

Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service Employee Newsletter



Colorado NRCS Welcomes its New State Conservationist

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Highlights

by

Phyllis Ann Philipps
State Conservationist

Let me begin by saying thank you to all NRCS employees in Colorado for your warm and inviting welcome.

Since officially reporting to duty on September 12th, I have hit the ground running. I have met with several natural resource partners, connected with key political representatives, visited several area and field offices, and attended the NACD convention.

I have also attended some watershed association meetings and met with the NRCS leadership team on several occasions. I continue to try to meet as many NRCS employees as I can; so far, so great.

On my first day in the office, I held an all-employees teleconference to simply say hello and introduce myself. I shared my philosophies and key messages as well as provided an opportunity for each of you to ask me any questions. I also shared my values and the foundations from which my expectations are rooted, which include:

1. **Understanding the importance of life balance.**

It is very important that we all feel good about what it is we do. There are a lot of variables that contribute to your job satisfaction, but one of the most important has absolutely nothing to do with work. I define it as life balance, which simply means being attentive to all aspects in your life, including health, family, and personal and professional growth. We

must take care of ourselves and our families first in order to continue to be productive, effective, and excited about being at work.

2. **Having a high functioning team where employees are treated with respect and dignity.**

NRCS employees are the backbone of the agency. Every discipline, in every office, at every level, has a meaningful purpose and is vital to realizing our mission and vision. It is critical that every employee understand their role and purpose as the agency strives to reach its goals, particularly field office employees because they make it happen. Our field offices continue to be the foundation of our agency because it is at that level where the job literally gets done.

3. **NRCS will manage and administer its services in the most cost-effective and environmentally beneficial way.**

Accountability and budget considerations are a part of any organization's planning process. NRCS continuously examines its strategies for delivering technical and financial assistance, ensuring that what we do and how we do it is not only fair and equitable, but also the right thing to do with the resources we have (e.g., our staff and budget). Along with grassroots input, I've asked everyone to begin to identify geographically-identified project areas where we can focus our resources in the next fiscal year to not only get the biggest bang for the buck but to find a project we can be passionate about. Seek outcomes that are

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meaningful not only to producers (by providing them sustainability and improving the resources on their farm, ranch, or private forest land), but outcomes that have off-site benefits within a watershed, a stream reach, a habitat area, a forest drainage, etc. Outcomes such as clean water, clean air, open space, wildlife habitat, and healthy productive landscapes are benefits that are valued by society.

4. **Integrity and Honesty.** This value is one that most might consider obvious or a given, but as a result, may not get verbalized very often. Being honest and having integrity builds trust and are critical to the success of any relationship, personal and professional. Sometimes doing the right thing may take a little more effort, but it is always worth it.

5. **Focus on not only what we do, but how we go about doing it.** Simply put, this means that I try to remember that people won't necessarily remember what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel.

As 2011 wraps up and we look ahead into 2012, I am feeling very excited about the future of NRCS in Colorado and I am honored to be a part of the collective that will continue to make a positive impact on the state's and the nation's natural resources.

Have a wonderful Holiday Season!



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SOIL .

WATER

AIR . .

PLANT

ANIMAL



"Without hard work, nothing grows but weeds."
~ Gordon B. Hinckley

"And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same."
~ Nelson Mandela

"You may only be someone in the world, but to someone else, you may be the world."
~ Source Unknown

"Life is 10% of what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it."
~ John Maxwell

"The more you take responsibility for your past and present, the more you are able to create the future you seek."
~ Author Unknown

"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."
~ Harry S. Truman

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."
~ Helen Keller

"Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."
~ Martin Luther King

"My life is my message."
~ Mahatma Gandhi

Pipe Springs Ranch: Colorado's 2011 Leopold Conservation Award Winners



The McEndree siblings have worked together to run their family ranching operation for seven years, and were recently awarded the Leopold Conservation Award.

By Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs
NRCS State Office

In the southeastern-most part of Colorado lays the historic town of Springfield, known for its farming and cattle ranching communities. It also now boasts one of Colorado's exceptional stewards of conservation, Pipe Springs Ranch LLC.

This 14,000-acre ranch has been named the 2011 recipient of the Leopold Conservation Award, which honors farmers and/or ranchers who demonstrate responsible stewardship and management of natural resources.

The Leopold Conservation Award, named after world-renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, is comprised of an etched crystal on a stand and \$10,000. It is presented annually in eight states by the Sand County Foundation, together with different partners in each state.

In Colorado, partners are the Colo-

rado Cattlemen's Association, the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust, Encana Oil & Gas (USA) Inc. and Peabody Energy.

Pipe Springs Ranch is owned and operated by siblings Jo Ann McEndree, Kaye Kasza, Steve McEndree and Cathy Tebay, fourth-generation ranchers who are committed to leaving a sustainable operation for their descendents. The McEndree siblings partnered with NRCS and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on their conservation efforts.

The four, who inherited the ranch in 1994, share a love of the land and remain steadfast in pursuing alternatives which allow the ranch to be a more profitable operation while benefiting the natural ecosystems, despite the ten years of severe drought conditions in their community.

A large part of their land stewardship was placing pipelines to distribute

water across the vast ranch. As a result, they created smaller pastures and were able to plant two windbreaks to offer protection for both livestock and wildlife. This allows for shorter grazing periods, increasing the productivity of the soil and the diversity of plants, which ultimately help wildlife.

