Colorado Conservator

"Partners in Conservation"

Vol. 23 No. 1
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and Colorado State Conservation Board

Stewardship Week: April 29 thru May 6

Stewardship Week 52 Years Strong

Stewardship Week is one of the world's largest conservation-related observances. Since 1955, the NACD has sponsored the national Stewardship Week program. The concept of stewardship involves personal and social responsibility. We have a duty to learn about and improve natural resources as we use them wisely. By doing this we can achieve material and spiritual growth in our own lives, and leave a rich legacy for future generations. Everyone wants to help improve the world. But sometimes the scope of the world's problems seems beyond the reach of one person. And sometimes we are tempted to believe that large agencies and organizations will take care of this important work, without our help. Stewardship Week helps reminds us of the power of each person to conserve natural resources and improve the world. When people work together with their local conservation district, that power grows and grows. And as these good deeds multiply across the nation's network of conservation districts, the results can be spectacular!

Topics for discussion in the 2007 Stewardship materials include energy saved by no-till farming; solar, wind, alternative fuel sources; renewable and non-renewable resources; conservation at home; and partnerships with conservation districts, community and families working together.

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Callie's Message

Callie Hendrickson

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) is proud to represent the 77 Colorado conservation districts and their constituents as we provide advocacy, education and information to landowners and other concerned citizens. During 2006, CACD was your advocate in securing funding which reinstated the Matching Grants Program and the locally led process of determining the priorities for federally funded cost share programs, such as the Environmental Quality and Incentive Program (EQIP). CACD also continued the natural resource conservation camp known as Camp Rocky, completed the second Conservation Leadership Program, and hosted the National Western Stock Show exhibit. As you can see, our work is extensive and important for strengthening Conservation Districts and providing information and education to the citizens of Colorado.

The CACD Board is working to make 2007 an even more successful year for the Colorado conservation districts, their constituents, and partners. We continue to provide leadership and be your advocate in securing funding to reinstate two Colorado State Conservation Board field positions and assuring that conservation districts continue their tax exempt status as political subdivisions of the State. At the time of this publication we believe we will be successful in both of these endeavors at the state level. A big Thank You goes out to all of you who have contacted your legislators regarding these two issues.

CACD also continues to work on your behalf for a strong conservation title in the 2007 Farm Bill. We know there will be no new money in the 2007 farm bill and therefore it is even more critical to maximize the funding that is available. The following are CACD's Farm Bill principles:

* Farm Bill programs should be resource-driven and locally-led with sufficient flexibility to identify local priorities and concerns.

* Technical assistance (TA) and its funding is critical due to the increasing demand on NRCS to provide this assistance.

* Retain the funding commitment to conservation programs provided in the 2002 Farm Bill, but look for opportunities to streamline and improve efficiencies within the current program options.

* Provide a balance between programs that set aside land and programs that provide incentives and cost-share for conservation practices on working lands.

* Support the development of alternative energy while maintaining natural resource protection for the land and providing the conservation and wildlife benefits of the land enrolled in conservation programs.

* Education and outreach to landowners and the general public are crucial to the successful delivery of the Conservation Title of the 2007 Farm Bill. **Con't. on page 7**

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Wildlife Workshop

Landowners and resource managers attended a workshop sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Upper Huerfano Conservation District, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife at the Stroh Ranch near Walsenburg, April 26th. Wildlife specialists were on hand to talk about landowner incentive programs, range management, and wildlife and habitat conservation. Emphasis was placed on cost-share opportunities and incentive programs for habitat enhancement.

For additional information about wildlife opportunities on agricultural lands, please contact Seth Gallagher with the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory at 970-248-1707 or email: seth.gallagher@rmbo.org.

The Colorado Conservator

Providing Colorado With
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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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Proving the Power of Conservation

NACD's 61st Annual Meeting Held in Los Angeles

Highlights by Randy Loutzenhiser, CACD Past President

After three solid days of meetin gs, networking and strategizing, NACD' s 61st Annual meetin g attend ees left sunny Califor nia reenergized and with new ideas.

NACD leader ship outlined steps for the future, and our partners provided information, advice and insight to generate the energy to renew and empower our nation' s conser vation future. Break out sessio ns educated partici pants on new conser vation possibilities, includi ng how to maximize our efforts to generate alternate sources of power from working lands, produce alternate sources of income for producers and find new ways to fuel district work.

There was strength and power in numbers. NACD' s Live Auction generated over $37,000 for the Legislative Fund. Board members elected the 2007 NACD Officer Team, includi ng John Redding from Monroe, Georgi a as Secretary-Treasu rer; Bob Cordo va from Colorado Springs, Colorado as Second Vice President; Steve Robins on from Marysville, Ohio as First Vice President; and Olin Sims from McFadden Wyomi ng as Presid ent.

Colorado's Involvement

Bob Warner sat on the Agriculture Conservation Issues Resolution Hearing Committee. Randy Loutzenhiser sat on the Grazing Lands and Public Lands Resolution Hearing Committee. It was in this committee that the only Colorado Resolution was heard. This resolution asks that NACD make it their policy position to the CRP Managed Haying and Grazing Program to allow grazing and haying every three years in a rotational structure, as it once did. Recent court ruling, in a lawsuit filed by the National Wildlife Federation, placed grazing restriction to no more than once in five years and haying restriction to once in ten

NACD's new officers (John Redding , Bob Cordova , Steve Robinso n and Olin Sims) were sworn in at the closing session of the 2007 NACD Annual Meeting .

years in Colorado on new Contracts including re-enrollments approved after September 25, 2006. It also applies to contract extensions had they not previously been approved under the CRP contract for managed haying and grazing. Thus if an appeal should arise on this ruling, NACD has a policy position. Passed committee and Passed at the Board of Directors Meeting on 2/6/07.

