

Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service Employee Newsletter



# Colorado NRCS: Creating a Climate For Success

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## Highlights

by  
**Allen Green**  
State Conservationist

It is hard to believe that another (calendar) year has passed and we are already approaching the half way point of fiscal year 2010. Our new national leadership for NRCS is finally taking shape with the vision and priorities for our agency being articulated.

Chief White has set forth three major priorities for the agency and they are:

- 1) Putting Conservation on the Ground;
- 2) Getting our House in Order; and
- 3) Creating a Climate for Success.

Each of these three major priorities will include a number of items to carry out, and I know that all of you will be doing your part to help assure that our agency meets these goals and continues to provide the products and services that our customers have come to expect and appreciate.

I continue to be impressed with how many farmers, ranchers, partners, and others share with me positive experiences they have had with NRCS and District staff in the field. I have been told many times that our employees are dedicated and have a belief and passion for what they do. This is recognized in the way you treat people and work to help land users conserve their precious resources.

No matter what the programs, legislation, budgets, rules, etc., it always comes down to dealing with the individual and partners at the local level. For this, I want to say thanks to all of you for your commitment, hard work, and service that you are providing for our agricultural community and resources.

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# HONORING HONORING THE HISTORY THE HISTORY

By Terri Blanke, Plant Technician and  
Heather Plumb, Plant Scientist-Range Plants  
Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center, Meeker, CO



*The Ute memorial with the Milk Creek battlefield site in the foreground.*

Members from the Rio Blanco County Historical Society, Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center (UCEPC) staff and Kessley LaRose (Ute ethno botanist and artist) met in Meeker, Colorado, at UCEPC on Friday, September 18, 2009, to exchange information and ideas about the landscaping for a memorial park, Milk Creek Battlefield. LaRose, a Native American Ute, discussed with the group the different plants Ute Indians used for their daily diets and medicinal purposes, as well as sharing a little bit of Ute history.

The next day, the group traveled to the Milk Creek Battlefield Park, east of Meeker on County Road 15. The Milk Creek Battlefield Park pays tribute to Ute warriors and United States soldiers who lost their lives there, 130 years ago on September 29, 1879. At the park, the group was joined by members of the Southern, Northern, and White River Ute Indian Tribes. Chairman, council members, friends and family expressed their

feelings and thoughts about the park. The group agreed it was important to focus on plant materials that would be sustainable and culturally meaningful to Ute tribes, and that the site should be kept as natural as possible in its appearance to help reflect the site's historical attributes. The memorial site is a place where the general public can visit and honor the history of the Milk Creek Battle.

On September 29, 2009, volunteers met again at the battlefield site with four native blue spruce trees, donated by Gary Moyer, White River Tree Farm. Dr. Dave Steinman, Rio Blanco County Historical Society, Johnnie Barton and Terri Blanke, UCEPC, dug holes, planted, staked and watered the trees. It was a coincidence that volunteers found themselves honoring the place where such a historical event occurred on exactly the same day, 130 years ago. UCEPC has additional materials to be placed in the park as landscaping progresses. "The project has the potential to be very important and successful in regional cultural affairs", said Dr. Dave Steinman.



*Johnnie Barton and Dave Steinman planting trees at the Milk Creek Battlefield Park.*

## One to Grow On



Pleasure in the job puts  
perfection in the work.

~ Aristotle

Never continue in a job you  
don't enjoy. If you're happy in  
what you're doing, you'll like  
yourself, you'll have inner peace.  
And if you have that, along with  
physical health, you will have  
had more success than you  
could possibly have imagined.

~ Johnny Carson

In order that people may be  
happy in their work, these three  
things are needed: They must  
be fit for it: They must not do too  
much of it: And they must have  
a sense of success in it.

~ John Ruskin

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

What we call creative work,  
ought not to be called work at all,  
because it isn't. I imagine that  
Thomas Edison never did a  
day's work in his last fifty years.

~ Stephen B. Leacock

Winners take time to relish  
their work, knowing that scaling  
the mountain is what makes  
the view from the top  
so exhilarating.

~ Denis Waitley

The common denominator for  
success is work.

~ John D. Rockefeller

# AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING ALLOCATED

By Petra Barnes, Public Affairs Officer, Lakewood, CO

The NRCS is working to help farmers and ranchers improve air quality. Under the 2008 Food, Conservation and Energy Act (2008 Farm Bill), NRCS will provide eligible producers with financial and technical assistance to implement cost effective and innovative practices that reduce harmful fine particulate matter and 8-hour surface ozone (the primary component of smog) into the atmosphere.

NRCS has identified numerous conservation practices that farmers may chose to implement under the 2010 Initiative. No-till, for example, is offered as a conservation practice because the reduced fuel usage of a no-till system reduces ozone and particulate matter emissions. Several conservation practices pertaining to animal agriculture such as manure storage structures, waste utilization and prescribed grazing are offered which will reduce dust, intercept particulate

Wind Turbines (600 KW or less)

- GenSet for Methane Digester
- Energy audit and renewable energy assessment required

*“Colorado farmers face increasing pressure to consider air quality issues as they plan and conduct their farming operations,” Carney goes on to say. “This one of the reasons NRCS is offering this assistance.”* NRCS will target the following counties that are in non-attainment with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Ambient Air Quality Standards for 8-hour surface ozone (O<sub>3</sub>): Douglas, Jefferson, Denver, Arapahoe, Adams, Broomfield, Boulder, Weld, and Larimer.

***“Colorado farmers face increasing pressure to consider air quality issues as they plan and conduct their farming operations,” Carney goes on to say. “This one of the reasons NRCS is offering this assistance.”***

\$37,000,000 has been allocated nationally for this initiative in 2010, which includes the \$1.4 million in Colorado funding.

NRCS will utilize its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to manage and administer the air quality initiative. EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that supports agricultural producers and offers financial and technical assistance to help them install structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land. *“Although landowners may apply for assistance through the traditional EQIP program,”* states Tim Carney, NRCS Assistance State Conservationist for Programs, *“these funds are targeted for specific practices which will allow for increased opportunity for enrollment for those landowners desiring to implement the air quality improvement practices.”*

matter, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Practices under the EQIP air quality initiative include:

***Anaerobic Digester – Controlled Temperature (366) and associated practices, including:***

- Waste Storage Facility
- Composting Facility
- Waste Transfer
- Vegetated Treatment Area
- Critical Area Planting

***Atmospheric Resource Quality Management (370)***

- Greenhouse Energy/Shade Screens
- Greenhouse Horizontal Air Flow (HAF) Systems

***Irrigation Water Management (449)***

- Cranberry Auto-Start Systems

***Renewable Energy Production (716)***

- Solar PV, Solar-Thermal and

Applications are accepted by NRCS on a continuous basis throughout the year to evaluate, rank, prioritize, and select applicants. Applications received by April 1, 2010 will be considered for the 2010 Initiative funding. Applications received after April 1, 2010 will automatically be entered into consideration for the next cycle of air quality initiative funding and/or traditional EQIP funding and ranked accordingly.

Farmers interested in applying for the Colorado EQIP Air Quality Initiative should contact the local NRCS field office located in the USDA Service Center that services their county or they may visit <http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/index.html>.

# Bent Conservation District Generating Farmstead Wind Power

By Mary Miller, NRCS Area Public Affairs Specialist, La Junta, CO

**F**or many years, the Bent Conservation District (CD) has promoted the conservation and wise use of traditional natural resources such as soil, water, air, plants, and animals. Knowing that the cost of energy and electricity would probably continue to increase, the district decided to expand into and to promote the use of small farmstead wind turbines for energy conservation. To assist them with this new initiative, the CD applied for a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG), which is part of the NRCS Environment Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in 2007.

***The goal of the project is to increase awareness of alternative energy for on-farm use, to promote the utilization of wind to supplement commercial electricity, and to expand the use of wind to power farmsteads.***

The goal of the project is to increase awareness of alternative energy for on-farm use, to promote the utilization of wind to supplement commercial electricity, and to expand the use of wind to power farmsteads.

Originally nine producers had feasibility studies done on their farmsteads. The studies included wind speed data from the Lamar airport and two years worth of electricity bills. Of these nine, four producers decided to go ahead and install turbines. In order to participate in the project, the four producers had to meet five criteria: the producer had to meet EQIP criteria; the turbine had to be installed on a working farm or ranch; the producer had to agree to host field tours on his/her demonstration site; the producer had to be willing to participate in informational meetings and serve as a spokesperson for the project;

and the producer had to be located within the Bent CD. In addition, each producer had to agree to maintain records of cost data for electrical use and maintain his/her turbine in good working order. Through the CIG funding, the district was able to provide 50 percent of the total cost to install the turbines.

Lorraine Schleining decided to participate in the program because she believes that in years to come, the turbine will provide a cost savings. Lance Verhoeff installed a turbine because he uses a lot of electricity for his house, shop, and granaries. He added that if it pays for itself, he will be happy. Laura Cline is participating because the information from the district made the turbine project study

pretty enticing. She also believes the turbine will help reduce her family's electric bill and be more energy efficient. Guy Wagner said he is participating for the same reasons as his three fellow producers.

After the four producers had feasibility studies completed, they then selected the size of the turbine based



*Guy Wagner's new turbine is ready to produce clean wind energy.*

on information the studies provided. Schleining and Wagner have smaller turbines made by the same company. Verhoeff and Cline have larger turbines from the same company. Both types of turbines kick in and begin generating electricity when the wind speed hits eight miles per hour (mph).

Some differences in the two types are that the smaller ones will produce electricity up to 30 mph, while the larger ones will produce electricity up to 54 mph. The turbines will shut down immediately once the wind speeds exceed these numbers. The smaller ones have 33-inch blades and no tail. The wind comes from behind the blades to make it turn. The larger ones have 14-foot blades and a tail. The larger turbines face into the wind to turn. The smaller turbine towers are 70 feet, and the larger towers are 105 feet tall.

Southeast Colorado Power Association (SECPA) has worked closely with all four producers to make sure the turbines were installed and grounded correctly. In the future, power companies will be required to have 20 percent of their electricity produced by renewable energy sources, so as part of the program SECPA is providing each producer with renewable energy credits. Since the power company's linemen will help with turbine maintenance, each producer is required to carry extra liability insurance.

The process in which the producers see if their turbines are producing more energy than they are using is called net metering. On an annual basis, the power company will compare the electricity each turbine has produced to the amount of electricity each producer has used. If the

*(continued on next page)*

# Sarah Hanlon Goes to Washington

By Sarah Hanlon, Range Conservationist, Springfield, CO



Chief White shows Sarah the founding documents of NRCS.

At the end of August I was given an amazing opportunity to spend a week in Washington, DC. While in our nation's capitol I had the honor of meeting with the leadership and range management professionals from the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and NRCS. This opportunity was awarded to me last February at the Society for Range Management's annual meeting in Albuquerque, NM.

Part of the annual meeting consists of contests that allow for some friendly competition among the range schools and students from the United States, Canada, and Mexico. These contests include research, presentations, plant ID, and a comprehensive knowledge based exam known as the Undergraduate Range Management Exam or URME. The Forest Service, BLM, and NRCS all sponsor one of the student contest awards and provide the first place winner in the respective contest with an all expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC to meet with the leadership of the Federal Agencies. I participated in the plant ID and URME competitions,

and came in first in the URME! The Forest Service sponsors the first place award for the URME.

I returned with a much greater appreciation for what happens in all of the Federal land management agencies at the national level. I had the opportunity to see the National Agriculture Research Service Experiment Station in Beltsville, MD. I was able to gain more detailed knowledge as to the aims and operations in our "sister" agencies. Of course, I was given some time to see our country's national landmarks and history, as it was my first adventure to Washington, DC.

I also had the immense honor of meeting with the Chief of the NRCS, David White; seeing documents that were the foundation of the NRCS; and setting my eyes upon the view that Hugh Hammond Bennett himself had every day from his office. Not only this, but I was also able to discuss with national NRCS staff the issues and successes with putting conservation on the ground right here in Baca County. It was an honor and an opportunity that not many fresh-out-of-college employees get, and one that I greatly appreciate a chance to share.

