

## Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service Employee Newsletter



# Colorado NRCS Succeeds in its Efforts to Get Conservation on the Ground

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## Highlights

by

**Phyllis Ann Philipps**  
State Conservationist

I am still singing “*Rocky Mountain High in Colorado!*”

What a terrific year, and it has gone by so fast! Colorado was the **ONLY** State Conservationist position I was ever interested in. Realizing this dream has been even better than I could have imagined.

It is a privilege be in a beautiful, diverse state with dedicated, hard-working, and passionate folks. I can honestly say this is the best job I have ever had! If you only knew what this means to me!

Let’s talk about the successes!!

**Conservation on the Ground:** We have achieved a 60 percent implementation rate this fiscal year (compared to 25 percent last year)! This is a huge success and means our efforts count where it is the most important with practices addressing resource needs. This means there was a concerted effort and focus to make this happen.

**State Performance Measures:** Every performance measure goal has been met!

**Extra Efforts:** In addition to a huge workload, fire and drought presented additional challenges to our State. This required many of you to go above and beyond to prepare damage assessment reports and last minute program contracting to provide assistance where we were able.

**Targeted Conservation:** Forty-eight proposals were submitted from all ten watersheds. This exceeded our expectations. Twenty targeted conservation projects will be funded in FY2013. This was a locally-led effort with leadership by the district conservationists and will mean that we can focus our technical and financial assistance on specific outcomes in these targeted areas next year.

**Our House in Order:** Our conservation program contracts have gone through an intense review and because of the field’s efforts, Colorado continues to have the least number of items on the monthly audit reports. You’ll have to trust me, but this is a BIG deal!

**Program Delivery:** Colorado has successfully obligated nearly 40 million dollars in more than 1,100 contracts. This significantly exceeds our efforts last fiscal year and means we will continue to have ample conservation to implement next year.

Those are just the highlights! So thank you, thank you, thank you for all of your hard work! I’m looking forward to another great year!



Photo taken at Maroon Bells in Pitkin County, Colorado.

# NRCS Sponsors Colorado's Inaugural Pedal the Plains Bike Tour

by Petra Barnes Walker, State Public Information Officer

Colorado NRCS was on hand for each leg of the Pedal the Plains (PTP), 3-day, nearly 170 mile bike tour slated to become Colorado's newest major annual cycling event.

Governor Hickenlooper fashioned the tour much like the widely popular Ride the Rockies bike race which attracts top international cyclists, except PTP took a more laid back approach through Colorado's eastern plains, which also served as an introduction to a variety of rural and agricultural landscapes for many. As a result, NRCS was quite enthusiastic about the opportunity to support the event.

The tour looped participants from Yuma to Wray, then on to Burlington, and then back to Yuma. Each leg featured a community day, hosted booths and exhibits, as well as featured local entertainment. NRCS sponsored the educational signs placed throughout each leg of the tour which were aimed at connecting

and educating cyclists about the area's crops, conservation practices, wildlife, natural resources, and other points of interest.

*"The signs were great,"* stated one of the PTP cyclists. *"This wasn't my first ride along these parts, but this time I learned something."*

There were also various educational stops along the route where riders had a chance to get off their bikes and learn about points of interest from speakers, viewing exhibits, or taking short tours at feed lots, farms, and other locations.

NRCS not only sponsored the educational signs but also staffed a booth at each community day and sharing information about USDA's 150th anniversary and the importance of conserving natural resources.

This year's event received more than 1,000 registrations and organizers.

## One to Grow On



**"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."**  
~Oscar Wilde

**"Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things."**  
~Peter Drucker

**"Success is what you attract by the person you become."**  
~Jim Rohn

**"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."**  
~Thomas A Edison

**"Hard work spotlights the character of people. Some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all."**  
~Sam Ewing

**"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."**  
~Confucius

**"Do you know what happens when you give a procrastinator a good idea? Nothing!"**  
~Donald Gardner

**"The tragedy of life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goals to reach."**  
~Benjamin Mays

**Two sure ways to fail: Think and never do, or do and never think.**  
~Zig Ziglar

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## 'Conservation on the Ground' Awards Program helps NRCS Meet Its Mission

Good quality conservation planning leading to financial assistance contracts with producers who are ready, willing, and able to implement practices is key to the success of NRCS. The environmental benefits are achieved only when conservation practices are performed.

As a result, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has implemented a 'Conservation on the Ground' awards program as an incentive to challenge and encourage NRCS employees to devote focus and extra effort toward getting conservation practices on the ground.

*"The 'Conservation on the Ground' award will be based on the highest percentage of practices implemented on Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) contracts,"* said Phyllis Ann Phillips, Colorado NRCS State Conservationist. *"The field office staff with the highest percentage of cumulative conservation on the ground in each area will receive an award at the end of each quarter."*

To date, Colorado has achieved a whopping 60 percent implementation rate compared to its 25 percent in FY 2011. That's about 3,742 practices, which represents soil erosion stopped, wildlife habitat improved, forest health restored, water saved, and water quality improved.

### Area 2 has implemented the greatest percentage of practices (68 percent) for FY2012.

*"The 'Conservation on the Ground' award is just one measure of success because we know there are other programs that are taking time and that also achieve conservation objectives such as the Conservation Stewardship Program, the Conservation Reserve Program, and fire recovery efforts,"* said Philipps. *"I want to thank everyone for all of your hard work and dedication."*

**CONGRATULATIONS** to the following field offices for the highest percentage of practices implemented in their area:

**3rd Quarter Winners: Delta, Franktown, Salida, and Durango**

**4th Quarter Winners: Delta, Franktown, Hugo, and Durango**

## Alamosa Bikes to Work

by Marianna Young, Technical Support  
Areas 1 and 4



Colorado Bike To Work Day 2012 (June 26) dawned as a perfect, blue-sky day to ride a bike to work.

To celebrate both the day and the concept, four NRCS employees at the Alamosa Service Center rode their bikes to work.

Tom Burke (Soil Scientist), Pete Gallegos (Civil Engineering Technician), Alan Stuebe (Soil Scientist), and Marianna Young (Area Resource Conservationist-Technology), collectively rode 43 miles. This accomplishment translates to 43 miles and four vehicles NOT driven that day.

Assuming an average fuel consumption of 29 miles per gallon for each of the four vehicles that would have been driven by the bicyclists, the bicyclists didn't consume about 1.5 gallons of gasoline, thereby keeping 30 pounds of carbon dioxide from polluting the atmosphere and adding to global warming.

They also enhanced their physical health by bicycling, and arrived at work more refreshed and invigorated.

Our goal for next year is to recruit more bicyclists to ride to work, and also to make more than one day a Bike to Work day.

CONSERVATION ON THE GROUND

# Secretary Vilsack visits with Colorado Agriculture Leadership Program (CALP) Participants

by Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs Specialist, State Office



Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs Specialist, NRCS State Office, and John Lestina, District Conservationist, Dove Creek Field Office, are pictured with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack at a recent agriculture leadership class held in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Burse-Johnson and Lestina are two of thirty participants recently selected for the two-year Colorado Agriculture Leadership Program.

**T**hirty participants of the Colorado Agriculture Leadership Program (CALP), husbands and wives, and several Ag Ambassadors from Colorado State University-Ft. Collins, waited in anticipation for the arrival of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Secretary Tom Vilsack to speak to them about agriculture at a recent dinner held on September 20, 2012 and hosted by CALP in Ft. Collins, CO.

Secretary Vilsack discussed issues surrounding Colorado's current drought and passage of the Farm Bill.

*"There is no more important piece of legislation that any member of Congress can work on for rural America for farmers, producers, and ranchers, than passage of a Farm Bill this month,"* Vilsack said.

Vilsack described the effects that the lack of a new Farm Bill will have on farmers and ranchers and their ability to make plans for their operations.

Vilsack also thanked the CALP participants for their involvement in such a program that is very important to the world of agriculture. The CALP program is led by Angie Cue, Executive Director; State Representative Jerry Son-

nenberg, Board President, and the CALP Board members.

*"Given the critical issues facing agriculture today, there is a need to provide an intensive leadership program to develop a new generation of leaders,"* said State Representative Sonnenberg.

The Colorado Agricultural Leadership Program, is a two-year intensive study of agriculture worldwide that equips people in the agriculture industry to become leaders in their fields.

*"Participants will collaborate with others and establish mentoring relationships with professionals serving agriculture and rural communities,"* said Cue.

According to the CALP website, the course will focus on communications, government, policy, economics, social and cultural issues and change management. Through the program, leaders will have the opportunity to travel internationally, nationally, and statewide to extend their knowledge on the global agriculture industry.

For more information about the CALP, please visit [www.coloagleaders.org](http://www.coloagleaders.org).

# Claims Filing Period for Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Who Claim Past Discrimination at USDA to **Open on September 24, 2012**

**Those Eligible Must File Claims No Later Than March 25, 2013**

**A**griculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege discrimination by the USDA in past decades can file claims between **September 24, 2012 and March 25, 2013.**

*"Hispanic and women farmers who believe they have faced discriminatory practices from the USDA must file a claim by March 25, 2013 in order to have a chance to receive a cash payment or loan forgiveness," said Secretary Vilsack. "The opening of this claims process is part of USDA's ongoing efforts to correct the wrongs of the past and ensure fair treatment to all current and future customers."*

The process offers a voluntary alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or female farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their applications for loan or loan servicing assistance for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods between 1981 and 2000.

As announced in February 2011, the voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief, to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees to participate in the program.

The Department will continue reaching out to potential Hispanic and female claimants, around the country to get the word out to individuals who may be eligible for this program so they have the opportunity to participate.

Call center representatives can be reached at 1-888-508-4429. Claimants must register for a claims package (by calling the number or visiting the website) and the claims package will be mailed to claimants.

