

Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service Employee Newsletter



Colorado NRCS: We Can Make a Difference in Conservation

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Highlights

by
Allen Green
State Conservationist

Often in our everyday effort to stay on top of records, reports, contracts, etc., we fail to take the time to appreciate some of the core functions that our agency was founded on.

Our primary focus to this day still remains one of helping agriculture to produce the food and fiber our country depends on, in a way that sustains the resources and has a positive impact on the environment.

We have evolved over the years to be an agency of technical professionals with the scientific background and training to assist a wide variety of agricultural operations to conserve and utilize their resources efficiently.

In this era of increased awareness of global climate issues, we can take pride in the fact that a great deal of our efforts to help farmers and ranchers conserve the resources on their lands have had a positive impact to not only improve their operation but also to sustain precious resources.

It is now being recognized that private land agriculture is a valuable landscape that not only produces food and fiber, but can also provide open space, clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, and even help sequester carbon and other greenhouse gases.

We have a great challenge and opportunity ahead of us to maintain and increase our technical

knowledge and skills in order to match an ever changing clientele.

I know that the greatest sense of job satisfaction for me has been when I see farmers and ranchers applying conservation practices that our agency had some involvement in.

If you have not done so recently, I hope that all of you (no matter what your job) will take the time to appreciate how fortunate we are to be part of an organization and partnership that can make a difference.

The best way that I know for us to express our appreciation for our good fortune, is to do everything possible to learn, grow, and do our jobs to the absolute best of our abilities.

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2009 Arkansas River Basin Water Forum:

“Water to Fuel Our Future” theme will explore water-energy connections

The 2009 Arkansas River Basin Water Forum took place in Pueblo, Colo., March 31 – April 1.

Keynote speaker Jennifer Gimbel, Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, kicked off the conference designed to promote open dialogue among water users, creating a greater understanding of water issues affecting the Arkansas River watershed from the headwaters to the state line.

In addition, other presentation topics included the Arkansas Basin Round Table, Water Conservancy Districts’ updates, Energy and Water Nexus, Drought and Climate Change Risk Preparedness, Invasive Species, Fountain Creek Vision Task Force, and Lake Pueblo Dam and Reservoir.

Thursday’s luncheon speaker was author/historian Joanne Dodds, who brought to life the history of the region. Field trips included the Xeriscape Garden at the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District and the Steelworks Museum of Industry and Culture, located at the historic CF&I Steel site.

Jane Wustrow, Sangre de Cristo Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Coordinator, was a member of the Forum’s Planning Committee. The RC&D was also one of the sponsors for this year’s event.

Kathy Trujillo, retired Sangre de



Jane Wustrow, Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council Coordinator, Sangre de Cristo RC&D, left, presents a Special Service Award to Kathy Trujillo, retired secretary, Sangre de Cristo RC&D.

Cristo RC&D Secretary, received a Special Service Award for all of her work in past years on the Forum’s Planning Committees.

Rick Romano, Canon City Field Office District Conservationist, won Nolan Doesken’s, Colorado State Climatologist, Arkansas Valley Basin Climate Trivia Quiz. Area 3 Natural Resources Conservation Service and the RC&D were two of the exhibitors.

The Forum provides a friendly, constructive atmosphere where individuals and organizations explain their views and engage in open dialogue with other water users from all parts of the basin including agricultural, municipal, industrial, environmental, recreational and governmental interests.

Past Forums have resulted in a wider understanding of water issues, contributing to wise decision-making that serves the common good for all who call the Arkansas River Basin their home.

The Forum also featured an art and photography contest for grades K-12 and an open photography contest.

One to Grow On



“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

~Mahatma Gandhi

“Enthusiasm finds the opportunities, and energy makes the most of them.”

~Henry Hoskins

“A good plan today is better than a great plan tomorrow.”

~George S. Patton

“The person who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.”

~Chinese Proverb

“If you make friends with yourself you will never be alone.”

~Maxwell Maltz

“Vision without action is day-dream. Action without vision is nightmare.”

~Japanese Proverb

“Sometimes one pays most for the things one gets for nothing.”

~Albert Einstein

“Positive thinking will let you do everything better than negative thinking will.”

~Zig Ziglar

“Whenever you find whole world against you just turn around and lead the world.”

~Anonymous



Possible revitalization of the proposed Hartland Dam Fish Ladder



Colorado Association of Conservation Districts

by Delta and Painted Sky Conservation Districts

Nearly 30 people representing federal, state, county, local and private interests, met March 12, 2009 to discuss the revitalization of the long-time proposed Hartland Dam Fish Ladder Project.

Painted Sky Resource Conservation and Development Council headed up the meeting as the project will be administered through them.

As partners with Painted Sky, the Delta Conservation District's involvement will entail facilitating on-the-ground implementation of the project. This is the number one fish ladder project on Region 6 of the US Fish and Wildlife (USF&W) Service priority list.

The Hartland Dam is located northeast of the City of Delta near the former City golf course on the Gunnison River takeout for the Hartland Ditch.

Over ten years ago, the proposed fish ladder project idea was conceived when three alternative plans were drawn up by a US Bureau of Reclamation contractor.

The project has been considered many times over recent years,

however, funding has never materialized. The USF&W Service is hoping to advance this project to a "shovel-ready" state in hopes to implement the project next fall or winter.

Three species of special interest make this project a priority of the USF&W Service. These species include the flannelmouth sucker, the bluehead sucker, and the round tail chub.

Currently, the dam creates a barrier to upstream habitat and spawning areas for these species. Providing a safe passage is will be a benefit to these species and others that occupy the river.

Working plans are back on the table and will be reassessed for functionality and up-to-date costs will be recalculated.

The goals of the project include assurance of: 1) safe fish passage through the dam to upstream habitat; 2) boater safety and reducing related-transportation on private property; and 3) conveyance of historic water rights.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service will do some of the initial engineering reassessment work.

The passage way or fish ladder entails rocks and boulders placed at the dam in the channel to form riffles and pools to enable fish to migrate upstream. At present, the dam creates a barrier and fish are unable to migrate over it. Construction bids for the fish ladder will be solicited from local contractors.

The mission of Painted Sky RC&D is to complement, balance, and promote natural and human resources to improve the general level of economic activity to enhance the environment and standard of living in the six-county area of the Painted Sky RC&D. Coordinator, Paul Van Ryzin, may be reached at 970.874.5735 ext. 113.

The mission of the Delta Conservation District is to provide for the conservation and preservation of our natural resources and agricultural heritage in order to ensure the health, prosperity, and welfare of the citizens of the District and the State of Colorado.

For more information about the District, view our website at www.deltacd.net.



Liz With, Rangeland Management Specialist in the Gunnison Field Office and Lars Santana, Rangeland Management Specialist in the Montrose Field Office, recently went to Albuquerque, New Mexico to give a poster presentation for the annual meeting of the Society for Range Management.