## Catching The Moisture

By Tom Werner, Soil Conservation Technician, Springfield, CO



In the fiscal year of 2009 the Springfield, CO NRCS Office has designed and installed approximately 52,780 ft. (10.0 miles) of flat channel terraces. The flat channel terrace is designed to capture run-off water from rains and snow and collect the run-off water in the channel to enhance the growth of crops in the channel. The flat channel terraces also controls concentrated flow (ephemeral and gully erosion).

## Wind Power *continued from page 4*

producers have used less energy than they produced, they will get a check for the difference from the company.

All four producers agree that assessing the energy savings will take time. In fact, they all agree that it may take a year of recordkeeping to get an accurate assessment.

Data showing cost benefits, maintenance issues and expenses, and the producers' overall experience will be compiled. Partners in the project are the Bent CD, NRCS, USDA Rural Development, SECPA, iCAST (International Collaboration for Advancing Security Technology), and the four producers.

After only four months of use, Cline noted "I encourage anyone to do it [install a turbine]. It's very green energy."

## 4th National Conference on Grazing Lands Held



### Rangeland Management Specialists present on Colorado grazing lands management at national conference

by Matt Barnes

Multi-County Rangeland Management Specialist, Kremmling and Walden, CO

Several rangeland management specialists represented NRCS-COLORADO at the 4th National Conference on Grazing Lands in Sparks, Nevada, in December. Dan Nosal (Franktown Field Office and Colorado Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative coordinator), Ben Berlinger (La Junta Area Office – retired), Matt Barnes (Kremmling Field Office), and Bruce Lindahl (NRCS – retired, representing Colorado GLCI) traveled across Colorado, Utah, and Nevada, following the Pony Express route across the Great Basin, identifying plants and assessing rangeland health in blizzard conditions.

The conference, “Grazing Lands—A Winning Hand,” heightened producers’ and conservationists’ awareness of the environmental and economic effects of rangeland, pasture, and grazeable woodland management, focusing on prescribed grazing.

Dan Nosal and Ben Berlinger presented a poster coauthored by Kimberly Diller (Cañon City Field Office) and Steve Oswald (Oswald Ranch) on “A beef producer’s experience thinking ‘outside the box’: an integrated approach to improve rangeland health while marketing grassfed beef.” Kimberly, Dan, and Ben assisted the Oswald Ranch to integrate multiple-species rotational grazing, range monitoring, calving in sync with nature, and better business planning to become a showcase of regenerative, profitable ranching.

Julie Elliot (Wray Field Office) presented “Changes in the beef

cow over the 20th century.” Cattle have gotten larger, but less efficient at converting forage to beef.

Matt Barnes presented a paper he coauthored with Tim Steffens (Springfield Field Office) and Larry Rittenhouse (emeritus professor, Colorado State University) demonstrating that, “Graze period stocking rate, not stock density, determines livestock nutrient intake”—explaining how livestock production can be maintained or improved, even in the short term, with prescribed multiple-pasture grazing management. Grazing land specialists from all over the country requested copies of the paper.

Matt Barnes presented a paper coauthored by Mark Volt (Kremmling Field Office), John Scott (Gunnison Field Office), Lars Santana (Montrose Field Office), and Joe Brummer (Colorado State University) on “Clover seeding for sage-grouse habitat and forage production on mountain meadows,” two large-scale collaborative conservation projects involving 116 private landowners in the Gunnison and Middle Park Conservation Districts and multiple agency partners to inter-seed legumes into grass meadows adjacent to sagebrush rangelands, treating most of this type of sage-grouse habitat in both districts.

State Conservationist Allen Green was also present, representing the state and spreading the message of grazing lands management.

The conference was hosted by the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, a partnership between the NRCS, other agencies in the USDA, national livestock producer associations, the Society for Range Management, American Forage and Grassland

Council, and Soil and Water Conservation Society. The GLCI funds grazing land technical assistance through NRCS.

The conference proceedings will be available in March. The 5th National Conference on Grazing Lands is being planned for 2012.

### Invasive Weed Workshop

by N. Tracy Miller, DC, Alamosa, CO

The Mosca Hooper Conservation District hosted a public Invasive Weed Workshop with numerous weed topics given by Colorado State Extension Service and Colorado Department of Agriculture personnel on re-certifying private or commercial applicator licenses. Other subjects on invasive weed control were covered, giving vital information to the farmers and ranchers also in attendance. A luncheon was served by Mosca Hooper Conservation District. The District plans on having a workshop every year.

The Mosca Hooper Conservation District is also working with the Alamosa County Commissioners to start up a weed spraying business in the future. This would involve spraying weeds on county roads and non-crop areas.

## 15th Annual Range Management School Held

At the request of local ranchers, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension (CSUCE) began offering Range Management School (RMS) in 1995.

This educational program was developed in cooperation with the livestock industry, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

RMS focuses on providing in-depth range information to permittees, state and federal land managers, environmentalists and private rangeland owners; and is a common-sense, science-based program that helps participants understand rangeland, plant growth, vigor and the interrelationship with animal nutrition, and how to implement grazing management decisions to meet the requirements of the range, animals and profitability.

More than 3,300 permittees, federal land managers, environmentalists, and private rangeland owners have attended classroom instruction, field tours and practical applications available

Current partners include the Colorado Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Committee, US Forest Service, NRCS, Custer County Conservation District, Colorado State University Extension.

Kimberly Diller, Canon City field office, and Jim Sperry, Silver Cliff field office, assist the partners in organizing the school. Ben Berlinger and John Murray, retired NRCSers are two of the instructors.

# NRCS and Organics

By Petra Barnes, Public Affairs Officer, Lakewood, CO

**\$50 million has been set aside for organic producers and those transitioning to organic production nationwide. Of that \$50 million, \$1.2 million has been allocated to NRCS in Colorado.**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced that in fiscal year 2010, \$50 million has been set aside for organic producers and those transitioning to organic production nationwide. Of that \$50 million, \$1.2 million has been allocated to NRCS in Colorado, which is in its second year of identifying objectives and goals specific to the organic production agricultural community. Last year's initiative in Colorado funded applications totaling over \$500,000 and treated more than 5,700 acres.

*"The Obama Administration set a high priority on providing assistance to organic agricultural production, resulting in increased support for the organic community within the 2008 Farm Bill,"* says Tim Carney, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, Lakewood, CO. *"The 2010 organic initiative's funding is made available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which is managed and administered by NRCS and offers financial and technical assistance to producers to help install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land as well as to address identified natural resource concerns."*

Through the EQIP program, organic producers can receive technical and financial assistance to plan and install conservation practices to address many of the resource concerns identified in their organic systems plans (OSP) including water quality, non-point source pollution, plant and soil

condition, soil erosion and domestic animals. NRCS conservation practices such as irrigation water management, nutrient and pest management, cover crops, conservation crop rotation, residue and tillage management, field borders, filter strips, and prescribed grazing can be planned and applied to address OSP resource concerns.

Organic producers interested in applying for enrollment into the organic EQIP initiative should first visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/organic/index.html> for eligibility requirements and other information. Producers may apply

at any time by contacting their local NRCS field office located within the USDA Service Center that services their county.

*"Organic producers should also be aware that they are not limited to applying for assistance just through the organic EQIP initiative,"* Carney goes on to say. *"They may also apply for enrollment into our traditional EQIP program or any other for which they feel they may be qualified. No matter which program they may choose, it is highly recommended they work with their local NRCS field staff to develop a conservation plan."*

Conservation plans are not mandatory for enrollment into any NRCS program; however, agricultural operations with qualified conservation plans receive priority when competing for conservation financial assistance program funds.



# on the pulse

## State Office News

### New Colorado Payment Storage System

**The NRCS State Office has fully** implemented the new web-based payment tracking system called Colorado Payment Storage System (CPSS). The system is designed to track the status of payments and mitigate payment rejections by Area and field office. Area 4 was the first to pilot the new system followed by Areas 3, 2 and 1. CPSS has been fully operational state-wide since January 2010. Each Area received training by the NRCS State office before rolling the system into production for their field offices.

Further enhancements will be developed in the future to allow more granular tracking of payments down to the field office level. The web-based system has experienced a 900% increase in traffic since February 2009.

**The NRCS was a proud** sponsor of the 2010 Tamarisk Symposium that was held at the Two Rivers Convention Center in Grand Junction, Colorado, on January 12 and 13. The symposium provided the latest information on tamarisk biocontrol, revegetation, tamarisk and wildlife issues, restoration projects, russian knapweed, and tamarisk water use.

Co-hosted by the Tamarisk Coalition and Colorado State University, the symposium introduced many knowledgeable speakers who gave oral presentations on the invasive tamarisk; featured a panel discussion on Southwestern Willow Flycatcher efforts; and showcased a myriad of posters for judging.

The NRCS booth provided information for attendees about tamarisk and other invasive species that are prevalent throughout Colorado. Overall, the symposium was a great networking opportunity for those working on tamarisk issues.

### The Colorado State Technical

Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 3, 2010 at the Sheraton Denver West in Lakewood. The NRCS is sponsoring a working luncheon with speakers and will provide a boxed lunch.

The meeting will include presentations, discussions, and requests for recommendations on NRCS programs and policies, including the proposed Sage Grouse Initiative, the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program Reserved Grazing Rights Option, the Conservation Stewardship Program, organic agriculture, and public lands policies.

### Comings

#### Jodi Hastings

**Starting Date:**  
July 17, 2009.



**Title/Responsibilities:** **Resource**

**Conservationist for Programs.** My main responsibilities are Colorado Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Colorado Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

**Previous Job:** District Conservationist in Brighton, Colorado. Prior to Brighton, I was the District Conservationist in Big Horn County, Montana.

**Brief Background History:** I worked with NRCS in MT and WA prior to joining Colorado NRCS. I worked as a Soil Conservationist and Range Management Specialist as well as a District Conservationist. I worked as a technician for the US Forest Service in the areas of Forestry and Range in Montana.

**College Experience:** I attained a Bachelor of Science degree in Range from the University of Montana, and an Associate of Science degree in Forestry from Flathead Community College.

**Spouse's/Kid's Name:** My husband's name is Ed.

#### Mark Hoskins



**Starting Date:**  
January 4,  
2010

**Title/Responsibilities:** **Budget Officer.** Responsible for Colorado budget and supervising financial management staff.

**Previous Job:** Administrative Officer. Responsible for NIST budget in Boulder and supervising administrative staff.

**Brief Background History:** Born and raised in Colorado. Went to Bear Creek High School and participated in numerous sports including track, football, and wrestling. Attended college in Colorado, and have numerous family members still living here.

**College Experience:** BS, Marketing, CSU; BS, Accounting, MSCD; and MS, Finance, CSU.

**Spouse's/Kid's Name:** Wife Ginny, son Trever, and daughter Natasha.

**Pets:** Jewel, a cat

**Hobbies:** Skiing, hiking, and playing poker.

**Frank Py**



**Starting Date:**  
11/23/2009

**Title/Responsibilities:** **Voucher Examiner.** I help process, audit and track payments for our conservation program participants.

**Previous Job:** Consultant

**Brief Background History:** I am originally from the Los Angeles area. I have over ten years experience with software consulting and business intelligence. I served in the Navy from 1990 to 1994, and have lived in Lakewood with my family since 1998.

**College Experience:** University of Phoenix, associate's degree in business.

**Spouse's/Kid's Name:** Wife Lynne, Daughter Katrina (age 5), and son Alexander (age 2).

**Pets:** Dogs Dizzy and Duncan.

**Hobbies:** Recording and audio engineering.

**Anything else you would like for people to know about you:** I enjoy working with all the great folks at NRCS! I'm a very ethical person; however, I have been known to exchange special favors for food.

**Charisse Romero**



**Starting Date:**  
01/19/2010

**Title/Responsibilities:** **Secretary.** Front desk reception, call directory, timekeeping, file/record management, trip and meeting planning.

**Previous Job:** Police Communications Technician. Emergency call-taking, call directory, dispatching emergency personnel including EMS, fire, and police.