All those interested in learning more or receiving information about the claims process and claims

packages are encouraged to attend meetings in your communities about the claims process and contact the website or claims telephone number.

**Website:** [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)

**Phone:** 1-888-508-4429

**Claims Period:** September 24, 2012-March 25, 2013.

Independent legal services companies will administer the claims process and adjudicate the claims. Although there are no filing fees to participate and a lawyer is not required to participate in the claims process, persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

Under Secretary Vilsack's leadership, USDA has instituted a comprehensive plan to strengthen the Department as a model service provider and to ensure that every farmer and rancher is treated equally and fairly as part of "a new era of civil rights" at USDA. This Administration has made it a priority to resolve all of the past program class action civil rights cases facing the Department, and today's announcement is another major step towards achieving that goal.

In February 2010, the Secretary announced the Pigford II settlement with African American farmers, and in October 2010, he announced the Keep-seagle settlement with Native American farmers. Both of those settlements have since received court approval.

Unlike the cases brought by African American and Native American farmers, the cases filed by Hispanic and women farmers over a decade ago were not certified as class actions and are still pending in the courts as individual matters. The claims process provides a voluntary alternative to continuing litigation for Hispanic and female farmers and ranchers who want to use it.

Audio and video public service announcements in English and Spanish from Secretary Vilsack and

*Claims, continued on page 6*

*Claims, continued from page 5*

downloadable print and web banner ads on the Hispanic and women farmer claims process are available at: [http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=PSAs\\_Print\\_and\\_WebBanner\\_Ads.xml](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=PSAs_Print_and_WebBanner_Ads.xml).

The following leaders have released statements on the opening of the Hispanic and Women Farmer and Rancher claims process:

**National President of the HNBA,  
Peter M. Reyes, Jr.**

*"The announcement that the USDA is starting an administrative claims process as an alternative to litigation for Hispanic or female farmers and ranchers is a welcome path to justice for individuals who alleged discrimination between 1981-2000 in connection with USDA farm loan programs. ... The new claims process, which is entirely voluntary, is a testament to Secretary Vilsack's vision and leadership and an important step to correct the wrongs of the past and strengthen the USDA for the future. The HNBA applauds the USDA and Secretary Vilsack for living up to President Lincoln's vision for the USDA as the "People's Department."*

**Raul M. Grijalva, Representative (D-AZ)**

*"Southern Arizonans may have some of the strongest claims out there on this compensation, and I encourage everyone to exercise their full legal rights in seeing that justice is served. ... The economy is rebounding and people are looking to build their family businesses again, and I applaud USDA officials for seeking to right a historic wrong at the right time."*

**John Salazar,  
Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture**

*"I am pleased to learn that the voluntary claims process has begun by USDA to help resolve discrimination complaints of Hispanic and women farmers. While I recognize not all claims will be resolved through this process the President and his administration deserve credit for taking steps to resolve for many their longstanding claims based on past discrimination."*

**Debbie Stabenow, Senator (D-MI)**

*"I commend Secretary Vilsack for addressing these long-standing equal opportunity issues. The steps he has taken move the Department in the right direction."*

**Colorado NRCS, FSA, and RD will host numerous landowner/producer informational meetings throughout Colorado in the months of September and October.**

**LEARN MORE AT A MEETING NEAR YOU:**

**Greeley – September 16 – 10:00 AM**

Island Grove Regional Park Event Center, 421 N 15th Ave., Room A, Greeley, CO

**Kiowa – October 17 – 10:00 AM**

Kiowa Exhibit Hall Building, 95 UTE Ave., Kiowa, CO (Elbert County)

**Colorado Springs – October 17 – 1:00 PM**

El Paso County Public Services Department, 3275 Akers Dr., Colorado Springs, CO

**Fort Collins – October 18 – 10:00 AM**

Hilton Hotel, 425 West Prospect Road, Fort Collins, CO

**Longmont – October 18 – 2:00 PM**

Boulder USDA Service Center (Fairgrounds Complex), 9595 Nelson Road, Longmont, CO

**Grand Junction – October 18 – 10:00 AM**

Mesa County Fair Grounds (Jockey Club meeting room), 2785 U.S. 50, Grand Junction, CO

**Avondale – October 18 – 8:00 AM**

McHarg Park Community Center, 405 2nd St., Avondale, CO

**Delta - October 18 – 2:00 PM**

Bill Heddles Recreation Center, 530 Gunnison River Drive, Delta, CO

**La Jara – October 19 – 2:00 PM**

NW Conejos Fire District's Meeting Room, 710 Broadway Street, La Jara, CO

**Cortez – October 22 – 1:00 PM**

Cortez Conference Center, 2121 East Main St., Cortez, CO

**Durango – October 23 – 10:00 AM**

LaPlata County Extension Service, 2500 Main Avenue, Durango, CO

**Springfield – October 24 – 10:00 AM**

Minnick Building, 28535 Co. Rd. 24.6, Springfield, CO

**Canon City – October 25 – 2:00 PM**

Upper Arkansas Area COG, 3224 A Independence Rd, Canon City, CO

**Akron – October 29 – 10:00 AM**

Akron Event Center, 552 2nd Street, Akron, CO



# Employee Spotlight

## Veterans Who Make A Difference: Deric Clemons

by Petra Barnes Walker, State Public Information Officer



*“Military service is not for everyone, but for me it was the right choice and I couldn’t be more proud to have served my country.”*

**A**t the tender age of 18, Deric Clemons knew he wanted more options for his future than what was traditionally afforded in his hometown of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and as a result, he enlisted into the U.S. Army Reserves for six years (1988-1994).

Seeking greater educational opportunities to learn new skills and continue his education, Clemons took advantage of the GI Bill for College and earned a B.S. in Agricultural Business at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

*“I had my country and my future in mind when I enlisted,”* said Clemons. *“Military service is not for everyone, but for me it was the right choice and I couldn’t be more proud to have served my country.”*

During his six-year enlistment, Clemons initially



served as a reservist in Pine Bluff. He then served on active duty in Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, and on the front lines in Iraq during Desert Storm/Shield.

Today, Clemons puts his experience and education to good use by serving as the District Conservationist in the Franktown Field Office in Colorado. He started his career with NRCS in 1992 as a summer intern and has aspirations to be a world changer at the State and National level some day.

*“I carry the lesson learned during my time in the military with me every day. I impose self discipline in every area in my life,”* said Clemons. *“I have a good work ethic and no matter the trial or the elements--rain, sleet, snow, sink or swim--I will never give up nor give in until I accomplish all my goals and dreams in my heart and hopefully make a positive impact in society wherever I go.”*

# Colorado NRCS Sets Precedent Conserving Resources Within the Workplace

by Kaitlin Fischer, OSM AmeriCorps VISTA, Jefferson Conservation District and Harvest Mountain Farm Gardens, State Office

In the last Colorado Connections newsletter, you may remember reading about the Federal Green Challenge and the Colorado NRCS's newly formed "Green Team." Marianna Young, Resource Conservationist in the Area 4 Alamosa Office, leads the Green Team, which convenes via conference call about once a month. But **WHO** exactly is on the Green Team and **WHAT** do they do?

## Green Team Volunteers:

- **Area 1:** None—We could use YOUR help!
- **Area 2:** Kaitlin Fischer (Lakewood), Lauren Mitchell (Brighton), Beth Ritter (Julesberg)
- **Area 3:** Patty Knupp, Rick Romano and Melanie Scavarda (Canon City)
- **Area 4:** John Lestina (Dove Creek) and Marianna Young (Alamosa)

The Colorado NRCS Green Team is charged with reducing our agency's environmental impact, specifically by making improvements of five percent per year in the areas of waste and electronics. Over the course of the summer, our Colorado team researched what materials can be recycled and where.

At the state office in Lakewood, this has largely meant identifying bin locations on the Federal Center campus and deciphering what those bins accept, to be followed up in the near future by outreach and education to inform employees about these recycling opportunities.

For the field offices, this has meant identifying local recycling facilities and what materials these facilities will accept. This information is currently being compiled into a statewide recycling directory that will soon be accessible through the Sharepoint website at <https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/west/co/adm/Green%20Team/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

The team was also allocated monies to order recycling bins for field offices in need. Please let us know if you could use any bins, and we will find a way to get them to you when they arrive sometime this fall.



Recycling bins ordered for field offices by the Green Team; all are made from a minimum of 20 percent recycled content.

Our hope is that willing NRCS employees can drop off recyclables in their travels between field offices at nearby facilities, since not all offices have easy access to recycling drop-off. This emphasis on recycling will be initiated as soon as Green Team volunteers conduct waste audits in several NRCS offices throughout the state. Calculating baseline trash data by weight will then be used in a year to quantify how much NRCS has reduced its waste generation.

Stay tuned for additional ways the Green Team seeks to make our offices more environmentally conscious, through green purchasing, recycling competitions, and adjustments to default printer preferences. We'll have an article in each Colorado Connections updating you on our actions and providing tips for a more environmentally-friendly lifestyle.

**Note:** Green Team members are NRCS or Conservation District employees who devote a few hours each month to the cause and to a conference call updating other members on what they have learned or accomplished and to share ideas. If you work within Area 1 and are interested in joining the team, please contact Marianna Young at [Marianna.young@co.usda.gov](mailto:Marianna.young@co.usda.gov). If you have any suggestions or action items for the Green Team, please notify your nearest Green Team member.

Colorado Green Team  
REDUCE • REUSE • RECYCLE

# Help in a Time of Need: Assistance Available to Colorado's Drought-Stricken Landowners and Producers

by Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs Specialist  
State Office

**T**his year, Colorado was faced with historic drought conditions that proved to be detrimental to landowners, crop, and livestock producers across the state.