Karen Berry serves on the NACD Urban, Community and Coastal Resources Committee and was part of the Small Acreage, Big Impact Concurrent Breakout Session.

Karen moderated the "Tooling up for Urban and Community Conservation" session.

Board of Directors

During the NACD Board of Directors meeting delegates approved the following Legislative and Policy priorities.

Tier I

2007 Farm Bill Conservation Programs & Conservation Funding: NACD is to initiate and take a lead effort in the federal annual budget and appropriations process in support of conservation districts' funding priorities.

Tier I Type of Issues; Annual Funding of Conservation Programs, 2007 Farm Bill, Drought/Disaster Legislation.

Tier II

Conservation Issues w/ Coalitions and Support for Partners Issues: NACD is to participate in efforts that work with current and future coalitions to seek opportunities to advance conservation districts' policy agenda. Evaluate key and emerging conservation issues to position our association for future legislative initiatives.

Tier II type of Issues: Bio-fuels/ Alternative Energy, Carbon Trading, Disaster Management, Endangered Species, Storm Water Management, Urban Forestry/Urban Conservation/ Community Conservation & Urban Strategies, and Water Quality & Quantity.

Tier III

Natural Resource Issues Covered by Existing Policy

NACD to monitor and seek opportunities to advance Conservation District policy, such issues include but are not limited to: protecting ag lands, forestry management, Farm Bill conservation implementation, coastal protection, urban resource conservation, fish and wildlife protection, grazing/rangeland conservation, renewable energy, water resource conservation.

Tier III type of Issues: Grazing Permit Buyout, Air Quality, Public Lands Management, Coastal Protection and Recovery, Great Lakes, Soil Survey, etc.

NACD Appreciation Banquet

Colorado districts and individuals were recognized for their contributions to conservation.

Bob Cordova, former President of CACD, was elected Second Vice-President of NACD. TheYuma County CD received the District Excellence Award for Grazing Lands Resources.

The El Paso County CD was honored with the Collaborative Conservation Award Top South West Region District

Jean Taylor wife of John Taylor San Juan CD received the NACD Auxiliary Award.

CACD congratulates these two Districts and Jean Taylor for their tireless efforts.

Bob Cordova took the Oath of Office (see photo) along with the other 2007 officers at the close of the banquet.

For more in depth details of the 2007 NACD Annual Meeting log onto the NACD web site at www.nacdnet.org.

Colorado Folks in attendance included: Bob Schlagel & Wife, Longmont CD, Louis Rademacher & Wife, Longmont CD, Karen Berry, Jefferson CD, Richard Foose and Wife, West Greeley CD, Julie Kallenberger, West Greeley CD, District Employee, Nick Hoban, West Greeley CD District Manager, Danielle Wollert, Prowers CD DistrictManager & President of CACD District Employees, John & Jean Taylor, San Juan CD, Chester Zwirn, Yuma County CD, Bob Cordova, NACD SW Region Executive Board Rep, Greg Sundstrom, Colorado State Forest Service, Deb Bogar, NACD Northern Plains Regional Assistant, Denver, Bob Warner, CACD Director to NACD Board of Directors, West Adams CD, Randy Loutzenhiser , CACD Alternate to the Alternate Director NACD Board, Flagler CD, and Callie Hendrickson ,CACD Executive Director, Grand Junction.

Bob Cordova

. . .on being elected 2nd Vice-President of NACD

I want to thank the people who voted for me. I particularly want to thank Colorado Districts for your support. Having been elected Second Vice-President, I think it is very important that we carry forward the goals and impact which the Western Coalition of Districts has achieved. We need to have a balance of power within NACD between the east and west. One of my goals will be to keep the attention focused on NACD as a leading force in testifying before Congress for the Farm Bill. I plan to stay in close touch with District Supervisors in Colorado. If you have concerns or issues that you want NACD to address, please bring them to my attention. Email: bobcordova@hotmail.com

CACD Individual Memberships

By Callie Hendrickson, CACD Executive Vice-President

On July 30, 1945, the Colorado Association of Soil Conservation Districts (CASCD) was formed as a statewide organization to provide guidance for the individual districts as well as to promote conservation at state and national levels. The word "soil" was removed from the Association's name in 2002 following the name change of the conservation districts themselves. Today, known as the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, CACD is proud to represent Colorado's 77 conservation districts and their constituents.

We hear from our members that the many programs and activities of CACD are essential to supporting the Conservation movement. But, we believe we can do more. CACD is now working to attract corporate sponsorships and individual memberships. This represents an exciting new chapter in CACD's history, leading us toward a more solid financial position which will strengthen existing programs and make new activities possible.

Some of the projects corporate sponsorships and individual memberships could fund include:

* Increasing sponsorships for the CACD Annual Meeting, Camp Rocky, and other programs;

* Sustaining a professionally designed and maintained CACD website;

* A Project Coordinator for CACD;

* A Watershed Coordinator for each of CACD's 10 designated watersheds in the state;

* Providing scholarships so that deserving conservationists can join and participate in CACD programs.

