



# Colorado Conservator

**Colorado Association of Conservation Districts**

## Woodland Park High School Team Wins 2016 Colorado Envirothon Competition

Woodland Park High School's AP Environmental Science team took first place honors at the 2016 Colorado Envirothon Competition held on April 26 and 27, in Castle Rock! This year's event was held at the Douglas County Events Center, with a new record number of teams participating. Nineteen teams came from all over Colorado, to compete in the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts' (CACD) annual natural resource science based contest. The second place team was last year's winners, Sargent High School's FFA team, from Monte Vista; and, the third place team was also from Woodland Park High School in Teller County.

In partnership with CACD, the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation and Education Initiative and the Center Conservation District helped increase CO Envirothon's outreach and funding. It was wonderful to see such a jump in statewide interest and involvement in just the past two years. Judy Lopez (RGWCEI) and Brenda Anderson (CCD) did a great job with the bulk of organizing this year's event. CACD would like to thank them, along with a number of other contest volunteers, instructors, and judges, for their contributions at making the 2016 COE event such a success!

The winning team members from Woodland Park High School were: Laura Wagner, Malena Harangozo, Hunter Stone, Madison Czelusta, and Hudson Pace.

Mr. Dan Ganoza is Woodland Park High School's AP Environmental Science teacher and acted as the team's advisor and coach. Assisting him was Rose Banzhaf. These Colorado students and their coach will be heading to the international NCF Envirothon competition in Montreal, Canada this summer, in July.

Other Colorado schools, that made the trip to Castle Rock for the 2016 contest, were from Alamosa, Blanca, Castle Rock, Craig, Del Norte, Fort Collins, Fort Garland, Glenwood Springs, Greeley, Kremmling, Monte Vista, San Luis, Saguache, and Woodland Park.



During the one and a half day competition, all students are tested in a total of five areas of natural resource science content, including: aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and

soils. Teams also have to make an oral presentation on solving a current natural resource problem, with this year's topic being "Invasive Species". Team work and critical thinking are the basis for a successful outcome at this fun and educational contest.

CACD thanks all of this year's participants and their school sponsors. The date and location of next year's 2017 CO Envirothon event will be April 25th and 26th, at the Douglas County Events Center. More information about the Colorado Envirothon program can be obtained from the website at:

**[www.coloenvirothon.com](http://www.coloenvirothon.com)**



# Message from the President

Since the Winter 2016 issue of the CO Conservator, CACD's Legislative Committee has worked together through another legislative session in Colorado. The work load did not seem as intense as some of the previous sessions, but there were a few bills that CACD was very involved with. Brian Starkebaum testified more than once, on the floor of the Capitol, on the Rodent Relocation Notification bill. Brett Moore, CACD's lobbyist, outlines several of the bills that we were either in support of, opposed to, or monitored. The bill with the most impact to our Conservation Districts was the legislation that required counties to pay back oil companies on Severance Tax payments. This issue will be discussed in more detail by Cindy Lair, from the CO State Conservation Board.

I would like to thank Cindy and her staff for the District Manager training session that was done in May 2016, at the CO Department of Agriculture's Broomfield office. The CSCB staff has also been helping facilitate the Local Work Group meetings that help provide on-the-ground conservation project input to the NRCS. It is very important that CACD and CSCB work together, enhancing each organization, to fulfill their very different roles for the benefit of Colorado's Conservation Districts.

This year, CACD has been looking internally at the Association on some long range planning, fund raising, and how to better serve its membership in our mission of representing the Conservation Districts' and the concerns of their landowners. To do this we have been focusing on solutions to grow and fund CACD for a brighter future, while also listening to the membership statewide. I would like to thank the West Greeley and White River Conservation Districts, along with Mr. Bob Warner, who have come forward with additional CACD funding, above their annual dues payments, to help maintain the current level of administrative services by CACD. We have also looked at some targeted or specific contribution funding by the Districts and CACD's conservation partners. Allowing our Districts to donate to a specific purpose, event, or activity that CACD participates in, benefits the Districts and CACD statewide.

Plans for the CACD 2016 Annual Meeting are underway, and one way that we are trying to incorporate membership suggestions is by shortening the total length of our annual conference. This is not an easy task! According to our By-Laws, CACD must conduct annual membership business, along with going through the time intensive Policy/ Resolution process. This year's meeting will start on the evening of Monday, November 14th, and conclude on the afternoon of Wednesday, November 16th. We are hoping that this shortened format will help more of our membership to attend the conference, while still allowing CACD to fulfill the necessary By-Law obligations. We understand everyone's time is valuable and, being a "volunteer" driven organization, we want the time to be well utilized. We hope that our membership and partners will be pleased when the 2016 Annual Meeting draft agenda is sent out.

CACD meets during the summer for a face-to-face meeting in August. This year, we will be reviewing some long range planning and CACD's funding issues for the future. We will be prioritizing the administrative aspects of our Executive Director, along with identifying the priority needs/wants of our membership. This outreach information can be related to CACD by each District and their Board of Supervisors at any time during the year. We may send out a short survey asking the Districts to provide input on what their needs are and how we can help fulfil those requests. Typically, this is done at the Annual Meeting each year. You can also contact your own CACD Watershed Director and pass along your thoughts, either by phone or email. Their contact information is included within this and all CO Conservator issues. The more suggestions that we receive from our District members, the better CACD will be able to serve you, within our means, statewide.

