebraska; Garden City, Kansas; and Grants, New Mexico will provide service to smaller corners of Colorado.

“Selecting the locations of the MLRA soil survey offices around the country was arduous,” says Steve Park, NRCS State Soil Scientist/MLRA Region 6 Team Leader, Lakewood, CO. “Careful consideration was taken at the state and national levels to determine the best placement of the MLRA Soil Survey Offices. Negotiations were long and difficult and involved many different partners.”

Over the years soil surveys had been conducted mostly on a county basis which has resulted in a quilt-work pattern of soils information proving to be inconsistent on political boundaries. These newly developed MLRA Soil Survey Offices will ignore political boundaries, resulting in a seamless, more consistent inventory of soils coverage. These offices will also provide the opportunity to enhance existing soils data collected during the initial phases of the soil program.

“The program began well over 100 years ago with the first soil survey ever conducted. Our knowledge and technology has changed over the years as well as the conditions of the soils first inventoried,” Park states. “These offices offer tremendous opportunity for our partners and land use decisions makers. In addition to improved and more consistent soils information and products, these offices will allow us to go back and do some of the things we are doing now but were not able to do at the beginning of the soil survey program: things like gathering new and different data to enhance the science of soils, and sampling and long-term monitoring of dynamic soil properties, including carbon sequestration and many other properties.” The soil survey staff will also provide technical services, assist with the natural resources inventory and assessment projects, and provide training and overall support to users of soil survey information.

USDA’s National Cooperative Soil Survey Program is a cooperative effort led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through other Federal and state agencies and numerous other entities which make up the NCSS partners.

The Ft. Collins and Grand Junction MLRA Soil Survey Offices will be up and running in the spring of 2008, and all NRCS MLRA soil survey offices are scheduled to be functional by the end of 2009. “I am really excited about these offices,” affirms Park. “I think they will be the best jobs in the agency. Their duties will be multi-faceted with high job satisfaction, a switch from the grinding duties of conducting initial soil surveys day-after-day, year-after-year. The initial soil survey product for this country is the best in the world, but it is not without its problems. With this new structure, political boundaries will be ignored, resulting in seamless and consistent soils coverage. We will be taking a great product now and making it even better, ensuring that one of our most precious natural resources is protected for future generations.”

Award Winning
Camp Rocky



The Colorado Association of
Conservation Districts

**Outdoor
Environmental
Adventures
For Youth**
(Ages 14-19)

July 6-12, 2008
Divide, Colorado

**Please send me an
Application Form!**

Name _____
(Please print clearly)
Address _____
City _____
County _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____
Date of Birth _____
Have you attended Camp Rocky before?
YES _____ NO _____

Send this form to:
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CACD office
phone: 719-686-0020
or email: cacd@cacd.us

Primary Sponsors:
Colorado Association of Conservation Districts
U. S. Bureau of Reclamation
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Colorado State Forest Service
Colorado Division of Wildlife

Who can come?

Youth having completed 8th grade by June 2008 through age 19.

Where is it?

Rocky Mountain Camp is in the mountains above Colorado Springs, near Divide, CO.

How much does the camp cost?

\$250.00 (all inclusive) *Limited scholarships available.*

Where will I sleep and what will I eat?

You will bunk in a cabin with about eight participants and eat **great** food supplied by the camp cook. (Seriously, it's **great** food!)

How Do I Register?

STEP 1: Send this interest form to:

CACD
P.O. Box 4138
Woodland Park, CO 80866

STEP 2: You will be sent an application, health form and more information about Camp Rocky.

STEP 3: Contact your local conservation district for sponsorship availability.

\$75.00 NON-REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT REQUIRED By JUNE 15, 2008

IMPORTANT: Prior to attending camp, every youth ***MUST*** have a physical exam by a licensed medical doctor. Submit your registration ASAP so we may send you your health forms right away!

STEP 4: Return health forms & balance of the camp fee to the address above by:

July 1, 2008

Please make checks payable to: Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD)

What is "Camp Rocky"?

Camp Rocky is a week long, residential camp for 14 through 19 year olds who enjoy the outdoors and are interested in natural resources. The Camp Rocky professional staff helps participants learn about their environment through hands-on experience. The students work in teams making new friends from across Colorado. Each year, new and returning students choose one of the following resource fields for their area of focus.

Forest Management

The forestry team learns 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.



Rangeland Science

The rangeland science group learns about the "fitness" of the rangeland and the forage it provides. They will see 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.