**Brief Background History:** Grew up in Denver. Attended Community College of Denver and currently working to obtain an AA in Paralegal Studies, then transfer to UCD to complete a bachelor's degree in Political Science. Mother of one boy; his name is James Paul. Disabled military veteran of the post-9/11 era; private first class in the US Army, where I served as a Russian language interpreter.

**College Experience:** US Army Defense Language Institute 07-08, Community College of Denver Fall 08-Present

**Spouse's/Kid's Name:** Boyfriend, Jerry Lara (Police Officer) and son, James Paul.

**Pets:** None.

**Hobbies:** Playing with my son, painting, studying for school, writing, reading, jogging, tap-dancing.

**Anything else you would like for people to know about you:** I am very excited to be working with NRCS and the federal government and I hope to be able to learn as much as possible quickly so that I can become an asset to the State Office team.

**Jonas Feinstein**



**Starting Date:**  
1/4/2010

**Title/Responsibilities:** **State Forester.**

I provide technical guidance and assistance to NRCS service centers and field office personnel in conservation planning of non-industrial private forest resources and agroforestry in Colorado.

**Previous Job:** District Conservation Forester for Jefferson Conservation District, in Lakewood, Colorado.

**Brief Background History:** I worked for five years as a U.S. Forest Service on the Grand Canyon. I spent the next five years leading forest ecology and management research projects in Rocky Mountain National Park, Central Montana's Big Belt mountains, the upper South Platte watershed, and in north-central Colorado. In the past two years, I worked for Colorado State Forest Service and for the Jefferson Conservation District.

**College Experience:** B.S. in Forestry with an emphasis in Forest Biology; and an M.S. in Forest Sciences, with an emphasis on Forest Ecology and Management, both from Colorado State University. Also, a very brief Ph.D. assistantship at the University of Wyoming studying climate-fire-lodgepole pine interactions

**Spouse's/Kid's Name:** Wife Christy.

**Pets:** The "worlds best/worst dog," Hayduke.

**Hobbies:** Fishing the Cache La Poudre, rafting wild and scenic rivers of the west, and backcountry skiing the steep powder-filled slopes of Colorado's high country with my wife and dog.

**Anything else you would like for people to know about you:** I gain a tremendous amount of inspiration from the following quotes, "Live in the positive" and, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

# on the pulse

## Area Office News

### Area One



*Charles Ryden, President of Bookcliff Conservation District, awards Mike Kishimoto.*

**Bookcliff, Mount Sopris, and South Side Conservation Districts** honored one of our partners for many years of exemplary service to our landowners. Mike Kishimoto has worked in the Glenwood Springs Field Office for over 20 years, offering his engineering expertise to our area landowners. His number one priority is the resource concern for which the landowner has requested his assistance. His engineering skills are respected throughout the state, and he has been asked to serve on several committees and assisted in reviewing and helping with design work.

Mike sometimes works nights and weekends, and even answers phone calls at home during Bronco games.

Mike never hesitates to step up to the plate to help out the districts in their meetings or workshops.

Mike excels not only at work but was chosen as "Assistant Coach of the Year" by his coaching peers for the state of Colorado. Mike

coaches track and field for the Glenwood Springs High School and has been a driving force for the Springers program, a youth track club in the summer.

### Area Two

**The CSU Career Fair was a** good place to spread the word about our agency. Sarah Belt, Human Resources Specialist, Lakewood State Office, organized and led the NRCS involvement at the Colorado State University Career Fair on October 13, 2009. Supporting staff were Chris Fabian, Soils Scientist, Fort Collins MLRA Office; Michael Daskam, District Conservationist, Holly Field Office; and Andy Piszkin, Soil Conservation Technician, Fort Collins Field Office.

A handful of the students did know about NRCS either through their professors, friends, or family. The students did seem very interested in what NRCS had to offer. The students generally seemed to have a slightly higher interest in the government job opportunities than those in private industry, likely due to the current economic outlook. Both underclass and graduating (not eligible) students showed interest in the NRCS Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). The fair, as one young man put it, was more about the "corn and cows" industry, rather than the larger and more diverse mix of companies observed at the annual Spring fair.

The NRCS team engaged in an estimated 60 face-to-face interactions from a fairly even mix of students ranging from freshmen to seniors, and networked with two CSU professors. The majority of junior- and senior-level students were Ag Econ & Business majors, while the

largest group of underclass students were Crop & Science majors; we met no engineering students at this fair. The female/male ratio was roughly 60/40. Less than six students could be classified as being a "non white-female" minority.

Chris, Sarah, and Andy interviewed a total of 5 students, and each of them are great candidates for either the SCEP or Career Intern Program. A total of 17 resumes were received at the fair, and one student also included transcripts. Sarah informed students, if they were truly interested, to e-mail her their resume and transcripts before the end of October.

**On November 7, Greeley Field Office Staff, Ray Mowery, district conservation and Stu McFarland, soil conservationist, participated in a workshop sponsored by West Greeley Conservation District.** Ray gave instructions on planning, planting, and pampering trees and shrubs, starting with understanding your soil properties, i.e.: water- holding capacity, root zone profile, and potential utility hazards. Other planning suggestions included: site selection, species selection, sketching a design, fabric mulch use and, irrigation. Planting instructions followed, with design layout, site prep, tree planting by hand and with the tree planter, laying fabric mulch, and installing the irrigation system. Pampering covered weed control, pest control, pruning and trimming, and meeting water needs.

Stu's presentation covered tree and shrub planting for wildlife. First priority is to decide which wildlife species you wish to benefit

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Stu McFarland, SC, presents at the Small Acreage Workshop.

and if they can be expected to inhabit your established habitat. Fruit bearing shrubs are generally more suitable to desirable wildlife species than tall trees; however, evergreens may provide critical winter protection. Stu suggested considering all of the requirements for your chosen wildlife, which included: food, cover, water, and landscape context. Planning, design and layout of the habitat was covered, with special consideration for spacing, food bearing grasses and shrubs, noxious weed control, irrigation for survival and growth, and livestock exclusion.

The half day event was well received by 41 district cooperators. One-on-one discussions followed the presentations to answer site-specific questions. Surveys returned indicated audience satisfaction.

**Area 2 started off the new Fiscal Year** with a DC Meeting in Greeley over the course of 4 days. Ron Schierer hosted an after work hour social at his home and that was probably the best part of the annual meeting. Area 2 also held their annual awards banquet with guest speaker, Gilbert Mares, retired State Trooper, who shared safe driving tips and a few "war" stories.

**Several Districts and Field Offices** have held landowner workshops noticing a decline in attendance in comparison to other

years. This was attributed either to the late harvest season due to continual wet weather and the overall condition of the nation's economy.

However, one of the more populated set of events were several local Youth Hunts sponsored by Pheasants Forever Chapters that some of the field office staff worked locally with as the organization promotes habitat as a key component. Three of these were the Phillips County Youth Hunt, Cache La Poudre Youth Hunt, the Denver Metro Youth Hunt.

At the Cache La Poudre Youth Hunt which was held in Wiggins, 19 kids ranging from teenagers through 8 years old spent their morning learning about gun safety, gun handling, hunter safety and the importance of habitat and respecting landowners. Stu McFarland and Levi Sievers from the Greeley Field Office assisted with the hunt.

Charlie Goodsell, age 8, hit a pheasant hen as the last bird of the day, making it the *"best day of my whole life."*

Noe Marymor, Area 2 Biologist, assisted with The Denver Metro Chapter, which met outside of Kiowa with 22 participants.

**An Animal Behavior Workshop** was held in Wray, sponsored by the Yuma County Conservation District, on Thursday, December 10, 2009.

*"There's more to it than just moving livestock from one grazing ground to another, and having the best of both worlds (i.e., weight gain, healthy, with good offspring)."*

This is just one of the many take-home messages attendees shared after listening to Dr. Fred Provenza talk about animal behavior.

Despite the bitter cold, 59 people (60% ranchers) drove anywhere from 11 to 614 miles came to hear Fred at an all day workshop in Wray. Additional support was received from the

Republican River Habitat Partnership Program, Colorado Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, NE Colorado RC&D, Cope CD, and Cheyenne County Kansas CD, along organization support from Julie Elliott with the Wray NRCS Field Office



Dr. Fred Provenza holds the attendees' attention in Wray.

## Area Three

**Tony Arnhold, Walsenburg, and Lorenz Sutherland, La Junta,** gave presentations on the coalbed methane (CBM) pumping near Walsenburg to students at Walsenburg High School. They also took the students out in the field to visit a discharge point and a well head of an actual CBM well.



**The Walsenburg field office** staff helped the La Veta FFA Chapter host the 2009 San Isabel FFA District Range and Dairy Contests.



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### The Hugo USDA Service

agencies celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month recently. Friends of Al White, who sells Mexican food, stopped by during the celebration.

### Kurt Ashmore is a senior at

Hugo High School. He is also an Earth Team volunteer at the Hugo field office for an hour each day during the week. Kurt is part of a program called "Class On Site Program," which gives students an idea of different professions in which they are interested.

### "Livestock Grazing Behavior

Basics" was the theme for a range workshop held in Kiowa recently. Topics included social behavior's influence on food selection, preference and palatability, and variety and nutritional needs. Partners included East Central RC&D, Agate, Double El, Kiowa, and Douglas County Conservation Districts, NRCS, Colorado Division of Wildlife, CSU Extension-Elbert County, and Elbert/Douglas Livestock Association.

### Rich Rhoades (Pueblo)

recently gave a backyard conservation and "how to make your backyard more wildlife-friendly" presentation at the Pueblo Nature and Raptor Center. He gave an overview of NRCS's land planning considerations and how they can apply to both large acreages and small lots.

### Tony Arnhold (Walsenburg),

Lee Neve (Pueblo), Brady McElroy (Lamar), Lorenz Sutherland, and

Mary Miller spent most of a week in the field with Dennis Neffendorf, NRCS Fort Worth Technical Service Center. Neffendorf has been helping the Walsenburg field office and Area 3 staff measure salinity levels in corn and alfalfa fields irrigated with water from the Cucharas River.



Tony Arnhold, Lee Neve, Brady McElroy, and Dennis Neffendorf

Waste water from coalbed methane pumping was discharged into the river in years past. Salinity levels have affected the crops. The group used a dual EM, carrying it or hauling it via a trailer through various fields. Neve has also helped take soil samples in all the fields.

Neffendorf was the State Resource Conservationist in Colorado. He also served on a detail to Iraq, teaching Iraqi landowners and officials how to rehabilitate their natural resources. He was embedded with troops. Look for a more in-depth article in a future *Colorado Connections*.



### Prowers CD Hosts Pizza Parties for Local 6th Graders

Wiley, Lamar and Alta Vista students and their teachers were treated to a

pizza party as a thank you from the Prowers Conservation District for their participation in the Prowers Conservation District Poster Contest. Lamar NRCS DC Susan Hansen and board member Don McBee presented the awards.

The teachers for each class received a poinsettia plant to recognize their hard work

Lamar's pizza party was held on December 11, 2009 at the school cafeteria. Poster winner **Morgan Dewitt** was honored for her winning poster entitled "Soil Conservation." Her poster competed at the state level contest.

Alta Vista's party was on December 15, 2009. Poster winner **Logan Clevenger** was honored for his poster entitled, "The Secrets of Soil." His poster competed at the state level.

Wiley's party was on December 17, 2009 and **Moranda Sue Morgan** was honored with her poster entitled, "Conserve Our Soil."

First place was Logan Clevenger of Alta Vista. Second place was Moranda Sue Morgan of Wiley. Third place went to Lamar's Morgan Dewitt. Each student will receive tickets to Prowers' Conservation District's annual meeting where their posters will be featured and they will be recognized for their hard work. Congratulations to all students who participated in the contest!

**Little Caesar's** gave the board a two dollar discount for the pizza, and water was donated by **Thrift Way** and **Deloach's**. Thank you for your assistance to our efforts to further conservation education!!!!