Other wildlife-friendly conservation practices on the ranch include the creation of a shallow-water habitat for migrating birds, installation of 17.5 miles of two-strand permanent fencing that permits easy movement of land-dwelling wildlife, and installation of ladders in water tanks for trapped wildlife to escape.

Future plans for the ranch include more water lines and fencing to create even smaller pastures, and shorter, more intense grazing periods. By purchasing temporary fencing materials, the McEndree family will be able to split a section into quarters for grazing purposes.

Greeley Field Office Takes Customer Service to New Heights



Hoop House ends installed.



Hoop House cover on.



Hoop House construction crew (left to right): Ray Mowery, District Conservationist; Will Owsley, SCEP student; Kyle Bobst, West Greeley Conservation District; Anthony Zamora, Farmer; and Levi Sievers, Soil Conservationist Technician. Not Pictured: Kari Easley, BMLP-Photographer.

When Sarah and Anthony Zamora became proud EQIP participants in the Seasonal High Tunnel pilot program, they were anxious to get the structure up and in use.

The funding came a little later than they expected, but as soon as they got the ok they ordered the 30 x 72 foot model. By the time they got the frame erected, they became proud parents of a bouncing baby boy. Contrary to popular belief, this did not add one to the work force, it left Anthony short his number one helper, Sarah.

Ray Mowery, DC, asked Anthony how many people it takes to install a sheet of plastic big enough to cover a hoop house this big. The answer is, as many as NRCS can provide. Ray thought this would be a great field training opportunity, so he volunteered the field office staff.

The end covers on this model are heavy woven plastic with zipper doors that required 4 or 5 people to lift into place and fasten with clips. After both ends were installed, it was time to unroll and unfold the giant sheet of plastic to cover the frame.

With 6 people and a little help from Mother Nature, no wind, it was a breeze! Mother Nature knew there were too many conservationists around to blow this project.

The High Tunnel will be used to protect and extend the growing season for tomatoes and an assortment of produce provided to member growers and local Farmer Markets.



Gunnison County Hosts Mill Creek Youth Summit

By Elizabeth With, Rangeland Management Specialist
Gunnison Field Office, Area 1

The Gunnison Field Office, in coordination with many other local agencies like the National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the US Forest Service (USFS), the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), the Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CDPW), Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO), and the Gunnison Conservation District (GCD), held the 17th annual Mill Creek Youth Summit for the Gunnison Middle School 7th graders.

John Scott, District Conservationist, was instrumental in organizing and planning the Summit.

The Youth Summit was an all-day event in which the 130 kids were



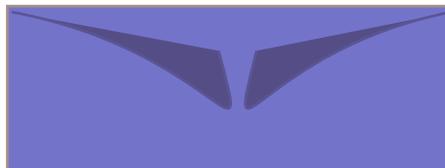
Above. Christina Santana and John Scott (l to r), Natural Resources Conservation Service, with a group of college students, wait for the next group of kids to arrive at their station. The dishwasher box and surveying pole were instrumental in getting kids to understand real life measurement and math.

based to a trailhead near the West Elk Wilderness.

They spent the day with the natural resource management professionals learning about the environment around them.

Western State College provided nearly 20 environmental education students to help manage the 7th grade students and enhance the educational experience.

John and Christina Santana, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist with RMBO, taught a station designed to help kids visualize structural dimensions and incorporate math into real world situations.

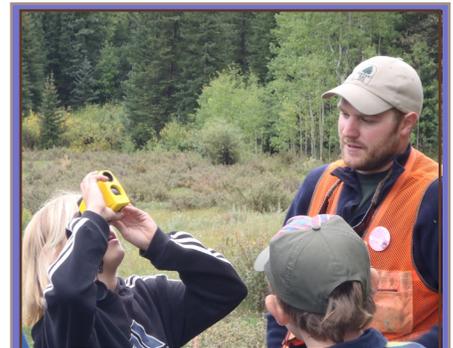


Below. Ellen Petrick, National Park Service, gave the 7th graders a neat experience when she asked them to help catch bugs from the creek. She taught them about water quality and water quality indicators. It was great to see the kids dive right in!



Other stations included lessons in forestry and forestry measurement, stream health assessment and riparian macro-fauna, the Leave-No-Trace ethics of recreation and camping, and team building.

A smaller group of the same leaders are also planning on initiating the first Lake City Youth Summit in Hinsdale County in October 2011 for 6th and 7th graders attending the Lake City School. Hopefully this event will be as successful as the Mill Creek Youth Summit.



Above. Sam Pankratz, with the Colorado State Forest Service, helped students measure trees with a digital clinometer. From the measurements students were asked to calculate board-feet and predict how many trees would be needed to build simple structures.



NRCS Range Inventory Training with Fort Lewis College Ag Students

By Deborah Clairmont, Soil Conservationist
Cortez Field Office, Area 4



Fort Lewis college students learn to identify Group 1 macro invertebrates that are pollution-intolerant by doing a kick test using a screen to collect macro invertebrates from the stream.

Beth LaShell- Instructor of the Agricultural and Biological Department at Fort Lewis College and Ag students met Shaan Bliss-NRCS Area 4 Range Specialist; Deborah Clairmont- Soil Conservationist; David Frederick-Soil Conservation Technician; Courtney Iuppa-SCEP Soil Conservationist student; and Marcus Patrick-NRCS Human Resource Specialist attended the Old Fort Lewis/San Juan Basin Research Center to learn about Range Inventory and water quality.

The training site at the Old Fort



Students record and compare data collected by NRCS in previous years to estimate any change in forage production.