Soil and Water Conservation

This team learns about the primary components of a watershed. They will "create" a river and learn how different types of soil affect plants, wildlife, water and humans.



Fish & Wildlife Management

The wildlife biology team will track a radio-collared animal, go electro-fishing, learn how Colorado wildlife adapt to their surroundings and complete a habitat enhancement project.



During the second half of the week

- Students from the different resource teams will develop and present natural resource management plans.
- Participants will use their group plan to complete a management project.
- Additional activities include volleyball games, hiking, a campfire, the Camp Rocky Challenge, and a dance. At the close of camp, students will receive a Camp Rocky **Certificate of Completion**.



CACD
Conservation
Poster
Winners

Clockwise from upper left:
1st Place/Olivia Charles;
2nd Place/Trevor Thompson;
3rd Place/Bronco Odell,
Rio Grande CD;
4th Place/Sebastian Clarke,
Shavano CD;
5th Place/Kolby Brubacher,
Mosca-Hooper CD.



Mitigating Lory State Park's Wildfire Hazards

Colorado State Forest Service and Colorado State Parks collaborate

By GayLene Rossiter
Colorado State Forest Service

Kathy Seiple, Lory State Park manager, looks over a ridge from the west border of the park. The area where she stands once was dense forest. “It was a wildfire hazard waiting to happen,” she remarks.

Now, this location offers a magnificent panoramic view of the foothills, canyons and distant mountains outside of the park.

Seiple pauses briefly, then smiles with certainty. “Our forest treatment project is off to a great start. Here, a detrimental fuel hazard, mistletoe-infected ponderosa pine, had existed between the park and adjacent private lands.”



Clearing the dead and diseased trees helps reduce wildfire risk by providing a break in the link between ground fuels and tree crowns. This fuels treatment method also helps limit the spread of dwarf mistletoe to healthy trees.

A Glimpse of the Park

Lory State Park, a popular recreation area, is located only a few miles northwest of Fort Collins. The park is adjacent to Horsetooth Reservoir and Horsetooth Mountain Park in Larimer County.

The park manager is proud of this pristine natural resource that consists of nearly 2,500 acres of diverse terrain including ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests, meadows and rock-outcroppings, as well as many species of wildflowers and wildlife, waterfalls and spectacular views of the Front Range. A 20-mile trail system is host to hikers, mountain-bikers, horse riders and others.

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Doing the Job Together

Colorado State Parks and the Colorado State Forest Service are partnering on a forest management plan to thin the dense forests in Lory State Park. The team will help defuse future wildfires in the park and alleviate the spread of fire to or from nearby residential properties. The project also helps eradicate dwarf



A Hydro-Ax is hard at work masticating trees on the first 67 acres of treatment in Lory State Park.

mistletoe. Prevalent in much of the park's ponderosa pine forests, this parasitic plant has weakened the trees making them susceptible to insects and diseases. The goal of both partners is to restore the park's forests to a more historically healthy profile where ponderosa stands of varying ages grow in clumps surrounded by open meadows.

The Park Plan

Land Stewardship Associates wrote the Lory State Park Wildfire Hazard and Mitigation Plan and describe the park's vulnerability to wildfire events as “...a build-up in ground fuels and a dramatic increase in forest density.” Ninety percent of its forests have larger trees with crowns close enough to support intense fires with the potential to spread, unconstrained, along the western sections of the park.

The plan helped Colorado State Parks and the Colorado State Forest Service launch the project with the first phase of fuels treatment (197 acres was treated the first two years) and 150 acres will be treated in 2008.

Forest Thinning 101

Thinning the dense forests will help reduce the park's wildfire hazards, remove dwarf mistletoe and restore the forest to a more resilient condition. Bordered on two sides by private property, the project is located on the west side of the park, the direction of prevailing winds. “Many neighbors with homes in the forested wildland-urban interface share Lory State Park's northern and western borders,” Seiple comments.

“Reducing forest fuels will help diminish the likelihood of fires spreading from private lands to the interior of the park, and will help contain fires within the park, minimizing the spread of fire to private lands,” White explains.

To control dwarf mistletoe in



Vegetation recovery progresses in Lory State Park, where fuels treatment was completed in 2006.

areas where all trees were infected, small clearcuts, were created. White says that these areas have excellent grass and forb growth, and that some are next to natural meadows where sun-loving ponderosa pines were encroaching. Forestry experts expect to see healthy ponderosa pine regeneration in areas treated in this manner.

