

# THE COLORADO NRCS CONNECTION



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## Insights & Highlights

by Allen Green



We are halfway through this fiscal year and, as I anticipated, we are progressing nicely with our goals and accomplishments.

Many of you have heard me express the need to adhere to our regionally and nationally mandated responsibilities and you have also heard me speak about the importance of not being program driven.

In that vein, I have outlined our priority natural resource issues. They include: Water Quantity, Rangeland Health, Soil Health, Water Quality, and Drought.

I am stressing these issues because they represent the most significant and urgent resource issues in Colorado. I have directed our leadership team to focus on these issues as we set direction for the future.

I have also asked our public affairs team to develop a comprehensive campaign to help make our landowners aware of and educate them on the value of these resources and what they can be doing to help protect and sustain them.

The activities and messages we share will convey to landowners how they can determine the current status and the opportunities for improvement of these natural resources and issues.

Each message will also focus on the capacity of our local districts and their leadership role in the conservation of Colorado's natural resources.

Water is probably the most critical resource for continued agriculture production, along

with supporting an ever-growing population.

Our goal will be to provide technical and financial assistance on a voluntary basis to those agriculture producers who wish to maximize the efficient use of their limited water resource.

Improving the health of our rangelands involves over 23 million acres of some of the most valuable landscape in the state.

Private rangelands provide a majority of the open space, plant diversity, and wildlife habitat in the state, along with supporting the key industry of livestock.

The approach to the soil health message takes a different turn. In the past, we have focused on reducing the rate of soil degradation through erosion control.

We will move ahead to look at how we can actually improve the health of our soil base to include improved tilling, organic matter, carbon sequestration, etc.

Our efforts to share information regarding water quality will revolve around animal nutrients with a focus on AFO/CAFO.

One of these major efforts will involve trying to assist livestock producers to remove undesirable situations from AFOs that could result in these operations becoming subject to increased regulations.

The focus of the drought issue revolves around creating messages from a resource standpoint, illustrating the impacts of the drought on those resources, sharing how the impacts can be minimized, and how landowners can prepare for future drought conditions.

We will be developing many activities and materials to support this campaign effort, which illustrates that NRCS is one of Private Land's Best Friends.

Zig Ziglar on:

## The Subtlety Of Language

I have found that sometimes the subtle difference in our attitude, which of course can make a major difference in our future, can be as simple as the language we use. The difference in even how you talk to yourself or others.

Consciously making a decision to quit saying what you don't want and to start saying what you do want. I call that faith. Believing the best, hoping for the best and moving toward the best.

A few examples could be, instead of saying, "What if somebody doesn't respond?" you start saying, "What if they do respond?" Instead of saying, "What if someone says no?" You say, "What if they say yes?" Instead of "What if they start and quit?" say, "What if they start and stay?" . . .

see *Language*, page 9

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# Brush Landowner Plants a 'Forest'

Story and photos by Jerry Schwein

Robert Parker believes eastern Colorado needs a little beautification, so he plants trees, and trees, and more trees.

He and wife, Ilona, have been planting trees since they bought 240 acres south of Brush, Colorado, in 1965.

They now own 6,700 acres throughout the Beaver Creek watershed and have planted an estimated 80,000 trees.

*"I've planted pines, Rocky Mountain juniper, Eastern red cedar, plum caragena, sumac...you name it, I've probably planted it,"* says Parker.

*"I plant 500 to 3,000 trees each spring, mainly for the aesthetics,"* he says.

However, there are many other benefits as well. Parker cooperates with the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Morgan County Chapter of Pheasants Forever in opening his land for free hunting. One year he had 830 hunters sign-in to hunt on his lands.

In addition to pheasants and doves, Parker has antelope, white tail and mule deer, and jackrabbits making homes and roaming his farm and rangelands.

In recent years, he has worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to install field windbreaks, wildlife habitats, and wildlife water guzzlers under the United States Department of Agriculture Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Most of his trees are purchased from the Colorado State Forest Service nursery in Fort Collins. He often drives to Fort Collin to pick up the trees himself.

Parker takes advantage of federal and state cost-share programs to purchase and plant the trees.

The continuous Conservation Reserve Program has provided cost-share help to the Parkers in establishing permanent grass cover and trees.

C. W. Scott, district conservationist with the NRCS in Fort Morgan, says the program pays 90 percent of the cost of planting trees and installing protective fabric.

Landowners also receive an incentive payment and annual rental payment for idling the land. The purpose is to protect croplands from wind erosion on the otherwise open prairies.

Parker graduated from Montana State University in 1942 where he majored in Forestry and Range Management.

In 1947, Robert received a master's degree in Forestry Silviculture at Yale University. He also received a degree in geological engineering in 1954 from the University of Utah.