Each Conservation District in Colorado faces dramatic challenges in the years ahead. It is vitally important for membership to remain strong and for us to pursue innovative strategies to become financially stable. Financial stability will allow the creative and appealing messages about conservation and the work of the conservation districts to reach the general population of our state.

As you know, there is a cost for development of these programs and CACD is seeking your support to move forward. $35.00 individual memberships from you, your neighbor, and conservation partners will assist in funding this new and exciting opportunity to improve the Association. You can play an important leadership role at this time by becoming an individual 2007 CACD member yourself and making this modest $35.00 investment.

CACD is a 501c3 non-profit organization so we encourage you to complete the form below and forward your individual membership or sponsorship to CACD and become a part of the natural resource conserva tion solution today.

COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
2007 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY, STATE,ZIP_____

PHONE_____EMAIL_____

AFFILIATION_____DATE_____

$35.00 AMOUNT PD FORM OF PAYMENT: CHECK #_____CASH_____

Noxious Weeds Targeted in Colorado's Eastern Plains

By Dale Swenarton
High Plains Weed Specialist
Colorado Dept. of Agriculture

Six noxious weed species are targets for intensive management in Colorado's Eastern High Plains under the new, 3-year High Plains Invasives Project. Funded by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) under the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI), the Conservation Services Division of the Colorado Department of Agriculture will administer the program.

The purpose of the High Plains project is to help communities partner and work together to eradicate six relatively uncommon, emerging weed species before they gain a significant foothold on the eastern high plains. Early detection and eradication are keys to managing and preventing new invasions. By focusing on currently uncommon weed species in the eastern plains, outlying small patches of invasive plants can be eradicated before they become huge, costly problems. The six target species are: Dalmatian toadflax (Linaria dalmatica), leafy spurge (Euphorbia esula), diffuse knapweed (Centaurea diffusa), Russian knapweed (Acroptilon repens) and spotted knapweed (Centaurea maculosa). Saltcedar (Tamarisk ramosissima) will be targeted only in the Republican River Watershed under this program due to funding limitations.

Spotted Knapweed flower
Photo by Missouri Extension

Invasive species cost an estimated $137 billion every year in the U.S. by making land and water unfit for grazing, agriculture, recreation or other uses. In 1989, just three invasive species (jointed goatgrass, volunteer rye and cheatgrass) were responsible for $24 million in losses to Colorado's wheat producers, and an additional $36 million in losses to rural communities.

Grant money is available to help build local coalitions - involving entities such as counties, municipalities, conservation districts, etc. To qualify for a grant, communities must apply together. The goal is to encourage conservation districts, counties, watershed associations, NRCS offices, CSU extension offices and landowners to combine forces to target these six species regionally. This summer, interested partnerships would become familiar with the extent of their problems with any of the six target species, and develop a weed management plan. Grant funds must be used to treat some or all of the six target species: they can be used to hire seasonal employees, create a cost-share program, buy tools or supplies or hire a commercial applicator. The grant application period begins October 15 and ends December 15, 2007.

Diffuse knapweed flower
Photo by Cindy Roche

The High Plains Weed Specialist of the Colorado Department of Agriculture, is available to help communities build partnerships and create weed management areas to target these six species on a regional basis.

For additional information on this program, contact Dale Swenarton at 303-910-0462 or email: dale.swenarton@ag.state.co.us

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.

Three Million Acres Expected Out of CRP

About three million acres that have been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) could be available for crop production—but not until Sept. 30, 2007, according to USDA estimates. Another 1.1 million acres are expected to exit the program in 2008-2010.

Secretary Mike Johanns announced that an estimated 23.9 million acres out of 28 million acres of eligible CRP contracts are expected to be re-enrolled. That means an estimated 4.1 million acres in CRP contracts will exit the program between 2007 and 2010. Of the 4.1 million acres, approximately 1.4 million acres are located in major corn producing states.

Contracts on 16 million acres were originally set to expire on Sept. 30, 2007. Of the 16 million acres, 15.7 million acres were eligible for REX.

FSA has approved re-enrollments and extensions for 13.1 million acres. This means an estimated 2.9 million acres in CRP contracts are now set to expire in 2007. The 2.9 million acres is made up of 2.6 million acres in contracts that declined REX and 300,000 acres of continuous sign-up practice that were ineligible.

"The percentage of landowners choosing to remain in CRP is consistent with what we have seen in the past, despite speculation that re-enrollment would drop significantly due to high corn prices," said Johanns. "We are closely monitoring interest in CRP re-enrollment, planting projections and demand for commodities to determine the most appropriate future actions in administering the Conservation Reserve Program," Johanns said.

USDA does not plan to conduct a general sign-up for Fiscal Year 2007 or 2008. However, continuous sign-up of high-priority buffers, wetlands and other initiatives, as well as Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, will continue. USDA encourages farmers and ranchers to consider these opportunities.

Book Review: Timothy Egan's "The Worst Hard Time"

By Cindy Lair, Colorado State Conservation Board

If you are passionate, involved or even just a little interested in natural resources conservation and you haven't read "The Worst Hard Time - The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl" by Timothy Egan (Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Company), you might want to hit the bookstore or the library, today to pick up a copy. If you go on line, you can get it for as little as $10.