Lewis College campus/ San Juan Basin Research Center consists of 6,279 acres located in the La Plata Conservation District in La Plata County.

Students learned how to identify forbs, shrubs, native and non-native grasses and percent coverage through utilizing a Line-Point Intercept transect in two different ecological sites-river bottom and loamy park.

Student recorded data and compared data collected by NRCS in previous years to estimate any change in forage production. Currently, the stocking rate had been reduced to 200 from 400 head of cattle that had previously rotated through the pastures selected for inventory.

In addition, students learned to identify Group 1 macro invertebrates that are pollution-intolerant by doing a kick test using a screen to collect macro invertebrates from the stream. Finding dominant organisms that are pollutant intolerant is the quickest

way to estimate the stream's health. Students found Group 1 and Group 2 macro invertebrates consisting of Mayfly nymphs, Stonefly nymphs, Riffle Beetle (adult), Crayfish, and Water Penny Beetle larvae in the screen, indicating the water quality of the stream was healthy.

If Pouch Snails, leeches, midge larvae, black fly larvae and aquatic worms which are tolerant of pollution were found, it would signify poor water quality.



Students learn how to identify forbs, shrubs, native and non-native grasses and percent coverage through utilizing a Line-Point Intercept transect in two different ecological sites.

Fifth Annual Backyard Conservation Camp hosted by Haxtun & Sedgwick CD

Haxtun and Sedgwick Conservation Districts with Holyoke and Julesburg Field Offices, Area 2

The fifth annual backyard conservation camp was held for more than 20 local area youth, according to Haxtun Conservation District Manager, Denise Swanson.

The conservation camp, consisting of students from fourth through eighth grades, is a huge amount of education and safety with smattering of intrigue, adventure, and some good old fashioned fun.

This year the campers were lucky enough to learn from a cross-county cooperative of experts from the NRCS, Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW), and Pheasants Forever.

The camp was held at the Watchorn Cabin in Sedgwick County. There was rolling prairie all around, the perfect location to learn the tracks of the local population.

Joe Crowder, NRCS soil conservationist, led the group in a game of Wildlife CSI. With CDOW Con-

servation Officer Jack Wieland's guidance, the campers found several snakes, reptiles, frogs, and toads.

Jerry Miller, Farm Bill Biologist for Pheasants Forever, CDOW, and NRCS showed us the riparian habitat and discussed the legacy of Aldo Leopold. Respect for the habitat and animals was the predominate message of camp.

The campers had many opportunities to see that they could have a positive impact on the habitats of many species, which in turn support them. This message was brought home with hands-on activities.

District Technician Tim Becker had the group making seed balls of pollinators, and Jack Wieland was the construction foreman of bird house building.

Beth Ritter, WAE employee, gave campers a demonstration of sign language, taught them the signs of

common reptiles, and had them practice their skills through competitive games of signing.

Finally, the study of the riparian habitat, or any habitat, would not be complete without learning about soils and vegetation.

Josh Saunders, the NRCS Rangeland Specialist, showed the different types of plant root structures: annuals, perennials, forbs, shrubs, and trees.

Mike Moore, Soil Scientist for NRCS, showed how to test the soil to determine how much sand, loam and clay made up the core samples. Then he showed us how he takes a core sample with a Giddings soil probe.

The Haxtun and Sedgwick County Conservation Districts owe a huge thanks to the community members and experts who made this camp interesting, educational, and fun.



Macklin Colorado's New Western Governor's Association Liaison/NRCS

In September 2011, Tim Macklin was selected as the Western Governors' Association Liaison/NRCS where he will be providing natural resource technical insight and science to the policy making process. Tim's areas of emphasis include Farm Bill updates, Wildlife Corridors Initiative, Water Planning, and Invasive Species.

For nearly two decades, Tim Macklin has been a proven leader and a viable source of expertise to the communities in which he serves. His experience in managing projects and programs that are focused on building sustainable communities, coupled with his knowledge of a wide range of land use and natural resource best management practices, makes him an asset to the farmers, ranchers, and landowners in his area.

In his past experience as coordinator of the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program with the NRCS, Macklin provided leadership to the Southeast Colorado RC&D Council. In this role, he assisted the council in administering and implementing the associated non-profit organization and their locally-led projects in the seven-county area.

Macklin served as the Acting Area Conservationist for Area 4 (Alamosa) and Acting District Conservationist in Lamar, Colorado, which provided him with working knowledge to address land use and natural resource concerns as well as to develop collaborative solutions.

He also served as the Assistant State Conservationist for Operations in Denver, CO, where he was responsible for implementing the AgEMPs (energy



Tim Macklin

audits) for the state and for the coordination of budgets. As the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operation in Area 2 (Central Coast), located in Salinas, California, Macklin served as a member of the State Leadership Team.

Prior to joining NRCS, Macklin served twelve years in Colorado State

University Extension (CSU) Office. As the Southeast Area Agricultural Extension Agent, Cropping Systems, his role was to provide oversight, management, and leadership to extension offices in seven counties on natural resource operations, soil, water, and agronomic programs. Macklin also served as the Baca County Extension Agent where his role was to complete and disseminate research to the community and serve as a leader for various community-based programs.

During his career, Macklin has been the recipient of numerous awards for exemplary service with both NRCS and the CSU Extension Service. In 2008, he received a Certificate of Merit Award for extra effort in leading and coordinating the development of the Lower Arkansas Watershed Plan in 2007-2008 and for being the Acting Area Conservationist in Area 4. In Spring 2009, he was recognized for outstanding leadership as the Acting District Conservationist in the Lamar Field Office. With the CSU Extension, Macklin was awarded numerous Sustained Superior Performance Awards.