Most ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir trees were mechanically masticated or chewed. A Hydro-Ax, a large articulated tractor with an eight-foot wide mower-mulching head mounted on the front, was used to masticate the first 67 acres.

“Decay of the masticated chunks returns nutrients to the soil, allowing for new vegetative growth to thrive later,” White says. This type of equipment often is used on projects of this nature because it has rubber flotation-type tires that cause little disturbance to the ground's surface.

White said wildlife also will benefit from the treatments. “Two to five large-diameter mistletoe-infected trees per acre were girdled, a method that kills the tree but leaves it standing, so insect food, nesting and



perching sites will continue to be provided for them. Some dead standing trees, too large to masticate, also were left for wildlife to use.”

Collaboration Equals Success

To visit the fuels treatment area, Seiple drives by private properties located just north of the park.

She takes a four-wheel drive vehicle on about three miles of steep residential road through the Red Cedar Drive Road Association neighborhood, and then continues up rugged terrain on another winding private road.

“We are very grateful to our neighbors for giving permission so our forestry contractor can use their roads to access this remote site in the park,” says Seiple.

When Seiple arrives at the first fuels treatment site completed in 2006, she walks through chunks of decomposing pine trees that now serve as mulch for young vegetation. Seiple reaches down to display a delicate wildflower between her fingertips and expresses satisfaction with the new look of grasses, wildflowers and young sprouting pine.

For more information about this project, contact: Denise White, Colorado State Forest Service, at 970.491.8348, denise.white@colostate.edu or Matt Schulz, Colorado State Parks, at 303.866.3203, matt.schulz@state.us

Bent Conservation District

...honored as District of the Year by Colorado State Conservation Board

Congratulations to the Bent Conservation District as receiving the recognition of the state’s top conservation district for 2007 at the CACD Annual Meeting. The Colorado State Conservation Board honored the Bent CD for its numerous projects for conserving soil, water and related resources.

Tom Wallace, president of the District, accepted the award along with James Souders, supervisor; Carlos Earl, conservation technician, and Nancy Appel, the district manager.

“District activities resulted in improved riparian-upland wildlife habitat and increased plant diversity,” according to Nancy.

The district also increased efforts to control and eliminate tamarisk infestation along the Arkansas River and on privately held lands.

The district was able to assist producers with the planning of wind-break-shelterbelt establishment and provide a tree planter and weed barrier installation machine through the district rental program.

Drip irrigation, rabbit guards and weed barrier fabric are also sold by the district to help promote the installation of windbreaks.

Nancy also noted that bird ladders were made available for livestock water facilities “to encourage the protection of short grass prairie birds.”

The district also provided technical assistance for producers wanting to install underground pipeline, gated pipe, sprinklers and for reservoir regulation. Additional planning was offered to help producers improve grazing programs. A Truax Flex drill is also available from the district for seeding pasture and hay lands.

“The completion of the district activities throughout the year are made possible through many outstanding relationships with partners that provide financial assistance, in kind donations and technical assistance. The district strives to maintain partnerships and looks forward to building on its alliance as it continues to address the conservation of soil, water, plant communities and wildlife.

District of the Year Trophy

In the course of turning Direct Assistance funding into a merit-based program, the Colorado State Conservation Board created its own “CSCB Conservation of the Year” Award. The trophy travels and resides with the district that came out with the highest number of points in the Direct Assistance Application ranking process. The Bent CD is a leader for District implemented conservation projects. They have received numerous grants that have generated revenue for landowners and the District.

Mel Rettig Addresses Ag Water Summit

The Ag Water Summit was held in December in Golden. Harris Sherman, Commissioner of the Colorado Dept. of Natural Resources pointed out that the State Water Study is on the DNR website. The Study shows a significant gap in water over the next twenty years by a 600,000 acre feet gap in water needed on the Front Range.

Mel Rettig, Colorado State Conservation Board, participated as a member of the Roundtable. Mel represents the Colorado River Basin and briefly addressed the subject of trans-mountain transfer of water and energy development in the Basin. “Emerging energy development will have a tremendous effect on the Colorado River.” Mel stated that a subcommittee is looking at water needs should energy development take off, as water requirements will increase significantly in the Colorado River Basin. (Oil shale development will, for example, require some 400,000 acre feet of water.) Mel also pointed out that the Roundtable does not have any authority over water rights, however, is available to provide input with regard to water rights issues. “The problems have been in place for sometime and will take sometime to resolve.”