Their project titled, "**The Effect of Brush Mowing on Invertebrate Populations in Sagebrush Ecosystems**" was an exposition of more than two years of monitoring data in sage grouse habitat treatments.

Their data suggests an increase in insect abundance and diversity (an important food source for grouse chicks) in sagebrush areas that have been mowed when compared to untreated areas.

Working Together to Refurbish Our Waterways

by Heather Plumb, Plant Scientist-Range Plants
Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center, Meeker Colorado

Riparian ecosystems are extremely sensitive areas that are used by both humans and wildlife. Riparian areas are well known for major problems concerning soil erosion and infestations of invasive plant species. These problems are because of natural and man-induced practices. As a result, habitat can be severely degraded.

On March 25 and 26 of 2009, the Los Lunas and Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Material Centers along with the Grand Junction USDA/NRCS Service Center hosted two one-day Riparian Restoration Workshops.

The event was held at the Western Colorado Botanical Gardens in Grand Junction, Colorado. This workshop was offered to land management entities, private landowners, and land consulting groups.

Each training provided attendees with knowledge on rangeland seedings and longstem pole transplants of trees, shrubs, and willows.

During the mornings the attendees listened to presentations and in the afternoon they were allowed hands-on planting technique experience with longstem pole transplants and dormant willow whip cuttings. Presentations on these topics were presented by Steve Parr, Manager, Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center, Meeker, Colorado; and Greg Fenchel, Manager, Los Lunas Plant Materials Center, New Mexico.

The hands-on field work was conducted at Watson Island located behind the Western Colorado Botanical Gardens. Los Lunas provided the willow cuttings, shrubs, and tree poles as well as a specialized auger to deep plant the riparian materials.

Dan Thompson, Wildlife Biologist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Grand Junction Service Center, worked with the Division of Wildlife to donate their 7230 John Deere tractor to be used for the field work. In addition to the planting, the attendees were instructed on how to keep the newly planted materials safe from wildlife predation and harm.

The workshop was a huge success and attendees agreed it helped further their knowledge of riparian restoration and planting techniques.



Greg Fenchel demonstrating how to plant a longstem plant.



Attendees prepare to plant several cottonwood poles along the path on the Watson Island complex.



A finished longstem shrub product.



Attendees on Watson Island experience hands-on riparian planting techniques.

Kiowa Creek Watershed Protection Project

by Lana Armon, Soil Conservationist
Franktown Field Office

Linda Pollick, Soil Conservation Technician at the Franktown Natural Resources Conservation Service field office, recently gave a presentation about the Kiowa Creek Watershed Protection Project to a 7th grade science class at Kiowa Middle School in Kiowa, Colorado.

Linda taught the students the importance of watershed dams and the reason the Kiowa Creek Watershed Dams were constructed. The Kiowa Creek Watershed Dam Project was completed on June 30, 1961. A total 67 dams were constructed, and to date, 52 dams are older than 50 years.

Kiowa Creek has had two major floods, in 1935 and 1965, which caused significant soil erosion loss, damage to crops, rangeland, homes, schools, and local businesses; and the restoration cost was remarkably high.

The students learned that in 1935 the Kiowa Creek streamflow peaked at 43,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) and at 41,000 cfs in 1965. The normal stream flow for Kiowa Creek is around 10 cfs.



Linda Pollick uses the agency's riparian trailer to demonstrate the purpose of watershed dams to 7th graders.

After the presentation, a hands-on demonstration was conducted using a riparian trailer to give the students a visual image of the effects that water can have before and after major storm events with and without adequate vegetation and structural practices.

All in attendance enjoyed the presentation and the teachers look forward to continuing the hands-on demonstration and teaching in future years.

Arkansas Valley holds Fifth Annual Symposium and Trade Show

The fifth annual Arkansas Valley Farm/Ranch/Water Symposium and Trade Show was recently held in Rocky Ford.

John Stulp, Colorado Department of Agriculture Commissioner, provided a legislative update during lunch.

Chuck Hanagan, USDA Farm Service Agency in Rocky Ford, and Dave Miller, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Rocky Ford, discussed the 2008 Farm Bill and how changes will affect farmers and ranchers.

A group of local producers (Dave Kitch, Joel Lundquist, and Hal Holder)

discussed producing bio-diesel from oil seed crops.

Dr. Richard Conant, CSU, and Rich Mullaney, AgriTech Consulting, gave presentations on carbon sequestration and opportunities for farmers and ranchers to become involved in offsetting carbon emissions. Bill Sauble shed some light on his experiences selling carbon offsets and the management practices he uses on his ranch in New Mexico.

Short update sessions covered topics affecting today's farmers and ranchers. Dr. Jack Whittier, CSU Cooperative Extension Service, provided an update on country of origin label-

ing for livestock and other products and how this impacts producers.

Animal feeding operations are common in agriculture and Ron Jepson, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, presented much needed information.

As a follow up to last year's Symposium, Steve Witte, the Division 2 Engineer with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, gave an update about irrigation efficiency rules. Dr. Mike Bartolo, CSU Cooperative Extension Service, Rocky Ford Research Center, explained the use of a lysimeter at the Center to determine water usage.

Small Acreage Seminar a Great Success

Eighty-one participants spent the day learning how to protect and manage small acreages while learning about a variety of national resource topics.

The workshop featured a presentation about grazing and weeds by Dan Nosal of the Natural Resource Conservation Service; Manure Management by Jessica Davis from Colorado State University; Animals on Small Acreages by Kipp Nye from CSU Cooperative Extension Service of Elbert County; Energy Alternatives by John Avenson, a renewable energy professional provided courtesy of the Colorado Renewable Energy Society; as well as a review of Ag Status and Zoning Restrictions provided by PJ Torstel, the Elbert County Assessor.

The workshop provided landowners, large and small, with the tools they need to ensure a healthier landscape for their small acreage landscape areas and the information of where to get more help. The Natural Resource Group partners are planning an animal grazing behavior

workshop later this spring.

A special thank you to "Farm Credit of Southern Colorado" for sponsoring the lunch served to participants. The following vendors provided informational displays useful for rural landowners: Tuff Tanks, Potestio Brother Equipment, Low Lines Cattle, Elbert Meat Company, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Kiowa and Double El Conservation District, CSU Elbert Cooperative Extension, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

The workshop was hosted by The Resources Group, a partnership of Agate, Double El, Kiowa, and El Paso County Conservation Districts.

Collaborating agency partners included USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service; Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service for Elbert and El Paso Counties; Elbert County Environmental Health Department; Colorado Division of Wildlife; and East Central Colorado Resource Conservation and Development.



colorado
it's agricultural

On March 18, 2009, Colorado celebrated National Ag Week where the Colorado Department of Agriculture hosted a press conference on the west steps of the Capitol.