Macklin grew up in New Hampshire, where he gained an appreciation of the coastal environment, which motivated him to pursue a career that allows him to work with local communities and protect the environment. He enjoys hiking, fishing, working on antique cars, traveling with his wife Stacey, and spending time with his two sons.

Colorado's 2011 Diversity Day Winner

By Rod Clark, AAPI SEPM
Alamosa Field Office, Area 4

This year's winner of Colorado's Service Center Diversity Day Celebration contest was the **Franktown Service Center**.

The Franktown Field Office and partnering agencies participated in a Diversity Month Celebration with a diverse group of agencies and a diverse group of people.

The agencies that participated were NRCS, Douglas County Conservation District, Kiowa Conservation District, Colorado State Forest Service, ITS, and RD.

The luncheon began with a spread of various dishes, ethnic music, and wonderful comradery and ended with a team building exercise that had everyone working in groups trying to figure out the ethnic background and meaning of each person's name. What a great way to learn a little something about your coworkers!

The Field Office also put together a "Franktown Field Office Celebrates Diversity" display for the office and all participants, which provided interesting information on "Facts of our Cultures" and the importance of valuing diversity in the workplace.

Taking the time to get to know a little more about the people you work with makes for a more enriching and understanding workforce, and we all benefit from it.

The Colorado NRCS Civil Rights Committee would like to thank all Service Centers employees in the state that took the time to plan and participate in the Diversity Day celebration.

There were several great submissions with creative and worthy activities. We look forward to challenging all offices to another celebration competition next year and hopefully, your office could be the next Diversity Day champion!

Colorado Communities Benefit from Protection of Living Snow Fences

by Katherine Burse-Johnson
Public Affairs Specialist, State Office

In an effort to manage the snow in times of snowy and windy weather conditions, living snow fences have been a life saver for residents of El Paso and Elbert counties.

Living snow fences are trees and shrubs that are planted in rows and run parallel to roadways or around portions of communities and ranchlands.

Properly designed and placed, these living barriers trap snow as it blows across fields, piling it up before it reaches a road, waterway, ranchland, or community.

Living snow fences can be a low-cost solution to prevent drifting snow problems and can reduce the effort spent on snow management. They can be designed to spread snow across a large area or to confine it to a small storage area.

A living snow fence program to protect critical sites that will benefit both landowners and the public requires a local partnership.

The key to success is county level agencies, organizations, and landowners working together to identify blowing and drifting snow problem areas and to develop creative approaches to establish living snow fences in these areas.

The Colorado Living Snow Fence Program began in 1982 under the leadership of Dr. Dale Shaw, retired forester, Colorado State Forest Service.

The goal for the living snow fences was to improve traffic safety, to



decrease the cost of snow removal on public roads, and to decrease the long-term costs associated with slatted snow fence maintenance.

“Trees will live for decades while a wood-slatted fence will only last five to seven years,” said Cheryl Churchwell, Double E1 and Agate Conservation District Manager, Simla Service Center.

Since 1997, Double E1 Conservation District has partnered with the El Paso County Department of Transportation to install living snow fences in the area.

More recently, Elbert County participated for the first time in the Living Snow Fence program. It was estimated that in areas where living snow fences existed, there would be up to three to four hour savings on snow removal efforts and approximately \$800 savings in traffic control and highway safety.

“These living snow fences have improved safety for the public by decreasing blowing and drifting snow across public roadways and also reduced snow removal costs,” said Churchwell.

Besides trapping snow and reducing removal costs, living snow fences also provide:

- Greater road visibility and driver safety;
- Improved wildlife habitat;
- Reduced soil erosion;
- Livestock protection;
- Reduced taxpayer costs;
- More beautiful rural landscapes

Living snow fences need to be placed a significant distance from the road or area needing protection, therefore, private landowners must be active members of the partnership. And because they are protecting roads and benefitting the public, landowners generally need to be adequately compensated for costs and inconveniences caused by a living snow fence on their property.

The NRCS in Simla has been involved with the living snow fence program by providing technical assistance for design and labor to install the plantings. The agency also conducts annual survival (of the living snow fences) checks and assists with planting replacements for up to three years.

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Jefferson CD Showcases Success at Annual Meeting

By Kaitlin Fischer
 Americorps Employee
 Jefferson CD, Area 2

On a Tuesday evening, September 27th, residents of Jefferson, Clear Creek, and Gilpin Counties could be found at Elk Creek Fire Station #1 in Conifer. Landowners gathered together at the 2011 Jefferson Conservation District (JCD) Annual Meeting to participate in an informational session and discussion surrounding natural resource concerns within the district.

Meeting attendees had an opportunity to socialize with one another and connect with JCD staff members. Scott Appel, owner of EZ Forestry, displayed a variety of forestry equipment with a focus on low impact work that is faster, safer, and more



District Forester Joseph Hansen (left) and AmeriCorps Member Brian Devine (right) hang up the JCD banner in preparation for the Annual Meeting.

affordable than other alternatives.

The event also included a presentation summarizing key work undertaken by the District during the past year, including significant expansion of the EQIP program to address the health of Colorado forests and development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) for hazard reduction, emergency response, and fuels mitigation.

A presentation given by Alan Searcy,

Stormwater Quality Coordinator for the City of Lakewood and Co-Chair of the Bear Creek Watershed Association, linked forest and watershed health and sparked a lively discussion about citizens' concerns within their own communities and potential solutions.