Author, Timothy Egan creates a detailed account of "the perfect storm" that happened when the Federal government encouraged people to settle and plow under the grasslands in a land where "dependable precipitation" were not two words that went well together. It just so happened that the great plains were experiencing some wet years; wheat prices went through the roof - all was well for the new residents of the great plains; more and more sod was broken out by the plow - despite the warnings from the big time ranches of, "root side down (not up)".

In 1917 around 45 million acres of wheat were harvested across the country. By 1919 that number had increased to 75 million acres. Prices went from .80 per bushel in 1910 to $2.00 a bushel in only five years!

Egan describes, "One suitcase farmer broke 32 thousand acres in southeast Kansas in 1921. Four years later, he plowed twice that amount. The banks seldom said no.

Prices leveled out to $1.00 a bushel by 1928 and then the stock market crashed the next year. Realizing that most plainsmen invested their profits in equipment and improvements to make life on the plains more bearable - by and large, they didn't incur immediate losses in the stock market crash. But it was only a matter of time until the effects of a crippled economy made its way toward the West. The drought that followed the crash of the Nation's economy created a natural disaster for the "Bread Basket" of our country.

"The Worst Hard Time" describes the sequence of events that created the Dust Bowl without ridiculing or blaming the different players in this national disaster that reached Biblical proportions. Egan paints a picture of the people who came and stayed with their land through the good times and the horrid ones. They somehow survived what Egan depicts as hell on earth - but there were many innocent tragedies. Many children died of dust pneumonia. Animals starved and many were killed by the government to relieve their suffering and to reduce supply. Static electricity became a serious problem due to all the dust. Automobiles had to drag chains to dispel the buildup of electricity so their engines would not short out.

April 14th was the 77th anniversary of "Black Sunday" where people in southeastern Colorado and throughout western Kansas and the Texas panhandle literally thought the world was coming to the end. I was thinking about it a lot that day and met up with a woman who was about 70 years old and came from a ranch in Las Animas County. I figured she, of all people, would recognize "Black Sunday" if I mentioned it. I was surprised to find that she was completely unaware of what that referred to - even with her family's background in agriculture. I realized that there are only a handful of people left who lived through it and really understand what happened. For those of us who weren't around then, we need to understand those events so that as we care for the land and teach people to be good land stewards, we can prevent another "perfect storm". Nothing is out of the realm of possibilities - especially if we remain ignorant of our past.

This book lays out the history of conservation districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (originally called the Soil Conservation Service). While we plan out our future for sustaining agriculture and our natural resources, we realize how different things are today. Consider our renewable energy opportunities, (computerized) precision agriculture, and the thought of being able to sell development rights for some of our farm lands - situations no one would have fathomed in the 1930's. We can see where the conservation road has traveled. This book helps us learn lessons from the past - and, as we look toward the future - make darned sure we don't relive the "worst hard time" over again.

Kiowa CD Profits from Tree and Shrub Sales

By Katherine Burse-Johnson, PAS
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Officials from the Kiowa CD assisted in distributing 16,000 tree seedlings to landowners this Spring.

Tree and shrub sales in Colorado's conservation districts are common and provide a strong source of revenue. Recently, Kiowa Conservation District (CD), located in Franktown, Colorado, held its own annual seedling tree and shrub sale and the event proved to be a success. "This program has been a good money-making project for our district over the years," said Charlie Carnahan, President, Kiowa CD. This year, the District received 132 orders for 16,000 trees to distribute to landowners in western Elbert County. The program aims to promote conservation on the ground by encouraging landowners to plant trees and serves as a joint effort of Kiowa CD, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery.

"All trees are pre-sold to landowners, supplied by the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery in Fort Collins, and delivered here for pick up," said Bob Whitehead, Vice President, Kiowa CD.

The process to order trees and shrubs begins in November and runs through March. Tree and shrub orders are usually available for pickup sometime in April. Landowners can choose from bare root, deciduous, and conifer trees and the cost per 50 lots is $31.00. Potted regular trees can also be purchased and are sold in lots of 30 for $44 along with small potted trees that cost $27 for 30 lots.

The sales of tree and shrubs provide conservation benefits such as erosion control, wildlife habitat, air and water quality, and energy conservation. Therefore, sales are restricted

to landowners who have a minimum of two acres of land and who use the seedlings for living snow fences, windbreaks, and other conservation purposes. "These seedlings cannot be used as ornamentals or for landscaping plantings nor can they be resold as a living plant," said Pam Brewster, District Administrator, Kiowa CD. Kiowa CD offers an array of related services and products for a nominal charge. These services include assistance with tree planting; weed/pest control, and maintenance.

CACD taking applications for Camp Rocky 2007

Ben Berlinger, NRCS Area Range Conservationist, teaches the basics of rangeland science to students at last year's Camp Rocky. Students learn about Soil & Water Conservation, Rangeland Science, Forest Management, and Fish & Wildlife Management during the week-long camp.