As a result of this unfortunate act of Mother Nature, the NRCS is offering nearly \$2 million in financial and technical assistance to get much-needed help to these landowners and producers who are facing extreme and exceptional drought conditions.

With this limited funding, higher priority will be given to those who have been in the exceptional drought (D4) areas of the state the longest and will include additional criteria based on erodible soils and other sensitive areas. This will ensure that the funds provided will be applied to the most vulnerable areas of the state.

Priority will be also given to those who are within areas of the High Park Fire that occurred in Larimer County. A map of the areas defined by the National Drought Mitigation Center in Colorado is located at: [http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DM\\_state.htm?CO,HP](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/DM_state.htm?CO,HP).

*"NRCS is committed to helping landowners and producers through this challenging drought period by providing additional financial and technical assistance through our conservation programs,"* said Phyllis Ann Philipps, Colorado NRCS State Conservationist. *"Program authorities allow us to reschedule practices, extend contracts, and substitute practices so producers are not penalized for circumstances beyond their control."*

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), funds will allow eligible producers to apply for selected conservation practices. These practices include prescribed grazing, livestock watering facilities, and water conservation practices.

Eligible producers also can re-apply for financial assistance to re-apply failed conservation prac-



Drought-stricken Colorado.

tices due to drought.

Landowners with a current EQIP contract can also request a contract modification to re-schedule planned conservation practices such as prescribed grazing, livestock watering facilities, water conservation and other conservation activities on pasture and forest land until drought conditions improve.

*"With this funding, we hope to provide some immediate relief in specific geographic areas where we can address critical resource concerns caused by the drought,"* Philipps said. *"It will also help producers keep their cattle healthy, restore pastures, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, and protect forest land."*

Through the WHIP funding, landowners interested in reducing erosion, sedimentation, and the effects of debris flows that compliment wildlife habitat, and who are willing to install erosion-control practices to protect the riparian and lowland areas from sedimentation are encouraged to sign up.

Landowners and producers are encouraged to visit with their local USDA Service Center for assistance with drought-related issues. Additional program requirements and information about EQIP and WHIP is available on the Colorado NRCS website at [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov).

# YCCD Hosts Beecher Island Youth Camp

By Julie Elliott, Rangeland Management Specialist, Holyoke Field Office, Area 2

The Yuma County Conservation District and Wray Field Office hosted 12 kids at their Beecher Island Youth Camp.

The young 'pirates' learned how to use GPS units and then went looking for 'treasure' – rubber animal tracks. At each track, the kids used track guides to figure out what animal may have left the track. An exhilarating game of 'O Deer' illus-

trated population dynamics in relation to habitat and predators.

The kids learned how animal life is all tied together using a ball of string and then explored the water cycle.

Each student took a water cycle poster home and were encouraged to share it with their science teachers.



# Meet Caitlin Hanagan: District Conservation Technician

by Tammra Straub,  
Colorado State Conservation Board

If you live in southeastern Colorado, you may have seen her tromping around local farms and ranches chatting with the landowners with animation and enthusiasm.

You may ask yourself, “what could they possibly be discussing with such animation and who is that blonde in the blue jeans?”

The excitement comes from none other than Caitlin Hanagan, the District Conservation Technician for East Otero, Olney-Boone, and West Otero-Timpas Conservation Districts.

For the past three years, Hanagan has provided support, alongside the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), to local producers to help improve water, wildlife, and soil conditions on their lands.

Hanagan is enthusiastically

assisting on a cost-share grant from the State of Colorado, which the Olney-Boone Conservation District has received to help prepare lands coming out of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for proper grazing, when needed.

The grant also supports conservation practices such as fencing, stock water pipelines, watering facilities and the drilling of new wells.

This program was developed to help landowners conserve and protect natural resources on their land for the benefit of the whole community, both now and for generations to come. It helps encourage and enable producers to install practices that may or



Caitlin Hanagan

may not have immediate economic benefits but will protect and conserve precious water supplies, wildlife habitat, agricultural soil, and rural communities themselves.

If you would like your own inspiring conversation with Caitlin about implementing conservation practices on your land, contact her at [caitlin.hanagan@co.nacdnet.net](mailto:caitlin.hanagan@co.nacdnet.net), or at 719-254-7672, ext.114.

## Jane Penley Joins Kiowa Conservation District



The Franktown NRCS field office would like to introduce Jane Penley as the new District Manager for Kiowa Conservation District.

Previously, Jane worked for the Elbert County Assessor as the Agricultural Appraiser and has a background in Animal Husbandry.

A native of Colorado and a resident of Elbert County, Jane has a love and appreciation of our natural resources.

A self proclaimed ‘dog lover’ Jane can often be found with her camera taking pictures of her herd of dachshunds.

Jane’s philosophy is that as temporary stewards of land we must preserve and protect our natural resources for the future generations.

We are excited and we welcome her to the district and to the Franktown NRCS field office!

# SOIL HEALTH

## Is Your *Soil* Working For You?

### Successful 2nd Annual Soil Health Tour

*By Shelly Anderson, Resource Conservationist, Area 4*

Soil Health in Area IV has been on-going since the mid-nineties thanks to our local NRCS staff and potato producers, including Brendon Rockey.

Rockey Farms produces specialty potatoes and has been learning and applying the principles of soil health since 1993. He is fast becoming an internationally known expert for the research, development and application of soil health ideas and strategies. Brendon suggests that the goal of Soil Health is to 'create a soil environment that induces more organized chaos.

This year, 59 people came to the 2nd Annual Soil Health Tour. The participants traveled from field to field to see cover crops that were designed to meet landowner goals including forage production, nematode suppression for potatoes, and windrow grazing for cattle. All the cover crop mixes are designed to improve soil health and to mitigate the effects of drought.

Thanks to the San Luis Valley Soil Health Group who have shown leadership in soil health and conducted the Soil Health Tours.

The following article was printed in the Valley Courier newspaper and they have given permission for us to use it.

#### **Fields of Green**

This year's tour started and ended at Mark Inness' Compost Technologies north of Cen-

ter. Stops included a visit with Brendon Rockey and a look at his multi-species mixture for improved soil health and a look at the species being companion planted with potatoes.

His goals this year is to improve the diversity of growing roots in the soil, to increase soil micro-biological diversity, and increase the amount and species of blooming plants that will attract beneficial insects, such as the lady bird beetle.

This year, some of the plants he included were peas, lentils, chickling vetch, and safflower, as well as Sordan 79 and Tillage radish and turnips. It was noted that in fields where there is NO Columbia root knot nematode problem, a variety of legumes can be used. Peas may actually be an alternate host and should not be used if nematodes are a problem. Due to the health of Brendon's soil, peas were no problem.

The next stop was at Billy and Cody Burns farm in Alamosa County. Keith Berns, from Green Seed Cover Crops and Cody discussed a garden plot of various cover crops, some which may prove valuable here in the San Luis Valley. Green Seed Cover Crops were also kind enough to host a meal with Compost Technologies after the tour was concluded.



*Soils, continued on page 13*

*Soils, continued from page 12*



Chickling vetch growing in Burns's Cover Crop.

Billy Burns reviewed his forage mixtures. Winter rye and hairy vetch stubble from last year's cover were lightly tilled and planted into a mixture of species including chickling vetch. His cover crops are sometimes grazed and hayed as another purpose of the cover crops.

Last year, one field where he planted winter rye was grazed on all winter and still produced over two tons of rye hay this spring. It was planted back to a mixture of species and alfalfa for a late summer hay crop and next year's alfalfa.

Lyle Nissen's farm was visited next. This year's cover crop was a mixture of Trudan 8 Sudan grass, along with Dawn proso millet and Adios radish. He plans to windrow this mixture and graze with cattle this next winter.

Other fields at the Nissen Farm (not toured) are planted to multi-species mixes specifically to chop and green manure for nematode suppression.

Before returning for the evening meal, we visited Bob Dugan's cover crop mixture west of Monte Vista. Here a variety of species were planted, including Super Sugar Sorghum/sudan, sunflower, pearl millet, oats, peas, Defender radish, Winfred turnip hybrid, winter rye, and sweet clover. This mixture will also

be windrow-grazed this winter, and spring-grazed next year.

Cover crops are used for a variety of purposes. In general, they are used to improve soil health. This year, many cover crops are still being planted on acreages that may have been set aside under Subdistrict One's Annual Fallow Program or under Crop Insurance Preventative Planting Options.

These programs significantly reduced irrigation demands on the underground aquifer; but to maintain soil in a healthy condition ground cover and growing a live root in the soil is critical, and many farmers have planted cover on these acres.

Local seed dealers have had to scramble to keep up with the need. All cover crops planted in June use significantly less moisture (only 6 – 8 inches). Even lower water-using cover crops are being August planted on fallow acres. These can include sorghum-sudan, winter rye, and sweet clover, all of which use 12 - 15 inches less irrigation water than traditional grain crops.

These crops were planted a little later than most; the cooler temperatures and shorter growing season require less water for ground cover. These were not in the tour this year, but we note reducing wind erosion through ground cover is also critical to maintain soil health.



Monte Vista Soil Conservationist, Ken Davis at 6' tall stands in Bob Dugan's cover crop.

# Front Range Community Aims to Protect Itself From the Next Fire

By Jonathan Geurts, Soil Conservation Technician,  
Longmont Service Center, Area 2

Even before we witnessed one of the most destructive fire years in Colorado history, the West Ranch Homeowners Association had begun preparing its own defense.

Assisted by the Jefferson Conservation District (JCD), and supported by a grant from the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) as well as NRCS EQIP funding, the community now fights fire with active forest management.

The West Ranch community hugs the Front Range, with a clear view to Denver and the plains. Houses sit perched within a mixed conifer stand, uphill from acres of scrub oak.