### The first contract in the

Trinidad Lake North Watershed (TLNW) Project using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 dollars was recently signed by John Knapp, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Area

*Continued from page 12*

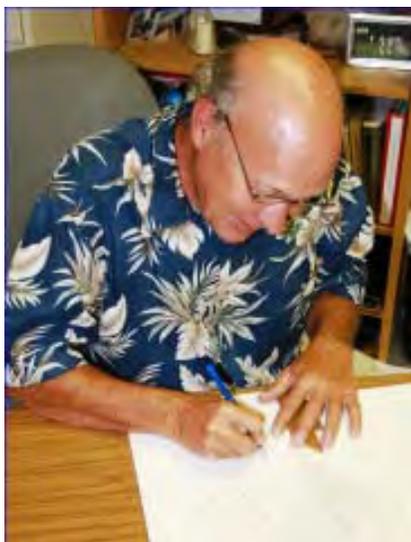
Conservationist, La Junta, Colo. The project area is in Las Animas County.

Earlier this year Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack announced over \$3.6 million in assistance to improve water quality, increase water supply, decrease soil erosion, and improve fish and wildlife habitat in rural communities of Colorado as a result of President Obama's ARRA of 2009.

A total of five Colorado watershed projects were approved for funding, including the TLNW Project in the Trinidad area, which will receive approximately \$60,000.

The project area encompasses approximately 111,100 acres. Conservation practices installed will result in the reduction of sediment transported to Trinidad Lake, thus improving water quality. There will also be improved grazing values and significant habitat improvement for the Trinidad Lake fishery.

"We are very pleased that the Trinidad Lake North Watershed Project was one of the five watersheds in Colorado to receive funding," states Knapp.



*John Knapp happily signs contracts.*

The funds for these projects go directly to the producers. Money will be spent locally for materials

and contractors which will help local Southeastern Colorado community economies.

NRCS partners in the TLNW Project include the Spanish Peaks Purgatoire River Conservation District, Purgatoire River Conservancy District, Las Animas County, City of Trinidad, and Colorado State Conservation Board.



**The Dove Creek Conservation**

District (DCCD) with assistance from the Dove Creek NRCS Field Office held a public meeting on September 1st, 2009 for landowners and producers in Dolores and surrounding counties whose acreage will be coming out of the Conservation Reserve Program in October. After lunch the group took a field tour of the DCCD No-Till Sunflower Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) project.

Over 50 people were in attendance as the DCCD brought in speakers for the morning session to discuss possible production options for acreage coming out of the CRP. Information on the future of the CRP was presented by Billy Merritt of the Farm Services Agency State Office. Conservation considerations, including grazing management and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program were thoroughly covered by Gene Backhaus of the Natural Resources Conservation Service State Office.

Economics of CRP lands was discussed by John Deering, CSU Agriculture and Business Management Specialist. Greg Vlaming of the San Juan BioEnergy plant covered the excellent opportunities available for organic production on expiring CRP lands and the various oil seed crops that are contracted for by the plant.

The morning session was wrapped up with a presentation on the new Conservation Stewardship Program by John Lestina of the Dove Creek NRCS Field Office.

After lunch was provided by the DCCD, the group headed out for a tour of the No-Till Sunflower CIG.

While many areas have been producing no-till crops for years, the practice is untried in our area of the state. Since the original clearing of this land in the 1930-1950 period, producers have based their tillage systems on the moldboard plow. That practice is still used on the majority of dry cropland in the area today.

The CIG project consists of over 400 acres of sunflowers planted into standing wheat stubble. The field toured by the group was directly adjacent to a conventionally tilled field of sunflowers, so the contrasts of each practice were readily visible. Alan Helm of the Golden Plains Area Extension Service was brought in by the DCCD to provide his expertise on weed control in no-till crop production.



**Animas Watershed Partnership**

Stretching from the alpine tundra of the San Juan Mountains to its confluence with the San Juan River at Farmington, New Mexico, the Animas River is under stress from various issues. The Animas Watershed Partnership, a locally-lead group of concerned stakeholders have been working on identifying issues affecting the lower Animas watershed since 2002, when a serious algae bloom occurred during the drought.

Working with the San Juan RC&D Council, the Animas Watershed Partnership was able to obtain funding to develop a stakeholders group and begin the process of developing a Watershed Plan that

*Continued from page 13*

would identify the causes of impaired water quality and work to address ways to protect and improve the water quality of the Animas River.

Doug Ramsey, RC&D Coordinator in Durango reports that since their start, the San Juan RC&D has received over \$209,000 in funds for this project from New Mexico's (\$90,912) and Colorado's (\$25,000) Environment Departments, Southern Ute Gaming Funds, cities of Durango and Farmington and most recently Colorado Watershed Protection Funds and Southwestern Water Conservation District.

A major part of this project is the construction of a land treatment using Best Management Practices to demonstrate methods that can improve water quality for a watershed. Currently undergoing evaluation and planning is a site on Kiffen Creek, where 1,300 feet of bank is mass wasting into the stream major parts of a farm field.

The AWP is partnering with a willing land owner, the San Juan Watershed Group, Williams Field Service and Conoco-Phillips to get this project installed to redevelop a vegetated flood plan and reduce the sediment and nutrients that are being eroded into the Animas River. Other work includes water quality sampling and mapping.

In the fall of 2009, members of the Animas River Partnership floated the Colorado portion of the river collecting samples for laboratory analysis and collecting data on pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity and other parameters at all inflows and other important locations in order to provide baseline information for future comparisons and contaminate sources.

### **NRCS and the Republican River**

Water Conservation District signed an Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) contract in Burlington, CO.

The purpose of the agreement contract is to establish a partner-based, dedicated funding pool for the RRWCD and NRCS to provide financial and technical assistance for water conservation measures in the Colorado portion of the Republican River Watershed.

The two-year agreement will provide cost-share assistance to eligible participants who voluntarily enter their land into AWEP to permanently convert irrigated land to sustainable dry land cropping, and grazing lands management systems. NRCS seeks to enroll approximately 2,500 acres into the program through September 30, 2010.

The 2009 AWEP agreement with the Republican River Water Conservation District continues a long partnership dedicated to progressive water conservation in this Basin.

"The NRCS in Colorado is committed to using AWEP to leverage local resources and provide assistance to farmers and ranchers to address water resource issues on their land," said Tim Carney, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, NRCS.

The AWEP program was established by Congress in the 2008 Farm Bill. The program promotes ground and surface water conservation partnerships to assist farmers and ranchers implement and maintain practices on their land. Through AWEP partnerships, local conservation priorities are addressed and the NRCS is able to leverage investment in natural resources conservation.

Carney and Dennis Coryell, President, RRWCD, signed the contract August 26th in Burlington at the Republican River Watershed Association meeting.

The NRCS and the Republican River Water Conservation District have pledged \$1 million each for the two-year project. The funds are dedicated to facilitate water conservation through voluntary transition of certain targeted lands from irrigated to non-irrigated farming and ranching in the Republican River Watershed.

This agreement is part of a larger local and State effort to support the sustainability of water resources and interstate compact compliance in the Republican Basin in Colorado.

Eligible producers are encouraged to apply through the continuous signup process at any time. Information is available through the Republican River Water Conservation District office in Wray, and through any of the NRCS field offices in the Basin. Producers who offer land for enrollment into the program will be compete for funding using a ranking system developed in partnership with the RRWCD. The District website is <http://www.republicanriver.com/>.

AWEP was established by the 2008 Farm Bill and funding comes from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the program for USDA. NRCS implements AWEP through partnership agreements dedicating resources to national, state, and local water resource concerns. The NRCS funding is delivered through EQIP contracts directly with eligible agricultural producers. All AWEP recipients must meet EQIP requirements.

For more information about specific AWEP projects, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov) or visit the USDA Service Centers in the Republican River Watershed.

# CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

By Karen Mandujano,  
Colorado BEPM, Brighton, CO

February marks the beginning of Black History Month, a federally recognized, nation-wide celebration that provides the opportunity for all Americans to reflect on the significant roles that African Americans have played in the shaping of U.S. history.

Black History Month is also referred to as African-American History Month. It is celebrated annually in the United States and Canada in February and the United Kingdom in the month of October. But how did this celebration come to be -- and why does it take place in February?

Dr. Carter G. Woodson, considered to be a pioneer in the study of African American history, is given much of the credit for Black History Month. The son of former slaves, Woodson spent his childhood working in coalmines and quarries. He received his education during the four-month term that was customary for black schools at the time. At 19, having taught himself English fundamentals and arithmetic, Woodson entered high school, where he completed a four-year curriculum in two years. He went on to receive his Masters degree in history from the University of Chicago, and he eventually earned a PhD from Harvard.

Disturbed that history textbooks largely ignored America's black population, Woodson took on the challenge of writing black Americans into the nation's history. To do this, Woodson established

the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. He also founded the group's widely respected publication, the *Journal of Negro History*.

In 1926, he developed Negro History Week. Woodson believed that "the achievements of the Negro properly set forth will crown him as a factor in early human progress and a maker of modern civilization."

In 1976, Negro History Week expanded into Black History Month. When the tradition of Black History Month had started in the US, many in mainstream academia had barely begun to explore black history. At that point, most representation of blacks in history books was only in reference to the low social position they held as slaves and their descendants, with infrequent exceptions such as that of George Washington Carver. W.E.B. DuBois' 1935 work *Black Reconstruction* was an early work in history that pointed to black contributions.

Woodson chose the second week of February for the celebration because it marks the birthdays of two men who greatly influenced the black American population: Frederick Douglass (February 14), an escaped slave who became one of the foremost black abolitionists and civil rights leaders in the nation, and President Abraham Lincoln (February 12), who signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which abolished slavery in America's confederate states.

Because of his work, Dr. Woodson has been called the "Father of Black History."

## 18th Annual Martin Luther King Unity Training

By Karen Mandujano, Colorado BEPM



The 18th Annual Martin Luther King Unity Training was held on January 21, 2010, and celebrated the principles of the life, love, and leadership as taught by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., by extending his dream of unity, peace, and equality from the African American culture to embrace all people. As Dr. King said, "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."

The training swelled with more people and energy than last year. The speakers each powerfully conveyed their messages to help us explore, through the lens of cultural heritage.

One highlight was Dexter Brooks, currently the Director of Federal Sector Programs in EEOC's Office of Federal Operations. He discussed a survey that determines the comfort level of people; and showed that most people are not prejudiced towards other races. They are just more comfortable with people with like interests, goals, issues, etc. And most of the time, those people are of the same race or ethnicity.

A delightful lunchtime speaker, Cynthia James, wears many hats. She is a teacher, worldwide lecturer, performing artist, and author. Mrs. James spoke eloquently about healthy and vibrant living.

During the luncheon, I had the opportunity to meet and talk with several people, some looking for job opportunities, and some retiring and moving to pursue other interests.

Later after the luncheon, the Denver Federal Executive Board (DFEB) presented United We Serve Awards to recognize exemplary volunteer and community service by government employees of Colorado. Colorado is the first state in the nation to present these awards. These awards are based on the President's and the First Lady's United We Serve initiative that encourages all employees to volunteer in the communities in which they serve.

This is a very informative training and I suggest that more NRCS employees request through their DCs and ACs to attend the 19th Annual MLK Unity Training.

## A Colorado Legend Retires

by Carla Green Adams,  
Multimedia Publications Specialist, Lakewood, CO

### James "JP" Pannell retired

December 3, 2009, in a typically low-key manner. *"Thanks for all coming,"* he said. After more than 60 years of Federal service, during which it is thought he never took a single day of sick leave, JP decided to scale back his work to a mere 30 or so hours per week as an ACES employee in his "old" office.

His retirement party on December 2 was attended by his coworkers in Durango, of course, and by active and retired soil scientists and other NRCS employees from around our state, and by Allen Green, State Conservationist. Friends and two of his nephews also attended. An impressive man was retiring from Federal service, and everyone who knew him wanted to pay tribute to the quiet legend.

Alan Price (Soil Scientist/Business Analyst) said of the party, *"JP was roasted by several attendees who recalled (and embellished) some of their remembrances working and interacting with him. JP received several gifts and an impressive plaque complete with tile spade to honor this amazing accomplishment."*

*"His career, both in longevity and accomplishments, sets a standard that few, if any, will ever equal,"* Alan stated. *"We all wish him the best in whatever is next for this amazing person."*

Steve Park, State Soil Scientist and JP's last "boss," wrote this tribute for JP's retirement plaque:

"Rarely in public service is an employee found that has served his country with such dedication, loyalty, professionalism, and length of service as "JP" Pannell.