Each year National Ag Day is organized by the Agriculture Council of America (ACA). ACA is a nonprofit organization composed of leaders in the agricultural, food and fiber community, dedicating its efforts to increasing the public's awareness of agriculture's role in modern society.

The National Ag Day program encourages every American to:

- Understand how food and fiber products are produced.
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.
- Acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food and fiber industry.

Some interesting facts about Colorado agriculture include:

- In Colorado agribusinesses contribute nearly \$16 billion to the state economy and provide 105,000 jobs.
- There are approximately 31,000 farms and ranches in Colorado encompassing 30.7 million acres, nearly half of the state's total land area.
- Cattle and calves is Colorado's number one agricultural commodity.
- Colorado's sheep and lamb totals rank fourth in the nation while Colorado wool production is also fourth.
- Colorado's four leading crops of corn, wheat, hay, and potatoes accounted for 90 percent of the total value from all field crops in Colorado (excluding sugar beets) in 2007 and were valued at \$2 billion.

(Information provided by Mary Miller, Colorado Agriculture Ambassador)

Morgan Conservation District hosts Landowners Summer Workshop

by Val Loose, Morgan Conservation District Manager



On March 14th there was excitement in the air as over 40 small acreage landowners gathered at the Country Steakout in Fort Morgan for a day filled with education. Professionals, Master Gardeners, and landowner peers shared their knowledge and expertise.

There were sixteen presenters who sat at round tables to enlighten eager learners on several subjects. Cary and Shari McMinn from Blessed Creek Farms talked about sustainable kitchen gardens: from soil to table.

The McMinn's discussed soil, seeds, planting, maintenance and harvesting the garden. They also talked about how gardening enhances your lifestyle and how a person can save money by gardening.

Todd Cozad and Pete Walker, Colorado Division of Wildlife Officers, talked about wildlife and how to live with them on small acreage lands.

They also spoke with people about native birds and how to attract them to your yard. Next, they discussed bats, their habitat, and how bats can eat twice their weight in mosquitoes.

Dina O'Toole from Miller's Landscaping and Materials showed the

group how to work on entryways, unity and variation, structures and seating, screening and budget, and future construction in landscape.

Marti Vocke, representing Graff's Turf Farms, spoke about lawn care and how to prepare your ground for sod or grass seed. She also answered many questions on lawn problems. Graff's Turf gave away a bag of fertilizer to an attendee.

Bruce Bosley, Colorado State University Extension agent, was busy explaining to the group how composting works, how to build a compost pile, and how important composting is to gardening with its rich nutrients added to the soil.

Bill Annan, Morgan County Rural Electric Association (REA), spoke to the group on energy efficiency and how to get your home energy efficient. The REA also gave away a homeowners energy kit.

Master Gardeners Kathy Wood and Dwight Anderson spoke on their respective areas. Ms. Wood talked about native plants and using them in landscape, and Mr. Anderson spoke on how to prune trees and shrubs on small acreage lands and how to use the limbs as a wildlife habitat.

Ron Neher, Resource Conservationist for NRCS, talked with the group about homestead windbreak planning. 4-H leaders Sheri Hayes and Cheryl Weibert, along with Dr. Dave Smits, Fort Morgan Veterinary Clinic, spoke on raising animals on a small acreage lands and how to care for them.

Claudia Nickel of Nickel Gardens taught the group how to care for flowers and cut and prepare them for display.

The group was delighted with Erwin Hillman of Bijou Creek Winery and his explanations of how to grow grapes on the eastern plains. He told the group how important it is to have your grapes growing on a hill as they don't like to sit in water. It is also important to fence them in, as deer also love grapes.

An evaluation was given at the end of the day with terrific comments on the valuable information that was shared and great suggestions were given for the next workshop.

At the next small landowners workshop there will be information on entomology, soil, fertilizing, and weed control.



Employee Spotlight

Three NRCsers Still Helping People Help the Land

by Mary Miller, Area Public Affairs Specialist

Can you guess what trio of Area 3 NRCsers have worked approximately the same number of years (totaling almost 90 years of experience), are the same age, and work in the same USDA Service Center?

If you guessed Jane Wustrow, Larry Borrego, and Rich Rhoades, Pueblo USDA Service Center, you are correct. I recently sat down with the three to discuss their careers.

How did you hear about the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), now the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)?

Larry: I was aware of SCS from applying irrigation structures and erosion control dams on our ranch. Don Martin, District Conservationist (DC) in Walsenburg, recommended me to Ross Campbell, DC in Pueblo, for the Soil Conservation Technician position in Pueblo. I interviewed with Ross at that time and now 30 years later, we have applied a lot of conservation on the land.

Rich: I heard about SCS through career counseling at Colorado State University (CSU).

Jane: I also heard about SCS through career counseling at CSU.

When did you begin your career with SCS?

Larry: September 1979

Rich: June 1976

Jane: June 1976 (Rich and Jane were classmates at CSU. They both majored in range management.)

Why did you decide to apply for a position with SCS?

Larry: My family ranches west of Aguilar. My understanding of the conservation of natural resources on the ranch was a natural fit with the goal of SCS. I felt by working with other farmers and ranchers, I could help them conserve their resources. I had an understanding of their situation.

Rich: SCS was the only agency offering permanent full-time positions at the time.

Jane: SCS had the best jobs at the time.

Where have you worked?

Larry: I have spent my entire career in Pueblo.

Rich: I began as a range conservationist in Sterling under Joseph E. Krebs. Then I was the DC in Eads. I have been the DC in Pueblo since 1984.

Jane: I started as a range conservationist in Fort Morgan under Emery Johnson, Fort Morgan DC at the time. I left the Service for a few years. When I returned, I was hired as a soil conservationist in the Pueblo field office. Now I am the Sangre de Cristo Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Coordinator stationed in Pueblo.

What is or has been your favorite part of the job?

Larry: My favorite part is the surveying, drafting, and designing of a wide variety of conservation practices. I take a lot of pride in my work and try to do the best job possible. There is a great sense of accomplishment when I see a project that I designed get installed on the land and when the producer's goal has been met and he/she is happy with the result.

Rich: My favorite part is working with other folks in NRCS who are competent and want to do a good job. This means a lot to me. I also enjoy the opportunity to get out on private lands and work with producers.

Jane: As a range conservationist and soil conservationist, I enjoyed getting out and working with landowners. The people I work with in RC&D make my job as Coordinator enjoyable. I work with a lot of talented people on a variety of projects. Bringing people together who have different areas of expertise and abilities to make projects successful, gives me a lot of satisfaction.

Do you have a favorite project or type of project?

Larry: Pooling agreements have been an interesting part of my job, but they can also be the most frustrating. It is quite a challenge and takes extra effort to get a diverse group of producers to agree on a project. There are always one or two producers who are against the project. When the goal of the project is accomplished and the practices installed, I feel a greater sense of accomplishment.