A few miles to the south, however, the view is not quite as pretty to most passers-by. Rank upon rank of blackened trunks stretch for miles. These scars, from the Hayman, High Meadows, Buffalo Creek, and now the Lower North Fork fires, are easily visible as beige swathes on Google Earth. Over time, however, even such extensive burn zones will regenerate themselves anew in a fire-adapted forest.

JCD coordinates forest management in an attempt to mimic the regenerative results of forest fire without the sometimes disastrous human consequences. Traditional fire mitigation work has focused on reducing ladder fuels, which, left untreated, carry ground-level flames to the forest canopy.

The more intensive work planned at West Ranch aims to add to this vertical management by also slowing the horizontal spread of fires that do eventually reach and travel the canopy. The treatment will open up irregular openings in the woods, cutting as a fire would naturally burn across the hillsides. Just as in the wake of a fire, both young and old trees will be left behind to maintain the age diversity of the stand.



Jonathan Geurts, Jefferson Conservation District, marks a unit boundary in scrub oak that is set to be masticated as part of the project.

On the ground, the scrub oak will be masticated by heavy machinery, which is nothing new for the area. This oak requires very frequent disturbance to minimize its wildfire hazard. The dry mixed conifer project adjacent to it, however, proved unique enough to attract five foresters to spend a field day marking the stand.

Though the forest type is a common back porch view for Front Range residents, the West Ranch project will be one of the first to conduct heavy forest treatment within it.

Surrounded by ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, as well as some lodgepole pine and Colorado blue spruce, the foresters debated which clumps to retain and which to cut.

The location of the crew's pink surveying tape deserved thought because the composition of clumps retained will determine the next forest type. Clumps of carefully chosen trees will produce a healthy forest, more resistant to disturbances such as insects and wind.

*Front Range, continued on page 15*

*Front Range, continued from page 14*

Meanwhile, the pattern of gaps that result from the treatment—if effectively planned—will cause the next fire to stutter in its movement through the stand. This halting movement will cause it to burn at a lower severity and miss trees along the way.

The lucky survivors will set seed in the cleared but not sterilized soil, speeding forest regeneration. A network of well-placed gaps across the landscape may combine to effectively minimize the size and severity of fires in the region.

The vision is large, and the progress of conservation seems small, but communities continue to approach JCD for forest management options.

It seems as if the recent wildfire season has reminded those who live in the pines just above the plains that they live in an ecosystem adapted to burn every 30-100 years. Living in such a zone comes with substantial management responsibilities.



## Successful Youth Technology Camp

by Tim Becker, Soil Conservation Technician, Area 2



Tim Becker, Soil Conservation Technician with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Holyoke/Julesburg Field offices, teaches participants about the applications of GPS at a recent youth technology camp in Holyoke.

Colorado State University Extension sponsored the Gear Tech Robotics and GPS Camp at the Phillips County Events Center July 9th through July 12th in Holyoke, Colorado.

Youths between the ages of 10 and 13 from Holyoke, Haxtun, Fleming, Julesburg, and Otis participated in the camp. During the four day camp, the youth gained skills and experience in using GPS and GIS technology. They also designed,

built, and programmed Lego NXT robots while at the fairgrounds.

Tim Becker, Soil Conservation Technician with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Holyoke/Julesburg Field offices, spoke to the participants about the applications of GPS that NRCS uses on a daily basis. He explained how the GPS unit helps with the planning of new projects that NRCS performs for producers in the area.

Tim also explained the importance of using GPS to design pipelines, fences, terraces, grassed waterways, irrigation systems and many more projects that help producers. After explaining and describing the uses and benefits of the GPS units, Tim took the kids outside so they could find predetermined points around the fairgrounds.

Finally, Tim talked with the participants about the opportunities there are for future careers that would tie their passion for agriculture and technology together.

# NRCS Employees and Partners Put the “Wild” in New Wildlife Training

By Noe Marymor, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist, NRCS/CPW/RMBO, Area 2

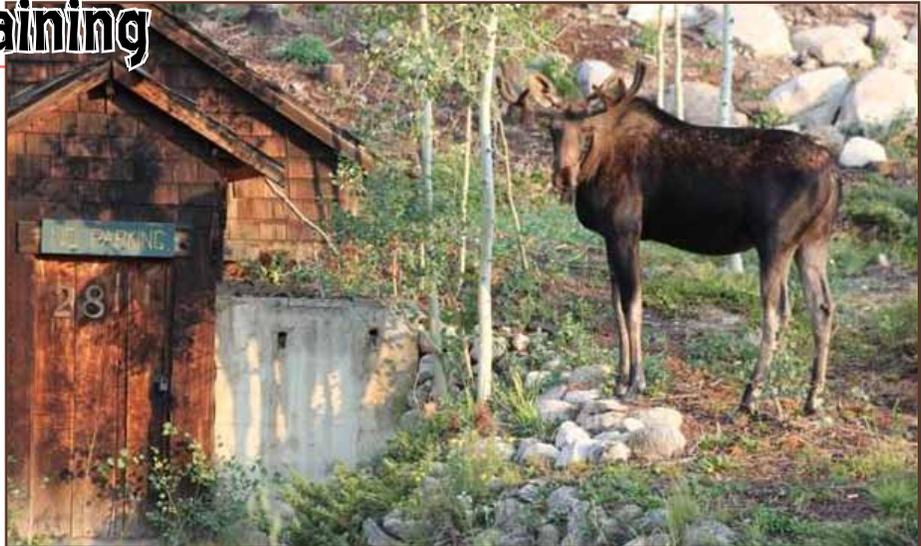
It's the site of a WWII military aircraft crash. Rumor tells that students have wandered into its nearby woods, never to be heard from again.

More frightening yet, there is no cell phone reception or VPN email access. Yet despite its colorful past and present character, CSU's Pingree Park Mountain Campus played home to over 20 students and speakers for the first ever Area 2 Wildlife Short Course.

From August 14th through 17th, 2012, a hearty group of NRCS, Conservation District, and Pheasants Forever staff and members participated in a new wildlife ecology and management training.

Area 2 has seen an influx in new employees in recent years, and the Area also hasn't had an in-depth wildlife training in recent times. This combination of factors spurred the creation of this year's Wildlife Short Course.

The training provided an immersion into wildlife science and its application to private lands conserva-



A bull moose visits the Pingree Park Campus for breakfast.

tion. The students learned about “r” and “K” selected wildlife species, about why it's important to distinguish source populations from sink populations, and how riparian areas create corridors of habitat connectivity that link both of those ecological concepts while supporting ecosystem processes.

Speakers from Colorado State University, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Wildlife Management Institute, Ducks Unlimited, and other groups explained why wild animals occur and behave in the places and ways that they do, and what basic conservation practices planners can use to restore and enhance important habitats across eastern Colorado.

The four-day course culminated in participants breaking into groups to develop and present wildlife conservation plans based on real world farming, ranching and wildlife scenarios.

Wildlife management continues to be an important aspect of NRCS's workload. Providing basic wildlife technical training helps employees communicate the value of wildlife to landowners and helps staff target funding to the best wildlife projects to meet landowner and conservation goals.



The “brave” participants of the Area 2 wildlife shortcourse.

# Agreements between the government and landowners will benefit those who own the land while also protecting endangered species

*Reprint, written by The Denver Post*

**D**uring the last four decades, battles over restrictions posed by the Endangered Species Act have at times been heated and ugly.

Remember the knock-down drag-out fight in the Pacific Northwest over Northern spotted owl habitat? And closer to home, the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, which pitted Front Range developers against conservationists?

Last week, two government agencies announced an effort that could defuse some of these battles by forging long-term agreements with ranchers and farmers, allowing them to continue commercial activities in exchange for promises to maintain habitat.

Working Lands for Wildlife would protect landowners from further restrictions so long as they keep promises to engage in agreed-upon practices meant to allow the species to survive. The agreements could last as long as 30 years, which would provide certainty for those who make a living off the land.

To be sure, some conflicts between wildlife that is endangered or on the cusp of being declared so are too great to overcome.

But the Natural Resources Conservation Service, an arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has designed this program in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to focus on seven species that pose opportunities for animals and people to co-exist.

In Colorado, the most pertinent is the greater sage grouse, which has not been declared threatened or endangered, but eventually could be.

David White, chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, tells us there are certain grazing management practices that, as it turns out, are beneficial for both the sage grouse and ranchers.

For instance, allowing grass to be grazed no shorter than 6-8 inches allows habitat for the



**Colorado Sage Grouse**

birds, yet maintains grass at a level in which it remains healthier for future grazing.

Keeping cattle out of certain areas during nesting season lets the sage grouse hatch out its young, and gives grass a chance to flourish. In addition, simple actions, such as putting plastic markers on the top line of a barbed wire fence prevents a significant number of devastating bird collisions with the hard-to-see fencing.

The over-arching idea is to cooperatively increase sage grouse populations in an effort to keep them from being listed as threatened or endangered, a designation that could trigger lawsuits and more heavy-handed government intervention.

Farmers and ranchers who enter into such voluntary agreements may receive conservation grants. And they will get a guarantee that even if the animal is eventually listed, they'll face no further restrictions. And depending on the length of the agreement, they would have those assurances for many years.

Working Lands has the potential to be the rare win-win in situations that often end in acrimony.

# RANGE DAY IN MORGAN COUNTY

by Val Loose, District Manager  
Ft. Morgan Conservation District, Area 2



Josh Saunders and Josh Tashiro, Rangeland Management Specialists at the Ft. Morgan Field Office, explain grass production to range day participants on a choppy sands ecological site.

The Morgan Conservation District hosted a “Range Day for Women and Men” on July 25th. The workshop was in part funded by a grant from the Colorado Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI).

Over 30 people attended this valuable workshop where Dan Nosal explained Colorado’s GLCI. Brianna Kroskob from Star Struck Genetics talked about embryo transfers in cattle and the possibilities of using it to improve traits in your cattle herd.