We are looking toward a bright future for CACD!

*Sincerely,*  
**Don McBee, CACD President**

# Voice of Conservation Heard at House Hearing On Wild Horses

Submitted by Whitney Forman-Cook, NACD

The National Association of Conservation Districts made the voice of conservation heard at a House subcommittee hearing Wednesday on the issue of wild horse and burro overpopulation on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands.

Callie Hendrickson, executive director for the White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts in northwest Colorado, told the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands that excess wild horses and burros have caused considerable ecosystem degradation on the Western range – shrinking available acreage for livestock grazing, complicating native wildlife management, and costing the taxpayers a small fortune.

“The BLM is responsible for the management and protection of public lands,” Hendrickson said in her opening statement. “We appreciate BLM’s verbal commitment to manage healthy horses on healthy range, but there’s a lot of talk with little action that moves us in that direction.”

According to the latest numbers from the agency, there are more than 67,000 wild horses and burros living on BLM land across 10 states today, when by law – the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 – there should be fewer than half of that number.

These feral and non-native horses are suffering because they don’t have any natural predators to cull their herds or enough food or water to keep them healthy at their present numbers. The government has

even had to conduct emergency gathers to save horses from dying of dehydration and starvation in the West, Hendrickson testified.

Every year, BLM gathers around 3,500 wild horses and houses them in paddocks on the range – feeding them hay, providing them water, and charging up an annual bill in excess of \$50 million. Right now, some 50,000 wild horses are housed in these pens because only a fraction are adopted out (2,631 in 2015) or sold (267 in 2015) to buyers that agree to not sell the animals for slaughter each year.

“Excess horses are devastating the Western rangelands in many locations,” said Hendrickson, who served a three-year term on the BLM’s wild horse and burro advisory board from 2012 to 2014. “Fertility control is a part of the solution, but it will do nothing to keep the land from (degrading) without first removing the excess horses.”

Hendrickson recommended that the House panel provide BLM with direction and additional tools to remove 40,000 excess wild horses and burros from the range. “From the conservation district side of the world, we have looked at every alternative,” she testified. “In order to remove the number of horses that need to be removed off of the range, we need to be able to sell horses with unrestricted sale.”

For more information on wild horse and burro policy, read Hendrickson’s written testimony available here on NACD’s website, watch Wednesday’s House oversight hearing here, and check out NACD’s resources on wild horses and burros here.

## 2016 Ag Day at the Capitol

On behalf of the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, allow us to thank the 2016 Legislators that supported the Ag related and natural resource conservation issues during Colorado’s 2016 Legislative Session. Above are CACD Board representative to NACD Bob Warner, CACD Executive Director Sharon Pattee, and Lobbyist Brett Moore, at the 2016 Ag Day at the Capitol.

Colorado’s agriculture, farming and ranching industries are vital to our state, and we greatly appreciate the interest, involvement, and support of these issues and the programs that showcase agriculture within our state. Again, thanks for your continued support!



# CACD's Executive Director's "Short Reports"...



Summer Greetings,

I can't believe that summer is already here! It has been a busy first half of 2016, and things won't be letting up anytime soon. Camp Rocky 2016 is right around the corner and planning is already underway for CACD's 2016 Annual Meeting in November, to be held in Loveland at the Embassy Suites. Additionally, we are the host state for the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) 2017 Annual Meeting, to be held January 28th through February 2nd, 2017, at the Sheraton Downtown, in Denver. Details for both meetings will be forthcoming as soon as I have them.

Here are some updates, in case you've missed them on our website:

**CO Ag Council at the Capitol** – CACD, as a member of the Colorado Ag Council, meets on a quarterly basis, with the other member Ag related organizations. This is our opportunity to collaborate and discuss relevant issues regarding conservation, natural resources, farming and ranching. As a member of Ag Council, CACD has a larger voice on current legislative issues that affect our Districts and their cooperators around the state. The next meeting has been scheduled for June 29th, in conjunction with the next meeting of the CO Ag Water Alliance. CAWA reviews and addresses CO's current water issues and legislation and provides input to the CO Water Conservation Board.

**Local Work Group Meetings** – By now, most of our Districts have either had or have scheduled your Local Work Group meetings, in order to affirm the local on-the-ground conservation needs and priorities in your District/Watershed area. CACD encourages your District to advertise and market these important input sessions, with meeting facilitation assisted by the CSCB Conservation Specialist for your area.

**2016 Camp Rocky** – Camp Rocky is in its 53rd year and registration has already started for camp this summer! CR will be held this year during the week of July 10 - 16, just outside of Divide, CO. This CACD sponsored co-ed event is for 14 – 18 year olds, who are interested in learning about natural resource conservation. There are 4 conservation based disciplines—soil and water, forestry, range management, and wildlife. Camp Rocky is one of the most supported of CACD's programs by the Conservation Districts statewide. Many Districts help to sponsor our future conservation leaders for the entire week at this educational summer camp. Please check out the latest Camp Rocky news on CACD's website, along with all of the 2016 forms, at: [www.coloradoacd.org](http://www.coloradoacd.org), under the "Education and Events" tab.

CACD Long Range Planning – The CACD Board of Directors is working on some long range planning goals for your state association. A LRP Committee has been formed and has been meeting monthly, via teleconference, and will report to the full CACD Board of Directors in August, at their face-to-face meeting. This fall, a progress report will be made available to the CACD general membership.