JCD staff and District residents were very pleased with the Annual Meeting, which developed and strengthened relationships between the Conservation District and landowners.

Living Snow Fences,
 continued from page 7

"This has been an ongoing project and we work with many partners to ensure the program's success," said Lana Pearson, District Conservationist, NRCS, Simla Service Center.

From private landowners, 4-H groups, Boy Scouts, and tree planting companies to local conservation districts, Department of Transportation, and the government agencies, many have helped plant living snow fences in El Paso and Elbert counties.

Agate Conservation District is also a participant in the living snow fence

program and has planted trees covering approximately 2.5 miles.

"To date, between Double El and Agate conservation districts, there has been a total of 21 miles of living snow fences planted," said Pearson.

"That's a total of approximately 12,410 trees since the program began in 1997."

Landowners can visit their local USDA



Living snow fences in El Pason and Elbert counties have played an instrumental role in community safety.

Service Center if they are interested in learning more about the living snow fence program, or call 719-541-2359 x101.

Sagebrush Identification Workshop Held in Kremmling

Colorado NRCS hosted the Sagebrush Identification Workshop in Kremmling, Colorado, this year.

Twenty-five NRCS employees and partners attended. Highlights of the workshop were lectures from Roger Rosentreter, Bureau of Land Management Range Conservationist, on biological crusts, sagebrush ecology, and sagebrush palatability; and by Leila Shultz, professor emeritus from Utah State University, on sagebrush identification. NRCS staff from the WNTSC and Colorado field and state offices also gave talks.

Mark Volt lined up field trip sites where the class was able to see seven different species of common sagebrush species.

At each site, Leila and Roger reviewed how to identify the species based on plant features, soil information, and landscape position.



Outdoor tour on Sagebrush.



Sagebrush identification class.



NRCS Employee Spreads the Word About Conservation to High Schoolers

By Kari Eden, Soil Conservationist
Pagosa Springs Field Office, Area 4

One issue we face as an agency, as well as across the nation, is the fact that many of our elite veteran staff will be retiring all around the same time, leaving a void which needs to be filled.

Although the significance of knowledge this staff possesses is invaluable, we will need to look at a new generation coming into the agency with their bright minds and new ideas. This is one of the many reasons I take time out of my schedule every semester to go to our local High School to give a presentation to the Computer Science class.

The presentation is aimed at educating high school students on how we use GIS (Geographic Information System) in our daily activities here at the NRCS office, how it helps us in conservation efforts, a few of the various programs NRCS offers local landowners to get conservation on the ground, and also a bit about the agency and how they can get involved.

With the class aimed towards computer sciences, the majority of the presentation is centered on ArcGIS.

I cover the basic steps of conservation planning and the ways we use different maps and layers in ArcGIS to help build a conservation plan, as well as the assortment of tools in ArcGIS we use to assist us in implementing and certifying various conservation practices.

This brings to light the assortment of cost-share programs NRCS offers that are available to the public in order to assist land owners to implement conservation practices on their land.

I like to finish off the class by discussing with the students the various ways they can get involved with conservation and the NRCS. Discussing with the students the STEP program and the SCEP program really seems to get their minds thinking about possible careers in the field of conservation, and at the very least, shows them the world of opportunities that are out there with our agency. These are the intelligent and innovative minds of our future!

I'm glad I can be a part of bringing them closer to the possibility of working for the NRCS.

MAKING RANGELAND MONITORING WORK FOR YOU

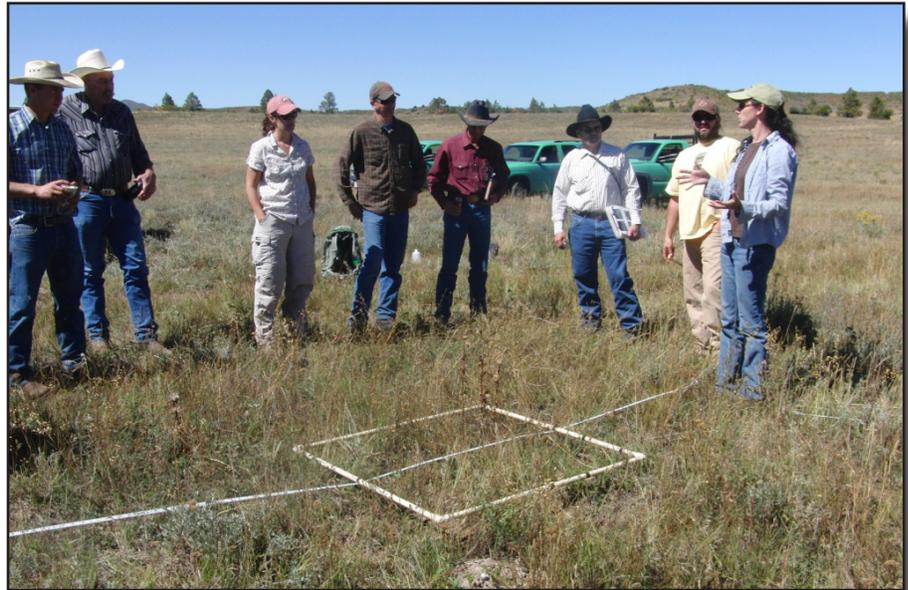
by Cynthia Crist, Soil Conservationist
Cortez Field Office, Area 4

Twenty local ranchers and agency personnel from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), NRCS, and Dolores Conservation District (DCD) came together for a field day to share information about keeping local rangelands healthy and productive.