Participants listen to a presentation given during Range Day.

Dr. Casey Matney, CSU Extension Agent, talked about the drought, noxious weeds, and the medicinal value of weeds. Matt Pollart, North Central District Manager for

Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners, talked with the group about the history of state leases and how they work. Margo Mesch, Morgan Conservation District board member, talked with fellow ranchers about the importance of record keeping.

After listening to several educational talks, the group toured a pasture where conservation practices are being applied. Josh Saunders and Josh Tashiro, both Range Management Specialists led the field presentation.

The attendees were shown how prescribed grazing and cross-fencing can improve and benefit soil and site stability (soil health), overall plant health, as well as the diversity of plants and their placement on rangeland. All of these are essential indicators of rangeland health as well as a monitoring plots.

The attendees were shown why the need for them and what to do with it and how to make it aid in the management of their grazing operation. The day concluded with a delicious steak lunch.

*NRCS Welcomes You!*



**WELCOME Chris!** Chris Bove is the new District Conservationist for the Gunnison Field Office.

He has 17 years of experience working in natural resource management in three different states with the NRCS, the Missouri Army National Guard, Conservation Districts, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Missouri Department of Conservation, and the University of Missouri.

He has worked within a wide spectrum of responsibility in the field of natural resource management, from an entry level technician to manager of complex conservation programs.

He has extensive experience in conservation planning and the application of resource management systems. He’s worked in pasture and rangeland management, forestry, fisheries and wildlife biology, and irrigation.

# NRCS “Partners Up” to Eradicate Noxious Weeds in the Upper Arkansas River Basin

by Patty Knupp, Soil Conservationist, Canon City Field Office, Area 3



**T**amarisk and Russian olive (RO) invasion threatens and has degraded the native riparian ecosystem in numerous ways.

It has crowded out many native plant species, reducing diversity and varied plant structure. Monotypic habitat has less diversity of wildlife species as well.

Tamarisk and RO have lead to significant widening of the floodplains, clogged smaller stream channels and caused an increased deposition of sediment. These invasive species have significantly increased non-beneficial water consumption in xeric sites and dried up smaller isolated pools needed by wildlife species of concern, such as the flathead chub and leopard frogs.

Invasive species control and water quality/quantity have been identified as conservation priorities by local work groups for both the Upper and Lower Arkansas Watersheds. Invasive species have been given special earmarked funds through the CO NRCS EQIP program over the past four years, which shows their level of importance.

Three NRCS field offices have teamed up to turn conservation plans into success stories. Pueblo, Walsenburg, and Rocky Ford have two watershed-scale, multi-county, multi-partner, and multi-landowner invasive weed projects in the upper Arkansas Basin that have been successful.

**The Apishapa River EQIP Invasive project began in 2005** with one landowner in the middle of the watershed looking for assistance with controlling tamarisk to make it easier to gather cattle out of the river bottom, increase riparian forage, and manage water.

Two years later, partners hosted a landowner workshop at this producer’s ranch. The following year, seven additional landowners decided to participate.

To date, there are 12 private landowners and two state landowners (CO Parks and Wildlife and CO State Land

Board) across three counties that are participating in the effort. Together they have controlled approximately 1,332 acres of tamarisk and RO along approximately 30 river miles. There are 10 partners providing funding and technical assistance for the project. Additional landowners are being contacted.

## **The NRCS CO Partnership Program (CPP) Huerfano River Watershed Invasive Weed Project began in 2010.**

This partnership, with Pueblo and Walsenburg NRCS field offices leading, includes 21 private landowners and 13 other partners. The partnership has worked together to control about 1,705 acres of tamarisk and RO in their two counties.

The goal of the projects is to try to get watershed-wide control of tamarisk and RO beginning at the top of the watersheds. Both projects utilize integrated pest management including chemical, mechanical and biological control.

Field office staff helped coordinate several successful aerial tamarisk campaigns, allowing landowners to get a better cost per acre for chemical control. They have also facilitated communication between CO Department of Agriculture-Palisade Insectary and private landowners.

*Invasive, continued on page 20*



**Tamarisk leaf beetle larvae (Diorhabda spp.).** (Photo by Patty Knupp, NRCS.)

*Invasive, continued from page 19*

Because of landowner participation, the Arkansas Basin has experienced significant tamarisk defoliation by the leaf beetle (*Diorhabda* spp.) beginning in 2011 and again in 2012. Multiple defoliations are needed to eventually kill a tamarisk tree.

The CPP Huerfano River project was recently the site chosen to visit during the Arkansas River Watershed Invasive Plant Partnership (ARKWIPP) restoration workshop held on June 20, 2012. Fifty land managers attended the hands-on workshop learning techniques to restore tamarisk and RO infested riparian areas once invasive control has been completed.

Native plant restoration on the Apishapa and Huerfano Rivers was recently selected as one of eighteen statewide Targeted Conservation Projects to be funded.

Without the great partnerships we have developed over the years, and the funding support through NRCS and others, these would not be success stories.



Left: Container of tamarisk leaf beetles getting ready to be released. (Photo by Beth Fortman, NRCS)

Right: Hydro-ax masticating Russian olive. (Photo by Patty Knupp, NRCS)

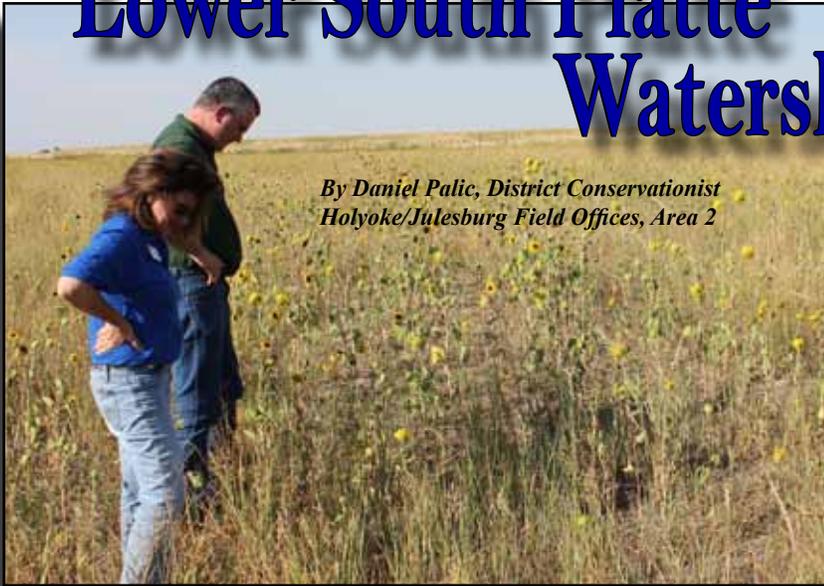


## NRCS and FSA in Sedgwick County turn "Blue" for Prostate Cancer Awareness



Sedgwick County  
Colorado FSA  
and NRCS

# Lower South Platte Watershed Meeting



*By Daniel Palic, District Conservationist  
Holyoke/Julesburg Field Offices, Area 2*

NRCS State Conservationist Phyllis Philipps and District Conservationist Daniel Palic tour Mid Contract Management Activities on Conservation Reserve Program fields before the Lower South Platte Watershed Meeting on August 27th.

**T**he Sedgwick County Conservation District hosted the annual Lower South Platte Watershed meeting on August 27th in Julesburg.

Representatives from Haxtun, Centennial, and Morgan County conservation districts attended the meeting as well as representatives from the Julesburg Irrigation District, Sedgwick Sand Draws Board, Colorado State Extension, Sedgwick County Well Users, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Phillips and Sedgwick County Commissioners, and Colorado State Conservation Board.

Mark Cronquist, Conservation Specialist, facilitated the meeting. Denise Swanson, acting treasurer for the LSPW, gave the financial report. Mark Cronquist asked if there were any nominees for the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) "Conservationist of the Year" award. None were submitted.

CACD will be hosting the 2012 annual meeting at the Vail Marriott November 12-15th. Camp Rocky unfortunately had to be cancelled this year due to the Waldo Canyon fire.

Colorado State Conservation Board member representative of the LSPW, Bud Mekelburg addressed the attendees regarding today's economics. Bud stressed the importance of everyone speaking out about their concerns and voting in this year's election.

Haxtun, Morgan, and Sedgwick County Conservation Districts each reported on their district activities and accomplishments this past year. Guest speaker Dr. Casey Matney,

Regional Range Specialist for NE Colorado, CSU Extension Service, took the floor to cover several prominent topics.

Casey started his presentation discussing the drought of 2012. He stated that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has recorded 2012 as the hottest and driest year since 1953.

NOAA predicts that El Nino is coming and we could see a wetter period next year. Casey stated that during this drought range production is down by 50 percent in our area and 25 percent of normal the further south you go.

Phyllis Ann Philipps, State Conservationist with NRCS, introduced herself to attendees. Phyllis covered three key topics:

1. Conservation on the ground
2. Targeted conservation projects, and
3. Field office of the future.

Phyllis pointed out that that approximately 80 percent of NRCS's budget is designated toward staffing.

*LSPW, continued on page 23*

# Adult Stress— Frequently Asked Questions

## How it affects your health and what you can do about it

Stress—just the word may be enough to set your nerves on edge. Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Some people may cope with stress more effectively or recover from stressful events quicker than others. It's important to know your limits when it comes to stress to avoid more serious health effects.



### What is stress?

Stress can be defined as the brain's response to any demand. Many things can trigger this response, including change. Changes can be positive or negative, as well as real or perceived. They may be recurring, short-term, or long-term and may include things like commuting to and from school or work every day, traveling for a yearly vacation, or moving to another home.