**Great Plains Windbreak Initiative** – CACD has been invited to be part of the Planning Committee for this new stakeholder group, to address the decline of windbreaks, shelter/hedge breaks, etc. occurring in the Great Plains Region. The states that have also been included in this initial Planning Committee process were: North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, and Texas. The group will eventually represent all facets of natural resource organizations, including state and federal Forest Service agencies, FSA, NRCS, state and local Conservation Districts, RC & D's, University Extension Offices, along with several private wildlife organizations. We will be focusing on how to deal with the aging windbreak conditions that had played an important part in the Great Plains region's rural conservation practices.

**2016 Annual District Dues** – A big THANK YOU to those Conservation Districts that have paid your 2016 annual dues to CACD! This dues income is imperative to CACD's administrative operations on a day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month basis. As always, we want to hear from you about what you and your District need. Please feel free to give me a call or email at any time, with any concern or questions that you may have, at: (719) 686-0020 or [spattee4cacd@gmail.com](mailto:spattee4cacd@gmail.com).

**CACD Legislative Committee** – CACD's lobbyist, Brett Moore, along with our Legislative Committee, saw the end of the Colorado 2016 Legislative Session on May 11th. The link for CACD's Bill Tracking Sheet is available on the CACD website under the "Education and Events" tab (<http://www.coloradoacd.org/legislative-and-current-policy.html>), for your review of the bills that we supported, were in opposition to, or were monitoring on behalf of our Conservation District membership.

I was up at the Capitol in Denver on June 9th, to be present at the South Platte Water Storage Study bill signing by Governor Hickenlooper. This was House Bill 2016-1256,

which Rep. J. Paul Brown championed for during the 2016 Legislative Session. J. Paul has always been a staunch supporter of CACD and Colorado's conservation issues. I was so glad that I was able to make the trip and to be there with him and a few of the CO Ag Council members, not to mention Senator Jerry Sonnenberg. CACD takes seriously our commitment to monitor all of the legislative water issues on your behalf, here in Colorado!

**CACD's 2016 Annual Meeting** – CACD's 2016 annual meeting will be at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Loveland, November 14 – 16, 2016. At the request of our membership, the annual meeting will have a shorter format/schedule. We hope that this shorten format will improve our Board Supervisor and District Manager attendance. Soon, I will be sending out further information in the form of a draft agenda. We have been having 2016 Program Committee teleconferences over the past several weeks, to discuss the theme and meeting content. If you'd like to get involved with the input for our conference this year, please let me know!

**NACD's 2017 Annual Meeting** – The National Association of Conservation Districts will hold their next Annual Meeting, January 28th through February 2nd, 2017, in Denver at the Sheraton Downtown Denver Hotel and Conference Center! As the host state Executive Director, I met with the NACD Planning Committee on June 15th to start focusing on Colorado's input to this national event. Please mark your calendars to attend this annual conference, where representatives from all over the United States come to make national natural resource conservation policy, network, and learn about the current important conservation issues. As soon as I have a draft agenda from NACD, I will send it out to all of the Districts and their Board Supervisors. It will also be posted on the CACD website.

**CACD Donations Through AmazonSmile.com** – CACD now has a link at AmazonSmile.com for a .5% donation of your eligible Amazon purchases to be sent to CACD as a charitable contribution. In order to browse or shop at AmazonSmile.com, customers must first select CACD as their organization to receive the .5% donation on your purchases to CACD by electronic funds transfer. Anyone can support CACD by choosing us as your AmazonSmile.com non-profit organization of choice, at: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/84-0470063> This link is also be available on CACD's website, on the home page, for your continued use.

As always, I want to encourage you to be relevant to your District's landowners, who you serve. If you accomplish this task, the success of your District will come – I guarantee it! Thanks always for your continued support!

*Respectfully,*

*Sharon Pattee, CACD Executive Director*

## THANK YOU!

CACD's 2016 Board of Directors would like to thank the following, for their additional 2016 funding contributions made to CACD, which are dedicated to CACD's administrative and Executive Director's salary and travel budget line items:

*West Greeley Conservation District  
White River Conservation District  
Mr. Robert L. Warner*

Many thanks, your generosity is greatly appreciated by us!

## Get Ready, Get Set Camp Rocky July 10 - 16, 2016

It's our 53rd year! 2016 Camp Rocky is scheduled for July 10th through 16th, again at the Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp facility, just outside Divide, CO. The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts brings this educational youth camp together each year for student's ages 14 – 18 years.

Our camp offers four natural resource conservation based disciplines: Soil and Water Conservation, Forest Management, Rangeland Science, and Fish and Wildlife Management. Each student is offered one of the four areas of study and will participate within that area for the entire week at camp. Most students attend through the generous sponsorship donations provided by Colorado's Conservation Districts.

*If you have any questions, you can contact Amy at: [amy.camprocky@gmail.com](mailto:amy.camprocky@gmail.com). Or, you can call Sharon Pattee, Executive Director for CACD, at (719) 686-0020.*



# 2016 CACD Legislative Report

By CACD Lobbyist Brett Moore

The 2016 Session of the 70th Colorado General Assembly convened on January 13 and adjourned on May 11. The session highlighted contentious issues between the Democratic-controlled House and the Republican-majority Senate, with Agriculture and Natural Resources being no exception. Controversial topics such as construction defects liability, the Hospital Provider Fee, and transportation funding all died during the session, setting up another contentious election year in Colorado.