The DCD and Southwestern Colorado Livestock Association co-hosted the field day utilizing funds from a Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative grant that was awarded to the DCD.

Colorado Resource Monitoring Initiative (CRMI), a new approach to rangeland monitoring that standardizes monitoring on private, state, and federal lands, was presented at a workshop held at the Arriola Community Center last December.

CRMI was developed through a memorandum of understanding between the Colorado Cattlemen's Association and other agencies, including the USFS, BLM, NRCS, Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado State Land Board, Colorado State University Extension, Grazing Lands Conservation Initia-



Cara MacMillan, Ecologist with the Dolores Public Lands Office, explains range inventory methods to several local ranchers.

tive, and the Public Lands Council. The field day was a follow-up to that workshop.

The overall objective of both the December workshop and field day was to provide land users with the knowledge and skills needed to conduct rangeland monitoring independently.

During the field day participants learned how to:

- Identify plants
- Assess rangeland condition

- Monitor using various methods ranging from simple photos to more technical long-term test plots
- Select appropriate monitoring sites
- Store and use monitoring data

The most significant outcome of the field day was the establishment of relationships and the open communication between ranchers with public lands grazing permits and the regulating agency personnel.

Formerly known as LANDCARE...

The NRCS Distribution Center/National Earth Team office has moved!!

Same Services, Different Location.

The new location accommodates all publications and forms, so that means no more waiting on deliveries from the off-site warehouse!

The new address and phone number are:

**4407 - 121ST ST
URBANDALE, IA 50323
515-270-4864**

We still offer all services, including national NRCS publication, form, and exhibit distribution; VHS transfers; CD/DVD copying; small order "Copy on Demand;" assembling; collating; and mailing services.

You can find the new web page on the national NRCS site. This site has all publications and forms categorized by audience and featured/new items.

NRCS Participates in the Upper Arkansas River Restoration Project

By Eve Triffo, Project Administrator
UARRP, Sangre de Cristo RC&D

Over many decades, the mining operations in the California Gulch area of Lake County near Leadville, Colorado, leaked mine tailings of zinc, copper, lead, and other metals into the headwaters of the Arkansas River. The mine tailings in the river polluted the private and public lands through which the river flowed.

The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) allowed the NRCS the opportunity to assist on the private lands.

NRCS worked on conservation plans to restore eleven privately owned miles of the Upper Arkansas River damaged by the mining activity.

After designating the California Gulch area as a Superfund Site, a number of federal agencies, including NRCS, the EPA, DOI's Fish & Wildlife Division, Bureau of Forestry and Bureau of Reclamation, as well as the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Geological Survey, cooperated to clean up the area using funds deposited by the polluting mining companies.

To date, the cooperating agencies have plugged up the leaks from the old mines, removed the pollutants from the river, and exchanged many hundreds of tons of contaminated soil with healthy soil on private lands.

The last phase of the restoration project is planned over the next five years. The focus will be on restoration plans for private landowners. CCPI funds have been utilized to write Fish and Wildlife Management plans on approximately 1,400 acres.

NRCS role with the project made it feasible for private landowners to acquire conservation plans that not only addressed the pollution problem, but also improved the acres for wildlife habitat.

The plans address the loss of soil through erosion, prevent more pollution, and restore a healthy environment in the river for irrigation of pasture lands and for fishing.



The soil in this photo still needs to be remediated on Doc Smith's property.



Greg Brunjak, Upper Arkansas River Restoration Project Manager, and Doc Smith, landowner, work together with other agencies to restore eleven miles of the River on Doc's privately owned property. This is made possible through the NRCS's Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative.



J-hooks on Doc Smith's property provide a place for fish to shelter, allow water to be re-directed, and prevent bank erosion.

Riparian Restoration of the Big Thompson River



By Noe Marymor, NRCS Private Lands Wildlife Biologist, Greeley Area Office, Area 2

Across the American West, invasive weeds are a major problem plaguing livestock producers and wildlife managers alike as non-native species out-compete native plants and reduce habitat for sensitive species.

This is the case along the Big Thompson River, the 78-mile tributary of the South Platte that flows from Rocky Mountain National Park to its confluence near Greeley, where Russian-olive and saltcedar have begun their campaign to become the most prevalent weed species along the river.

In 2009, a group of agency personnel and landowners began to discuss options for eradicating these plants from riparian areas along the Big Thompson, and in 2011 those discussions reached fruition with a basin-wide project getting underway with tree removal on six properties in Weld County.

Russian-olive and saltcedar (nicknamed TRO to talk about both at once) are species from Europe and Asia that were brought to the U.S. for erosion control and ornamental purposes. Well adapted to arid climates, these species did better than ever expected – to the point of out-competing and crowding out native plants which

serve as forage for both livestock and big game wildlife. Fortunately, TRO are easily controlled by cutting the trees at the base and quickly painting the stumps with herbicide to kill the roots. Cut trees can then be piled for burning or chipping, or the slash from large trees used as livestock windbreaks.

Currently, the Weld County Youth Conservation Corp is contracted to use its six- to eight- man hand crews to cut, pile and chip TRO for the Big Thompson project. In most cases, after TRO removal, pastures rebound without any further restoration required.

Native shrub species like willow and buffaloberry will recover on their own with proper grazing management. In some cases land managers may chose to replant native shrubs to move the recovery process along more quickly.

The Big Thompson Project, which forms voluntary incentive-based partnerships with landowners, is currently planned in two phases. Phase I is planned for 2011 and 2012 and includes removal work on the Big Thompson and its drainages in Weld County. Phase II is tentatively planned for 2013 and will begin work in Larimer County.

