

Lower Arkansas River Watershed

Resources at work from October 1, 2010 - September 30, 2011

The Lower Arkansas River Watershed totals 8,683,610 acres.

It includes all and/or portions of Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Las Animas, Lincoln, Otero, Pueblo, and Prowers Counties.

NRCS natural resource specialists are staffed at the Eads, La Junta, Lamar, Las Animas, Rocky Ford, and Springfield USDA Field Service Centers, as well as at the Northeast Prowers Conservation District Office to assist residents.

NRCS Vision
Productive Lands -
Healthy Environment

NRCS Mission
Helping People
Help the Land

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The Colorado Watershed Approach

Instead of the traditional statewide approach in addressing priority resource issues like soil erosion, water quality, grazing lands, wildlife, and animal waste, NRCS looks to Colorado's ten watersheds to identify their particular local resource needs and priorities.

Watershed work groups meet annually to determine which natural resource concerns are most prevalent in their communities.

In turn, Colorado NRCS focuses its resources on addressing those concerns. Colorado's local conservation districts provide leadership in this effort to foster increased decision making at the local level.

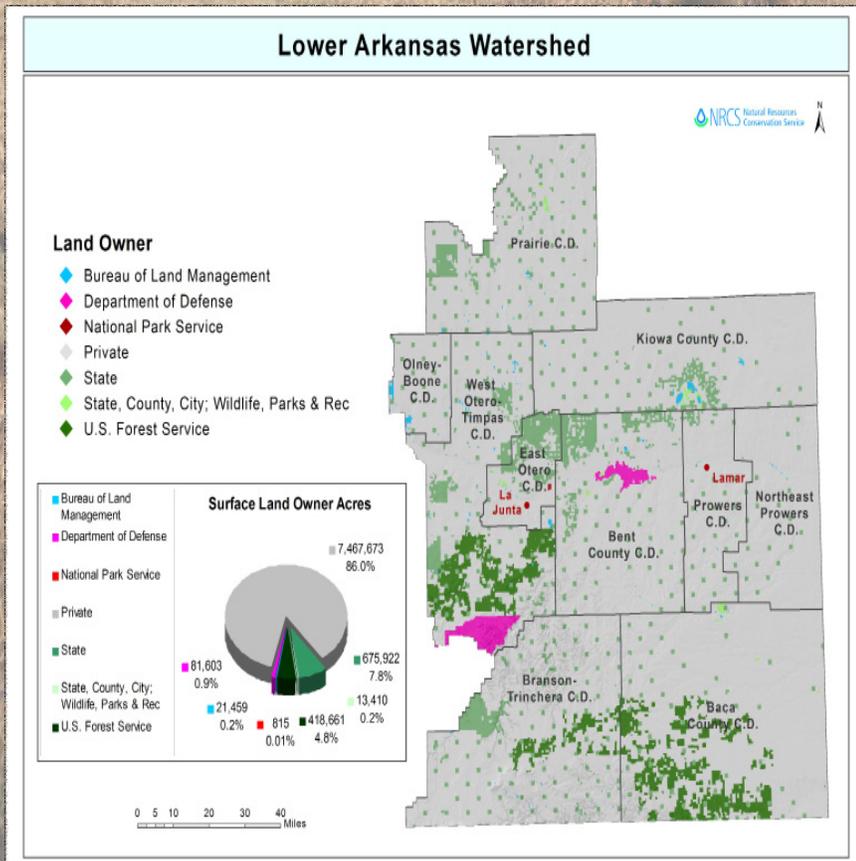
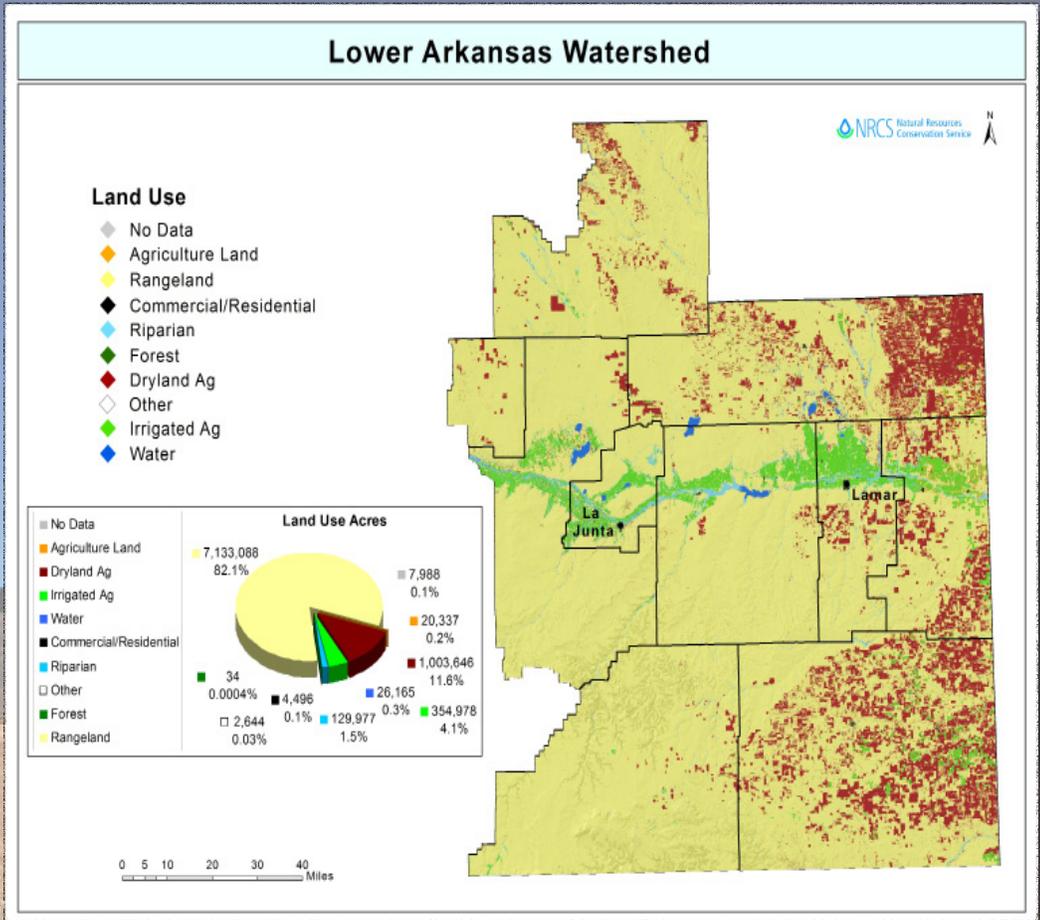
High Priority Resource Concerns in the Lower Arkansas River Watershed