Parker, now 82 years of age and going strong, has received state and national recognition for his tree planting



Robert Parker, landowner, stands beside an Eastern red cedar, one of the many thousands of trees he has planted throughout Brush and Beaver Creek, Colorado.

efforts. In 1992, he was selected "Wildlife Landowner of the Year" by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

That same year he was recognized by the Colorado State Legislature for providing wildlife habitat and hunting opportunities on his land. In 1996, Parker received the National Arbor Day Foundation award for his tree planting achievements.

One of the main goals of Robert and Ilona in addition to raising their five children has been to create a haven for all forms of wildlife and to plant a forest on the prairie on their little section of the earth south of Brush.

They have done well.

## NRCS welcomes new Earth Team volunteers

Miranda Grynkevicz is working with the State Office IT staff. She moved to Colorado after retiring from NRCS in New Hampshire where she was an Information Technology Manager and served on the Civil Rights Committee.

The IT staff is pleased to have such a capable and friendly volunteer.

Corey Green lives on a farm out-

side of Byers, Colorado and is a part-time student at Fort Morgan Community College.

Reportedly, Corey is a tremendous asset to the Byers F.O. where he volunteers afternoons assisting with various tasks.



Corey Green, Byers FO volunteer.

# Colorado's April Snowpack Breaks Records

by Mike Gillespie, Snow Survey Supervisor

The warm and dry weather, which was entrenched across Colorado during March, has had a devastating impact on the state's snowpack percentages.

The latest snow surveys, conducted by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), show the statewide snowpack dropped to 65 percent of average on April 1, 2004, down from last month's 90 percent of average. Significant early melting at lower elevations was measured across the state, with the greatest decreases measured in the Arkansas, Gunnison, and combined San Juan, Animas, Dolores, and San Miguel basins.

Snowpack percentages dropped by 30 percentage points or more dur-

ing March in these basins according to Allen Green, State Conservationist with the NRCS.

Across northern Colorado, the dry March weather only worsened what has developed into another significant drought year for the state.

*"We count on March for about 20 percent of our annual snowfall. With much more snow melting than was added to the snowpack during the month, the impacts will be felt for water users for the remainder of the year,"* said Green.

The warm and dry weather dropped snowpack readings to record low levels for April 1 at 14 manually measured sites in Colorado. Most of those sites have had snowpack meas-

urements taken since the late 1930s, when snow surveying began in the state, and are located in the vicinity of Rocky Mountain National Park and the Headwaters of

the Arkansas and Colorado Rivers. As a result of the reduced snowpack levels, runoff expectations for this spring and summer have diminished across the state. Below average streamflows are forecast across Colorado for the 2004 runoff season, with well below average volumes expected in the South Platte and portions of the Colorado River basins.

While the early melting snowpack mostly soaked into the state's dry soils, many streams in western Colorado flowed at above average levels during March.

Although reservoirs can capture much of this early meltwater for use later in the summer, most experts feel there's little advantage in this.

*"This early melt only extends the runoff season over a longer period where losses to soil moisture and evaporation can occur. Ideally, we'd hope for a short runoff period, where wet soils allow for most of the snowmelt to runoff with greater efficiency,"* said Green.

The state's reservoir storage continues to track below average across most of the state. Although storage is better than last year, there is little optimism for full storage this year.

BASIN	% AVERAGE SNOWPACK	% LAST YR.'S SNOWPACK	% AVERAGE RESERVOIR STORAGE	% LAST YR.'S RESERVOIR STORAGE
Gunnison	74	86	105	129
Colorado	64	63	87	244
South Platte	51	44	83	143
North Platte	69	71	---	---
Yampa/White	69	75	110	119
Arkansas	60	58	53	115
Rio Grande	77	104	52	84
San Juan, Animas, Dolores	70	93	74	125
Statewide	65	69	81	144

## COLORADO RECEIVES NATIONAL SERVICE AWARD

Colorado recently received the 2003 Earth Team National Volunteer Service Award at the NRCS National Leadership Team Meeting, held in Crystal City, Virginia, on March 22, 2004.

Chief Bruce Knight presented the Chief's Cup to Allen Green, Colorado State Conservationist.

*"Earth Team volunteers and staff in Colorado showed creativity in using volunteer resources for conservation education, monitoring water quality, developing partnerships, and conducting engineering surveys and designs,"* Knight said.

Additionally, volunteers and NRCS employees in Colorado earned the following awards: The Northern Plains Outstanding RC&D was awarded to San Luis Valley RC&D; the Chief's Field Office award went to Glenwood Springs; and the Volunteer Group award went to the Coalition Upper South Platte.

*"Congratulations, to everyone involved in the Earth Team effort in Colorado!"* Knight said.

The Chief's Cup is not an award based on the number of volunteers or the number of hours worked. It is based on

creativity in planning and identifying volunteer jobs and in recruiting volunteers.



Chief Bruce Knight presents the 2003 Earth Team National Volunteer Service Award to Allen Green, NRCS Colorado State Conservationist.