Rapid Carbon Assessment in Colorado and MO6

By Kari Sever, Soil Scientist
Ft. Collins, Area 2

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Colorado is participating in a nationwide rapid assessment of soil carbon as part of the U.S. Soil Carbon for Conservation Planning and Modeling initiative.

The purpose of the program, initiated by the NRCS Soil Survey Division, is to develop a comprehensive inventory of soil carbon stocks for soils of the U.S. and evaluate differences in soil carbon associated with differing ecosystems, agricultural management systems, and land uses. This information will be used to evaluate the effects of conservation practices on soil carbon and also for global carbon accounting.

The Rapid Carbon Assessment (RaCA) project took us by surprise. MO-6 was assigned 382 random sampling locations with a field sampling completion date of September 30, 2011.

In an unprecedented effort to obtain a comprehensive inventory of soil carbon stocks with a short deadline, NRCS soil scientists across the MO-6/Colorado region were asked to set aside their routines and prior commitments to participate.

By the time data locations and sampling equipment were distributed to the front lines, the national deadline for field sampling was only 12 months away and included several months of winter.

The amount of effort and time required to obtain landowner information, gain access permission, schedule, access and sample the soils,



Soil Scientists Kari Sever and John Norman sample soils in northern Colorado.

transfer samples, and complete data entry was extraordinary and unforeseen.

Fourteen sampling teams from MO6/Colorado were created and assigned a set of data point locations (sites). Most teams traveled extensively to obtain the data within the required time frame, which was shortened by record snow pack and subsequent flooding, and resulted in rearranging schedules many times to accommodate access issues.

Each site seemed to take on a life of its own with all the tasks and obstacles surrounding it. This entailed identifying the landowners, remotely assessing the site using aerial photography, sending out letters or explaining the project via phone, acquiring permission to access, sometimes obtaining a permit, scheduling a sampling date and time, accessing the site (often a 2 hour drive and/or a 3 mile hike one way), and sometimes meeting a landowner – all this before we even began the actual field sampling.

Add to this mix the variables in weather, soil type, and access and each site took on its own personality. At each data location, 5 soil pits were hand-dug about 90 feet apart, less than 2 feet in diameter and no deeper than 3 feet.

The soil was described and soil samples of each horizon were collected in bags for soil carbon and bulk density analysis in the lab. In the office, data from the field was recorded and transferred, describing the soil, as well as vegetation, percent bare ground, and land use. The soil samples were then transferred to the CSU laboratory for processing and analysis.

Once in the laboratory, the soils are then processed to determine the bulk density and scanned with the VNIR (Very Near Infra-Red) spectrometer. MO-6 collected over 8,000 bags of soil that are currently being processed and scanned. Processing the samples includes weighing the moist sample, air drying, weighing the dried sample, sieving the coarse fragments, oven drying a 50 gm sample, and weighing again.

After processing and scanning, the samples from the center hole at each site will be sent to the National Soil Survey Center for archiving, as well as a 3% subset for quality assurance.

The completion goal for the soil processing and scanning phase of the RaCA project is March 31, 2012. MO-6 finished the field sampling phase of the RaCA project ahead of the September 30, 2011 deadline,

continued on page 21



Employee Spotlight

4-H Makes an Impact on the Life of an NRCS Employee

My name is Cindy Einspahr and I've been a USDA/NRCS employee for over 19 years and I am currently serving as District Conservationist in Brighton, Colorado.

I can honestly say that I'm where I'm at today because of 4-H and my continuing involvement. 4-H has structured a major part of how I live my life and nothing spells it out more than the 4-H pledge.

I pledge: ***My head to clearer thinking...*** This gives me the power for realistic, concise judgment and reasoning. I will form my own rational opinions rather than let someone form them for me. I do this by learning to stand on my own feet and learning to work with others.

My heart to greater loyalty... I pledge to be loyal to my family, my friends, NRCS, the United States of America, and myself. I will not deceive or betray them. I will keep my word and uphold my integrity. I will stand by and defend them. I will always treat the people around me with nobleness, kindness, sympathetic compassion, and truth.

My hands to larger services... I pledge to give back to my community, by being helpful, using my skills, and being useful. I strive to help

my friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, and my producers when I'm able. I will always be grateful for what I have and share my good fortune with others.

My health to better

living... This gives me the strength to enjoy life to the fullest and work efficiently for NRCS. Good health is the key to being able to use my abilities for not only myself and family but for those around me. For my club, my community, my country, and my world.

I believe in giving back to my community and being active in its development. I will have pride and stand by my country. I pledge to do whatever I can to improve the quality of my fellow man, on local and global scale, with citizenship and civic education, by taking community responsibility.

The true building blocks that I received came more from my personal development, leadership skills, and the relationships that I have formed.

I have become self-reliant. I have gained an abundance of knowledge and skills in several projects and activities such as livestock, cooking, clothing, and home environment



projects, as well as livestock judging and junior leaders.

As I go through life, I look back on the opportunities and doors that 4-H has opened and my life path to serve my world as an NRCS employee. I feel very passionate about the future of 4-H and instill these values in my own daughter and other young people.

4-H has taught me so much and will continue to teach me throughout my life. I will always remember my leaders, my judge coaches, and my fellow 4-H members.

For me 4-H was, and is, a family affair. I thank my Mom and Dad for their support, taking me to all those events, and showing me what I was capable of doing and becoming.

on the pulse State Office News

Colorado NRCS Welcomes....