Now, with the 2016 session in the books, the following pieces of legislation were actively lobbied by the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) during this session. The following link can be checked at any time for the latest on the bills that CACD is monitoring: CACD Bill Tracker

**HB 1010 Destructive Rodent Pest Release Authorization Requirements** -- Current law only requires a Department of Parks and Wildlife biological suitability study, but does not consider the impacts to the relocation area or alert local landowners or governments (county, conservation district, etc.) to the transfers of destructive rodents. The bill would have required that a transfer within the same county requires approval from the county commission, similar to the current law regarding county-to-county transfers.

This bill died on a party-line vote in the Democratic House State Affairs committee, after hours of compelling testimony from local land owners in Arapahoe and Adams County as well as CACD Board Member Brian Starkebaum. Special thanks to Sharon Croghan with East Adams County Conservation District for her efforts in supporting the legislation and rounding up folks to testify. The bill was lost this year, but we expect this issue to come back in the future, so please document transport or release of destructive rodents in your area by taking photos, while noting the time and location for future reference.

**HB 1109 Application of State Water Law to Federal Agencies and HB 1256 South Platte Water Storage Study** -- 1109 is another in the string of bills supported by CACD over recent years to assert state water rights and the prior appropriation system in the face of attempts by the federal government to weaken long-established water law, while 1256 helps to achieve CACD Policy by supporting more water storage. Both bills were passed on bi-partisan basis and signed by the governor. It was great to finally see these

pieces of legislation move forward after seeing previous versions fail in years past.

## **HB 1163 Appropriations from Noxious Weed Management Fund** --

Providing roll-forward spending authority for the noxious weed program by allowing unspent funds to be spent after the end of the fiscal year in June was a priority item for the Department of Agriculture this year. The weed season doesn't end in June, and now Conservation Districts that participate in noxious weed control will have greater flexibility to work with Colorado DOA staff in executing their grants.

**HB 1405 2016-2017 Long Appropriations Bill** -- The annual State Budget or "Long Bill" contains multiple direct and severance funding lines for the Conservation Districts. Despite some budget pressures from bumping up against the TABOR cap, the annual funding that CACD has lobbied for in years past was left intact for the 2016-2017 budget.

**Stock Show Rodeo and CO Ag Council** -- In addition to these activities, CACD hosted the annual evening at the Western Stock Show Rodeo, with legislators from the House and Senate Ag Committees joining the CACD Board for an evening of policy discussions and camaraderie, in addition to recognizing the CACD 2015 Conservationists of the Year in the Farmer and Rancher categories. CACD also continues to be an active participant as a voting member of the Colorado Ag Water Alliance, in addition to the Colorado Ag Council, a group of agricultural trades who meet regularly to provide a forum on issues affecting Colorado agriculture, and put together the very popular annual Ag Day at the Capitol event in March each year.

As always, it is an honor to represent CACD at the State Capitol. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can address any of your legislative concerns!

*Brett Moore is the principle of OnTheBallot Consulting, and has represented CACD since 2011. He hails from a 5th generation family of farmers and ranchers in Northwest Kansas, but calls Denver home.*



# The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts

## Membership Options

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) is a non-profit organization that represents and serves the 76 Conservation Districts of Colorado. CACD gives voice to the Districts and their private landowners. Each District's Board of Supervisors is made up of volunteers that reside or produce within the District's boundaries and largely consists of some of CO's finest farmers, ranchers, and land stewards.

Conservation Districts are local units of government, established under state law, to carry out responsible and practical natural resource management and programs at the local level. Districts are tasked to work with landowners and cooperators in order to manage and protect land and water resources on private and some public lands in CO. CACD operates on annual dues from the seventy-six CO conservation districts and support from people like you!

### **Individual Memberships:**

- **Student:** \$25
- **Educator:** \$30
- **Bronze:** \$35
- **Silver:** \$50

### **Corporate Memberships:**

- **Gold:** \$100
- **Platinum:** \$250
- **Lifetime** (one-time donation): \$350
- **Diamond:** \$500 and above

CACD is a Colorado 501(c)3 non-profit organization, so your generous contribution is fully tax deductible, under IRS regulations. ***Please make checks payable to: CACD***

.....  
***Please provide the following information for our records:***

Membership Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card (circle one):                      VISA                      Mastercard                      Discover

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Three Digit Code: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

# Farming Evolution 2016 No-Till Event Well Received



Ag producers: Where were you on February 17 & 18, 2016? Folks traveled from as far away as Grants, New Mexico (650 miles) to attend the NRCS Farming Evolution No-Till Workshop event. It was held at the Phillips County Events Center on Wednesday and Thursday, February 17th and 18th. Over 160 attendees were present on Wednesday, and the attendance topped 185 on Thursday.

Clint Evans, Colorado's State Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was there to open the event. He gave a warm welcome and brief overview of what the two day program would entail. An overview of soil structure and function was given by Lance Gunderson of Ward Labs. During the second day, Lance explained to attendees about the Haney soil test--what it does and doesn't tell you and how to use the results.

"Choosing where and how to soil sample is not so difficult..." according to Clark Harshbarger, NRCS Resource Soil Scientist, who is based in Greeley. However, what it does depend on is what you want/ need to know, Harshbarger stated. Testing at the same time of year and in the same method enables you to similarly compare your results. It is also important communicate with the soil lab that you intend to use.