# on the pulse

## Area Office News

### Area One

**The Grand Junction Area** Office recently held an Area One District Conservationists Meeting in Grand Junction, Colorado. Topics discussed at the meeting included updates on NRCS, the Conservation Security Program, Public Affairs, and Earth Team activities. The DCs also received information on the Performance Results System Conservation Systems Guides, Cost Docket Preparation, and Survey and Construction Safety.

The DCs in Area One are working diligently ranking conservation practices such as EQUIP, WHIP, CRP, FRPP, and GRP.

**Grand Junction FO** - received \$1 million in funding for the Grand Junction salinity project. Jim Currier, Grand Junction DC, has been teaching a small acreage workshop at Mesa State College for the past three years and has generated EQIP contracts and easements, as a result.

**Glenwood Springs FO** - will hold an Agriculture Teacher's Workshop in late June; Range Fork Conservancy is helping out with the water trailer project; and field office just closed out a FRPP contract south of Carbondale.

**San Miguel FO** - is planning for Environmental Appreciation Day where local kids will be given a

presentation on soils. The local Sage Grouse working groups are now meeting on a regular basis.

**Kremmling FO** - will be participating in the upcoming Hay Days. Grass seeds are now available through the Conservation Districts.

**Steamboat Springs FO** - **Vance Fulton**, Soil Conservation Technician, is Acting DC for the FO. There has been interest expressed in the FRPP program. The FO will be getting new employees soon: a District Clerk and a new District Conservationist.

**Craig FO** - generated two continuous CRP contracts. The FO will participate in Earth Day activities at a local middle school. In conjunction with CDOW, BLM, and Dinosaur, Craig FO will be hosting a jeopardy game at the school.

**Gunnison FO** - the 2006 Soil and Water Conservation Society International Meeting will be held in Keystone, Colorado. The field office conducted an elaborate study of Sage Grouse, captured the findings, and packaged it into a PowerPoint presentation.

**Montrose FO** - **Brad Banulis**, Watershed Wildlife Biologist, is assisting Gunnison, Montrose, and Delta on wildlife issues. Montrose has filled a Soil Conservationist, Engineer, and IWM Specialist position and all employees should be on board

soon. **Sherri Brandt**, Soil Conservationist, is expecting a newborn in September - Congratulations! Districts are working on producing a cd on agriculture and conservation. Water festivals will begin in May and there will be a related poster contest at that time.

**Walden FO** - the Living Snow Fences program will be going on this summer. Delta is working with the Forest Service on a forest improvement plan. The Seedling Tree Program is going again and the field office is working with Middle Park on the upcoming Hay Days.

### Area Two

**Sammie Molinaro**, District Conservationist, Byers FO recently attended a wild turkey release sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF). The release was located on the Colorado Rifle Club property 15 miles northeast of Byers, Colorado. Twenty-seven turkeys were released, and over 100 people attended this event.

NWTF chairman and renowned turkey caller, Rob Keck, was the master of ceremonies. A local youth group called the JAKES from Strasburg, Colorado, helped with the release of the turkeys.

The Colorado Rifle Club installed plum thickets, food plots, and windbreaks to provide not

only food and habitat for the turkeys, but for all of the local wildlife.

Byers FO is working with the Colorado Rifle Club under the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program contract, to install additional wildlife food plots, thickets and windbreaks. This project demonstrates the strong partnership between NRCS, NWTF, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

**Wild Turkey Release**



*Get Ready...*



*...Fly Away!*

The Colorado Farm Show was held in Greeley, Colorado, and was an excellent opportunity for information and education outreach. The Greeley NRCS Field Office and West Greeley Conservation District put together a booth to promote conservation, distribute information and education materials at the show.

An estimated 200-300 people stopped by the booth during the three day-event. The District gave away 30 free trees to winners who entered their names in a drawing held at the booth.

**TaTrecia Wesley, Shana Harness,** and **Stuart McFarland,** soil conservationists from the Greeley field office, judged the

2004 Longs Peak Science Fair (Earth Science and Botany related entries) at the University of Northern Colorado on February 4th.

The awards for this portion of the science fair were provided by the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

**Gene Backhaus,** District Conservationist for Metro Field Office, **Sammie Molinaro,** District Conservationist for Byers Field Office and **Sylvia Hickenlooper,** Soil Conservationist for Brighton Field Office, along with the CART group, put on a small acreage workshop at the Adams County Fairgrounds on February 21st.

Approximately 45 people were in attendance with talks given on weeds and weed management, grass establishment and management, wildlife, windbreaks, and Xeriscape.

The Flagler field office, Flagler CD, CSU Coop. Ext., CDOW, FSA county committee held a "conservation update workshop" to present EQIP, WHIP, etc., cost-share programs and to remind producers that during these tough times, even though they may not feel they have extra cash to do conservation, NRCS and the CD can provide assistance with noxious weed ID, wildlife info, nutrient management, etc.