Changes can be mild and relatively harmless, such as winning a race, watching a scary movie, or riding a rollercoaster. Some changes are major, such as marriage or divorce, serious illness, or a car accident. Other changes are extreme, such as exposure to violence, and can lead to traumatic stress reactions.

### How does stress affect the body?

Not all stress is bad. All animals have a stress response, which can be life-saving in some situations. The nerve chemicals and hormones released during such stressful times, prepares the animal to face a threat or flee to safety.

When you face a dangerous situation, your pulse quickens, you breathe faster, your muscles tense, your brain uses more oxygen and increases activity—all functions aimed at survival. In the short term, it can even boost your immune system.

However, with chronic stress, those same nerve chemicals that are life-saving in short bursts can suppress functions that aren't needed for immediate survival. Your immunity is lowered and your digestive, excretory, and reproductive systems stop working normally. Once the threat has passed, other body systems act to restore normal functioning. Problems occur if the stress response goes on too long, such as when the source of stress is constant, or if the response continues after the danger has subsided.

### How does stress affect your overall health?

There are at least three different types of stress, all of which carry physical and mental health risks:

- Routine stress related to the pressures of work, family, and other daily responsibilities.
- Stress brought about by a sudden negative change, such as losing a job, divorce, or illness.
- Traumatic stress, experienced in an event like a major accident, war, assault, or a natural disaster where one may be seriously hurt or in danger of being killed.

The body responds to each type of stress in similar ways. Different people may feel it in different ways. For example, some people experience mainly digestive symptoms, while others may have headaches, sleeplessness, depressed mood, anger,

*Stress, continued on page 23*

*Stress, continued from page 22*

and irritability.

People under chronic stress are prone to more frequent and severe viral infections, such as the flu or common cold, and vaccines, such as the flu shot, are less effective for them.

Of all the types of stress, changes in health from routine stress may be hardest to notice at first. Because the source of stress tends to be more constant than in cases of acute or traumatic stress, the body gets no clear signal to return to normal functioning. Over time, continued strain on your body from routine stress may lead to serious health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, anxiety disorder, and other illnesses.

**How can I cope with stress?**

The effects of stress tend to build up over time. Taking practical steps to maintain your health and outlook can reduce or prevent these effects. The following are some tips that may help you to cope with stress:

- Seek help from a qualified mental health care provider if you are overwhelmed, feel you cannot cope, have suicidal thoughts, or are using drugs or alcohol to cope.
- Get proper health care for existing or new health problems.
- Stay in touch with people who can provide emotional and other support. Ask for help from friends, family, and community or religious organizations to reduce stress due to work burdens or family issues, such as caring for a loved one.

- Recognize signs of your body's response to stress, such as difficulty sleeping, increased alcohol and other substance use, being easily angered, feeling depressed, and having low energy.
- Set priorities—decide what must get done and what can wait, and learn to say no to new tasks if they are putting you into overload.
- Note what you have accomplished at the end of the day, not what you have been unable to do.
- Avoid dwelling on problems. If you can't do this on your own, seek help from a qualified mental health professional who can guide you.
- Exercise regularly—just 30 minutes per day of gentle walking can help boost mood and reduce stress.
- Schedule regular times for healthy and relaxing activities.
- Explore stress coping programs, which may incorporate meditation, yoga, tai chi, or other gentle exercises.

If you or someone you know is overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional. If you or someone close to you is in crisis, call the toll-free, 24-hour National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255).

*(Information provided courtesy of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). For more information on your health, visit the NIH website at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>.)*

*LSPW, continued from page 21*

A proposal of "virtual offices" has been explored to save money. This idea would allow for technician to work out of their equipped vehicle and travel to the landowners and producers at any time during the day.

LeRoy Hall, NRCS Area Conservationist, introduced new employees Greg Hansen, Multi County Civil Engineering Technician based in Sterling, and Sherri Brandt, Soil Conservationist based in

the Julesburg Field Office. Jack Devie, Sedgwick County Conservation District President was elected to serve as president for the LSPW for 2013.

Before the meeting District Conservationist Daniel Palic gave State Conservationist Phyllis Philipps a tour of recent mid contract management activities and emergency haying and grazing on Conservation Reserve Program fields.

# Megan Weisensee...

## Outstanding volunteer and employee

*By Sammie Molinaro, District Conservationist  
Byers Field Office, Area 2*

Megan started with NRCS as an Earth Team Volunteer for the Byers NRCS office on April 8, 2011, volunteering every Friday helping the office with the phone calls and walk-ins for the East Adams Conservation District Tree Program.

This was a great fit for Megan as she had previous experience on planting trees with her family on 5 acres of native pasture for the local wildlife under the NRCS WHIP program. Megan is the daughter of Henry and Nora Weisensee and grew up on a family farm and ranch located 7 miles north of Deer Trail, Colorado.

On June 3rd of this year, Megan switched to working for us as a STEP student. Megan expanded upon her previous work experience as an Earth Team volunteer by assisting with the CRP program. Megan was instrumental in helping the office with field checks, filling out the job sheets and putting the conservation plan folders together for landowners. Megan also assisted with the EQIP, CSP, and CSTP programs.

Megan recently was awarded a scholarship by the Deer Trail and East Adams Conservation Districts for her college education. Megan graduated from Deer Trail High School in May as valedictorian of her class. She was also enrolled in the Morgan Community College Program for High School Seniors and received a 4.0 grade point average for the spring semester making the President's List.

Megan has been an active member of the Deer Trail FFA Chapter throughout her high school years and a member of 4-H since she was 8 years old.

Megan first love has always been working with the family sheep operation. That is why she is leaning towards being a veterinarian. She left us on August 21st to start college at the University Of Wyoming and is enrolled in the Veterinary Science Department.

The Byers Field Office hopes to have her back for the Christmas Holidays for a couple of weeks. Megan is missed by all of the Byers Field Office staff as she brought to them a tremendous work ethic and very outgoing personality that brought joy to the entire office.



Joe Lindsay, President of Deer Trail Conservation District, presents a scholarship award to Megan Weisensee.



Megan assists in the Byers field office.



Megan helps landowners load weed barrier for tree plantings.



Byers Tree Planting.



Megan receives backpack as a thank you for over 100 hours volunteer service.

# NRCS PARTNERS CHAMPION CONSERVATION EDUCATION



by Petra Barnes Walker,  
State Public Information Officer

Third through sixth graders show off their beets at the Junior Master Gardener Program.

**K**aitlin Fischer is an OSM AmeriCorps VISTA and one of the Jefferson Conservation District's go getters and champions for conservation education.

This summer, she partnered with the non-profit Harvest Mountain Farm Gardens to start the Junior Master Gardener Summer Camp in Lakewood, CO.

*"I really wanted my summer activities to focus on conservation education,"* states Fischer, a Western Hardrock Watershed Team VISTA working for the Jefferson Conservation District.

*"Instilling into today's youth the understanding of how important our natural resources are is critical and something that is often missing in traditional educational programs; so I was overjoyed to connect with Harvest Mountain and even more excited to be able to co-teach the camp."*

Working with the Harvest Mountain Farm Garden, Fischer was able to utilize CSU's Cooperative Extension Junior Master Gardener Program to serve as the foundation for the development of an urban garden camp.

For eight weeks, the camp hosted kids ranging from 3rd through 5th grade, as well as 6th through 8th graders teaching them about soil health, water quality and quantity, the benefits of farm fresh ingredients, and much more.

*"Kids from all over Jefferson County and from all walks of life were invited to participate,"* Fischer goes

on to say. *"We met for two hours once per week for eight weeks, and had lessons on subjects like insects, composting, and the kids actually started their own compost pile for the farm. Each student received a certificate of participation and got to sample some of the food they helped grow during the camp awards ceremony, where they presented on what they learned over the summer."*

Fischer is hopeful that the camp will continue and expand next summer, and is thrilled others have taken notice of the camp's success and effectiveness in its use of the Junior Master Gardener curriculum.

*"I hope this is just the beginning of this camp, we've certainly had a lot of support,"* Fischer said.

*"I was even approached by the coordinator of CSU's Junior Master Gardener Program to help correlate their educational tools with Colorado academic standards in the hopes that the Junior Master Gardener curriculum will be incorporated into the traditional studies."*

For additional information about the Harvest Mountain Farm Garden's Junior Master Gardener Camp, contact Fischer at [Kaitlin.Fischer@co.nacdnet.net](mailto:Kaitlin.Fischer@co.nacdnet.net).



**Top photo:** Brian Devine helps harvest at the urban garden. **Bottom photo:** Katlin Fischer, OSM AmeriCorps VISTA, teaches kids how to harvest the urban garden.

# Purple Loosestrife Along the South Platte River in Morgan County

*By Val Loose, District Manager  
Ft. Morgan Conservation District, Area 2*

**E**arlier this year the Morgan Conservation District was awarded a \$5,900 grant from the State Noxious Weed Fund Grant to eradicate purple loosestrife along the banks of the South Platte River in Morgan County.

The hunt was on for this noxious weed because in 2011, the district had received an initial grant from the State Noxious Weed Fund. In the summer of 2011, two large masses of purple loosestrife were discovered in Morgan County.

Patty York and her helpers from the Department of Agriculture, along with help from the Colorado Division of Wildlife and myself, set out from the east end of Morgan County in search of this nasty weed. Before the day ended, we found a huge, 1,000-plant infestation. The next day another large infestation was found with around the same amount of plants.

This year, since we know where those pesky plants are we started work on eradicating them. Terry Musgrave, Morgan Conservation District board member, his wife, Mille, and I have been working on this project every weekend. We have bagged over

30 bags of blooms and sprayed countless weeds on this project. Someday they will be eradicated!

We have floated (mostly walked) along miles of South Platte River sand looking for more purple loosestrife. We have all been amazed and saddened with how low the river is.