Rich: From an erosion control standpoint, I enjoyed the



Left to Right: Larry Borrego, Jane Wustrow, and Rich Rhoades, all work at the USDA Service Center in Pueblo.

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conservation tillage special project we did in Eads. At the time conservation tillage was new and innovative. We put in a lot of terraces, approximately one million feet a year in the early 1980s. In Pueblo, I enjoy working the owners of the larger ranches to help them improve their grazing management.

Jane: I have enjoyed a lot of my projects. I really enjoy when I can get back out on the land rather than working in the office or attending a meeting. The Badger Creek Project that John Valentine started is one of my favorites. The goal of the project was to reduce sedimentation going into Badger Creek and the Arkansas River. I also enjoy working with the Upper Arkansas Cooperative Weed Management Area. It is a very cohesive group that gets things done.

Where did you attend college?

Larry: I attended Trinidad State Junior College.

Rich: I went to CSU.

Jane: I also went to CSU.

What advice do you have for new employees?

Larry: Try to learn from the most accomplished employees.

Rich: They need to develop their technical and teamwork abilities through professional societies. Also, try to keep a positive outlook. It is easy to dwell on the frustrating aspects of the job. Most people I have talked with who have worked for other agencies or private sector businesses say that NRCS is a great place to work.

Jane: New employees need to look for opportunities to expand their skills. They also need to be flexible in taking new job assignments.

What is the most challenging part of the job?

Larry: The most challenging part of the job is trying to get the work done with all the program changes, lack of funding, and rule changes.

Rich: The challenging part for me is the documentation and administrative

aspects.

Jane: The most challenging part for me is balancing the many "hats" that are worn in a one-person office. I am the PROJECT coordinator, secretary, and administrator all at the same time.

What changes have you seen over the years?

Larry: The documentation goes back and forth. Also, surveying technology has improved, computers are now central for designing, and every function we are associated with.

Rich: SCS did not have computers when I began. We barely had calculators. In addition, our agency still struggles with documentation to show Congress what we've accomplished. We are still trying to find a way to report progress accurately.

Jane: Technology is the biggest change I have seen. I have also been around long enough that it seems like everything that was old is now new again.

FFA Rangeland Judgers Compete in La Junta

By Ben Berlinger, SRM Youth Activities Chair

Future Farmers of America (FFA) students and their advisors from high schools across eastern Colorado arrived at Otero Junior College in La Junta on October 8, 2008.

The purpose was to compete in a rangeland plant identification exercise and participate in judging the soundness of the rangeland.

This state-level competition attracted 102 students representing 16 FFA Chapters from as far away as Merino to the north and Vilas to the south. The state contest rotates among three locations in eastern Colorado; Akron, Flager or Stratton, and La Junta.

Team awards and top scoring individuals were recognized at the awards ceremony, which was held at the conclusion of the competition.

The Colorado Section SRM sponsored the individual honors while several of the Conservation Districts across eastern Colorado sponsored the team plaques and provided lunch for the participants.

Colorado Section members who facilitated the contest this year were Ben Berlinger, Kimberly Diller, Natalie Edmundson, Rich Rhoades, and David and Mary Miller.



FFA students judging an Alkaline Plains ecological site south of La Junta at the State rangeland judging contest.

The Colorado Section individual awards were presented to Jessica Gutierrez of Kim for the high score on the combined site judging and plant identification (83% score); and to Philip Witt of Flager for the high score on the plant identification portion of the contest (98% score).

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Conservation Technical Assistance Alive and Well in Pueblo Field Office

By Mary Miller,
Area Public Affairs Specialist

"In these tough economic times, most of our work is on cost-share projects," said Rich Rhoades, USDA Natural Resources Conservation (NRCS) District Conservationist in Pueblo.

Last year, however, Rhoades and Larry Borrego, Soil Conservation Technician in Pueblo, enjoyed working on a project that was straight Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) project.

During the winter of 2008, Reeves and Betsy Brown, ranchers near Beulah, contacted Rhoades and Borrego about an erosion problem on their ranch.

The Bryson Ditch, which runs through the ranch, was eroding and receding so much that they were losing cattle in it in addition to having access problems for equipment such as cattle trucks, tractors, utility trucks, etc.

The Browns do not take any water



Bryson Ditch photo shows how deep and eroded ditch has become.

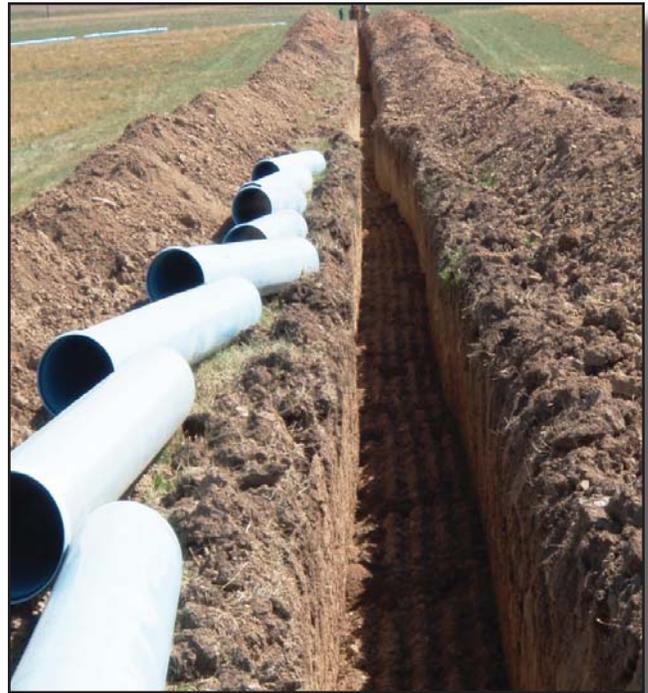
from the ditch. It runs through their property and delivers water to their neighbor Bill Ogden. Rhoades and Borrego met with the Browns and Ogden that winter. They consulted with the Water Commissioner on historic diversions and the location of the ditch.

After the meeting, Borrego developed the costs for the alternatives the group had discussed. The Browns decided that the best alternative was an underground pipeline.

"This project was done with no cost-share. Non-cost-share was the way to go because the producers wanted to move quickly and the timing wasn't right for a fast turnaround on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and a delivery system this long and expensive—5,000 feet—wasn't going to rank out that well under EQIP," said Rhoades.

The design that Borrego developed had the pipeline going the shortest, also the straightest, distance between point A, where the water enters the Brown's ranch, and point B, where the water exits their ranch and enters Ogden's land.

The Bryson Ditch



Bryson Ditch Project: photo shows the trench and the pipe to be installed underground.

had meandered through the Brown's property. The most effective and affordable design was to use 15"-50 psi pipe that would run the 5,000 feet through the Brown's ranch.

A new inlet structure with a trash screen was also installed. The old ditch was backfilled and then seeded. The Browns and Ogden worked out the details of the cost of this project.