This workshop was attended by local producers.



**Jerome Daugherty,** Soil Conservationist, Flagler, presents to a small group of the landowners.

The Jefferson Conservation District along with other partners

including NRCS, sponsored a *Living Colorado Style* booth at the Garden and Home Show at the Colorado Convention Center February 7-15, 2004.

Total attendance at the show was over 100,000 urban and small acreage landowners seeking information on home improvements, both interior and exterior in nature.



**Bob Zebroski,** Director, CACD, left, assists landowners at the Garden and Home Show, February 10, 2004.

Each year the Wray Field Office assists with hosting the Ogallala Symposium. This year the symposium was held on January 26, 2004 and had over 400 people in attendance from the tri-state region. The Wray NRCS Field Office received many good compliments and was able to distribute a large amount of promotional items for the Colorado NRCS and Conservation Districts.

**Steve Ivins, SCT, Barb Clayburg,** CD Manager, and **Gary Campfield,** DC for Wray NRCS Field Office, attended Republican River Riparian Project at the fish hatchery on Jan.15. Sixty concerned people showed up to discuss water issues and tour the headwaters. It was a very good turnout from local people and some from Kansas and Nebraska. This was hosted by NE Colorado RC&D. This project was initiated by Rick Mullaney, SW Nebraska RC&D coordinator.

West Greeley CD planted a demonstration site on tree plantings in Greeley Colorado. It was

planted to demonstrate the drip system, mulching, and a variety of trees that are available through the district tree sales.

This gives customers the opportunity to see items at work and what they will provide once growing. This site has proven to be a great assist for the district and the Greeley NRCS Field Office.



The CSU Forest Service tree planting crew volunteers their time and labor to assist with planting of the demonstration site in Greeley, Colorado.

More than 50 tree-planting contractors, conservation district managers, local landowners, and NRCS personnel from Colorado and Nebraska attended a seminar held on January 21 in Holyoke, Colorado.

Colorado State Forest Service nursery manager Randy Moench, Colorado State Forester Greg Sundstrom, and District Forester Damon Lange presented procedures and proper planting methods for growing and harvesting trees.



Greg Sundstrom, Colorado State Forester, discusses proper tree-planting methods at a seminar in Holyoke, Colorado.

### The Yuma Conservation

District recognized two Yuma Middle School students for outstanding science fair projects. Ryan Lebsack, 7th grade, and

Deseray Gruben, 8th grade, each received \$50 savings bonds for outstanding conservation projects. Eris Salvador, along with representatives from the staff and board, presented the awards.

There were over 100 entries in the science fair. Projects with an environmental theme were judged by representatives from the district's Marvin Salvador Science Fair Project.

The conservation district's annual award encourages awareness of local natural resource concerns and memorializes the work done by Marvin Salvador, who put in 32 years of service in Yuma District as a soil conservation technician.

## Area Three

### CSU Cooperative Extension

and NRCS in Area 3 sponsored three rangeland drought workshops in Area 3. They were in La Junta, Lamar, and Canon City.

The title of the workshops were "Integrated Strategies for Drought Recovery." Speakers included **Ben Berlinger**, La Junta field office Area Rangeland Management Specialist. Dr. Roy Roath, CSU Cooperative Extension, Jeff Tranel, CSU Cooperative Extension Agriculture and Business Management Specialist, And three local ranchers.

### Approximately 200 people

attended the 10th Annual Arkansas River Basin Water Forum (ARBWF) held in Canon City, March 4-5. **Jane Wustrow**, Sangre de Cristo RC&D office, was one of the co-chairs. **Kathy Trujillo**, Sangre de Cristo RC&D office, also served on the planning committee and was in charge of registration.

Topics covered included the Arkansas River Flow

Program, Democracies and the Colorado Watershed Movement, plus others.

The forum was dedicated to **Robert "Bob" Appel**, former Southeast Colorado RC&D Coordinator, who passed away November 16, 2003. Bob was an integral member of the ARBWF planning committee from the beginning of the Forum.

The three conservancy districts in the Arkansas River Basin are setting up a Robert "Bob" Appel Award to be given each year at the Forum.

Bob was also honored by the Bent County Chamber of Commerce as its Citizen of the Year at the Chamber's recent Annual Banquet. Nancy Appel, Bob's widow, accepted the award on his behalf.

During the presentation, the Chamber president mentioned that Bob always went "above and beyond" expectations for community projects and that he helped out in Bent County and the entire RC&D area.

### Wade Sigler, East Otero

and Olney-Boone CD Farm Bill Technician, and **Mary Miller**, La Junta area office, took two displays to the Arkansas Valley Irrigation Expo held in Rocky Ford on March 12. They provided materials about NRCS programs and answered questions on cost-share programs available to irrigated farmers.