I pointed out areas along the river where last year we crawled out of canoes to look for weeds and this year I was able to walk to these areas. The only area that had any depth to it was where I ran into a tree with the canoe and tipped it over. I fell in the water and came up sputtering. Terry and I had to drag the canoe from the river, upside-down in order to get all of the water out of it.

The only convenience with the river being so low, we can walk right up to the infestations and work. The areas were in the middle of bogs where there are cattails and other weeds and who knows what reptiles lie in wait, but with a good pair of boots we are getting the job done.

## Helping People Help the Land

# Pollinator Week Recognized with Pollinator Workshop in Akron

by Jerry Miller, Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist, NRCS/CPW/PF/QF, Area 2

Pheasants Forever (PF) partnered with the NRCS, the Washington County Conservation District, the Cope Conservation District, the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO), the Farm Services Agency (FSA), and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to conduct a Pollinator Workshop on Monday, June 18, at the Akron Senior Center in Akron, Colorado.

Jerry Miller and Shannon Bowling, Farm Bill Biologists for NRCS/CPW/PF; Noe Marymor, Private Lands Biologist for RMBO; Beth Conrey, President of the Colorado Beekeepers Association; Tom Nadgwick, NRCS Range Management Specialist; Dollie Gonzales, NRCS District Conservationist; and Woody Woods, FSA County Executive Director, gave presentations to thirty-five participants from Washington, Weld, Larimer, Logan, and Phillips counties covering pollination economics, seed mixes and species selection, site selection and site preparation, wildlife benefits, and Farm Bill Programs designed to help landowners establish pollinator plots.

The Pollinator workshop included a field tour to local producer Rob Slusser's farm to see first-hand how pollinators can be successfully planted in Washington County. Participants used sweep nets to compare the number of insects in an adjacent CRP grass field with the numbers in the pollinator block. Everyone was amazed to see that the pollinator block contained up to 10 times as many insects. Insects are not only important for pollination, they are also essential food and water sources for young fledgling upland birds during the first 6 weeks of their lives.

Pollinators are essential to our environment. The ecological service they provide is necessary for the reproduction of nearly 70 percent of the world's flowering plants, including more than two-thirds of the world's crop species. Beyond agriculture, pollinators are keystone species in most terrestrial ecosystems. In many places, the essential service of pollination is at risk from habitat loss, pesticide use, and introduced diseases.

The workshop concluded with a barbecued brisket luncheon at the Akron Senior Center sponsored by Pheasants Forever, the Cope Conservation District and the Washington County Conservation District. Special thanks to the Akron School District for providing the bus transportation.



Left to Right, Al White, Byers; Breck Wahl, Akron; Shannon Bowling, Burlington; Hans Manly, Linden; and Noe Marymor, Greeley. Al White demonstrating sweeping technique used to compare CRP with Pollinator Plot.



Left to Right, Joe Crowder, Holyoke; Sherri Brandt, Akron; and Mike Sherman, Fort Collins. Making notice of the increased number of insects swept from the pollinator area.



Up close comparison of the number of insects swept from pollinator area (bottom) with those collected from adjacent CRP field (top).



*by Donna Goodsell, State Earth Team Coordinator*

**T**he Earth Team is made up of volunteers who assist us in conserving, improving, and sustaining the nation’s natural resources.

Colorado has a history of being one of the best in the region for utilizing the Earth Team program in our offices.

The purpose of the Earth Team is to expand our services by utilizing volunteers. Your Colorado Earth Team Coordinators are: Donna Goodsell, Katherine Burse-Johnson, Amber Freouf, Ruth Lewis, and Lloyd Reed.

Our Chief’s goal for the Earth Team is 100% participation by all offices: Field, Area, Specialty, and State. If you didn’t have any hours for your office in 2012, you might want to take time to count what you are already doing for next year.

As an office, you may feel like this is just one more thing to do, but you may already be doing it and not taking the credit for it.

First, the people in your community need to know that we have volunteering opportunities available. Most volunteers are asked by someone from the local office and generally are a producer, Conservation District member, a friend, or a family member. People who know you like what you do. These people are usually the ones willing to come help you.

The number one best way to get a volunteer is by word of mouth and to ASK!

**What defines an Earth Team Volunteer?**

1. Is the Volunteer at least 14 years old?
2. Is the activity one that an NRCS employee would perform?
3. Is the activity beyond those the individual is paid or elected to do?
4. Is this an activity your State Conservationist would approve?

Volunteers can work on a variety of different projects with different goals in mind for assisting an office. There are basically three levels of volunteering in regards to Security.

**Volunteers and Security – Three levels:**

1. Non-Office work: Meetings, tree delivery, field work, conservation district and CTA assistance.
  - a completed volunteer application form - OF-301a
2. Office work NOT on a computer: Field work, filing, answering phones, general clerical
  - a completed volunteer application form - OF-301a
  - ask the volunteer to read and complete the Section 1619 Compliance
  - take the annual security awareness and privacy basics training courses hard copy
3. Work in the office on a government computer requires all the forms above plus a full background investigation and all the paperwork associated with hiring a district or partner employee. In addition, must submit
  - a completed volunteer application form - OF-301a
  - NRCS can cover the expenses of fingerprinting.
  - Full forms are located at the Colorado State Security Forms: <https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/west/co/adm/Security%20Forms/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

*Volunteers, continued on page 29*

*Volunteers, continued from page 28*

In order to get going, develop a needs assessment which is simply a list of items that you would like to accomplish but can't because of workload and deadlines.

We all have our projects we would like to do, but can't seem to. A volunteer may be able to help with some of the common office tasks to free up time for you to work on that project or they may be able to complete some of the legwork needed to get your project started.

If you have a good idea of what skills you need, then you have a target to shoot for when looking for a volunteer to fill that skill need. The important thing is to just ASK.

Volunteers can help with Feds Feeds Families, recycling items as part of the Green Team, or help with Conservation District informational meetings setup, registrations, and clean up.

A producer maybe interested in volunteering simply by being your rod-man or flagger while completing a survey on his property. A Conservation Board member may volunteer to assist with CRP field checks or assist with answering the phone in the office. You really don't know what help you might get until you ask.

If you would like more information on the Earth Team, please visit the National website at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/volunteers> or you can find additional Colorado information at <https://nrcs.sc.egov.usda.gov/web/co/areas/a2/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fwest%2fco%2fareas%2fa2%2fShared%20Documents%2f360%2d12%2d18%20PER%5fEarth%5fTeam%5fVolunteers&FolderC&View=%7b9CEA7093%2dA983%2d4CDE%2dAE0C%2dCECAB899D3E1%7d>.

## Haxtun Conservation District Annual Meeting

by Denise Swanson, WAE/Ultima/District, Area 2

The Haxtun Conservation District held its 66th annual meeting September 11, 2012 in Holyoke, CO. Landowners and producers met at a local restaurant at 7:30 am for a buffet breakfast and a business meeting.

Approximately 35 people were in attendance and were able to meet the three returning and three new board members.

President Renee Weis welcomed everyone and member Brad Young gave the invocation. After a buffet breakfast, Vice President Mike Miller reviewed the district's accomplishments for 2012 and District Manager Denise Swanson spoke of

the outlook for the upcoming year.

NRCS District Conservationist Daniel Palic spoke to the attendees about the many programs that NRCS is offering at this time including EQIP drought assistance. He also detailed the targeted initiative that assists ag producers in reduction of nitrogen drift.

Secretary/Treasurer, David Anderson honored two termed board members with plaques for their years of service. The board members sponsored a drawing for a Cabela's gift card and with there being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

## Stream Visual Assessment Protocol, Version 2 Training

Stream Visual Assessment Protocol, Version 2 (SVAP2) Field Training was recently conducted for 20 NRCS and Partner staffs in Area 1 and Area 2.

Area 1 training was held at Meeker on Coal Creek and the White River. Area 2 Training was held on the South Fork of the Republican River near Hale, Colorado.

SVAP2 is a method for assessing stream and riparian health by looking at 15 different indicators.

Some of the indicators that are evaluated include: Riparian Area Quantity and Quality, Canopy Cover, Nutrient Enrichment, Pools, Fish and



Group discusses SVAP 2 results

Aquatic Invertebrate Habitat Complexity, and the Aquatic Invertebrate Community.

Each indicator is given a rating from 1 to 10 then the average of the indicators is used to determine whether quality criteria are met.

Planners can use the SVAP2 results to work with landowners on ways to improve the low scoring factors and thus improving the quality of their streams and riparian areas.

## Make Plans Now to Attend the 5th National Conference on Grazing Lands

December 9 - 12, 2012  
The Caribe Royale, Orlando, Florida



The 5th National Conference on Grazing Lands is a unique, producer-based, national conference to increase the sustainability of the Nation's grazing lands, which cover nearly 600 million acres in the United States, or almost 30 percent.

More than 50 percent of the conference speakers are successful agricultural producers who share their success stories in hopes it will help others increase their sustainability and conservation practices.

### Featured speakers include:

- Temple Grandin – professor of Animal Science, Colorado State University; consultant and well-known author on animal behavior
- Fred Provenza – professor of Animal Behavior and Management, Utah State University; award-winning research scientist and rancher
- Kit Pharo – author, speaker and Colorado rancher

An exhibit hall will be full of displays with educational information and samples of new products and services.

### Who should attend?

Ranchers; farmers; federal, state and local land managers and policy makers; seed, animal and other related companies; public officials; academia; students; and others interested in proper grazing land management and its benefits.

Early discounted registration ends **October 15th**. For more information and the full agenda, visit the conference website at [www.glci.org/5NCGL.html](http://www.glci.org/5NCGL.html).



**Effective for the 2013 Benefit Period the maximum amount you can contribute to a Health Care FSA will be \$2,500.**

For the Benefit Period beginning January 1, 2013, all individuals participating in a health care flexible spending account will **no longer** be able to contribute up to \$5,000 annually.