Monty Smith Honored as CACD’s District Supervisor of the Year

Monty Smith of the Costilla County Conservation District was honored as the CACD Supervisor of the Year for 2007. Monty is involved with numerous boards and activities including the Costilla County CD, the Sierra Grande School Board, the U.S. Potato Board and the Potato Administrative Committee.

Monty and his wife, a school teacher at Sierra Grande, are also busy raising their three daughters, Hannah and her twin sisters Jordan and Skyler. They also own and operate a large potato and barley farm near Blanca, Colorado. Congratulations to Monty on being selected CACD Supervisor of the Year.

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FORESTRY

notes

<http://nacdn.net.org/news/publications/forestrynotes>

Getting the word out on fire

Jefferson County CD prepares handbook to help districts to address wildfire

Jefferson Conservation District in Lakewood, Colo. recently released a handbook entitled, "The Phoenix Guide: A handbook for watershed and community wildland fire recovery." The booklet is a product of information gathered from a number of western districts which have dealt with wildfire up close.

"We thought it would be great to gather the information together so that others could learn from our mistakes and successes," said Karen Berry, an official on the Conservation District's Board.

To download a copy of the handbook ...

go to http://www.jeffersonscd.org/Phoenix_Guide/Phoenix_Guide.htm

Jefferson CD realized there was a need for the resource some time ago, after it had already assisted on several fires. According to Berry, "At the start of one fire season, districts contacted us to gain knowledge." The District organized a series of meetings, but then the Hayman Fire of 2002 arrived, demanding all of its attention. That fire consumed 133 homes in an area 30 miles southwest of Denver.

The devastation created by that fire, coupled with an even greater need for fire information from area respondents, led Jefferson CD to develop the full-color handbook. The district used a \$7,000 U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry grant, via a subcontract with NACD, to fund the project, which began as a much smaller booklet that grew into a 126-page undertaking.

"Once we started talking to other organizations and conservation districts we realized there were so many aspects. It just naturally expanded," said Berry. "There are so many people doing good work out there."

The handbook is helpful to communities trying to recover from catastrophic wildfires, but Berry emphasized that it is of most help to those looking to prepare before a disaster sweeps through their community.

Said Berry, "One of the things we've tried to do in the manual is to help others get up emergency response methods ahead of time. It's not for post-fire, it's meant to help things go more smoothly ahead of the fire."

See 'Handbook' on Page 4



According to the handbook, one key to establishing a successful plan against wildfire is to build relationships with volunteers. (Ed Spence photo)

Next
Month

Joint Forestry Team
advances partnership



FORESTRY NOTES

Handbook ... continued from page 1

The handbook is broken into nine chapters. They include:

- What's in the handbook
- Impact of wildfire
- On the brink of disaster: What you can do to be ready
- Community engagement
- The recovery process: Immediately after the fire
- Toward the recovery: Organizing and utilizing volunteers
- Restore landscapes and rebuild communities
- Liability: Volunteer protection and Good Samaritan laws

To add perspective, Berry sought opinions from districts in California, New Mexico, South Dakota and Montana which had helped communities rebuild after experiencing catastrophic wildfire. That collaboration, along with a working relationship with USFS Urban and Community Forestry and the Coalition for the Upper South Platte has created one of the most comprehensive handbooks available to districts with regard to wildfire.

"I know the Jefferson District well, and I couldn't be more pleased that it was the one to take on this project," said Larry Payne, director of cooperative forestry for the U.S. Forest Service. "It's always a thrill for me when districts work with other districts on anything to do with addressing wildfire. This handbook is going to be incredibly useful and I'd like to see it get into the hands of as many district folks as possible. I think it's that valuable."

Catastrophic wildfire continues to be a problem, not only in western states but across the country. As Payne said, "The job we're facing is getting bigger and more complex each year." For this reason, Berry considers the handbook a constant work in progress.

For more information on Jefferson County Soil Conservation District, visit the Web site at <http://www.jeffersonscd.org>, or contact Karen Berry at 303/866.2018, or email her at kahberry@mac.com.