There were four presentations given by Dr. Jill Clapperton over the course of the event. She led the group in a fascinating discovery session of the vast array of "critters" in the soil. She also shed light on how they interact with each other and the subject plants to release nutrients into the soil. "Agricultural producers should think of the soil as a habitat with a variety of sizes and types of animals..."

says Dr. Clapperton. These animals can be as big as earthworms, but much of soil life are tiny critters visible only under a microscope. And, just like above ground creatures, those living in the soil also have complex predator/prey & habitat relationships and are sensitive to disturbance.

Paul Jasa, an Agricultural Engineer with the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, is a long term no-till advocate of over 35 years. He said that a person needs their planter to do four things: 1) handle residue; 2) penetrate the soil to the desired seeding depth seed placement; 3) provide seed and soil contact; and, 4) close the seed V.

Throughout the day, attendees heard how organic matter is drought "insurance" for the soil. A 1% organic matter soil will hold 27,000 gallons of water in the top six inches of soil, and a 3.5% organic matter soil will hold 94,500 gallons of water. Most crop field's today range from 1% to 3% organic matter. The more "critters" there are in the soil, the higher the soil organic matter levels are. This results in higher nutrient availability and more water storage potential. Attendees left with plenty of new knowledge and understanding of the soil to think about over the growing season. "I've learned so much, my head is full..." commented one attendee.

Farming Evolution 2016 was hosted by the Haxtun, Sedgwick, West Greeley and Yuma County Conservation Districts in northeastern Colorado, and the Upper Republican NRD in Nebraska. The Colorado State Conservation Board, Phillips County Pheasants Forever and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also supported this year's event. Wish you were there? You can watch and listen to the Farming Evolution recording on the internet! Go to [www.barnmedia.net](http://www.barnmedia.net). Then type "Farming Evolution 2016" in the search window on the right, just under the picture banner, and the recording is the top link.



# Farming Evolution 2016 Featured Several Producer Speakers

The Phillips County event center buzzed with excitement about a topic many might find uninteresting: the soil.

Folks traveled from over 600 miles away to attend the Farming Evolution event on February 17 & 18. The two day event featured scientist and no-till producer presenters on both days. Both were well received, but there is nothing like hearing from someone who has real experience.

While each of the producers had unique perspectives, motivations and experiences, they also had a common message: 'Farmers need to stop treating their soil like dirt!'

Michael Thompson, Farmer from Almena Kansas talked with the audience about "Parking the Iron-How to improve your soil". Originally, they adopted no-till because he knew the family would have to change how they operated in order for him to come back to the farm. Change is difficult, however "If you really want to do something, you will find a way. If you don't you'll find an excuse" [Jim Rohn], said Thompson

However, adopting no-till alone didn't fix the problems. "We had to change how we viewed our soil" said Thompson, "you need to get a 'brain transplant' and abandon the tillage part of your brain." They started thinking about keeping a living root in the soil as much as possible. Then they added livestock.

In the early 1990's the organic matter on Thompson's farm was 1% or less and he had erosion problems. Today, organic matter levels are 3.6% and there is no erosion on any fields. He has reduced his chemical costs by 19% and Nitrogen costs by 27%.

A rain simulator demonstration by NRCS is what sold John Heerman of Haxtun, CO, on no-till. "Seeing the dry tilled soil and the wet no-till soil when those trays were dumped told me I had to change," said Heerman. My goal is to have a living root in the soil at all times, he said. Heerman gave the audience his insights on his learning curve of improving soil health.

Dietrich Kastens of Herndon, KS, is not new to the Farming Evolution speaker position. This time he shared his family's journey into no-till – the good, the bad, the challenges and rewards.

"For us, the 1990's were all about improving Water Use Efficiency," said Kastens. "The 2000's were all about finding the equipment to move to 100% no till. The early 2010s were still about fixing problems, but also about looking at the whole "system" rather than at specific pieces. The late 2010s will be about Soil Health, and determining how to improve it while remaining profitable in the short run."

"We know we are doing the right thing (by using no-till)," said Kastens. "We're not using cover crops yet, but we are certainly looking at them."

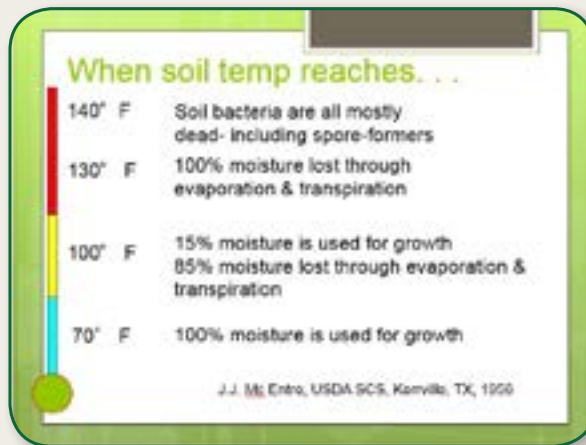
More than once the speakers made the point that soil temperature determines soil water availability. Please insert this graphic, attached to the email transmitting this article. When the soil is 70 degrees, 100% of the moisture is used for growth. When soil reaches 100 degrees, 15% of the moisture is used for growth. At 140 degrees most soil bacteria are dead. Plant cover serves as a heat shield.

Adopting no-till, diversifying crops, and adding animals to the land is not without its hazard. There is a learning curve, there will be failures and mistakes. 'But,' the producer speakers asked, 'Conventional

farming has all of those too, doesn't it?'