His contributions to this county in the service of the U.S. Army, and as a soil scientist with the Soil Conservation Service, later the Natural Resources Conservation Service, are immeasurable and invaluable.

On behalf of the American taxpayers, your peers, coworkers, and customers, the National Cooperative Soil Survey Program, and the State of Colorado, we thank you 'JP' for your long and dedicated public service."

**"Like the soil, he is also a very valuable resource."**

I thought Steve had said it all. Then I read the letter he wrote a couple of years ago, successfully nominating JP for the 2008 Soil Scientist Achievement Award, and was impressed even more. An excerpt of that nomination reads as follows:

"Think about how many state soil scientists he has broken in or how many younger soil scientists he has trained and passed his wisdom to. He knows more about the soils in Colorado than anyone alive today, or in the future. His knowledge and wisdom is often sought out by me and many of the other soil scientists and conservationists in the state. He is a living legend to soil scientists in this part of the world.

"He is a steady, dedicated, and consistent employee producing high quality products with little direction or oversight. He goes about his work quietly, passionately, and efficiently, avoiding the limelight, and never complaining. He is fulfilled anytime soil survey information is used in conservation planning, thereby benefiting the land.

"His body has forced him to slow down a little, but his mind and desire are still strong. He disproved the old saying,

"You can't teach old dogs new tricks", by readily adapting to the computer age and all the new technology. Not only has he readily adapted to the changing technology, but he has excelled with the new technology, including NASIS and ArcGIS geospatial applications. He is very proficient in NASIS, enjoys editing digital soil layers, and collecting and analyzing soil temperature data using the latest datalogger technology.

"I can't point to any one outstanding achievement during his career. However, it is the summation of all his career efforts and contributions towards this country's soil survey program that is the achievement of a lifetime that most likely will never be matched or exceeded. Very few public servants in any agency can come close to the service he has provided to this country. Like the soil, he is also a very valuable resource."

Indeed, JP Pannell is a special guy. How much conservation work could we achieve if we all tried to be more like him?

Congratulations, JP, upon your amazing career, your professional achievements, and the many friends and admirers you have in Colorado and beyond!

### JP's Career Path in the SCS/NRCS

1950—Student trainee at Monte Vista  
1951—Soil Scientist on Mobile Soil Survey Crew at Steamboat Springs  
1952—Soil Survey Party Leader on Mobile Soil Survey Crew at Steamboat Springs  
1955—Soil Survey Party Leader at Lamar  
1962—Soil Survey Party Leader at Cortez  
1963—Soil Survey Party Leader at Alamosa  
1971 to present—Soil Survey Project Leader at Durango

# A Few Questions With JP Pannell

By Carla Green Adams, Multimedia Publications Specialist, Lakewood, CO

**Q.** I hear you served in the military as a young man, and was wondering -- how long did you serve? And in which branch? And where were you stationed?

**A.** I was in the Army. I received my basic training in Texas. Then I was shipped overseas to the Philippine Islands where I spent the rest of my army time. I was on Luzon near Manila for a while then was sent to Palawan which is about 500 miles south west of Manila. I was in the army for nearly two years.

**Q.** What are the five things you can't live without?

**A.** Food, Air, water, a car or pickup, plenty of gas.

**Q.** What would I find in your refrigerator right now?

**A.** Left over fried chicken (3 wings and 1 drumstick - funny chicken), left over potato salad, part of a half gallon of milk, orange juice, condiments of all kinds, unpopped popcorn that has been in there for years, lettuce, left over boiled cabbage, shelled pecans that have also been in there for years, potatoes, butter, etc.

**Q.** Are you a cat person or a dog person?

**A.** I like both cats and dogs but I don't have either one.

**Q.** If you won \$20 million in the lottery, what would you do with the money?

**A.** Now that would be a whole different problem. What to do with that much money would be challenging. I think I would give most of it to charity and some to needy kin.

**Q.** How would you describe yourself in just a few words?

**A.** Reserved, quiet, don't like to be in the spotlight, stay in the background.

**Q.** What is the quality you most admire in a person?

**A.** Sincere, honest, dependable, don't cause any trouble.

**Q.** What were you like as a child? quiet? outgoing?

**A.** I think I was quiet. (most of the time) My parents might not agree.

**Q.** What is your favorite childhood memory?

**A.** We always had a dog and the dog just followed me and my brother everywhere. Those were fun times.

**Q.** When you were a little kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

**A.** At that age I don't think that was even a thought. But I know it wasn't to be a soil scientist because I never heard of them guys until about the time I got this job.

**Q.** What is the best present you've ever received?

**A.** I think that would have to be the bicycle I got when I was in about the fifth grade. The only one I ever had.



**Q.** What do you consider to be the most beautiful thing in the world?

**A.** I don't know how I could select one thing out of the millions of beautiful things. But, the fall colors in the mountains rate pretty high on my list. (See "The Back Page.")

**Q.** And, most importantly for all of us, **what's your motto or the advice you live by?**

**A.** No Smoking. Drink alcohol only in moderation. Get some exercise most days. I do a lot of reading of things I like. I do other things I like to do as much as I can - hunting and fishing, sports, movies, TV (mostly now), and do a little traveling (but not too much). And if you like to climb the fourteeners or an ice cliff - go for it. Same for parasailing or sky diving. Not for me though.

## JP Pannell's Recent Awards and Honors

2008: National Cooperative Soil Survey: Soil Scientist Achievement Award

1999: Numerous awards for completing 50 years of service including: A Commendation letter from the White House; Congratulatory Letters from Governor Bill Owens, Senator Ben Campbell, The Chief of the NRCS, and the Director of the Soil Survey Division of the National Cooperative Soil Survey; a commendation from the State Conservationist; and a US flag that had been flown over the U. S. Capitol.

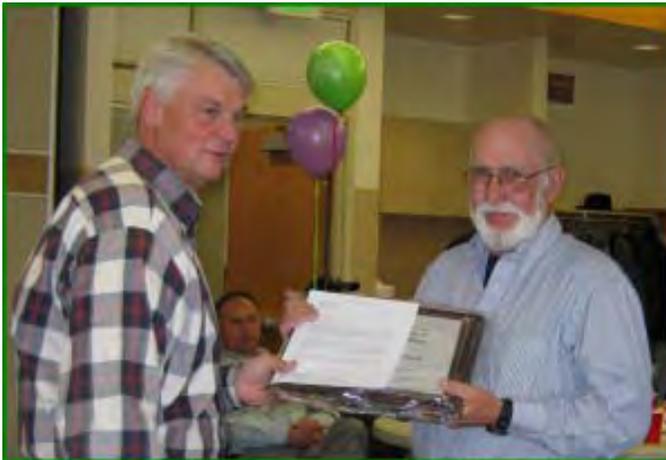
Over the years, a variety of cash awards and Certificates of Merit were awarded to JP. He received a Special Achievement Award in 1983, and an Outstanding Quality Award in 1996.

## Colorado's Million Acre Soil Mappers Honored

By Alan B. Price, Soil Scientist/Bus. Analyst, Ft. Collins, CO

Immediately following JP's retirement party, several soil scientists were honored for each mapping 1,000,000 or more acres over their careers.

Many years of driving, hiking, digging, describing, mapping, avoiding insects and snakes, blistering feet and hands, sun burns, frost bite, sore muscles, and aching joints are necessary to achieve this lofty acreage figure.



Allen Green presents to Dave Dearstyne.

Allen Green, State Conservationist, presented letters, plaques, and lapel pins to honor these weathered "soldiers of soil survey."



Some of the Million Acre Mappers pose with their certificates. From left: Dave Alstatt, Lee Neve, Steve Park, JP Pannell, Doug Ramsey, and Alan Price.

**Congratulations to Colorado's Million Acre Mappers!**

## Interview with Flavio Gonzalez, NRCS's First Hispanic State Conservation Engineer

By Debra M. Molinaro, Management Analyst/HEPM, Lakewood, CO



Flavio Gonzales, Colorado's first Hispanic State Conservation Engineer.

Herman Garcia and I had the pleasure of interviewing Flavio Gonzalez, Colorado's former State Conservation Engineer. Flavio retired from the NRCS in January of 1995 with over 42 years of service with the SCS/NRCS.

He began his career with SCS in his home town of Rio Grande City, Texas in 1953. After graduating from Texas A&M with a degree in civil engineering and a two-year service in the Army, Flavio obtained a position with SCS as a field engineer. He worked under Elias Guerrero, the District Conservationist at the time. He worked in Rio Grande City for approximately 12 years before accepting a position as the Area Engineer in Durango, Colorado. He also worked in Alamosa, Colorado for two years during this period.

In 1976, Flavio accepted the position of Assistant State Engineer in Reno, Nevada where he worked until 1981. In June of 1981, he accepted the position of State Conservation Engineer of Colorado, which he held until his retirement in 1995.

Flavio was the third State Conservation Engineer in Colorado following Charlie Mitchell and Jim Fischer, and was the first Hispanic Engineer in the history of NRCS. Some of Flavio's most enjoyable memories include his time spent in Colorado, especially in Durango.

## CSCB Matching Grant Applies "On The Ground" Conservation

By Levi Montoya, District Conservationist, Trinidad, CO

The Branson-Trinchera Conservation District has applied for and been awarded a Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) Matching Grant to assist private landowners with the implementation of conservation practices on their ranches. The project is a proactive approach for getting conservation enhancement practices on the ground; to better manage grazing, existing conservation practices, and avoid overgrazing on native rangeland and expiring CRP lands. It also provides opportunity to agricultural producers to implement one or more conservation practices that may not rank high enough to be funded through Farm Bill programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) or the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). Through the CSCB Matching Grant, the Branson-Trinchera Conservation District is addressing water quality issues, range management, and wildlife habitat concerns as identified in the District's Long Range Plan of Work and Annual Plan.

The Branson-Trinchera CD, in partnership with the USDA-NRCS Trinidad Field Office and the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO), is providing additional financial and technical assistance. The NRCS Field Office staff provided technical assistance to all the applicants, and will continue to provide technical assistance through the final implementation and field checks of the conservation practices. The RMBO has identified this project as beneficial to short grass prairie birds such as the Long-bill Curlew. Because of these wildlife benefits to habitat, RMBO participated in the ranking process and agreed to provide additional financial assistance.

A total of 27 applicants signed up for the program, for a total of 45

different conservation practices benefiting approximately 32,594 acres of native rangeland and expiring CRP. The common conservation practices include refurbishing old livestock tanks with concrete rims on existing concrete floors; solar pumps for underground livestock pipelines; and fencing, including cross fencing and perimeter fencing.

Once the ranking process was completed, the CSCB Matching Grant along with RMBO financial assistance funded 19 of the 27 applications, or 70% of the total applications. Approximately 26 of the 45 conservation practices planned are scheduled to be applied, or 58% of the total amount practices planned. This will provide land benefit to proper grazing and wildlife habitat on approximately 20,254 acres of the total 32,594 acres originally applied for, or approximately 62%.

The total CSCB Matching grant was awarded in the dollar amount of \$25,000.00. Approximately \$22,500.00 of the grant will be implemented on the ground through conservation practices, the remaining \$2,500.00 will be used for administrative cost. The RMBO has agreed to assist in the funding of 16 applications, in the total additional amount of \$17,261.00. The total number of conservation practice RMBO will assist financially on is 23 practices, benefiting approximately 19,894 acres. The CSCB Matching Grant will cover approximately 36% of the cost, the ranchers will cover another 36% of the cost, and the RMBO will cover the remaining 28%. Bringing the total project cost to approximately \$61,651.00

Through grant programs such as this provides private landowners, conservation districts, and partners the opportunity to participate in the addressing natural resources concerns, provide opportunities to manage for domestic and wildlife use, and assist in sustaining agriculture production at the local level.