Camp Rocky: July 8-14, 2007, Divide, Colorado

To apply you must be age14-19. Complete the information below and send to CACD, 743 Horizon Ct., Suite 322, Grand Junction, CO 81506

NAME_____
ADDRESS_____
CITY_____**COUNTY**_____
STATE_____**ZIP**_____
PHONE_____
EMAIL_____
DATE OF BIRTH_____
Attended Camp Rocky Before? Yes___ No__

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Black Mesa Ecological Academy for High School Students in Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma & Texas

Kenton, Oklahoma is across the NM/OK state line along the Dry Cimarron River just southeast of Springfield, Colorado. "There are not many ecology camps that traverse across five states such as this one," says Ben Berlinger, NRCS Area Rangeland Management Specialist, from La Junta, Colorado, one of the instructors. Berlinger goes on to say, "Some of the campers have continued in this field of study and have gone on to a career in natural resources management." The top camper from Colorado will be honored as a paid delegate to the International Society for Range Management (SRM) meeting in Lexington, Kentucky in February 2008. Colorado students are encouraged to apply for this outstanding learning experience. Log onto the following website for an application and PowerPoint presentation about the academy: www.cssrm.org/youth.html

Black Mesa Range Ecology Academy
June 24 – 29, 2007
Society for Range Management
Colorado Section

Program

Have you always been interested in conservation, biology, plants, wildlife, livestock, and outdoors or land improvement but had nowhere to learn but the classroom? You should come to the Black Mesa Range Ecology Academy. While classroom learning is very important, applying these principles in an outdoor setting is critical. While in this outdoor classroom you will learn why conservation of our natural resources is so important for all of us.

"All of us is smarter than one of us" could be the theme of the Academy. This program is a weeklong experience where you will learn:

- Basic ecological principles
- Plant identification
- Leadership skills
- Speaking skills
- Teambuilding skills
- How to evaluate habitat for wildlife and livestock
- How to develop a land management plan
- How to incorporate technology such as Global Positioning Satellites (GPS) & Geographic Information Systems (GIS) into land management
- Have fun

Eligibility and Location

The Academy will feature 10 high school sophomores, juniors, or seniors from each of the following states: Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. It will be based out of the Camp Billy Joe facility near Kenton, Oklahoma. This is beautiful country and features terrain and vegetation from the Rocky Mountain Foothills/Mesas and the High Plains. Tours of local ranches, dinosaur tracks, hikes to Black Mesa, and locally prepared food are some of the features. (Even a stage coach robbery may take place!)

Staff

The Instructors will be select specialists from Natural Resources Conservation Service, Universities, Cooperative Extension, Conservation Districts, and private ranches and businesses from the five states. They include Rangeland Management Specialists, educators, Livestock Specialists, Wildlife Biologists, ranchers, Water Quality Specialists, GIS/GPS Specialists, and others.

Schedule

The Academy will be held Sunday, June 24, through Friday, June 29, 2007. Participants will need to arrive by 3:00 p.m. **(CDT)** on Sunday, June 24. The program will conclude at noon on June 29.

The Academy begins with a challenge course; a tool used to build teamwork, teach problem solving, and cultivate self-confidence.

Activities include a tour through the history of the region, starting with the early Native American culture and ending with the present day inhabitants. The foods as well as the culture and historical living skills will be featured.

All teaching is done in a participatory learning environment -- just a little talking, quite a bit of doing.

Scholarships
Funds are available to assist participants with their cost of tuition for the Academy. To inquire about the availability of scholarships please contact your local Conservation District or County Extension Office.

Students will participate in the identification of natural resource concerns (soil, water, air, plants & animals) and the development of a land management plan. This information will be collected with traditional means as well as the latest technology using GIS/GPS. This information will form the basis for working in teams to prepare a land management plan based on objectives. This exercise will bring together the skills in problem solving and teamwork.

Our promise is that those that come will remember this week the rest of their lives and make friends they will continue to see for the remainder of their lives. In addition, students will gain insight into educational opportunities and job opportunities in the vast and diverse field of natural resource management.

Application

The cost of attending the Academy is $75 per student for the entire five days. This includes lodging, food, entertainment, and all learning materials. [The *Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM)* is providing 50% of the cost for each participant to attend this valuable academy].

All applications must be received by June 8, 2007. Mail your application form, letter of reference, and essay along with your check in the amount of **$75** to:

Baca County Conservation District, PO Box 398, Springfield, CO 81073. Make your check payable to the Baca County CD.

Photocopies of this application form are acceptable.

Callie's Message con't. from Page 2

In addition to being your advocate on state and federal issues, CACD continues to plan our annual events and develop greater partnerships. The CACD Annual Meeting will be held in at the Antlers Hotel in Colorado Springs on November 13 - 15 so mark your calendars. We are planning a new and exciting program for the meeting so look for more information in the next Colorado Conservator and plan to attend.

CACD has worked with the Morgan and Delta Conservation Districts to coordinate "Know Your Watershed" meetings which provided great discussions in those areas regarding the key resource concerns and understanding the "8-digit watershed". Based on the results of these meetings, CACD will be providing a request for proposals (RFP) to all Colorado districts to host these meetings in the near future. More information will be forthcoming to the districts within the next month.

Finally, it is a pleasure to recognize four !st place winners from Colorado in the NACD national photo contest. They are:

Linda Roper, Fremont CD in the Conservation category
Judy Lopez,Rio Grande Watershed Association in the Education category
Patricia Burke, Mancos CD in the Landscapes category, and
Erin Elliott, North Park CD in theTrees category

In summary, CACD exist to be your voice and provide information and education at the state and federal levels. I would like to thank all the districts who are working diligently to provide the local leadership to landowners in implementing on-the-ground conservation practices and providing information and education. Thanks to your good work at the local level, CACD is able to focus on providing leadership and being your advocate at the state and federal levels. Both are very important. Together, we are "making a difference". Keep up the good work.