You can watch and listen to the Farming Evolution on the internet. Go to [www.barnmedia.net](http://www.barnmedia.net) and type 'farming evolution 2016' in the search window on the right, just under the picture banner. The recording is the top link.

Ag producers, where will you be in February 2017? Farming Evolution 2016 was hosted by the Haxtun, Sedgwick, West Greeley and Yuma County Conservation Districts in Colorado and the Upper Republican NRD in Nebraska. The Colorado State Conservation Board, Phillips County Pheasants Forever and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also supported the event.





# 72nd Annual Meeting

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts

*Colorado Association of Conservation Districts*

*2016 Annual Meeting*

*November 14 – 16, 2016*

*Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center*

*4705 Clydesdale Parkway, Loveland, CO 80538 Telephone: (970) 593-6200*

*CACD's 2016 Annual Meeting is being held at the Embassy Suites in Loveland! Please join us in November to engage with friends and partners in natural resource conservation. Our meeting will provide great speakers and learning sessions, while you enjoy luxury accommodations at the conference rate.*



*The Embassy Suites Loveland Hotel, Spa and Conference Center accommodations include:*

- *Complimentary Manager's Reception (cocktails and light snacks each evening)*
- *Complimentary Daily Cooked-to-Order Breakfast*
- *Sofa Sleeper Bed*
- *Two-room suites with 32" flat panel televisions*
- *Granite Bathroom Vanity*
- *Refrigerator, microwave oven, coffee maker*
- *Desk w/high speed internet access*



*Stay Tuned for the Draft Agenda and Speaker Listing.*

*All Conference Forms Will Soon Be Available at: [www.coloradoacd.org](http://www.coloradoacd.org)*

*Events/2016 Annual Meeting*

*Questions? Contact Sharon Pattee, CACD Executive Director, at (719) 686-0020*

*CACD, P.O. Box 777, Fountain, CO 80817*

# CACD Thanks the Sponsors of our 2015 Annual Meeting

## DIAMOND

Warner Ranch  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

## GOLD

CO State Conservation Board  
White River Conservation District  
American AgCredit

## BRONZE

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies/RMBO  
Spanish Peaks/Purgatoire River Conservation District  
Granite Seed and Erosion Control  
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union  
Waugh & Goodwin, LLP CPAs  
West Greeley Conservation District  
Ottertail Environmental, Inc.

## EXHIBITOR

Truax Company, Inc.  
Pawnee Buttes Seed, Inc.  
USDA – National Ag Statistic Service

## BREAK SPONSORS

Fremont and Costilla Conservation Districts  
South Side Conservation District  
Bookcliff Conservation District  
United Power

## FRIENDS OF CONSERVATION

White River Electric Association, Inc.  
Val D'Isere Health Clinic, Inc.  
Colorado Livestock Association



**Pawnee Buttes Seed Inc.**

**More Than a Bag of Seed. More Colorado.**

Native grass, forb & shrub seed • CRP • Pasture mixes  
Reclamation consulting • Site-specific recommendations

Call us at **1-800-782-5947**  
[info@pawneebuttesseed.com](mailto:info@pawneebuttesseed.com)  
[www.pawneebuttesseed.com](http://www.pawneebuttesseed.com)

## CACD Donations Through AmazonSmile.com

CACD now has a link at AmazonSmile.com for a .5% donation of your eligible Amazon purchases to be sent to CACD as a charitable contribution. In order to browse or shop at AmazonSmile, customers must first select CACD as their organization to receive the .5% donation on your purchases to CACD by electronic funds transfer.

Anyone can support CACD by choosing us as your AmazonSmile.com non-profit organization of choice, at:  
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/84-0470063>

## South Platte Water Storage Study Bill Signing

This is a photo taken at the Capitol in Denver on Thursday, June 9th. A few members of CO Ag Council were present, to show support for House Bill 2016-1256, the South Platte Water Storage Study bill, that Rep. J. Paul Brown championed for during the 2016 Legislative Session. J. Paul has always been a supporter of CACD and Colorado's conservation issues. CACD was there in a show of support, along with a few of the CO Ag Council members, not to mention Senator Jerry Sonnenberg. CACD takes seriously our commitment to support the legislative water issues on your behalf, here in Colorado!



# Are We Looking Broadly Enough at Partnership?

Submitted by Cindy Lair, Program Manager, Colorado State Conservation Board



There is all this talk about conservation “partnerships” and “teamwork” – as if by saying “Partnership is important to us,” it somehow makes it so? Don’t partnerships just happen when we are passionate about what we want to accomplish and have the resources to do the job? So you think to yourself, “How many times do I have to hear about how important it is to work with partners and create new partnerships?”

What makes a quality partner? Is it an organization or individual that closely aligns with your set of beliefs? It seems that is where we have been going for a long time.

Think about your current partners – your very best ones. How did the connections begin? Did you always have connected ideologies or did it start differently?

When I reflect upon some of my best conservation partners, the ones at the top of my current list, I find that some of them had always been philosophically different from my own way of thinking. Interestingly, that top list of best partners started out to be silent threats to me, personally. These people struck an element of trepidation in me when first we met and their extreme differences in approach overwhelmed me. Some were even offensive in their approach. It was often difficult to see what we had in common. However, instead

of attempting to over-power or to avoid these people, like I secretly wanted to do, I made it a point to stick with them and tolerate them a while to learn where it may lead. And while I was a captive, tolerant audience, something

happened - I spent a lot of time listening, communicating back to them and learning about their priorities.