## J&L Farms Partnership Honored for Excellence in Rangeland Conservation

By Mary M. Miller, USDA-NRCS Area Public Affairs Specialist, La Junta, CO

Excellence in rangeland conservation defines the work done by J&L Farms Partnership, owned by John and Laura Negley, on its rangeland in Kiowa and Bent counties. For the Negleys stewardship, the Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management honored them with its Excellence in Rangeland Conservation Award. In addition to rangeland, which Laura manages, they also farm non-irrigated cropland, which is John's responsibility.

On their rangeland, the Negleys run a commercial herd of Black Angus and Angus cross cows. Historically the ranch had been managed as a cow-calf operation with traditional stocking rates and continuous season-long grazing. Today, Laura manages the rangeland using the philosophy of moderate stocking combined with short-duration rotational grazing. The rangeland is divided into 21 pastures. The cattle are in each pasture from 7-21 days during the growing season. During the growing and dormant seasons, each pasture is grazed just once.

Of the seven Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) tracts on the Negley operation, Laura has incorporated four of them into her grazing program using the CRP managed grazing provisions.

Last year, Laura began using temporary electric fencing to further divide a pasture into three sub-units. Her objective is to increase stocking densities so that the cattle eat the galleta grass, a relatively less palatable but significant component in the pasture.

Over the past five to seven years, Laura has installed wildlife-friendly two-strand permanent perimeter fencing. She also used power fencing to divide the existing pastures. Some of these improvements were installed using USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts. The ranch also has a 2008 Conservation Security Program (CSP) contract due to the Negleys stewardship.

To help monitor livestock nutrition, Laura has used the NRCS Nutritional Balance Analyzer (NUTBAL) program.

Besides farming and ranching, the Negleys are involved in many county and community activities and organizations.



# TECHNO TIPS

## NEXT GENERATION GPS

by Robert Fontaine  
Civil Engineering Technician, Canon City, CO

GPS technology has been around for about the last ten years within NRCS for tasks such as practice inventory and checkout. It's probably safe to say that most NRCS conservation planners are pretty comfortable taking a handheld GPS unit out in the field, collecting data, and then downloading that data into Toolkit and ArcMap. As GPS technology has improved, our agency has strived to keep up with the latest advancements to make GPS data collection easier and more accurate for our field users.

With the state-wide acquisition of new GPS units, we now have an opportunity to move into the next generation of GPS and really improve the task of data collection. These new units offer submeter accuracy without the need for backpacks and external antennas. Furthermore, these GPS receivers are fully operation PDAs that run under the latest version of the Windows Mobile operating system. Because of this open-feature, the new GPS units are able to run just about any Windows Mobile application that is available.

For the purpose of GPS data collection, the new units will come loaded with two GIS applications: One is a program that offers simple capturing of GPS points, lines and polygons. This program also is used for setting up, controlling, and monitoring the unit's internal GPS receiver. ESRI ArcPad is the other GIS program that will be loaded on the new GPS units, and one



*An initial mobile technology/ArcPad workshop was held in Salida, Colorado, November 3-4, 2009. The group shown here was out in the field, putting the equipment to the test.*

that may be at least a little more familiar, since we already use its big brother ArcMap for our conservation planning maps. Because of its integration with ArcMap and Toolkit, it is ArcPad that we are focusing on and encouraging our planners to take advantage of when going out in the field and collecting GIS data.

A mobile technology/Arcpad workshop was held in Salida, November 3-4 of 2009. The training session was attended by users who had already acquired the new GPS units, as well as users who were using ArcPad on their tablets, in conjunction with an internal GPS card. NRCS field users from around the state learned how to configure their Trimble GPS receiver and collect data in the field using ArcPad. In the simulated field exercise, the GPS inventory data that was collected was then

downloaded into an actual landowners plan map. It all went very well, and should be a pretty simple, straightforward and hopefully fun process once these new GPS systems become integrated into everyday conservation planning.

As the new GPS units are rolled out in the next year, look to your fellow field office colleagues who are already familiar with these new devices and ArcPad for assistance. Training sessions will be scheduled, and your Area Resource Conservationist for Technology will also be available to help field users. As with learning any new task, the most important thing to remember is to be patient and keep working at it, and soon it will become second-nature!



# TECHNO TIPS

## SPEED AND EFFICIENCY ENHANCEMENTS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE TOOLKIT & ARCMAP

By Marianna Young, Resource Conservationist-Technology, Alamosa, CO

Are you bogged down by Toolkit/ArcMap? Do you wish you didn't have to wait so long for your ArcMap document to open? Or do you sometimes need to view orthos from adjacent counties but your field office server doesn't have enough storage space or you don't know how to acquire them? Try some of the tips below and see if they increase your efficiency & improve your work flow.

> **UNCHECK THE ORTHO** Before exiting your ArcMap document (.mxd), uncheck the ortho imagery layer so that it doesn't need to draw when you open the .mxd. The ortho can take an interminably long time to draw, and there are times when the ortho isn't necessary. Save the .mxd after you uncheck the box or your change won't take effect.

> **COPY ORTHO TO C: DRIVE** Create a geodata/ortho\_imagery data folder structure on your C: drive, and copy your county's ortho imagery layer to that location from the f:\geodata\ortho\_imagery folder. Copy all files with the same prefix, not just the .sid portion of the ortho. Next, in the .mxd that references the ortho, right-click on the ortho in the table of contents (TOC), Properties, Source tab. You should see that the current location ArcMap is pointing to for the ortho is the F:\geodata folder. Click on the Set Data Source.... Button; then click on the drop-down button in the Look in box, and browse to your new folder structure, C:\geodata\ortho\_imagery. Click on the applicable \*.sid file, and then click Add, then OK. Save the .mxd after you uncheck the box or your change won't take effect.

> **USE BLACK & WHITE (GRAY-SCALE) ORTHO** Prior to 2005 (when we received the color ortho imagery), field offices used gray-scale orthos that had coarser resolution and were thus smaller in file size and drew more quickly. These older orthos are still available to users, though you may need to request them from your

Area Resource Conservationist for Technology (ARC-T). These orthos can be used in ArcMap for general pre-printing digitizing and planning work. Make sure to switch to the color ortho when printing. Due to limited server space in some offices, it's probably best to store them in your C:\geodata\ortho\_imagery folder. (FYI – updated color orthos are being transferred to field offices this autumn; some offices already have them.)

> **USE GIS SERVERS FOR ADJACENT ORTHOS** A non-NRCS site I have found very useful for viewing multiple counties' orthos is <http://services.arcgisonline.com/v92>. This is a handy site for people who work in multiple counties, because it reduces the need to have numerous orthos & other layers stored on the C: drive. Internet access is necessary, however. How does one easily access this site and use data from it? See below:  
Brief instructions: In ArcMap, Add Data. Click on Look in drop-down button, scroll toward the bottom & select GIS Servers. In the next box, double-click Add ArcGIS Server, then select Use GIS Services and click Next. In the Internet (top) box, type, after the http://, services.arcgisonline.com/v92, then click Finish. In the next box, double-click on the newly added service; in the next pop-up window, double-click on I3\_Imagery\_Prime\_World\_2D. In your .mxd, you will see a new layer added to your TOC, and, depending on how far in you are zoomed, you will see another layer of ortho imagery in your map. Be patient with this layer initially; as you pan & zoom more, the drawing speed will increase noticeably.

If the above instructions are too sketchy for you to follow, go to the Colorado Sharepoint Technology Team site, and read the document entitled "Accessing APFO web mapping data in ArcGIS9-2".

Following are a few Windows-specific tasks that can be done to generally improve the performance of your computer:

Reduce desktop shortcut icons, whether to programs or documents

Disable sounds: go to Start, Control Panel, Sounds and Audio Devices, Sounds Tab. Under Program events, a little symbol will be displayed next to each action that has a sound associated with it. Disable all sounds you don't want; to speed up booting, disable the Windows Startup and Shutdown sounds.

Right-click on the desktop, click on Properties. On the Themes tab, select Windows Classic. On the Screen Saver tab, select (None) as your Screen saver. Many temporary and "scratch" files end up in the C:\temp folder, and remain there until they're manually removed. Along with all of the \*.tmp files that can be deleted periodically, delete a folder named rasterproxies if it appears. This is an ArcMap-created folder that's used to store raster-related files, and it can become quite large after a time.

Toolkit- and ArcMap-related items:  
Do not use spaces when naming shapefiles or the Planned Land Unit layer.  
When saving your ArcMap session, be sure to save the .mxd when exiting ArcMap, even if you just clicked the Save button.  
When adding in your own county ArcMap template to use as your map, do not overwrite the ToolkitGIS\_Template.mxd. Avoid being creative when working in ArcMap inside Toolkit – it can cause problems. In other words, stick with Toolkit-specific toolbars & tasks. However, when you're using ArcMap outside of Toolkit, use all the creativity you want. This is by no means a comprehensive list of Customer Service Toolkit/ArcMap/Windows improvements. Your ARC-T is a good resource for additional tips and tricks, both for ArcMap/Toolkit and your computer's performance. If anyone out there has additional ones that have worked for them, I'd be interested in hearing about them.

## Montrose Tour Examines The Use of Calcium Chloride



By Lars Santana, Rangeland Management Specialist, Montrose, CO

**O**n November 4th the Montrose Service Center had a field tour looking at the use and application of calcium chloride. The tour visited a renovated irrigated pasture that was previously limited use acreage due to high salt and high clay content of the soils. Soils with high amounts of clay and elevated salt levels, derived primarily from Mancos Shale parent materials, continue to challenge both farmers and ranchers around the Montrose area. In the past, a lot of time and effort was put into restoring this pasture, with plowing and tillage along with fertilizer and different irrigation techniques, but these practices had limited effect. The use of calcium chloride, applied through the irrigation water, has helped with deep saturation of the soil profile.

Previously the irrigation water would just run off. The improved infiltration of irrigation water also helps move the salt down from the surface, which allows for better production of forage.

A life long rancher and former Shavano Conservation District Wildlife Conservationist of the Year hosted the tour. His soils contain some of the highest clay contents in the valley. Seepage from the large canal into these Mancos Shale soils helps to keep his water tables elevated and soil salt levels high. Coupled with these high water tables and heavy clay soils, pasture grazing can cause seasonal soil compaction, which has been very difficult to break up.

facilitates better soil structure. Basically it replaces the salts, which inhibit water movement, with calcium. This also allows the salts to move readily into solution which can then be flushed out of the top soil. This improves the tilth or mellowness of the soil.

So far, the landowner is impressed with the results of his two-year trial using calcium chloride. He has a good stand of palatable grass where it was sparse before.

The soil is looser now and will actually soak in irrigation water into the soil profile. Soil compaction from his cattle is

not as much of an issue now. This soil amendment appears to be working for his operation in combination with his other conservation efforts.

If you have further questions or would like more information about these field day observations, please contact the Montrose NRCS office and ask for Lars Santana.

**So far, the landowner is impressed with the results of his two-year trial using calcium chloride.**

In the past many attempts to grow grass involved broken pieces of tillage equipment and many boulder size, rock hard, clods of soil. Ongoing efforts and study of these problematic soils, has brought him into contact with soil scientists who have utilized calcium chloride as a soil amendment to alleviate similar problems.

Calcium chloride, also known as liquid gypsum, lowers the pH in the soil, improves infiltration of water, and



# Employee Spotlight

## Noe Marymor, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist Area 2 Administrative Office, Greeley CO

*What is a wildlife biologist and what are your job responsibilities with the Agency?:*

A wildlife biologist is a practitioner of the art and science of managing the wildlife that are held in public trust. The NRCS biologist is tasked with conserving, restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat on private lands. Our job responsibilities within the agency include outreach to landowners to develop habitat projects, providing wildlife-related technical assistance to NRCS field offices and working with other state, Federal, and non-governmental partners to develop coordinated habitat conservation programs.



**When did you begin your career with NRCS in Colorado?**  
October 2006

**Were you previously employed with NRCS?**  
In Nebraska, for 1 1/2 years, I was a Farm Bill Biologist.

**How did you hear about the Agency?**  
One of my professors at CSU was Wendell Gilgert, the NRCS West Regional Wildlife Biologist out of the Portland Office. Wendell was instrumental in introducing me to habitat management and the NRCS.