- Water Quantity
- Rangeland Health
- Erosion
- Water Quality
- Invasive Species



Helping People Help the Land

Watershed Profile



2011 Conservation Success:

The Ogallala Aquifer and Colorado's Water

Issue:

The Ogallala Initiative proves vital to Water Quality and Quantity issues in Colorado

What NRCS Colorado is Doing:

Much of the High Plains region of Colorado relies on the Ogallala for water but the water in the Ogallala Aquifer is diminishing because of widespread irrigation use.

NRCS in Colorado places special emphasis on land use conversion from irrigated to non-irrigated cropland, and conversion to perennial vegetation and managed for livestock.

In 2011, it is estimated that Colorado awarded nearly \$800,000 in contracts for the Ogallala Initiative, resulting in resource conservation plans on approximately 5,000 acres and although this is a new initiative in the State, the plans impacted the aquifer by increasingly improving residue and reducing tillage on 1,218 acres of cropland.



Center pivot irrigation allows producers to irrigate with a higher application efficiency and uniformity, minimizing runoff from the field or water moving below the root zone where it is unavailable for the crop.

Also, better irrigation water management will be implemented on approximately 4,042 acres, as well as nutrient management plans on 400 which can positively impact water quality irrigation efficiency of water delivery systems has been improved on 1,949 acres. **Program used: EQIP**

Natural Resource Benefits and Impacts

In 2011, conservation practices were applied by farmers and ranchers in Colorado through various NRCS programs. Conservation practices work to improve farmland, soil, water quality, air, plants, forestland, and wildlife habitat.

Through practices such as nutrient management, landowners were able to improve soil quality and plant health; and through irrigation water management, they were able to improve water quality delivery, thereby improving crop production on their working lands.

Many Farm Bill conservation practices apply to rangelands, such as prescribed grazing. Through installation of water developments, pasture division fences, wells and water pipelines, these practices focus on maintaining, enhancing, and restoring needed plant communities and habitat conditions.

Throughout fiscal year 2011, landowners worked with NRCS staff to develop a good, sound conservation plan to identify and address natural resource concerns on their land.

Conservation Program Descriptions

Environmental Quality Incentives

Program (EQIP) provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers, ranchers and owners of private, non-industrial forest land that promotes agricultural production, forest management and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible producers install or implement conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program offering cost-share incentives to landowners to voluntarily develop and improve wildlife habitat on private lands.

Agricultural Water Enhancement

Program (AWEP) A voluntary conservation initiative that provides financial and

technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program to restore former wetlands, re-establish native wetland wildlife habitat and retire marginal land from agricultural production.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands on their property.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program

(CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities; and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

The Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) is a voluntary program that helps landowners keep their productive farm and ranch land in agriculture. USDA provides matching funds to state, local, or tribal government entities and nongovernmental organizations with existing farm and ranch lands protection programs to purchase conservation easements.

Fiscal Year 2011 Environmental Quality Incentives Program Summary

Lower Arkansas River	Applications Received	Contracts Approved	Dollars Approved	Acres Treated
Lower Arkansas - Agro-Forestry	16	7	\$59,741	968
Lower Arkansas - All Lands/Animal Waste	1	1	\$4,997	5
Lower Arkansas - All Lands/Wildlife	13	7	\$85,372	899
Lower Arkansas - Cropland/Soil Management	41	10	\$244,831	8,494
Lower Arkansas - Cropland/AIT-Water Quality/Quantity	31	7	\$595,361	790
Lower Arkansas - Cropland/Water Quality/Quantity	82	19	\$834,709	1,549
Lower Arkansas - Grazingland	97	25	\$1,170,531	72,053
CO Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative	3	3	\$328,651	10,335
CO Ogallala Initiative	5	4	\$368,370	477
Organic-Transition	2	1	\$23,161	11
CO Seasonal High Tunnels Pilot	2	2	\$10,282	17
Totals	293	86	\$3,726,005	95,597

Farm Bill Program Activities Summary Lower Arkansas River

NRCS Program	Applications Received	Contracts Approved	Dollars Approved	Acres Treated
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	175	129	\$3,381,866	400,503
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)	2	2	\$99,866	7,228

Farm Bill Program Activities Statewide Summary

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Contracts: 789

Acres: 335,000

Financial Assistance: \$26 Million

Agricultural Water Enhancement Program

Contracts: 19

Acres: 3,461

Financial Assistance: \$1 Million

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

Contracts: 12

Acres: 15,656

Financial Assistance: \$421,303

Grasslands Reserve Program

Easements: 3

Acres: 6,185

Financial Assistance: \$1.2 Million

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

Properties/Entities: 33

Acres: 9,467

Financial Assistance: \$8.4 Million

Wetlands Reserve Program

Easements: 2

Acres: 463

Financial Assistance: \$1.4 Million

Conservation Stewardship Program

Applications: 331

Acres: 800,859

Financial Assistance: \$7.8 Million

Disclaimer: All data was retrieved from Protracts and funding manager's records for easements on October 4, 2011.