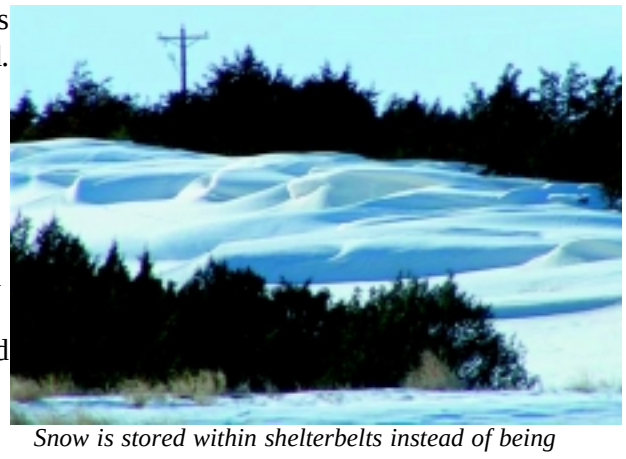
Shelterbelts and the "Winter of 06"

By Greg Sundstrom, Colorado State Forest Service

Gerald Schreiber, a cattle rancher near Last Chance, Colorado, planted several shelterbelts to protect livestock and the home sites on his ranch several years ago. This spring, he expressed his satisfaction with having put in those living barriers. Gerald stated, "My bulls sure did better than they would have without the windbreaks we put in. Those rows kept a lot of the snow out the yard too. I can see where we need to fill in some of the gaps where trees are missing, but they did what they were supposed to do."

Barriers keep wind driven snow away from areas needing protected. Photo by Larry Brachtenbach.

The "Winter of 06" will go down as the worst for many Coloradoans. For those on the plains, snow blocked roads and driveways, ice caused accidents, strayed and killed livestock, increased livestock feed expense, closed businesses and schools, and a number of other affects of the numerous blizzards will be long remembered. Conservationist and foresters have long promoted the planting of trees and shrubs in rows to act as barriers to manage snow deposition and protect resources. This winter demonstrated the value of properly designed and properly located windbreaks to many living on the plains.



Snow is stored within shelterbelts instead of being deposited where it creates problems. Photo by Larry Brachtenbach

Just as Gerald has done, as we look back at the long winter, we can reflect on the benefits of well designed and properly placed barriers that helped control where snow was finally deposited. Barriers reduce wind velocity down-wind to reduce the wind chill, which added to the misery of animals and people over the winter where barriers did not exist. In other instances, we can also reflect on where such a barrier might be placed to keep snow from being deposited where it caused problems, and also to reduce wind chill where animals concentrate. We should look at the barriers to examine their effectiveness and plan how they can be improved to be more effective.

Shelly Van Landingham, one of the Colorado State Forest Service foresters in eastern Colorado, has reported many calls concerning damage to trees in their shelterbelts. They have noticed stems and branches broken from the weight of the snow which was captured within the shelterbelts. Shelly and her forester counterparts tell landowners that this is evidence that the rows of trees and shrubs have done their job and they can continue to do their job even if they have been damaged.

There are some techniques that can help revive the damaged trees and shrubs, but they usually do not need to be removed because of the damage. Broken branch stubs should be pruned back to the tree trunk or a larger branch to aid in healing over.

Jagged stubs create a situation where the wounds can not heal over, leaving the tree exposed to potential future rot and decay. Shrubs tend to be able to recover without much pruning because most species tend to sprout new growth when injured.

Publications on proper pruning and planting are available to provide guidance. The Colorado State Forest Service Nursery provides low cost tree/shrub seedling for new and replacement plantings each spring. Contact your local CSFS District Office for information, or visit the CSFS web site at http://csfs.colostate.edu for further information.

Colorado State Forest Service foresters are available to assist at windbreak workshops for the public as well.

Discovering Opportunities on the Plains

Alternative Enterprise & Heritage Tourism Conference

May 4, 2007

8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Washington County Event Center

Akron, Colorado

Come and learn from experts on Tourism, Natural Resources, Business and Enterprise Management. Key-note speaker is Scott Campbell, Colorado Heritage Tourism Progam Manager. Also learn about "Marketing at Farmers Markets, Corn Maze and other Ag-tourist attractions, New Techniques in Small Acreage Pasture Management, and What's Going on in Colorado Agri-Tourism."

Registration is $40 at the door which includes lunch and coffee breaks. For more information, contact Richard Mullaney, RC&D project coordinator, at (970) 522-7440 Ext.4 or email: richard.mullaney@co.usda.gov

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Grow Crops for the New Energy Economy

By Jeffrey Berman,
San Juan Biodiesel

San Juan Biodiesel Seeks to Determine Farmers' Interest in Growing Sunflower and Possibly Canola Crops for Biodiesel Production San Juan Biodiesel is planning a 5 million gallon per year oil extrusion and biodiesel production facility in Dove Creek, Colorado. To operate the facility, this coming winter SJB plans to seek contracts for the production of sunflower and possibly canola crops within a 200 mile radius, including irrigated lands in Montezuma County.

At this time, SJB seeks to determine Montezuma County farmers' interest in growing oil seed crops for biodiesel production. Working with the CSU Dolores County Extension office and the Dolores Soil Conservation District, San Juan Biodiesel has distributed surveys to approximately 200 farmers in the region.