**What do you enjoy the most about your job?**  
I enjoy helping landowners to be good wildlife stewards and managers.

**What is the most challenging part of your job?**  
The most challenging thing is sitting inside doing paperwork when I want to be outside!

**How does wildlife biology benefit conservation?**  
Wildlife is a resource, just like soil or water. The conservation, or wise use, of wildlife allows the resource to be used in the future whether that is for hunting, wildlife watching, or for the ecosystem services that wildlife provide.

**Tell us about one of your most interesting projects or activities that you have been involved with for NRCS:**  
I have really enjoyed being involved in the new CRP SAFE program. The program represents a flexible new tool under the CRP program dedicated to conserving declining and economically important wildlife species. It has huge potential nationwide to protect several declining species, including the lesser prairie chicken and sharp-tailed grouse species in Colorado.

**What other agencies do you work with in your job?**  
Colorado Division of Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, and Pheasants Forever.

**List some of your major professional accomplishments:**  
- I drafted and led the stakeholder group that provided input into the Western Slope Grouse Conservation CRP SAFE program.  
- With a group of colleagues in 2003, I helped create a unique system of beaver damage control called the "beaver deceiver," which has since been adopted for use in other states.  
- As a technician for the Forest Service in 2001, I recorded the first capture of a Spotted Bat (a fairly uncommon and elusive species) in the state of Washington.

**What is your college experience?**  
Colorado State University, B.S. Wildlife Biology/Statistics, 2005

**Do you have any pets?**  
One cat named Cedar.

**What are your interests or hobbies?**  
I am a hunting and fishing fool. I especially love to turkey hunt and wish I could do it year round. I am also President-elect of the Colorado Wildlife Society and am Treasurer of a group called Special Youth Challenge of Colorado which takes disabled youth hunting.

**Anything else you would like for people to know about you and/or what you do?**  
I appreciate the support of the NRCS for these partnership biologist positions!



# Coordinator's Corner

## Volunteer Hero

By Colleen McCleary, Earth Team Coordinator, La Junta, CO



**Joel Aaron King** was born in 1983 in La Junta, Colorado. He grew up in the town of Swink, where he attended and graduated K-12 at the Swink Elementary and Swink High School.

On June 23, 2003, he swore into the United States Marine Corps. He completed boot camp at MCRD San Diego, California in September of 2004, and went on to the School of Infantry (SOI) as a Private. After completing infantry training, he was chosen to be a Machine Gunner.

After graduation and more training, Joel deployed to Iraq with Weapons Company 81mm from February through October of 2004. He was also working on advancing in the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, and the same day Joel earned his Green Belt, he also received the rank of Lance Corporal.

Upon his return from Iraq, Joel continued his training with the

Marines, until an injury to his feet caused him to fall behind in exercises. That injury did not stop him from deploying again to Iraq on July 4, 2005. Joel was still in a "Roller Cam" walker when he deployed, but made himself useful as a Radio Operator in a forward base in the heart of Fallujah.

When it became known that the only way to correct Joel's feet was to have the operation in the U.S., he returned in October of that year. Serving in the "Remain Behind Element," he got the necessary treatments and served the rest of his military time as Barracks Duty NCO, maintaining the order, discipline, and integrity of the Marines that lived and worked around the barracks at which he was tasked.

In March of 2007 in La Junta, Joel married Lalena Maria Dunham from 29 Palms, California. By June of 2007, Joel was honorably discharged from the U.S. Marine Corps. Joel and Lalena moved to Pueblo, and then back to La Junta to be near family because of the happy news that they were expecting their first child.

Joel began volunteer work with the NRCS in June of 2009, doing secretarial work and light building maintenance. His coworkers feel they are privileged to have Joel as a volunteer, and say he is a true American hero!

On July 8, 2009, Annabel Leah King was born in La Junta, like her Daddy. Her parents are very happy to have this addition to their family!



## The Colorado Earth Team Volunteer Award Winners of 2009 are:

INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEER EARTH TEAM AWARD:  
**Jim Valliant**, Area 3

GROUP EARTH TEAM VOLUNTEER AWARD:  
**Y.C.C. Group Conservation Corp**, Area 4

CHIEF'S FIELD AWARD:  
**Longmont Field Office**, Area 2

NACD/NRCS EARTH TEAM AWARD:  
**Center Conservation District**, Area 4

NRCS EMPLOYEE EARTH TEAM AWARD:  
**Chanda Pettie**, Area 4

***Congratulations and thanks to each of you!***

# FIVE-COUNTY CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM

## Five Counties Cooperate to Increase Heritage Tourism in Southern Colorado

Representatives from chambers of commerce, tourism boards, and other organizations from five counties in south-central Colorado are working together to develop heritage tourism as an expanded economic sector.

Located between two state heritage tourism regions and at the intersection of major highways, the five-county group is working to develop a regional identity while recognizing the distinctiveness of each community.

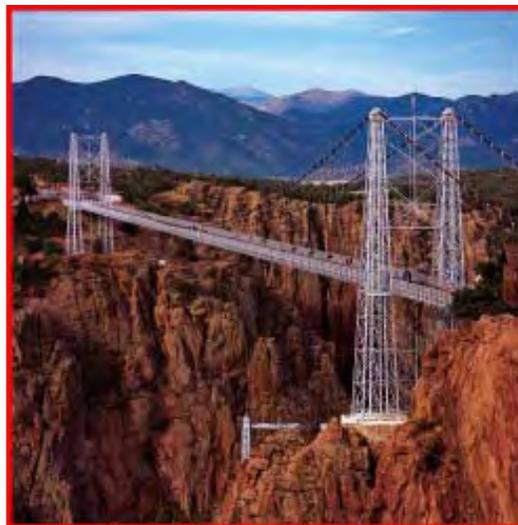
The group engaged Judy Walden of the Walden Mills Group to conduct an initial assessment of the area's heritage resources, challenges, and opportunities. The assessment identified "an extraordinary inventory of historic, cultural, and scenic assets; centers of excellence in the performing and visual arts; and ethnic histories second to none in the state". The assessment was funded by local tourism groups, Colorado State University, and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs.

The Council sponsored the grant on behalf of the five-county heritage tourism group. Funding from local tourism groups, Colorado State University, and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs round out funding for the project.

This unique approach to uniting tourism and the arts garnered the group an invitation to speak on the project at the Governor's Tourism Conference held in Pueblo, Colorado, in October 2009.

Based on the results of the assessment, the RC&D Council applied for and was awarded a grant from the Colorado Council on the Arts to develop a regional marketing map highlighting heritage tourism and the arts.

The group spent the summer touring each of the five counties to become more familiar with the heritage tourism assets in the region. The group's next focus is to raise funds to develop a strategic plan.



# "BULLY" IS NOT WHAT AN ENGLISHMAN SAYS IT IS!

By Tony Panek, CET, Cortez, CO  
Area 4 Representative CCRAC,  
CCRAC Vice-Chair

Not long ago, I visited a business here in Cortez. The person who waited on me asked a question I hadn't heard in many decades; a question that, recollecting my younger years, made me cringe.

When I told the worker my last name, I heard, "What nationality is that - Czech?"

I'm an American. But I knew what the real question was.

"Sure!" I was inclined to respond, just to put an end to a particular conversation in which I did not want to participate. At first, I hesitated in my reply.

"Polish," I heard myself say eventually, but without the fear or embarrassment associated with the past. This ill-repute of the Poles stemmed from, I believe, their crushing defeat at the hands of Nazi Germany in World War II, when they fought Hitler's Luftwaffe & Panzer divisions from horseback. Having a last name that is pronounced "panic" didn't help my situation. Afterwards, the Poles were branded with a "backwardness" often unfairly associated with those in Appalachia. My wife, from West Virginia, amazingly still confronts these mindless perceptions about Appalachia on occasion despite the fact she holds a Master's degree in clinical informatics.

Being Polish in northern Illinois when I was young was not just a matter of developing thick skin and riding out the ridicule because I was attacked with more than just words. I fought my way through the days and proved to them I was not afraid to bleed. Survival meant keeping my distance from others and keeping the awareness of my existence limited to their minds. Above all else, do not be noticed!

And I hear the mantra in my mind; "What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger!" Tell that to a ten year old. Words cannot correct the injustice caused by the insecurity of others.

I'm not writing this to talk about myself.

I'm writing this to talk to you.

As the Area 4 representative to the Colorado Civil Rights Advisory Committee, I thought my greatest involvement with the committee would be attending meetings, working on committee assignments, preparing an outreach report, and looking around.

Yet, I find myself attentive to the lives of others in this role and some have contacted me with issues. I speak little and hope to notice much. The subject most often brought to my attention is how you treat those with whom you work. The subject for today is bullying in the workplace. It's not what the Englishman said it was.

According to the Workplace Bullying Institute, "37% of the U.S. workforce reports some kind of bullying at work. Bullying is a systematic campaign of interpersonal destruction that jeopardizes your health, your career, the job you once loved. Bullying is a non-physical, non-homicidal form of violence and because it is violence and abusive, emotional harm frequently results".

## What constitutes bullying in the workplace?

"Bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Sometimes, bullying can involve negative physical contact as well. Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behavior that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people. It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggression."

**Bullying, when employed against a protected class (e.g. age, race, gender), becomes harassment, which is illegal discrimination.**

The first step in dealing with bullies is to recognize you are being bullied. To regain control, you must realize you are not the source of the problem. Bullying is about control and has nothing to do with your performance.

## What are some examples of bullying?

- \* Spreading malicious gossip or innuendo that is not true
- \* Excluding or isolating someone socially

- \* Intimidating a person
- \* Undermining or deliberately impeding a person's work
- \* Withholding necessary information or purposefully giving wrong information
- \* Making jokes that are 'obviously offensive' by spoken word or e-mail
- \* Intruding on a person's privacy by pestering, eavesdropping, or stalking
- \* Yelling or using profanity
- \* Criticizing a person persistently or constantly
- \* Belittling a person's opinions
- \* Tampering with a person's personal belongings or work equipment.

## How should you deal with bullies?

- \* Seek the advice of a trusted mentor who may have dealt with this situation before.
- \* Make sure your superiors are aware of your work. Workplace bullies often try to spread the word that you are not doing your job well and will even go as far as to report the smallest infractions to your boss. Your actions will carry more weight than his or her words.
- \* Don't allow the bully to isolate you from your colleagues. Keep up your workplace friendships.
- \* Don't try to win over other people to your side. The way in which you handle the situation will allow them to make their own judgments.
- \* If you can, confront the bully in a professional manner, but only if your physical safety isn't threatened. Don't sink to his or her level. Stay as calm as possible. Don't yell or threaten. Often bullies are looking for this type of confrontation and it will encourage them to come back for more.

## What should you do if you're being bullied?

This article is not intended to proscribe courses of action but to protect yourself, you need evidence. Document, document, document. Talk to your supervisor and talk with a friend. solve the situation.

## Bullying exists because someone did nothing to stop it.

*"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."* - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Please contact me for resources at [anthony.panek@co.usda.gov](mailto:anthony.panek@co.usda.gov).

# Prescribed Grazing and Herding for Rangeland Health

*Kremmling Field Office, Middle Park Conservation District host "out-of-the-box" workshop*

*By Matt Barnes, Multi-County Rangeland Management Specialist, Kremmling/Walden, CO*

Participants in a recent workshop learned the basic concepts of planned grazing and herding at the award-winning Blue Valley Ranch, on the bank of the Blue River and below the steep crags of the Eagle's Nest. After locally roasted coffee and a welcome by Bonnie Koblitz of the Middle Park Conservation District, the morning began with my presentation "Prescribed Grazing for Rangeland Health." This culminated in a caffeinated discussion of adaptive grazing management.

Planned grazing that meets the needs of soil and plants as well as those of animals and their owners is the single most important practice to improve the health and productivity of our rangeland and pasture resources.