### David Miller and Deanna

**Russell**, Rocky Ford field office, gave presentations to 150 La Junta 7th graders on March 9-11. They showed a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) educational video on the Dust Bowl and current conservation work that was filmed with southeastern Colorado NRCS's help in 1997.

### The Sangre de Cristo

RC&D held the Pueblo County

## Area Three, cont'd

Community Collaborative Rain and Hail Study (CoCoRaHS) kickoff at Colorado State University-Pueblo on March 18 from 6:30-8 p.m. CoCoRaHS is a science education, research and outreach project housed in Colorado State's Colorado Climate Center.

Through the CoCoRaHS project, the size, intensity, duration and patterns of rain, hail and snow storms were analyzed and documented by more than 900 volunteers in communities throughout the state.

**Rich Rhoades, Pueblo field office,** gave a presentation about NRCS and its programs to an Environmental Sciences Class at Colorado State University-Pueblo.

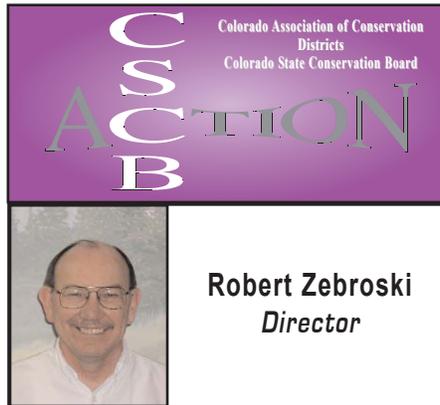
**Lorenz Sutherland, La Junta area office,** was the featured speaker at the Southeast Colorado RC&D Annual Meeting held in La Junta. Lorenz gave a presentation on the history of irrigation in the Arkansas Valley.

**The East Central Colorado RC&D office** worked with other agencies to raise funds for playground improvements at the Hines Park Playground in Hugo. Installation of the equipment is scheduled for this spring.

### In Memory of:

**L.D. (Pete) Ward, Jr.,** who worked in the Trinidad field office, passed away on March 14. Prior to working for the NRCS, Pete worked on ranches in Colorado, Montana, and New Mexico, before moving back to his family's ranch northeast of Trinidad where he raised Black Angus cattle.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Jane, and sons, Will (Delrae) and Walter, two sisters, and numerous other family members and friends.



**The Lower Arkansas River Watershed** has submitted the name of Leroy Brase of the Prowers Conservation District as the representative on the Colorado State Conservation Board. Leroy is currently a member of the Colorado Conservation Leadership Program.

**There are ten candidates of the Spanish Peaks Purgatoire River Conservation District** seeking four positions on the Board of Supervisors during the election in May.

**The Upper South Platte Watershed Association** met this month in Lakewood. John Covert of Colorado Working Landscapes was the featured speaker on the subject of alternative sources of energy from agriculture producers.

**The Colorado Nonpoint Source Council** made funding recommendations on the proposed 319 Water Quality projects for next year. The two proposals developed by the San Juan Conservation District and the East Otero Conservation District were both recommended for funding.

**The Yuma Wray Pump Testing Association** is working with the Division of Water Resources as a potential source of funding for the irrigation water management program.

**The first three Watershed Conservation Partner Development meetings** held in Burlington, Sterling, and Lamar were considered a success by the participants. State Board members Veryl Eschen, Pat Meakins, and Leroy Brase attended the meetings.

**NRCS has allocated 25 percent of the funds** for the Ground and Surface Water Program to areas outside the Ogallala Aquifer.



## UP AND COMING



*You may want to jot this down!*

**TSP Open Season**----- Apr. 15-June 30

**Living Snowfence Planting**-----Apr. 18-23

**Riparian Trailer Demonstrations** --Apr. 18-30

**Gunn./Dolores Watershed Mtg.** ----Apr. 20

**N. Platte/White/Yampa Watershed Mtg.** -----Apr. 21

**Technology Team Mtg.** -----Apr. 21-22

**NEPA Training** -----Apr. 27-28

**Riparian Trailer Demonstrations** --May 1-14

**Area 3 DC and FO Tour** -----May 3-6

**Upper S. Platte Watershed Mtg.** --May 6

**Mother's Day** -----May 9

**LT Teleconference** -----May 11

**Memorial Day** -----May 31

**LT Teleconference** -----June 8

**Area 2 All DC Mtg.** -----June 9

**Rio Grande Watershed Mtg.** -----June 11



# Private Land Wildlife Biologists. . .

## . . . Introducing the New Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Program

Through the efforts of Colorado State Conservationist Allen Green, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently started an innovative program for protecting important wildlife species and their habitat.

The Private Lands Wildlife Habitat Conservation program started in February 2003 when the NRCS, the Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), and the Colorado Watershed Network (CWN) entered into a joint agreement to place four Private Land Wildlife Biologists (PLWB) into NRCS offices around Colorado.