I certainly didn’t agree with a lot of their way of thinking, but through the respect and tolerance I mustered, my perspectives and experience morphed into appreciation and even a bit of awe – and yet, it will always require some amount of tolerance, because we still don’t really see eye to eye. The lesson and value these less affable relationships bring is a greater variety in perspective, approach and experience. The discussions in which we engage add an enhanced dynamic that can lead to ways that address the needs of a larger conservation audience.

When I was the Boulder County Noxious Weed Manager, a time when I was young in my career, I would receive a lot of hateful phone calls every year from what I perceived as “nasty people” that cursed me for using herbicides as one of our weed management tools. In those early years at that job, I would become defensive and argue my case and even provided a stockpile of peer-reviewed literature to support my side. Thinking back, this approach never got the caller and me to any workable, tolerable place. Often in instances like that, I would find that instead of building an ally, I had helped solidify an enemy. As I learned that scientific facts don’t change the way people think and saw how those adversaries never became partners, I decided to try something new. One day, instead of fighting back with all my knowledge and “expertise”, I decided to sit still, allow the person time to talk while I listened. It didn’t change my understanding of the fundamental weed management principles, but it changed something else. Through listening and trying to understand views from their perspective, instead of listening enough to formulate my rebuttal, in many cases, we found common ground. We even found ways to work with each other (lacking complete agreement) without insisting on getting our own way. We established respect, and some of these people



who started out so supposedly “mean and nasty” eventually turned into partners. They helped support my efforts by committing to help through other means. They would attend public hearings to defend our efforts instead of showing up to fight against us, like before. Through listening and being willing to adjust some of my actions, I gained partners. I never for a minute changed my own way of thinking and neither did they, yet the more we were around one another, the closer our connection grew. By finding ways to cooperate with others, I received this cooperation, in return.

Some years later, my current role with the State Conservation Board is very similar. There are many different kinds of people with ideologies greatly different from mine, but I’ve grown to appreciate the part of my work that includes these different opinions. This variety is essential to our success, even if I felt that a few folks have been downright angry and mean-spirited. It would seem simpler to never work with them, again. Thankfully, I never avoided them. I faced my discomforts every time I saw these individuals that, admittedly, intimidated the heck out of me, and I made a point to approach them to simply see how things were going. What usually happened was that we’d start to talk about some aspect of conservation and, through that exchange we found our common ground—ways to connect. Quite often, these individuals were still bitter about their original gripe and paradoxically, I usually continued to hold onto my own assertions. That hadn’t changed. However, after finding that common ground, we both added something valuable to the subject at hand. We helped each other succeed on that commonness so that the “dislike” eventually turned to “like”. “Like” even turned into “gratitude” and “learning” and it grew to be more significant than our initial differences that originally seemed so unbearable. This is a concept that requires practice. At first it feels almost impossible to do but after trying it and being successful, it can become a strength. I liken it to strengthening a set of muscles in one’s body that were previously unknown to exist.

I invite us all to find a few people who get under our skin with their crazy beliefs and find ways to challenge ourselves to learn from them – while we

challenge them to learn from and work with us. Let’s find ways to pull people out of their comfort zones and show them how real land stewardship and locally-led conservation looks. When we’re done, I hope those who started out as an adversary starts to see value in what we/I do – to the extent that they want to be involved.

While clearly not all of the people I consider to be partners started out as my opponents, and not all opponents have become partners, my intention with this article is to deliver the message that our future success depends on our ability to pull in more outsiders into our discussion. If we look at the reasons why some conservation districts aren’t as relevant as they once were, I believe it has to do with this concept that we’ve isolated ourselves so that our conversations only happen with those whom we share ideologies. It’s only when we reach out of that comfort zone to pull in the ones we don’t understand can we broaden that value and relevance of our conservation districts.

There are new conservation organizations springing up all over the place and we can all agree that they don’t always have the best interests of landowners and locally-led conservation. We already have the best model for grassroots conservation in our conservation districts. It’s time to stop making new organizations (because we can’t agree on exactly everything) and pull those folks in to contribute, learn and ultimately make our way of putting conservation on the ground work even better. We don’t need another new conservation group. We need to make what we’ve got work for a broader audience.

***The Yuma County Conservation District would like to introduce their new manager, Sheila Brophy. Sheila graduated from Yuma High School in 2010. She continued her education to receive a degree in Natural Resource Management with a minor in Ecological Restoration from Colorado State University in the spring of 2015. Come in and see our new addition at the Yuma County Conservation District.***

# Spruce Beetle, Tree Defoliators Extensively Impacting Colorado Forests

Submitted by Ryan Lockwood, CSFS

Spruce beetle was the most widespread and destructive forest pest in Colorado for the fourth consecutive year, based on the results of an annual aerial forest health survey conducted by the U.S. Forest Service and Colorado State Forest Service in 2015. Outbreaks of two defoliators of conifer trees – western spruce budworm and Douglas-fir tussock moth – also expanded significantly.