Volunteers spread hay after the Hayman Fire rips through Colorado. (Ed Spence photo)

Conservation Calendar

- Dec 10-12 - Roundtable on Sustainable Forests: challenges with scaling indicators and format issues regarding the 2010 edition of the National Report on Sustainable Forests, Cockeysville, Md. Contact Shawn Walker at shawnwalker@merid.org or at 202-354-6450 to register
- Jan. 28-31, 2008 - "Fire in the Southwest: Integrating Fire into Management of Changing Ecosystems," Tucson, Ariz. Contact: Erik Berg, Wildland Fire Science Lead, 703/648-4243, or eberg@usgs.gov
- Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2008 - Missouri Natural Resources Conference, "Get Ready for Change: Ensuring Resource Sustainability in an iPod® World," Osage Beach, Mo. Information available <http://www.mnrc.org>
- Feb. 10-13, 2008 - NACD 2008 Annual Meeting, "Conservation Beyond Boundaries," Reno, Nev. Information available at <http://nacdn.net.org/events/annualmeeting>
- March 10, 2008 - Conference on the Ecological Dimensions of Biofuels, Washington, DC, hosted by the Ecological Society of America. Information available at http://www.esa.org/science_resources

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Send news items to: Doug Williams, Managing Editor
email: forestrynotes@nacdn.net
news deadline - 15th day of the preceding month

NACD Annual Meeting
Reno, Nevada
February 10-13, 2008

Register at:
www.nacdnet.org

Teller-Park CD Assists in Mine Land Reclamation

While demonstrating the River Riparian Trailer at the 2006 National Western Stock Show in Denver, Vern Vinson, Teller-Park Conservation District Supervisor, was approached by Loretta Pinetta with the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety, about a watershed rehab project in Teller county. Of course, Vern was very interested in assisting the DMG and eventually represented the CD at various meetings and planning sessions to carry out the million plus dollar project.

The Millsap Creek project involved fifty-plus acres of mine tailings dating back to the 1920's. Eighty foot deep canyons had been gouged out of the countryside due to the type of soil material left there. The soil was ball mill "fines" that did not contain acid or heavy metals, however; so the project was easier to rehab due to this environment.

"This area was selected as a demonstrating project on how individuals and government can cooperate", said Julie Annear, project coordinator with DMG. The Teller-Park Conservation District facilitated the hiring of the "contractor" who performed the work at a significant cost savings. Through their past experience with the Buena Vista Dept. of Corrections Heavy Construction Technology Program, the Supervisors and NRCS staff recommended that the prisoners do the rehab work for the tailings project. The district also procured the reclamation seed mix suited for the high altitude mountain environment south of Victor.

About a dozen sponsors completed the project in October, with the local mining company providing spoil material and sharing their knowledge of local seed mixes that assisted in the revegetation efforts. Some of those involved in the project were Teller County, Cripple Creek-Victor Mine, Buena Vista Dept of Corrections, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Trout Unlimited, individual landowners as well as the Teller-Park Conservation District.

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CACD Auxiliary Officers



CACD welcomes the new CACD Auxiliary Officers for 2008. From left to right: Jean Taylor, Past President; Sally Fosha, President; Darlene Lucore, Vice-President; and Jolene Robinson, Secretary-Treasurer. Congratulations Ladies!

The Auxiliary's goal for 2008 is to have increased outreach and recognition of the Conservation Districts and CACDs' valuable conservation efforts. The Auxiliary would also like to create an even more outstanding event. Please be thinking of your silent auction contribution for the CACD Annual Meeting in November 2008.

Please note all donations

may be taken as a charitable deduction. Proceeds benefit the Camp Rocky Youth program, the poster contest, and the Auxiliary.

If you would like additional information or want to become a part of the Auxiliary please contact: Sally Fosha, phone: 719-347-2785; Email: fosha-bsr@worldnet.att.net Address: P.O. Box 136 Calhan, CO 80808



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Conservation Leaders Lost

...we pay tribute to conservation leaders who passed away in 2007



Olin Sims, NACD President *Sept. 1, 1960 - Dec. 7, 2007*

NACD President Olin Sims died unexpectedly from injuries suffered in a ranching accident on December 7, 2007. He was many things to many people, but to conservation districts, he was our President, our leader, our friend and a man who lived what he preached.

Freezing temperatures, blowing wind and a long trip did not deter over 1000 folks from making the trek to Rock River, Wyoming on December 15, 2007 to celebrate the life of NACD President Olin Sims. The ceremony clearly depicted the life of a man who followed his passions, touched lives across the nation and gave more of himself in 47 years than many of us could give in 100. There was an outpouring of love and support from the conservation district family, both at the services and in many, many phone calls, letters and emails.