From planning to completion, the project took six months—May to October 2008. NRCS specs were followed for this project. "Following our NRCS specs was a requirement if the field office was going to work on this," said Borrego. "Following specs meant a quality job that would be worth the investment.

Rhoades added that the field office wanted to spend staff time on a project that would generate progress and function properly.

The end result has been better accessibility and a safer environment for the cattle on the Brown's ranch and a reduction of erosion, seepage, and evapotranspiration of Ogden's irrigation water due to it running through a pipeline instead of an open ditch.

on the pulse *State Office News*

English/Spanish Dictionary:

Colorado developed a publication a few years ago that translated common natural resource terms from English into Spanish.

In January, that publication was updated and distributed to all NRCS agencies as well as to offices in Colorado.

NRCS in Colorado has partnered with the BARN network (an online media outlet) to establish a monthly interview between them and NRCS.

These interviews are posted on the Colorado website homepage.

The latest USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service news release concerning the status of Colorado's snowpack, reservoir storage and expected water supplies for 2009 can be found on Colorado's web site at: http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/snow/fcst/state/current/monthly/data/news_selection.html.



The Recovery Act was signed into law by President Obama on February 17th, 2009.

It is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart our economy, create or save millions of jobs, and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century.

The Act is an extraordinary response to a crisis unlike any since the Great Depression, and includes measures to modernize our nation's infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need.

To learn more about the Act, go to [recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov) <<http://www.recovery.gov/>>.

March 25, 2009, was the kick-off to the Colorado Leadership Development Program.

Three participants were selected for this 18-month program. They are Katherine Burse-Johnson, State Office; Robert Molacek, Delta Field Office, and Tiffany Harvey, Julesburg Field Office.

This year marks the fourth annual statewide coloring contest in recognition of Earth Day.

This year's theme "Living with Water & Wildlife," was chosen since water and wildlife are a large part of Colorado's natural resources.

This year, thousands of coloring entries were received from different elementary schools around Colorado within the months of February and March.

Two statewide winners were selected from two categories: Grades K-2 and Grades 3-5.

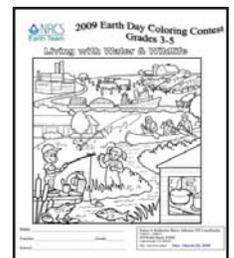
Also, area winners were selected from every grade level of students in grades K-5.

Below are the two coloring entries used in this year's contest.

See page 18 to see the finished, winning coloring entries.



K-2 Grade Coloring Contest Entry



3-5 Grade Coloring Contest Entry

on the pulse Area Office News

Area Two

The Annual Colorado Farm Show was in Greeley, CO on January 27, 28, and 29, 2009.

Then on February 3, 4, and 5th the Annual Colorado Conservation Tillage Association held their Annual High Plains Conference in Greeley as well.

Both of these events were well attended by many participants from throughout Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Kansas.

The Area 2 Conservation Planners Refresher Course training was held in Ft. Morgan at the Morgan Community College and was well attended by Area 2's certified planners. The training was presented by Gene Backhaus, John Fusaro, Ron Schierer, and Paul Weber.

Todd Boldt, John Fusaro, and Andy Piszkin are cooperating with the Big Thompson Conservation District and a private engineering firm to assist in the restoration of the irrigation system for the Timberlane Farm in Loveland.

Timberlane Farm is a working farm museum intending to preserve the 1860 to 1940 life style and farming techniques.

The museum offers the unique opportunity to experience the home and farm life in the early days of the Big Thompson Valley.

On March 9th, Mike Gillespie, Snow Survey Supervisor, spoke at the Ditch and Reservoir Operators Workshop held in Greeley, CO at the Island Grove Regional Park.

The workshop was well attended by over 150 participants and the NRCS booth focused on the Snow Survey Water Supply Forecasting and The NRCS Mobile Irrigation Labs.

John Fusaro, Ft. Collins Range Management Specialist, is working with a group of CSU investigators and resource professionals on an Agriculture and Food Research Initiative grant on "Applying a Supply Chain Model to Working Agroecosystems for Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services, and Economic Outcomes."

This is a partnership between several CSU departments, the Institute for Livestock and the Environment and the Center for

Collaborative Conservation.

John Fusaro, Ft. Collins Range Management Specialist, gave a talk on soils and water movement through the soil profile to a local cub scout pack. He also made a presentation with WGCD's riparian trailer to a 5th grade class at a local Ft. Collins school.

Todd Boldt, John Fusaro, and Andy Piszkin with the Ft. Collins Field Office met with CDOW, a private excavating company, a nationally renowned engineering firm, and private landowners to implement stream restoration practices along 1.5 miles of the Big Thompson River to improve habitat for endangered plains fish.

Plans also include upland habitat improvements to maintain the rookery for 300 Great Blue Herons.

The Burlington Field Office and District had good landowner turnout even though it was a wet, snowy, miserable day at their Tree Workshop on Saturday April 4th.

Their workshop had presenters from NRCS, Forest Service and the Colorado State University Extension Service.

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Todd Boldt, District Conservationist, Ft. Collins Field Office, met with Dr. Jon Stednick, Colorado State University professor, Watershed Science, to discuss the availability of Soil Conservation Service/Natural Resources Conservation Service training materials for use in Vietnam by students at Vietnam University.

Dr. Stednick travels to Vietnam on a regular basis and teaches their budding Natural Resource professionals about hydrology, water quality, water quality monitoring, erosion prediction, stakeholder building, agricultural non-point source pollution prevention and conservation buffers.

Internet access by the populous in Vietnam is limited due to the restrictions of the government. For that reason Dr. Stednick is looking for hard copy materials that he will copy and give back to NRCS.

One of the criteria Dr. Stednick has stressed is the materials must be hands-on, meaning training material with examples and/or activities incorporated in the training materials so the students can work through the activities to gain a better understanding of a particular concept.

Todd sent out a request to Area 2 NRCS District Conservationists, Engineers, and CETs requesting assistance in gathering materials to be used by the students.

Todd Boldt, District Conservationist, Ft. Collins Field Office, is assisting researchers working at the Natural Resources Ecology Lab (NREL) at Colorado State University get in contact with Colorado producers to participate in a carbon sequestration study.

NREL researchers are studying the potential for carbon sequestration on Colorado's farms and ranches. As part of the project, researchers want to meet with individual growers to learn how management decisions are made.

They hope to use the information from the interviews to develop a decision-making tool for agricultural producers who might be considering entering a carbon credit program.



The Byers Field Office and Conservation Districts have been holding several landowner workshops this spring.

On February 21, the Tree Workshop had presenters from NRCS, the District, and Forest Service. There was a good turnout of about 20 landowners which they felt was good with the economic decline in the area.

The Yuma County Conservation District, Yuma County Extension Service, and the Wray Field Office Staff organized and hosted the annual Northeastern Colorado Water Fest.