This multi-organization partnership reflects a unique and exciting new direction. It provides technical resources to landowners and other land managers to more fully incorporate wildlife management

into their existing conservation plans.

Private landowners recognize the value of wildlife habitat as an integral component of land health, but have not always had the resources to successfully incorporate wildlife practices into their agriculture and other land use practices.

The CDOW works with these landowners to the extent possible, but does not always have enough biologists and or other resources available.

The NRCS has the responsibility and financial resources through the Farm Bill to address wildlife concerns, but does not always have the technical expertise.

By integrating the CDOW expertise with the NRCS resources, the new PLWB will be able to bring the best of both organizations

to assist Colorado's landowners.

The primary responsibility of the PLWB is provide technical and program support for the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), the Conservation Security Program (CSP), the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), and Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) program.

Each PLWB covers multiple counties in their responsibility to provide support for incorporating fish and wildlife considerations into resource planning with landowners.

This includes designing conservation plans for landowners to ensure biological considerations are addressed in planning.



**Casey Veatch**  
PLWB, Flagler

**Area of Focus:** Short Grass Prairie  
**Duties:** Working with landowners to increase the understanding and improvement of managing Short Grass Prairie habitat.

In his first year, Veatch has worked on planning for 59 CRP projects, 5 WHIP projects, 6 Wildlife EQUIP projects, and 1 GRP project.

Veatch is a science teacher who has been traveling throughout eastern Colorado working on education and outreach efforts.



**Brad Banulis**  
PLWB, Montrose

**Area of Focus:** Gunnison Sage Grouse  
**Duties:** Working with landowners to improve wildlife habitat conservation for the Gunnison Sage Grouse.

Banulis works in the priority areas of the Gunnison River Basin, where CRP lands are managed to maintain, enhance, and develop quality habitat.

The Gunnison Sage Grouse is a distinct subspecies that is on the State species of concern list.



**Chanda Pettie**  
PLWB, Alamosa

**Area of Focus:** San Luis Valley Critical Wetland Habitat  
**Duties:** Working with landowners to plan and improve projects in the San Luis Valley.

The San Luis Valley is a critical area containing the highest number and diversity of wetlands in Colorado.

Highlights for Pettie's first year include two new WRP conservation easements, two WRP easements waiting for funding, and several other applications.



**Ed Schmal**  
PLWB, Morgan

**Area of Focus:** Lower South Platte  
**Duties:** Working with landowners, in coordination with NRCS and DOW, on critical wetland, riparian issues in the Lower South Platte.

In his first year, Schmal has worked with the Holyoke and Julesburg FOs on wildlife-related programs and has advocated for wildlife programs based on a landowner's needs.

He has also conducted status reviews for Morgan, Sedgwick, and Philips counties.

# Onion Demonstration Project:

## Comparing Furrow and Drip Irrigation in the Uncompahgre Valley

**N**RCS, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, and Tuxedo Farms recently participated in an onion demonstration project, which compared furrow and drip irrigation in the Uncompahgre Valley.

The goal of the project was to determine if drip irrigation is a viable method for the Uncompahgre Valley by measuring yield, evaluating disease, and monitoring water usage between drip and furrow irrigation.

In preparation for the onion demonstration project, the participants prepared the land by plowing, disking, rollo-harrowing, and land planing. They also shaped and rolled 30-inch beds and



Prior to planting the onions, participants of the onion demonstration project install drip tape into the soil.

injected drip tape into the soil 3.5 inches below surface in the center of the 30-inch bed.

Next, the participants planted a variety of onions: 135,000 seeds per acre in the furrow irrigated land and 195,000 seeds per acre in the drip irrigated land.

The seeds were planted in two rows per 30-inch bed approximately eight inches apart in the furrow irrigated land and four rows per 30-inch bed, with drip tape injected in the center of the bed, and with the onions planted four inches on either side of the tape in the drip irrigated land.



Drip irrigation on the left and furrow irrigation on the right.

Then a total of 320 pounds per acre of nitrogen was applied in two applications to the furrow irrigated land and 210 pounds per acre was applied in the drip system to the drip irrigated land.

During the initial irrigation, total water used for furrow irrigated land was 3.98 acre feet per acre and 2.57 acre feet per acre for drip irrigated land. Clearly, drip irrigation required less water than furrow irrigation.

In summary, furrow irrigated land yielded 712 sacks of onions per acre equaling 51,264 pounds of onions per acre and drip irrigated land yielded 1,168 sacks per acre equaling 84,096 pounds.

Drip irrigated lands increased yields 64 percent over furrow irrigated lands. Also, water used for drip irrigation was half that of furrow irrigation, disease incidence was less, and onion size was greater.



Participants harvest the drip irrigated side of onion demonstration.

### Language, cont'd from page 1

I found that when you start thinking and saying what you really want then your mind automatically shifts and pulls you in that direction. And sometimes it can be just a little twist in vocabulary that illustrates your attitude and philosophy.