Olin was raised on a ranch in McFadden, Wyoming, where he and his family put a high priority on caring for the land. His presence will be deeply missed, but his legacy will remain in our lives and hearts.

Olin and Tammie Christensen were married in Laramie on Sept. 26, 1981. Olin joined the ranch partnership with his father, Don, and brother, Scott in 1983. Olin and Tammie were blessed with a son, Tyler Cole, in 1986.

Olin's first passion was for ranching. He was a skilled mechanic and welder, keeping not only all of his family's equipment functioning, but also helping out any neighbor needing his expertise. Anyone who knew Olin knew the only place to find him in the summertime was either fixing machinery or mowing hay.

Olin thoroughly enjoyed being on horseback, including sorting cattle, moving cattle, calving heifers, and roping calves to drag to the branding fire. He loved time with family and friends and would never have missed the annual camping trip, or elk hunting with Tyler.

Olin was a much sought-after auctioneer, being self-taught, and practicing his chant during the many hours spent in his hay swather. He often offered his services free of charge, just trying to give back to his community. Olin auctioned for the CACD Live Auction in 2006.

He felt very strongly about conservation efforts and followed in his grandfather Roy's footsteps; Roy was a charter member of the Medicine Bow Conservation Board. Olin served the Medicine Bow CD from 1986 to the present, including being elected as Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Water Resources Chairman. Olin was the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts President from 1998-2004, the Western Coalition of Conservation Districts Chairman from 2001-2002, the National Association of Conservation Districts Alternate Board Member from 1998-2003 and Board Member from 2004-2005.

Olin's conservation achievements culminated when he was elected Second Vice President of the NACD in 2006 and then elected President in 2007, a position he was to have held until 2009.

Maybe you knew Olin for 20 years, maybe you just met him once, or maybe you've never seen him in person but have heard his voice on his prized "America's Voice for Conservation" audio clips. He's an easy man to remember; he didn't know a stranger. NACD is collecting stories, thoughts and memories to share with his family and to use in its Annual Report and on its website. If you want to share your memories of Olin in NACD's "Tribute to a Cowboy" please go to: www.nacdnet.org

Raymond Peters, Yuma County Conservation District

Raymond Peters, former member of the CACD board passed away in November from natural causes. His service to the Colorado conservation districts' was greatly respected and appreciated.

Marvin Garrett - Vice Pres. Fremont Conservation District. *April 14, 1931 - October 8, 2007*

Marvin was a lifelong rancher and homebuilder. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, playing with his grandchildren and being with his loving wife, Jackie. He was a lifelong member of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association and Fremont Cattlemen's Association. He served on the Cotopaxi School Board of Appeals, the Fremont County Planning & Zoning Board of Appeals, and was a founding member of the Fremont County Weed Board. Marvin served on the Fremont Conservation District Board as Vice President for the past 24 years. Marvin had 4 children, 3 step-children, 19 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. Marvin will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Glenn Ermel - El Paso County Conservation District *Passed Away: November 3, 2007*


Glenn Ermel worked for over 30 years with conservation districts, the State Board, and the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts. Glenn was one of the original founders of the Fountain Valley Conservation District before it consolidated into the El Paso Conservation District. Many districts across the state worked with Glenn, over the years, and he has many friends that knew him well and regarded him with great respect.

O. Marion Jones, Colorado First Conservation District *Passed Away: July 28th, 2007*

O. Marion Jones was a rancher most of his life and continued to raise horses well into his 80's. Marion was very devoted to his family especially his wife Katherine. He served his community doing two terms as a Moffat County Commissioner and was one of the founders of the Colorado First Conservation District. He believed very strongly in conservation of our natural resources and planted windbreaks on his ranch and property north of Craig. Marion worked closely with Neil McKinstry one of the first SCS staff for Colorado First, whom we also lost this June. Together they started Moffat County on the road toward conservation of our natural resources promoting windbreaks, water projects, farming practices and stock management.

Gerald Mathes - President Costilla County Cons. District *Oct. 30, 1925 - Sept. 11, 2007*

Gerald Mathes lived in the San Luis Valley his whole life. He served on the Costilla County Conservation District board for 55 years, the last ten being President of the Board. He was a faithful member of the board, and is very much missed by those he worked alongside to make the Valley a better place to live. His last wish was that his son Garth Mathes take his place as board member, and Garth was sworn in at the October board meeting. He has some big shoes to fill.



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