Sunflower and canola make a good rotation crop for alfalfa hay and other grasses. Crop budgeting analyses suggest that SJB's oil seed crop needs will be more profitable than growing oats and barley as the rotation crop for alfalfa. At a $2.06 / bushel 10 year average and 90 bushel/acre yield, oats may gross approximately $185, with significant variable costs often greater than that.

At 2200-3000 lbs/acre and a $12/100 cwt anticipated offer price, irrigated sunflower would bring a $312 gross, with generally low variable costs (often just three passes – plant, cultivate, and harvest). Meanwhile, sunflowers are generally drought tolerant, and can still give good yields with less irrigation as well.

Crop Yield Price Basis Gross Irrigated Oats 90 bu/acre $2.06/bu. Current price? $185 Irr. Sunflower/canola @2200 lbs/acre $12/cwt. Current Projection $264 Irr. Sunflower/canola @3000 lbs/acre $12/cwt. Current Projection $360 SJB plans to construct regional storage, and ship the oil seed from that storage to its facility over the course of the year.variable costs (often just three passes – plant, cultivate, and harvest). Meanwhile, sunflowers are generally drought tolerant, and can still give good yields with less irrigation as well.

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SJB also plans to offer a premium for crops after harvest, likely beginning January of each year.

For more information, please contact the following: • Steve Miles, Dolores Soil Conservation District President, 970-565-4890, dscd@doloressoilcd.com • Dan Fernandez, Colo. State University Dolores County Extension Office: 970- 677-2283 • Jeff Berman, San Juan Biodiesel Project Manager: 970-422-2025

San Juan Biodiesel will seek to contract for oil seed crops within a 200 mile radius of Dove Creek.

SRM Summer Tour

The Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (CSSRM) is hosting its summer range tour Friday, June 29th on the Taylor/Oswald Ranch in Cotopaxi. As recipients of the 2006 "Excellence in Rangeland Conservation" Award from the CSSRM, the Oswald's are recognized for their integrated approach to "improve the health, vigor, and production of their rangeland resource base while marketing a natural beef product to the public." The tour will be held Friday morning from 9:30 to about Noon followed by a BBQ on the ranch. A pre-tour campout/BYO Potluck BBQ will be held Thursday evening, June 28th at the KOA Campground on US Hwy 50 just east of Cotopaxi on the Arkansas River. Live bluegrass music by the Rocky Road Gals will be provided at the evening BBQ, followed by an informal "jam" session. Bring your instruments! The KOA campground offers tent sites, camper/RV sites w/hookups, cabins, and/or motel rooms. Make your own reservations through their website at coloradocampkingkoa.com/ or call 1-800-562-2686. PRE-REGISTRATION (before June 15th) for the range tour is $35.00 which includes the BBQ lunch on the day of the tour. LATE REGISTRATION (after June 15th) is $40.00. Make checks payable to "CSSRM" and mail them to: Kimberly Diller, c/o USDA-NRCS, 248 Dozier Avenue, Canon City, CO 81212.

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Yuma County CD Wins National Excellence Award

YCCD President Chester Zwirn receives award from NACD President Bill Wilson

The Yuma County Conservation District (YCCD) was recognized at the National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting on February 7. The Grazing Lands and Public Lands Resources District Excellence Award was received by YCCD President Chester Zwirn during the awards ceremony held in Los Angeles, CA. The District was recognized for providing educational programs for livestock operators.

The YCCD has sponsored or co-sponsored 15 range/ranch workshops since December 2002. Of these workshops, one was cosponsored by GLCI, one was a four stop workshop series involving GLCI and 14 other conservation districts throughout southeast Colorado, one was part of a watershed project, and one was cosponsored by four other conservation districts, RC&D, a wildlife organization, and the local cattlemen's group. Total workshop attendance has been 679 landowners, plus 75 NRCS and District personnel.

Topics and presenters included:

* Irrigated Pasture: CSU Extension, University of Nebraska, Colorado State University, and producers

* Drought (3 presentations): Roy Roath, CSU Extension

* Livestock Handling: Temple Grandin, CSU

* Wildlife: Quail Unlimited, Wild Turkey Federation, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Colorado Division of Wildlife, and Pheasants Forever

* Early Weaning for Drought: Dr. Mike Slattery, Veterinary Med.

* Grass/Grazing Mgmt: Jim Gerrish, American Grazinglands Services

* Ranching Profitably: Dave Pratt, Ranch Management Consultants

* Beef Cow Nutrition & Economics 101(two sessions) : Dr. Mike Slattery and Matt Stockton, Nebraska Extension

* Bud Williams Marketing School (two sessions): Ann Barnhardt

* Ranchers Forum: Kit Pharo, Chip Hines, & others

No other organization has offered this many learning opportunities to area rural ranchers. Workshop evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive with a high demand for more. Attendees travel an average of 70 miles one way to attend these workshops: the record distance traveled is 450 miles one way.

The District Board believes that conservation is accomplished through education. This is demonstrated through their financial commitment in direct expenses and employee wages. The district does not charge a registration fee. They have spent over $10,000 in District funds for speakers, meals and refreshments, and promotion.

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Southeast Colorado Producers Voice Disaster Assistance Needs

Curtis Foos describes cattle losses from winter blizzards to disaster panel.