Over 400 students in grades 4th, 5th, and 6th enjoyed a variety of activities. The water fest would not be possible without numerous volunteer presenters.

District and NRCS personnel and other government and private organizations helped to make the day a great success.

NE Colorado Water Fest



Fun!

Fun!

Fun!

Area Three

The Area 3 District Conservationists and the Area Office Staff celebrated Black History Month at a recent meeting. For lunch, participants made food reflecting Black heritage.

The Woodland Park office also celebrated Black History Month with a potluck.

The Trinidad Field Office staff recently participated in a variety of activities. For Aguilar Days, the staff set up an NRCS exhibit and provided information on what the agency provides to the community.

Levi Montoya was one of the professionals who spoke to Trinidad High School freshmen and sophomores on the importance of science and math, and of school in general.

Montoya also participated in the Purgatoire River Watch. Participants in this project cut down and chemically treated tamarisk and Russian olive and picked up litter along the river.

In the April 5, 2009, "People" magazine the Walsh Community Grocery Store was featured under "People Heroes in Hard Times."

During the blizzards of late 2006 and early 2007, residents of Walsh could not get to the nearest grocery store, 20 miles away, due to snow drifts at least four feet high.

Residents decided that they needed to get their grocery store back. More than 300 residents bought \$50 shares in the store. The town also received money from USDA Rural Development through Southeast Colorado Power.

The Southeast Colorado RC&D and the Baca County Conservation District assisted the community in this project.



The Holly Field Office worked with the Lamar Farm Service Agency (FSA) office and the local conservation districts to host a CRP meeting at Lamar Community College.

Chad Hart, Lamar FSA, presented some facts about expiring CRP while Gene Backhaus, Lakewood NRCS, gave a presentation on post-CRP options. A Colorado Division of Wildlife representative talked about CRP's role in preserving wildlife.

Finally, Rich Mullaney, retired NRC-Ser who is now with AgriTech Consulting, informed attendees about CRP and Carbon Sequestration options. More than 200 individuals, mainly producers, attended this session.



Several Colorado NRCsers attended "Conservation, Sustaining Our Future," a technical conference sponsored by the Northern Plains Chapters of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Dave Miller, Rocky Ford, was one of the district conservationists, representing the six states in the region, who sat on a panel that discussed "The Art of Conservation Planning."

A longer article that summarizes the conference is included in this issue of "The Colorado Connection."

Wildlife Escape Ladders Now Available from the Custer County CD

by Jennifer Filbrun,
Custer County CD District Manager

According to Taylor and Tuttle in the Water for Wildlife handbook, natural watering sites are fast disappearing from arid rangelands of the West, forcing wildlife to rely increasingly on livestock troughs, tanks, and ponds, in order to survive.

But without properly-placed escape structures, unobstructed access and adequate water levels, these water supplies of last resort become deadly traps for a wide variety of wildlife.

Ranchers and range managers can, with minimal cost or effort, act as invaluable stewards of wildlife, preventing the loss of whole populations of animals that are essential to maintaining healthy rangelands.

Wildlife Escape Ladders are a required specification for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Practice Standard (code 614). The Custer County Conservation District (CD) has made it easy for you to include this in your design.

The ladders are made of painted steel and are designed to be placed inside steel and fiberglass stock tanks. The ladder allows small animals and birds, after falling into the tank, to crawl out alive. Helping wildlife escape will also keep your water source from being contaminated.

For more information on these ladders, contact the Custer County CD at Jennifer.filbrun@nacdnet.net or call 719-783-2481.

Area Four

The NRCS San Luis Office (Ray Gekosky-Soil Conservationist & Joseph Lobato-Soil Conservation Technician) along with Area 4 Range Specialist Cindy Villa, are currently working with the San Luis Vega, Inc. in developing a land management plan.

The Vega has contracted with NRCS to cost-share on the installation of approximately 10,000 feet of electric cross fencing.

The Costilla County commissioners, realizing the benefits to the community, agreed to pay for Vega's share of the fence materials. Much of the fence has been installed and will be operational this spring.

Rotational grazing plans are in development and should be implemented during the 2009 grazing season.

The 500-acre historic Vega Commons is the only communally owned and managed agricultural land in the United States, with ownership interest passed from generation to generation of the descendants of the original pioneers.



As of March 1st the Area 4 Area Office moved from Monte Vista to Alamosa.

The new address is 101 South Craft Dr, Suite B, Alamosa, Colorado 81101. Area Staff can be reached at (719) 589-6432 x 5.

The Area Office is south of the existing Alamosa Service Center. The La

Jara Office has also relocated to the Alamosa Service Center and can be reached at (719) 589-6432 x 3.

On April 1, the Alamosa Service Center had a "getting to know your co-workers" Bar B Que.

Alan Stuebe, Soil Scientist, coordinated the event. It was an occasion to introduce the Area Office Staff and the La Jara office employees to the existing Alamosa Service Center employees which consisted of NRCS, FSA, and RD agencies.

The weather did not cooperate and the happenings were brought indoors. The event was filled with food, fun and good company.



On March 24th the Pagosa Springs Field Office gave a presentation on watershed planning as part of the "Water in the San Juan Basin" water quality forum

organized by Colorado State University Cooperative Extension.

The NRCS provided information on the Area Wide Conservation Planning process and how that process was used in the completion and implementation of the Stollsteimer Creek Watershed Master Plan.

Other topics presented by a diverse group of state and local organizations included the state water quality regulatory process, protection of domestic water sources, and water quality issues on the western slope.

A total of 30 individuals attended the forum held at the Archuleta County fairgrounds.

The Pagosa Springs Field Office also gave a presentation to local high school students on the use of GIS.

Students were shown a PowerPoint that explained how NRCS uses GIS to produce a conservation plan and soil inventory for landowners.

The students were also introduced to the vast array of tools used in GIS and their functions.

They were shown how NRCS planners use GIS to help landowners make decisions about implementing conservation practices on their property.

Approximately 100 students viewed the presentation throughout the day in their Computer Science class.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff members in cooperation with Southern Ute Tribal Employees recently completed the Pine River Restoration Project.

Seven hundred feet of river bank was stabilized to protect productive pasture, Beaver Creek, and an irrigation diversion structure.

Surveying and Engineering work was completed by District Conservationist Sterling Moss and Area Engineer Rod Clark.

The design required the installation of 6 J-Hooks and a berm in the river to redirect the river's flow and remove a 90 degree bend resulting in a more gradual curve. Banks were re-shaped to facilitate re-vegetation, which included grass seeding, willow clumps, and cottonwood poles.

Implementation of the project was completed by tribal employees from the Water Resources Division. During the following spring unusually high runoff

along with several ice dams caused participates to fear the worst, but the project survived with only minor damage.



CIG helps get Prescribed Grazing on the Ground

By Levi Montoya, Trinidad Field Office

A 2008 Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) was written and approved under the direction of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) in cooperation with many partners.