The **new** maximum annual amount will be \$2,500.

**Open Enrollment Period:  
Monday, November 12, 2012 - Monday, December 10, 2012**

### Small Acreage Webinars

In partnership with Colorado State University (CSU) Extension, NRCS's small acreage program is offering webinars on lots of small acreage topics.

Small Acreage webinars are recorded and available on the CSU Extension Small Acreage Management website at [www.ext.colostate.edu/sam/webinar.html](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/sam/webinar.html).

### In Memory of

## James Ellis Tanner



James Ellis Tanner, 63, of Gilcrest, Colorado, passed away August 9, 2012 at his home. He was born May 30, 1949 in Cleveland, Ohio, son of Edgar and Gwendolyn Tanner.

James graduated from Valley High School in Platteville, Colo., with the class of 1967. He received his Associates Degree in Swine Management from Northeastern Junior College in Fort Morgan, Colo.

James won Reserve Champion in Poland China barrow with a first place in medium weight division at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, Colo., in 1972. He farmed and raised livestock in the Greeley, Colo., area off and on since 1965.

James operated several businesses before returning to the Greeley, Colo., area to purchase a farm in 1990. He raised corn, alfalfa, cattle, and a family.

James served several terms at the Platte Valley Conservation District Board, most recently as Vice-President. James felt very passionate about conservation and our youth.

# 2012 National Hispanic Heritage Month

## ¡FELIZ MES DE LA HISPANIDAD!

National Hispanic Heritage Month is an annual event from September 15 to October 15. Each year, this time is set aside to celebrate the history, achievements, culture, and contributions of Americans who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico, and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

The month-long observance begins on the same date five Latin American countries celebrate their independence: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively.

“Diversity United, Building America’s Future Today” is the theme of this year’s Hispanic Heritage Month celebration. Please support the many activities taking place around the Nation in commemoration of National Hispanic Heritage Month.

DIVERSITY UNITED,  
BUILDING  
AMERICA'S  
FUTURE  
TODAY.

HISPANIC  
HERITAGE MONTH

The USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

SEPT. 15 - OCT. 15

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USDA United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS National Resource Conservation Service

# September 15 - October 15, 2012

# Strikeforce



**SAVE THE DATE**

## Colorado Congreso de Acequias

preserving the water and heritage of Southern Colorado's oldest farming communities

October 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>  
San Luis, Colorado

\$20/person for farmers and ranchers; \$100 for all others includes Friday reception and lunch on Saturday and Sunday. Full agendas are available at your local NRCS office. Register online at [www.sangreacequias.org](http://www.sangreacequias.org) or call Sarah Parmar at (719) 695-0060.

Sponsored by: Trinchera Blanca Foundation, Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Costilla Conservancy District

## Trapper Days



Fort Lupton hosted a series of events the weekend after Labor Day themed, "**Deeply Rooted, Growing Stronger.**"

The Trapper Days action started with flint steel fire-starting, period costumes, and family fun at a reconstructed fort located at Weld County Road 14-1/2 and Highway 85.

West Adams and Platteville conservation districts and the Brighton NRCS Field Office participated in the fun with an information booth and fur trade.



## As USDA Celebrates 150 Years in 2012...

*Did you know that...*

In 2007, eighty-eight percent of farms are small, and these farms account for 64 percent of farm assets, including 63 percent of the land owned by farms?

## 68th CACD Annual Meeting

November 12-15, 2012 | Vail, Colorado

Vail Marriott Mountain Resort & Spa  
715 West Lionshead Circle, Vail, CO. 81657  
Tel: 1-877-622-3140

**Special Room Rate of \$92.00 per night!**  
You must register by October 29, 2012,  
to receive this special rate.

For more information, visit the CACD website at  
[www.coloradoacd.org](http://www.coloradoacd.org)

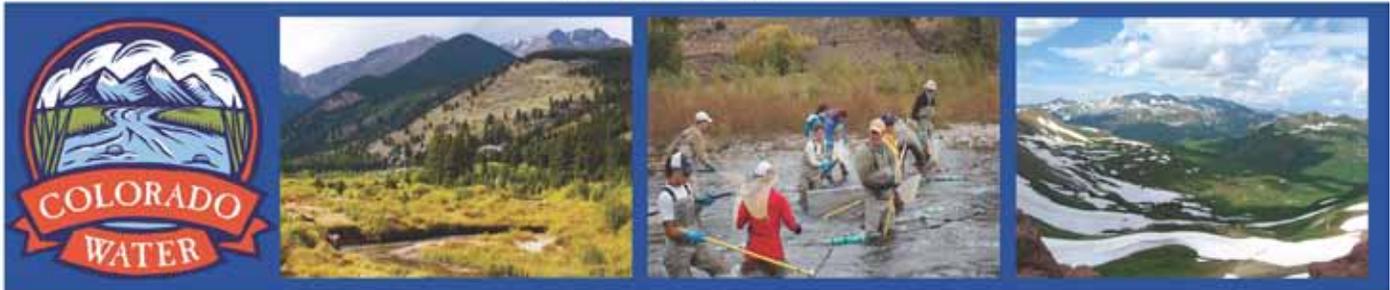


Columbus Day  
*Monday*  
*October 8, 2012*

# SAVE THE DATE!

## 2012 Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference

*Water 2012*  
 October 9-11, 2012  
 Westin Riverfront Resort  
 Avon, Colorado  
[coloradowater.org/Conferences](http://coloradowater.org/Conferences)



This annual conference expands cooperation and collaboration throughout Colorado in natural resource conservation, protection, and enhancement by informing participants about new issues and innovative projects.

**JOIN US FOR:**

- An exciting Keynote speech by Peter Decker, author of *Saving the West*.
- Interactive socials including a scavenger hunt and live music!
- A Plenary speech by Reeves Brown, Executive Director of the Department of Local Affairs.
- Eric Eckl's communication workshop on "Water Words that Work"!
- A half-day field trip in conjunction with the Eagle River Watershed Council.
- Speakers and panels presenting on 3 tracks: education & policy, water quality & quantity, and protecting & restoring your watershed!

**WHO SHOULD ATTEND:**

- Watershed groups
- Restoration professionals
- Environmental scientists
- Educators
- Anyone interested in Colorado water!

**EARLY REGISTRATION PRICE:**

- \$180/Members
- \$205/Non-Members
- One day registration available

Hosted by:



Thank you to our current sponsors!  
 Interested in sponsoring the conference?  
 Visit: [coloradowater.org/Conferences](http://coloradowater.org/Conferences)  
 for more information!



## NRCS Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The NRCS Employee Assistance Program provider is called The Sand Creek Group.

The EAP is a **free, confidential** counseling service available to you and your family members and is available 24 hours a day/7days a week, at 1-800-632-7643.

## Jefferson Conservation District Annual Meeting

**When:**

Thursday, October 18, 2012

**Where:**

Elk Creek Fire Department  
 11625 Blackfoot Rd  
 Conifer, CO 80433



**Time:**

6:00 pm -8:00 pm

Come learn about our history, eat some food, and have some fun!!



# TECHNO TIPS

## What is a LincPass? Who Needs One and Why

A LincPass is USDA's version of a Personal Identification Verification (PIV) Credential. USDA coined our PIV credential after Abraham Lincoln who founded the Department of Agriculture, hence the "LincPass". PIV credentials are required as a result of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12) which was issued on August 12, 2004 by President George W. Bush.

*"HSPD-12 calls for a mandatory, government-wide standard for secure and reliable forms of ID issued by the federal government to its employees and employees of federal contractors for access to federally-controlled facilities and networks. Based upon this directive, the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) developed Federal Information Processing Standards Publication (FIPS Pub) 201 including a description of the minimum requirements for a Federal personal identification verification (PIV) system. USDA's new HSPD-12 compliant ID is called the LincPass, as it is designed to link a person's identity to an ID credential and the credential to a person's ability to physically and logically access federally controlled buildings and information systems, respectively." (http://lincpass.usda.gov/)*

Who needs a LincPass? Your agency Sponsor decides if your position requires that you have a LincPass, but basically anyone who works in a USDA facility as an employee or affiliate staff, with access to sensitive information and IT resources needs one. The LincPass will be used not only for identification purposes, but eventually also for access to both federal computer systems (LACS) and federal facilities (PACS). Therefore it is very important that LincPass cardholders safeguard their LincPass at all times.

**LACS, Logical Access Control Systems**, relies on Two-Factor Authentication.

Authentication and is based on **what you know**, such as a password or a PIN, **what you have**, such as a LincPass, or **what you are**, such as biometric data (like a finger-



print). "Two-factor authentication" means using two of these authentication methods (**LincPass + PIN**) to increase the assurance that you are authorized to access USDA systems. It is also a primary step towards reducing the number of logins and passwords needed for access. Basically logging in with your LincPass + PIN gives employees and staff access to most agency resources and applications without having to repeatedly enter logins and passwords.



**ePACS, electronic Physical Access Control System** is the building access component of your LincPass. USDA facilities that use card readers for access will be upgraded by GSA to work with employee and staff LincPass cards. It integrates several disparate PACSs into an enterprise application providing a system that can rapidly authenticate credentials electronically, a system that is less susceptible to identity fraud, tampering, counterfeiting and terrorist exploitation.

A LincPass card also allows employee or staff to



**electronically sign** documents and e-mails, and access agency resources from off-site locations through an enterprise Virtual Private Network (VPN). As new forms and applications are rolled out, electronic signature capability becomes even more important.

So if you are a USDA employee or staff member, a LincPass will get you in the door, get you on the computer, get you to agency web applications and sign your work for you. Yes, you need one and it needs to be active. See your HR or Technology support staff for more information on how to get one.