Each year the USFS and CSFS work together to aerially monitor forest insect and disease-caused tree mortality or damage on millions of forested acres across the state. In the most recent survey, the spruce beetle outbreak was detected on 409,000 acres of high-elevation Engelmann spruce forests, increasing the total area impacted by this bark beetle since 1996 to more than 1.5 million acres in Colorado. This infestation is now spreading from depleted forest acres to areas with host trees not previously impacted. Forest stand blowdown events, combined with long-term drought stress, warmer temperatures and extensive amounts of older, dense spruce, have contributed to this ongoing epidemic.

The area impacted by western spruce budworm, Colorado's most widespread forest defoliator, increased significantly, from 178,000 acres in 2014 to approximately 312,000 acres in 2015. This insect typically feeds on the new needles and emerging buds of fir and spruce tree species in southern Colorado.

Outbreaks of another conifer defoliator, Douglas-fir tussock moth, also expanded, with a total area of approximately 26,000 acres impacted in Colorado in 2015. Impacted acreage was observed primarily in the South Platte River Basin and areas just west of Colorado Springs. Ground surveys have documented the presence of a naturally occurring virus among Douglas-fir tussock moth caterpillars, which has historically been

a key indicator of imminent population collapse.



“The lesson we can take away from the extensive insect and disease damage we’ve seen in Colorado over the past two decades is the need for proactively taking care of our forests,” said Mike Lester, State Forester and Director of the Colorado State Forest Service. “The best time to take actions to address long-term forest health is before a major outbreak starts, and not after.”

In the past two years, the CSFS has released new Quick Guides on spruce beetle, Douglas-fir tussock moth and Douglas-fir beetle. All are available free online at <http://csfs.colostate.edu/csfspublications>.

# TPCD's 2nd Annual Homestead Series is Underway

The Teller-Park Conservation District is co-sponsoring a monthly, free Homestead Series for the second year. This year's topics include:

The 2016 series kicked off with ***"Get Your Farm On! Beginning Chickens & Honey Bees,"*** presented by Kirstin Trexler, a third-generation beekeeper and BEO of Miss Bee Haven Farms in Crystola. Other topics include:

## ***June 4: "Edible & Medicinal Plants"***

Take a walk on the wild side and find out which local plants are edible and can be used medicinally. Mari Marques Wooten of the Thymekeeper in Florissant will lead the session.

## ***July 9: "Native Arts & Cultures"***

Enjoy demonstrations of Native Arts & Cultures, such as hide tanning, flint knapping, and more. Fun for the entire family.



*Kirstin Trexler was the first presenter for the 2016 Homestead Series.*



*Mari Marques-Wooten Addresses the June 4th Workshop Crowd on Edible Plants.*

## ***August 6: "Food Preservation & Spice Making"***

Learn how to grind your own spices, make jerky, and dehydrated excess bounty from your own garden—or using products purchased at your local farmer's market.

## ***September 3: "Make Your Own Soap and Natural Cleaning Supplies"***

Good old-fashioned soap making demonstrated live, along with tips and recipes for making your own natural cleaning supplies.

## ***October 8: "Annual Seed Swap"***

Back by popular demand! Bring seeds—vegetable or flower—you've collected during the 2016 growing season and share them with others.

These workshops are planned and staffed by TPCD to meet the needs of a growing urban interface. Other partners include the Woodland Park Harvest Center and Aspen Valley Ranch (the location for all events). More information can be found at [TellerParkCD.org](http://TellerParkCD.org).



## THE “100% CLUB”

*CACD would like to thank those districts that have sent in 100% of the annual dues for 2016! (In order of receipt)*

|                        |                               |                           |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Center CD              | Fremont CD                    | West Greeley CD           |
| Yuma County CD         | Mount Sopris CD               | Shavano CD                |
| Haxtun CD              | Boulder Valley CD             | Central CO CD             |
| Prowers CD             | Longmont CD                   | Southside CD              |
| Turkey Creek CD        | Delta CD                      | Sedgwick County CD        |
| Dove Creek CD          | Douglas Creek CD              | High Desert CD            |
| Deer Trail CD          | White River CD                | Cope CD                   |
| South Pueblo County CD | Spanish Peaks – Purgatoire CD | Dove Creek CD             |
| Baca County CD         | East Adams CD                 | San Juan CD               |
| Eagle County CD        | Bookcliff CD                  | DeBeque-Plateau Valley CD |
| West Adams CD          | Mancos CD                     | Lake County CD            |
| Douglas County CD      | La Plata CD                   | Southeast Weld CD         |
| West Arapahoe CD       | Pine River CD                 | Costilla CD               |
| El Paso County CD      | Washington County CD          |                           |

## 2016 CACD Board of Directors

### **Lower Arkansas River Watershed**

Don McBee, President  
Lamar, CO

### **Rio Grande River Watershed**

Anthony Lobato, Vice President  
Center, CO

### **North Platte, White, Yampa Watersheds**

Gary Moyer, Director  
Meeker, CO

### **San Juan Basin Watershed**

Gary Thrash, Director  
Durango, CO

### **Lower South Platte River Watershed**

Brian Starkebaum, Director  
Haxtun, CO

### **Upper Arkansas River Watershed**

Elaine Kist, Director  
Hartsel, CO

### **Upper South Platte River Watershed**

Charlie Carnahan, Director  
Kiowa, CO

### **Republican River Watershed**

Jim Cecil, Director  
Cope, CO

### **Gunnison-Dolores**

#### **River Watershed**

Mike Cleary, Director  
Crawford, CO

### **Colorado River Watershed**

Scott Jones, Director  
Gypsum, CO