Our language can also affect how others perform and behave around us. A teenager says to a parent, "I need ten dollars." And if the parents learn to say, "No comprende. That kind of language doesn't work here. We've got plenty of money, but that's not how you get ten dollars." Then you teach your teenager how to ask, "How can I earn ten dollars?"

That is the magic of words. . . .

If you just understand these simple principles, teaching them . . . is sometimes just a matter of language. It's like an investment account instead of a savings account. Simple language, but so important. It is easy to stumble through almost a lifetime and not learn some of these simplicities.

Then you have to put up with all the lack and all the challenges that don't work out simply from not reading the book, not listening to the tape, not sitting in the class, not studying your language and not being willing to search so you can then find.

But here is the great news. You can start this process anytime and you might find that your language can have a great impact on your attitude, actions and results.

It's all about  
**COMMUNICATION!**



# NATIONALLY SPEAKING

## USDA Provides \$19.8 Million to Control Salinity in the Colorado River Basin

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that Colorado, Utah and Wyoming received \$19.8 million to control salinity in the Colorado River Basin. The Colorado River Basin is the primary domestic water supply source for 27 million residents in seven states and is a source of irrigation water for more than 3.5 million acres of farmland.

*"These funds will help control salinity on private lands and improve the water quality in the basin so that millions of people can have a safer domestic water supply,"* Veneman said.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming will use this funding from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to provide technical and financial assistance to eligible producers. Colorado and Utah each will receive nearly \$9.6 million and Wyoming will receive \$675,000. Colorado's three projects have 703 active contracts; Utah's two projects have 495 active contracts; and Wyoming's one project has 12 active contracts. Only these three



**Salt-affected soils are visible on rangeland in Colorado.**

states have approved USDA salinity control projects in the Colorado River Basin.

USDA aims to reduce the salt loading by 705,000 tons by the year 2020. So far, agricultural producers have reduced 369,000 tons of salt, or nearly 52 percent of the USDA goal.

The Colorado River Basin encompasses portions of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. The river flows more than 1,400 miles from its headwaters in Wyoming and Colorado to the Gulf of California in the Republic of Mexico.

### Request for Proposals for Conservation Innovation Grants Due May 28, 2004

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman released the interim final rule for Conservation Innovation Grants and announced that \$15 million will be available

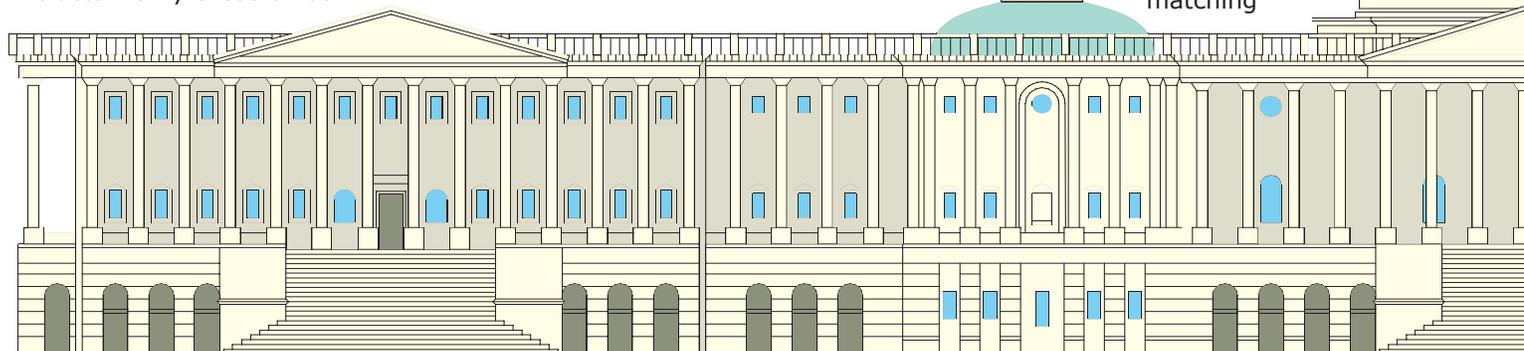
to fund selected grant proposals. The request for proposals for Conservation Innovation Grants is due on May 28, 2004.

*"This program provides a great opportunity to promote conservation technologies and stimulate innovative approaches to environmental enhancement and protection on working lands,"* Veneman said. *"Farmers and ranchers will benefit by having new technologies to protect the environment and comply with federal, state, and local regulations."*

Conservation Innovation Grant proposals will be accepted from eligible governmental or nongovernmental organizations and individuals for innovative single or multi-year projects involving producers who qualify for EQIP.

The grants will fund projects targeting innovative on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. Project proposals may address areas such as market-based pollution credit trading, agricultural conservation systems, carbon sequestration, and reduction of applied nutrients.