The primary purpose of the grant is to inform and educate private landowners, agency personnel, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the importance of using prescribed burning.

Prescribed burning is used as a tool to manage encroachment on shortgrass prairie ecosystems and to enhance and improve grazing lands and grassland biodiversity in south-east Colorado.

Prescribed burning is an economical tool that will assist in sustaining agriculture with benefits to livestock and wildlife.

Many partners were involved with the planning and implementation of the CIG. They included the RMBO, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Central Plains Experimental Range, Colorado State University, Environmental Defense, CSU Cooperative Extension (CSU CE), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, the Branson-Trinchera Conservation District, the Baca Conservation District, and local livestock producers.

The original proposal includes the shortgrass prairie region of southeastern Colorado located in Las Animas,



John Wier, Oklahoma State University, discusses a prescribed burning plan.

Baca, Bent, and Otero counties.

The scope is to evaluate the effects of prescribed burning on pinon juniper and brome snakeweed infestations, to educate the participants in the required documentation and process, and to understand local and state regulations and required design criteria in planning, plus techniques in application.

Approximately 40 participants attended the workshop, consisting mainly of local ranchers, with agency and NGO personnel from NRCS, DOW, TNC, Kim Fire Department, Baca County Fire Department, Las Animas County Road and Bridge Department, CSFS, RMBO, CSU CE, and others. Laura Quattrini, RMBO, was the facilitator and kept the workshop on track.

The main instructors were John

Weir, Oklahoma State University, and Pat Shaver, NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist, Portland, Oregon. Weir discussed and showed hands-on techniques in applying fire, fire behavior, burn plan considerations, fire weather concerns, and forecast sources.

Pat Shaver discussed NRCS's Burn Policy and its responsibility during the planning process, and actual implementation through cost-share programs, and general conservation assistance. Other topics included Colorado burn laws, fire effects, and smoke management.

The CIG will continue with three demonstration sites on private lands that represent pinon juniper infestations, brome snakeweed infestation, and other shortgrass prairie areas.

conservation

Northern Plains SWCS Chapters Hold Successful Technical Conference



More than 120 participants attended the “Conservation, Sustaining Our Future,” technical conference that was held in Rapid City, South Dakota recently.

The conference was sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) Northern Plains Chapters.

With the expansion of urban growth across the Northern Plains, land to produce commodities is becoming scarce. Agriculture must become more efficient to triple production.

The three-day conference provided natural resource enthusiasts from Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Nebraska and North and South Dakota the opportunity to hear the latest information on soil quality, water quality trading credits, energy and conservation.

Presentations included “Dig It,” a new Smithsonian Display presentation, given by Dr. Gary Peterson of Colorado State University, soil and water quality and what that means to landowners as well as professionals.

More sessions included Animal Feeding Operation/Confined Animal

Feeding Operation rule update, Pollinators, Carbon Credit Trading and Using Visual Simulations for Communicating Conservation just to name a few. Continuing Education Units were available from the Society for Range Management and provided for Certified Crop Advisors.

Proceeds from the silent auction provided resources for Northern Plains SWCS chapters to fund educational activities within their own chapters.

SWCS chapters across the United States foster the science and art of natural resource conservation. The work of chapters targets conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources on working land—the land used to produce food, fiber, and other services that improve the quality of life people experience in rural and urban communities.

Chapters work to discover, develop, implement, and constantly improve ways to use land that sustains its productive capacity and enhances the environment at the same time.

For further information on work performed by the Soil and Water Conservation Society, contact any SWCS chapter located within the Northern Plains region.

(pictured above from left to right: David Miller, Colorado NRCS; Ann Fischer, Montana NRCS; Lowell Noeske, South Dakota NRCS; and Jay Fuhrer, North Dakota NRCS. Not pictured are Robin Foulk, Nebraska NRCS, and DeMont Grandy, Wyoming NRCS).

FFA, continued from page 9

Jessica was presented with a \$100 check from the Colorado Section along with her plaque, and Phillip received an SRM belt buckle together with his plaque.

The winning high schools recognized at this year’s competition included: **Kim FFA Chapter**, 1st Place Gold Team; **Flagler FFA Chapter**, 2nd Place Gold Team; **Vilas FFA Chapter**, 3rd Place Silver Team; **Custer County FFA Chapter**, 4th Place Silver Team; **Pueblo County FFA Chapter**, 5th Place Bronze Team; **Branson FFA Chapter**, 6th Place Bronze Team.

The Colorado Section also recognized the high scoring individual at the FFA rangeland judging competition held on September 28, 2008 near Walsenburg.

A plaque and SRM belt buckle were presented to Avery Hollingsworth from the Kim FFA Chapter for his high score on both range site judging and plant identification skills (77% score).

The FFA rangeland judging contest is divided into two parts. The native plant identification involves the naming of rangeland plants common to eastern Colorado, together with rating important plant characteristics such as life span, grazing response, and palatability for cattle.

The second part of the contest takes place in the field and requires the students to judge the condition of two different rangeland sites. Here the students must determine the plant composition of each site, the range condition compared to the reference plant community, the suggested stocking rate, and range trend.

Finally, based on their evaluation of the existing plant community, each student must select the appropriate management practice (or suite of practices) that would be recommended to the land owner for improvement of the rangeland resource and livestock performance.





Coordinator's Corner



Colleen McCleary
State Earth Team Coordinator

National Volunteer Week was April 19-25 and I want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for recruiting Earth Team volunteers and allowing them to become active members of our conservation team.

Volunteers allow us to do more. They truly are vital members to our agency so I ask that each of you take the time to let the volunteers in your office know how much we appreciate their efforts.

Thank you for doing your part in helping make the NRCS in Colorado a success in utilizing Earth Team volunteers!

Below is something you can give to your volunteers as a token of appreciation.

Valuable is the work you do.

Outstanding is how you always come through.

Loyal, sincere and full of good cheer.

Untiring in your efforts throughout the year.

Notable are the contributions you make.

Trustedworthy in every project you take.

Eager to reach your every goal.

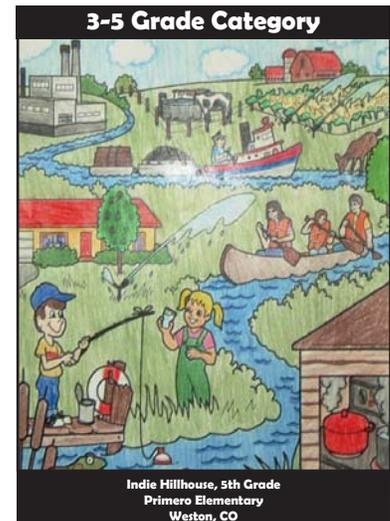
Effective in the way you fulfill your role.