Even with "proper" or conservative stocking, poorly managed grazing leads to distribution problems, where heavily grazed and unused patches are found side-by-side within a pasture. Animals are attracted to re-growth when plants are least tolerant of grazing, creating expanding patches of deterioration: loss of palatable plant species, soil stability, and hydrologic function. Prescribed grazing can break this cycle with short grazing periods and high stock density, encouraging livestock to consume a higher proportion of plants in a pasture, and then removing the livestock until the grazed plants have recovered.

Commonly cited barriers to adoption of prescribed grazing are that, as usually implemented, it requires more fencing (permanent fence is often cost-prohibitive); and it requires a lot more management, including handling and moving livestock, which, with conventional handling techniques, can stress both animals and people.

Herding makes prescribed grazing technically practical and economically viable by allowing a few individuals to move a large herd over long distances and rough terrain, and place them—without fencing. This means that stock can be moved off of sensitive areas, breaking the cycle of repeated grazing and improving distribution, as well as facilitating vegetation treatments. To that end, we invited Guy Glosson, manager of the award-winning Mesquite Grove Ranch near Snyder, Texas, and a Certified Educator in Holistic Management, to teach the low-

stress livestock handling techniques that he learned directly from stockmanship guru Bud Williams.

After allowing that there might be nothing crazier than teaching a bunch of cowboys to handle livestock, Guy spent the next two days bravely doing just that. By applying pressure and then releasing it at the right time, Guy taught us to inspire the animals to want to go where we want them to go, and then let them go or stay there. Guy began by demonstrating the low-stress initial approach to the herd, and then walked the herd up and down a fence line. Participants found that low-stress livestock handling is not a kinder, gentler version of conventional handling, but a new method that requires the herder to be in a different position relative to the herd. To learn to work the lead animals from the side, participants had to let go of their previous experience of pushing the herd from behind.

Tim Robertson, livestock foreman at Blue Valley Ranch, could hardly contain his enthusiasm. "This is fascinating!" he whispered after quietly walking the herd through a pattern delineated by a set of barrels. Mark Volt (District Conservationist) and other participants walked the cattle across a pasture and through a gate, pressing them when they slowed and releasing the pressure as they moved in the desired direction.

Dan Nosal (Franktown Field Office) and Ben Berlinger (La Junta Area Office), rangeland



*Bonnie Koblitz (Middle Park CD) and Jenny Stricker (Walden FO) practice new stockmanship skills.*

management specialists representing the Colorado Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, worked with me and Guy to emphasize grazing planning and adaptive management concepts throughout the workshop. Dan acclaimed the workshop as "the most out-of-the-box" of any funded by the Colorado GLCI.

John Kossler, Blue Valley Ranch's natural resources manager, and a conservation district board member, emphasized that immediate adoption of low-stress livestock handling on the ranch is a crucial aspect of the project, and the employees who do the bulk of the livestock handling all attended the workshop. The workshop is just the first phase in a longer-term project demonstrating prescribed grazing best management practices for rangeland health. We agreed to host a tour in a year or two to demonstrate how Blue Valley Ranch uses herding to apply prescribed grazing and change patterns of use on this stunningly beautiful landscape.



*A black bear interrupted the proceedings. Mark and Matt were ready to take heroic action to fend off the intruder, but the bear ran away!*

## Ft. Collins Field Office Promotes "Resources" Through Internship Program

By Andy Piszkin, Soil Conservation Technician, Fort Collins, CO

Besides the 3 R's—"Rigor, Relationships, and Relevance," the High School Programs at Front Range Community College (FRCC) have added "Resources" to their promotional motto via a cooperative educational internship with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Fort Collins Field Office. The Wildlife, Forestry and Natural Resources program, offered at the Larimer Campus, provides advanced career and technical training experiences for juniors and seniors from the public high schools in Larimer and Weld counties.

One exceptional student, John Denton, was selected to intern with the Fort Collins Field Office earlier this year.

Andy Piszkin took John out on a Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) assignment for a farmer who was preparing his field for a micro-irrigation (subsurface drip) system but first needed an accurate survey of the field. Using one of the two GPS survey units used in Area 2, Andy explained the basic concepts of GPS, land surveying, and GPS surveying. He showed John how to set up, collect data, and close out a survey. After the fieldwork, Andy and John were able to transfer the node coordinates into an autoCAD file and develop a 0.5-foot contour map of the field. A .pdf file of that map was then emailed to the client. The client was thankful for the GPS data.

A significant opportunity John had during his internship was exposure to the Big Thompson River Habitat Project, a 1.5 mile reach under private landownership. John worked directly with Andy Piszkin (NRCS) and Glenn Newlon (GN Engineering) on streambank erosion and stabilization analysis, surveying, and data collection. Since John happens to be 6'-6", he was duly nominated to measure some of the deeper thalweg cross sections of the river using the GPS survey equipment, while Andy provided guidance and technical direction (and also made sure the expensive GPS survey controller stayed out of the water.) John also kept detailed notes as Glenn performed pebble counts across several key locations along the river.



John recorded pebble count data on the bank of the Big Thompson.

John discovered that river restoration truly is the successful blend of engineering, science, and ecology, and can only be truly successful through plenty of coordination and support from a diverse group of organizations.

Since successfully completing the Wildlife, Forestry and Natural Resources High School Program at Front Range Community College, John has enrolled at Colorado State University (CSU) as a Watershed Science major. He is



John and Andy Piszkin survey the Big Thompson River for a habitat restoration project.

carrying 13 credits while working two jobs: one with the CSU Warner College of Natural Resources Restoration Ecology Laboratory. Maybe John's exposure to the Big Thompson River Habitat project had something to do with his interest in Watershed Science as a major.

Regardless of which major(s) John Denton studies, the cooperative educational internship with the NRCS Fort Collins Field Office provided him with valuable insight and awareness of the real-world application of natural resources. Being an exceptional young man, John has a great head start into the field of natural resources and conservation.

Todd has already begun coordinating with area schools for 2010 internship opportunities and Earth Team volunteers.

The 4 R's, "*Rigor, Relationships, Relevance, and Resources*" also apply to the success of the NRCS Fort Collins Field Office: a true service to the Front Range Community.

## CACD Watershed Associations Set to Host 2010 Conservation Input Forums

By Petra Barnes, Public Affairs Officer, Lakewood, CO

The NRCS, in coordination with the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) Watershed Associations, will be holding a series of Watershed Conservation Input Forums between February 2010 and May 2010. The meetings will be held

Discussions during these sessions will revolve around various conservation practices like irrigation water management systems, range management, and many others. Participants will also have the opportunity to discuss their issues regarding high priority natural resource concerns including water

**Don't miss this important opportunity to contribute to the conversation, as the wise use and conservation of our natural resources is everyone's responsibility.**

within the ten Colorado geopolitical watershed boundaries, and are designed to provide NRCS customers, natural resource partners, and other organizations with the opportunity to help guide and make recommendations regarding NRCS financial and technical assistance programs.

*"NRCS in Colorado is tasked with managing and administering millions of dollars annually to help NRCS customers and partners enhance the quality of the state's natural resources," says Petra Barnes Walker, NRCS Public Affairs Officer, Lakewood. "These forums are a great opportunity for those at the grassroots level, and who will most likely be directly impacted by programmatic decisions, to ensure their input and interests are represented."*

quantity, water quality, invasive species, rangeland health, small acreage management, forest health, and many others. Then they will be asked to share input about how NRCS can help mitigate some of their concerns through agency programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP); the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP); and many more.

Don't miss this important opportunity to contribute to the conversation, as the wise use and conservation of our natural resources is everyone's responsibility and is critical to sustaining and enhancing the quality of life we enjoy within our community. For additional information about the forum within your watershed, please visit [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov).



## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATES 30 YEARS IN MARCH

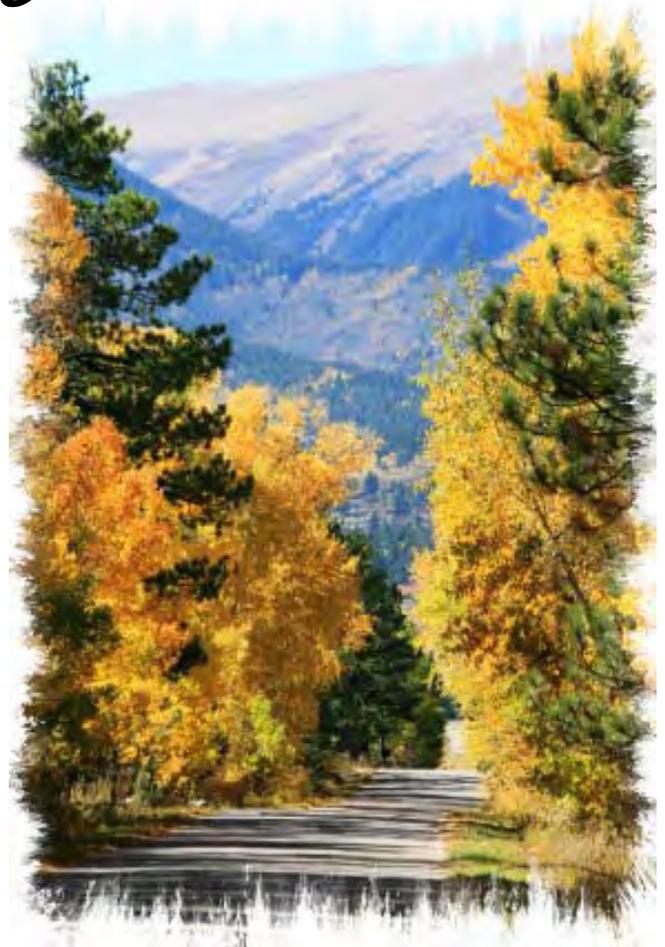
By Sherri Brandt, CO FWPM, Akron, CO

Women's History was first celebrated nationally during the week of March 8, 1980 when former President Jimmy Carter issued a Presidential Proclamation declaring that week as National Women's History Week. It became National Women's History Month in 1987 when Congress expanded the week long celebration into a month-long celebration. March 2010 marks the 30th Anniversary of Women's History Month, with the theme for the celebration "Writing Women Back into History."

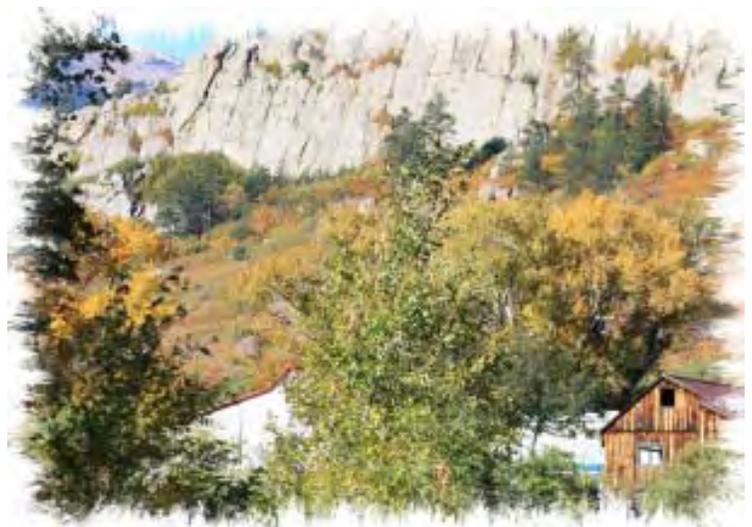
Up until the 80s, the topic of women's history was limited to college curricula and even there it was fairly scarce. At that time, women were usually written in as footnotes and women of color and women in fields such as math, science and art were completely omitted from the history books. For the past 30 years the National Women's History Project has worked to change the way women are perceived in history. You can learn more about the National Women's History Project by visiting their website at [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org).

As your Colorado Federal Women's Program Manager, I encourage each NRCS office in Colorado to celebrate Women's History Month by doing an activity that increases your knowledge of women's history. Activities in the past have included pot lucks, trivia questions, quizzes and crossword puzzles. I will be once again be sending out information on Women's History Month as well as an activity for you to participate in during Women's History Month and of course there will be a prize for the winner. Be sure to send me and write up and pictures of how your office chooses to celebrate **Women's History Month.**

# *The Back Page*



*For JP...  
a few of your favorites*



*All photos by Mary Miller,  
Public Affairs Specialist, La Junta*