Selected applicants may receive grants up to 50 percent of the total project cost. Applicants must provide nonfederal matching





Fertilizer application applied directly into irrigation lateral for flood application.

funds for at least 50 percent of the project cost. An exception allows for beginning and limited resource farmers and ranchers, tribes, and community-based organizations representing these groups to obtain a higher percentage of project matching funds from in-kind contributions. The federal contribution may not exceed \$1 million for a single project.

Additional information on Conservation Innovation Grants is available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig>.

## USDA Signs Agreement with the American Seed Trade Association

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Bruce Knight recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) to promote better exchange of seed technology.

*"This partnership will ensure that quality native seed is available for future conservation efforts. Native seed supplies are essential and must be available for conservation program participants,"* Knight said.

The NRCS Plant Materials Program selects plants that are important to conservation efforts and develops innovative planting technologies that make the plants more effective in solving conservation concerns.

The program includes a network of 26 plant materials centers that work with commercial seed producers to make sure that high quality seed needed for conservation work is available.

In addition, NRCS works closely with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to make recommendations for reseeding after wildfires and other major disturbances, as well as to improve rangeland quality in the West.

The five-year MOU to exchange cultivation information and technology extends to those activities of ASTA, the NRCS Plant Materials Program, and related programs that apply to conservation of natural resources.

Additional information on the NRCS Plant Materials Program can be found at <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>



## NRCS celebrates Earth Team Volunteers During National Volunteer Week

NRCS celebrates Earth Team volunteers during National Volunteer Week April 18-24, 2004.



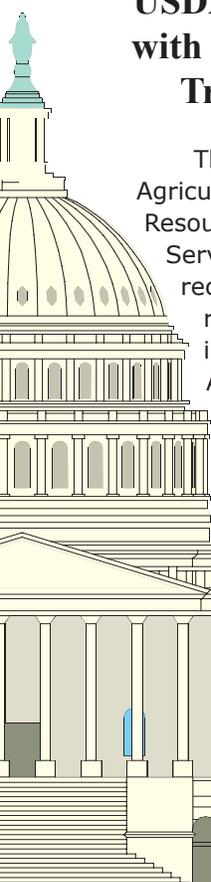
The national observance creates the perfect opportunity for NRCS to thank the more than 40,000 Earth Team volunteers who have donated more than 1,000,000 hours to conservation efforts nationwide.

These Earth Team volunteers, working side-by-side with paid staff, plant the seeds of conservation today that will sustain our resources for tomorrow.

The Earth Team has been around since 1981, when Congress passed legislation allowing NRCS to use volunteers in all programs.

In 2003, over 43,000 Earth Team Volunteers donated over one million hours of their time to conservation practices, which valued over \$16 million.

For more information about National Volunteer Week, contact your state volunteer coordinator.



# Resource Conservation & Development

## East Central Colorado Resource Conservation and Development Projects



### Historic Preservation Projects

Economic impact - \$500,000 - \$1 million plus

Partners - Kit Carson Historical Society, Lincoln County Historical Society, Colorado State Historical Society, Town of Hugo, Town of Genoa, Roundhouse Preservation Inc., Drennan Community Building, numerous individuals  
Project Status - ongoing

### Hines Park Playground

Economic impact - \$50,000

Partners - Prairie Horizons Women's Group, Town of Hugo, Greater Outdoors Colorado, Eastern Colorado Plainsman Newspaper

Opportunity - Prairie Horizons, a local women's service group requested assistance from ECC RC&D to raise funds for playground improvements to a local park in Hugo, Colorado. Two low maintenance, age appropriate play systems were selected. Through a series of local fundraisers and grants, \$50,000 in cash and donated services were raised. Installation is scheduled for May 21-23, 2004.



### Drennan School

Three room prairie school built in 1916. This school building is currently used as a community building. East Central Colorado RCD (ECC RC&D) is working with the board of directors to secure funding to complete a Historic Structure Assessment. This assessment will address preservation needs as well as those to rehabilitate the building for future use as a licensed day care facility and community center.



### Other Projects:

**Hedlund House Museum** - Plans are being developed with the Lincoln County Historical society to restore the exterior and foundation and replace the electrical and heating systems to provide for year round use. First phase cost \$100,000.

**Kit Carson Rail Road Depot** - Local museum in Kit Carson, Colorado was assisted with fundraising for exterior restoration. Current phase of restoration will begin this spring. Estimated cost is \$200,000.

**Plains Hotel and Historic Store Front** - ECC RC&D is working with the Town of Genoa to complete Historic Structure Assessments on two vacant properties owned by the town. Plans are to rehabilitate the buildings and return them to the tax base improving the appearance and economy of downtown Genoa.

**Burlington-Kit Carson Storm Water** - plans are being developed to improve safety, eliminate flooding, close open drainage ditches, and reduce operation and maintenance costs.

**Alternative Crops** - ECC RC&D continues to search for alternatives to the current crops of wheat, corn, and sunflowers.