Ready with a smile like a shining star,

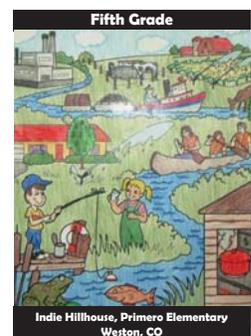
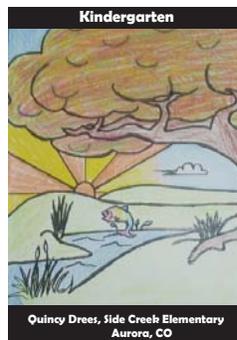
Special and wonderful – that's what you are.

2009 Earth Team Coloring Contest Winners!

Overall Statewide Winners (per grade category)



Statewide Winners (per grade level)



About the Coloring Contest:

There were two different coloring entries: one for grades K-2 and one for grades 3-5. The state was divided into five areas for this competition. A winner from each grade level was selected at the statewide level and awarded a prize. Out of those winners, two overall statewide winners were selected (one per category) and awarded grand prizes.

Above are the coloring entries of the two statewide winners (per category) and the entries of the statewide winners (per grade level).

Each of the five areas also selected "Area Winners" (per grade level) and recognized them for their efforts.

Sustainable Environmental Economic Development (SEED) Park

A Legacy Project of the San Luis Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council

Based on the number of employees, the 2000 Census ranked agribusiness employers first, followed by education, wholesale/retail trade, and government.

Besides the government sectors (education, forest service), agribusiness is the primary employer of people in the San Luis Valley of south central Colorado.

Covering over 8,000 square miles, the San Luis Valley is the largest alpine valley in the world and sits on top of the second largest aquifer on the continent. The large number of sunny days (320 days per year) also makes it ideal for agriculture.

The population of the Valley is 47,464; 52 percent of the residents are Anglo and 45 percent are Hispanic in ethnicity, with 3 percent other minorities. Twenty percent of the Valley's population lives below the poverty rate compared to 9 percent statewide (US Census). Forty-nine percent of business leaders in Colorado identified energy costs as their top concern second only to health care costs.

The area produces 90 percent of the Colorado potato crop, the fifth largest growing area in the nation. The region also produces a good portion of the state's barley, hay, alfalfa, oats, grass finished beef, and spring wheat.

Major agribusinesses include: Rakhra Mushroom Farms, Gosar Ranch Natural Foods, Haefeli's

Honey, 3S Farms, Coors (barley), Mundorf Farms, and the Colorado Alligator Farm (tilapia).

In recent years, the agricultural business base of the San Luis Valley has been threatened by drought, rising energy costs, and downward market pressures on existing crops.

These threats have provided an incentive for combining resources, utilizing by-products, and nurturing new value-added agricultural products. It has also been recognized that a diverse mix of agribusiness is necessary in order to maintain a healthy economical business base for the San Luis Valley.

The San Luis Valley Resource Conservation and Development (SLV RC&D) Council addressed these problems by studying the feasibility of establishing a "Sustainable Environmental Economic Development Park" in the San Luis Valley.

The primary purposes of the feasibility study were two-fold: first the RC&D Board needed to determine if "SLV Communities would adopt the concept of a SEED Park, and would they invest in it?" And, if so, create a roadmap for selecting compatible businesses, appropriate renewable energy sources, and recycled processes appropriate for the SEED Park.

The SLV RC&D Council put the feasibility study out to bid for a consultant in the Rocky Mountain Region in July 2006 and selected

Global Scientific Inc. (GSI).

The RC&D Board appointed a development committee and they worked with GSI to implement the feasibility study. The first major task was hosting and facilitating the stakeholder meeting on December 1, 2007.

One hundred fifty people attended the all-day meeting, and talked about renewable energy, recycling, hydrogen production, agriculture production, tourism and education. \$6,000+ was invested by local private citizens in the Project.

The SEED Park feasibility study has determined a mutually beneficial mix of agribusinesses to be located in one park. This combination of businesses will share some resources in order to reduce costs (including energy and water) and grow their businesses. Waste may be reduced significantly or eliminated all together.

The economic benefits will be significant in job creation and expanded market opportunities for the SLV and include: 50+ permanent jobs; energy independence; selling surplus power to the grid; relieving the counties and municipalities of the task of burying trash; producing local fresh food for local people; and ensuring water discharge is clean.

It also increases the value to the economic base through business creation, wealth generation, and infrastructure advances.

High School Youth Benefit from Rangeland Management Forum

By Ben Berlinger, SRM Youth Activities Chair



Colorado's three HSYF delegates (left to right) Avery Hollingsworth, Jessica Gutierrez, and Lyndee Charles.

The Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) was well represented at the 2009 High School Youth Forum (HSYF) held in Albuquerque on February 8-12, 2009.

The HSYF is an integral part of the SRM annual meeting. During the Forum, high school youth from all part of the western United States and Canada are invited to participate and interact among themselves and the various professionals and college students attending the meeting. Each of SRM's 21 Sections is allowed to send up to three youth delegates to this program that provides a high quality learning experience.

This year the Colorado Section, along with the Branson-Trinchera and Flagler Conservation Districts, sponsored three delegates to Albuquerque.

Lyndee Charles of Flagler, Avery Hollingsworth of Kim and Jessica Gutierrez also of Kim were selected to participate in the Forum.

All three delegates were chosen based on the high level of achievement in FFA rangeland judging as well as exceptional participation at the Colorado Association of Conservation District's (CACD) Camp Rocky, Colorado's premier natural resource youth camp.

The goals of the HSYF are to recognize youth for outstanding accomplishments in rangeland activities and to provide young people the opportunity to discuss rangelands, career options, and meet with leaders in the field of range management.

One requirement of the HSYF is that each delegate must present an illustrated talk on some aspect of range-

land conservation or management.

Lyndee's presentation was titled, **Switching to Switchgrass**. She discussed the significance of utilizing switchgrass for the production of biofuels, and how this would affect the agricultural community in her home county of Kit Carson.

Avery presented his talk on the proposed expansion of the Pinyon Canyon Maneuver Site located in Las Animas County. His talk was titled, **Range Wars: Cattlemen versus Cannons**.

Avery expounded on how the expansion of the site would dramatically affect the ranching economy in south-eastern Colorado, both from the standpoint of the natural resource base and the sociologic impacts.

Jessica's presentation was on African rue, an extremely important noxious weed in Las Animas county where her family ranches. Her title was, **African Rue: An Unwanted Invader**.

Jessica discussed the many aspect of this noxious invader including plant characteristics, identification, control options, and implications for grazing management.

The Colorado Section SRM and CACD congratulate Lyndee, Avery, and Jessica for their outstanding achievements in rangeland management and wish them the best of luck as they further pursue their ambitions in the field of natural resource management.

Contact Ben Berlinger (719-384-5408), or Darlene Jenson (719-686-0020), for more information about the SRM High School Youth Forum or Camp Rocky.