It was standing room only February 25 as 200 southeast Colorado farmers and ranchers packed the Baca County Resource Center to voice their need for disaster assistance. The Baca County CD organized the meeting. Listening panel members included Doris Morgan (Senator Wayne Allard), Allison Cortner (Senator Ken Salazar), John Stulp (Commissioner of Agriculture), Cindy Lair (State Conservation Board), Allen Green (NRCS State Conservationist), Lewis Frank (Farm Service Agency), and Mike Bennett (USDA Rural Development).

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Small Wind Workshop Draws Interest

The Baca County Conservation District's Small Wind Workshop provided the opportunity to investigate on-farm wind generation. Attendees came from as far as Colorado Springs to glean information.

By Misty George, Baca County CD, District Manager

It was an information packed day for the 50 farmers, ranchers, small business owners, and rural school representatives who attended the Small Wind Workshop, March 30, at Lamar Community College. The event was organized by the Southeast Colorado RC&D and the Baca County Conservation District.

April Dahlager, with USDA Rural Development, began the afternoon by detailing their renewable energy grant opportunities, including eligibility requirements and the paperwork process. Angela Crooks from the Governor's Office of Energy Management and Conservation followed with the types of projects in which their office participates. James Wittler, from the NRCS in Springfield, described the cost-share dollars available for renewable energy projects through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

The Southeast Colorado RC&D provided refreshments during the afternoon break. Ravi Malhotra of the International Center for Appropriate and Sustainable Technology (iCAST) gave the diverse crowd data o small wind generation. "Small wind" describes turbines that generate 100 kW and less. Ravi covered statistics o appropriately sizing the turbine to your needs and installation costs. Jack Wolfe from the Southeast Colorado Power Association closed out the day's presentations. Wolfe detailed SECPA's interconnection policies, and made attendees aware of additional expenses, like insurance, that should be considered when exploring on-farm wind generation.

The take home message of the day was that on-farm wind generation is a good way to offset your energy expenses. While a turbine is a significant capital expense, there are grants and cost-share dollars available.

Event sponsors included: Baca County Commissioners, Southeast Colorado RC&D, Baca County Conservation District, Colorado Department of Agriculture, iCAST, SECPA, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, and Lamar Community College.

If you missed this event, you have another opportunity to investigate on-farm wind generation at the Baca County Conservation District's Annual Meeting. Ravi from iCAST will be presenting agriculture related, small wind generation scenarios at the April 30th event.

Northeast Prowers Conservation District and Holly NRCS Field Staff Assist Tornado Victims

By Viola Melcher, Holly Earth Team Volunteer

The Holly tornado on March 28, 2007 had the Holly NRCS office and the Northeast Prowers Conservation District busy for the next two weeks after the tornado hit.

Some of the activities that the office and their families assisted in were: checking houses for injuries on the night of the tornado, cleaning up District Manager Shari Wagner's mother's lot and scattered household items; tree felling, cleaning on a variety of properties, and hauling off debris. We also assisted in helping Sheri Moorman get her house packed and cleaning debris from there, cleaning of pastures and fields of debris, assisting in helping the Red Cross and Salvation Army with meals, baby sitting for families in need, and lodging for displaced families.

The office crew GPS tracked the tornado path and made maps for FEMA and the town of Holly for their public town meeting. This information was also useful to State Department of Emergency Management, State Department of Health and Environment, Prowers County Emergency Management Coordinator, Holly Fire and Ambulance, and FSA. The Holly NRCS office collected documentation to submit to FSA for their ECP program.

Information on additional funding is being provided to producers who have damaged conservation practices that were originally installed with cost share assistance. The Holly office also helped the Forest Service examine the trees in the park and area for survivability. They set up a workshop for the public and city crews on how to trim the damaged trees and to look into getting Federal dollars to replace the park trees.

Short notes were included in the Holly Community Newsletter concerning the tree trimming workshop. This newsletter comes out three times per week since the tornado hit to keep the townspeople informed on what is happening in the town.

The Holly office handed out 115 Colorado Blue Spruce seedlings (one per family) to the grade school children to replace trees that were damaged.

E-mails have been sent from our office to other NRCS offices concerning the tornado. Pictures, both ground and aerial, have been included in these e-mails.

The Holly Field Office distributed 115 Colorado Blue Spruce seedlings to families with damaged trees.

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Platte Valley CD Assists Students with Earth Day Tree Planting

The students from the Fort Lupton High School Agriculture did not shy away from hard work or cooler weather on Tuesday April 17, when they assisted in planting nearly 300 trees in honor of Earth Day. Eighteen students, with their teacher Ms. Andra Collins, worked diligently on planting trees on Victor Androvich's property near Hudson. Androvich works with the Brighton Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office and participates in the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) to improve wildlife habitat along a riparian corridor and pond on the property.

Norland Hall, with the Colorado State Forest Service, demonstrated tree planting and tree care, as well as assisting students during the field trip. In addition to tree planting, the students learned about the different soil types, different species selection, improvement in wildlife habitat, and different tree identification.

Androvich has taken marginal land that was once continuously overgrazed and is working to transform it back to resemble the native condition. Victor is repairing the habitat for many species in an area where habitat is continually declining.

A special thank you goes to the Platte Valley Conservation District for supporting the day's event and providing snacks for the hard working students. Finally, thank you to Mark Cronquist, Adams County Small Acreage Coordinator, for helping with the tree planting and taking pictures of the event.

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