Phyllis Philipps as its new State Conservationist. She officially reported to duty on September 12, 2011.

In this selection, Mrs. Philipps continues her distinguished 30-year career with NRCS, which started in Washington, DC working for the Agency's Land Use Division.

After that, her career took her to Montana where she served for more than 25 years in various capacities including Soil Conservationist, District Conservationist, Natural Resource Team Leader, and Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations.

She also recently served on a detail in Washington, DC to the White House Council on Environmental Quality as the Deputy Associate Director for Private Lands and Agriculture.

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated every year from September 15th until October 15th.

In 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim the first "National Hispanic Heritage Week," which would include September 15th and 16th.

In 1988, the observance was extended from a week to a month and became "Hispanic Heritage Month." The observation coincides with Indepen-

dence Day celebrations of several countries.

September 15th is the anniversary of independence for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico's anniversary of independence is on September 16 and Chile's anniversary is on September 18th. Belize celebrates their independence on September 21st.

On October 5, 2011, the State Office celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month by having a pot luck luncheon. A salsa contest was held and prizes were awarded to participants for the best salsa.

Marta Villano, Al Albin, and Ted Lucero were the winners of the salsa contest.

Many Hispanic food dishes were brought in by state office employees to share and Spanish music was enjoyed by all.

A video about the life of Cesar Chavez was shown to everyone.



Marsha Sims, Archaeologist, chaired a symposium accepted at the 76th annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Sac-

ramento, CA earlier this year, which involved archeologists working for NRCS.

The symposium, entitled "Human Limitations, an Archeological Perspective," included topics on tracking disease in Pre-Columbian Trans-Pacific Asian contact, process versus preservation in Arkansas, in the footsteps of Rafinesque and Web, wagon trails in South Central Oregon, potential of LiDAR for identification, and Paleoindian material along trails.



Applications are being accepted on a continuous basis from interested landowners for 2008 Farm Bill funding opportunities.

All completed applications received by January 15, 2012 will be batched and ranked for fiscal year 2012 General EQIP and WHIP funding.

NRCS will offer two ranking periods for the **Air Quality Initiative**: February 3, 2012 and March 30, 2012. The **Organic, Seasonal High Tunnel, and On-Farm Energy** initiatives will offer three ranking periods: February 3, 2012, March 30, 2012, and June 1, 2012.

State Office Awards Ceremony

These photos are only a few of the many photos taken at the State Office Awards Ceremony. NRCS State Conservationist (STC) Phyllis Ann Philipps presented the awards. Please visit S:\Service_Center\Common\Pictures\2011 Awards Ceremony to see all photos. *Congratulations State Office employees!*



John Andrews



Employees gearing up for the ceremony.



Jason Peel and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Kent Amott and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Dustin Urban and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Rachel Murph and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Randy Randall and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Steve Park and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Cyndee Hjelmstad and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



BJ Shoup and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Debra Pummill and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps

on the pulse Area Office News

Area One

Glenwood Springs Natural

Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff and Bookcliff Conservation District (CD) helped Charles and Angela Ryden host Farm Day for local 6th graders.

Grand Valley School brought 82 students, Ross Montessori School attended with 20 students, and New Castle schools brought over 200 students!

They enjoyed rotating between educational stations including the soils pit, water trailer, various games and the favorite, the corn maze.

Karla Ware, Mike Kishimoto, Derrick Wyle, Pamela Mora, and Scot Knutson helped out from NRCS; Sharie Prow, Daniel Shaw and Dennis Davidson represented Bookcliff CD; Sandy Jackson and Mike Wilde assisted from Mount Sopris CD along



with Colorado Division of Wildlife, Farm Bureau, and Colorado Water Conservation Board.

This event has been held for the last seven years and each year continues to grow. We appreciate the educational community for recognizing the importance of agriculture and trusting us with over 500 students each year.

In 2010, South Side Conservation

District partnered with local landowners, Garfield County, NRCS, Colorado State Conservation Board, Meeker Plant Center and the Palisade Insectory to implement Tamarisk removal on Mamm Creek.

South Side CD acquired 100% participation and signatures from landowners last year. We also hired a summer intern to map the entire drainage for tamarisk and Russian olive, noting the stand density.

There is approximately 160 acres of Tamarisk along 6 miles of Mamm Creek. Garfield County released 10,000 tamarisk beetles at the mouth of Mamm Creek and there is already evidence of their effect.

The project continues this year. South Side CD requested our intern to return and hired Daniel full time as project manager.

The Colorado Western Conservation Corps is working for eight weeks this fall to hand cut and treat chemically the tamarisk on Mamm Creek. We

also hired Stan Young to remove the most heavily infested tamarisk with a mulcher. Stephen Jaouen, NRCS, is assisting Daniel to develop site-specific revegetation plans. In September 2011, we held a landowner and media tour to help promote the program.

This will be a long term project including several years of monitoring and retreatment. The success of this project is due to the partnerships that we have developed.

Mamm Creek Tamarisk Removal

Mulching Tour



Before Treatment



After Treatment



Area Two

The Longmont Service Center staff, **Boyd Byelich, District Conservationist**, and others, were asked to provide a tour of the Four Mile Canyon Fire for several local chapters of the Society of American Foresters (SAF).



They were interested in burn severity mapping, rehabilitation efforts, and the effects of fire mitigation thinning completed prior to the fire. Fifty-five members of the SAF showed up for the tour that was held in September.

Several stops throughout the burn area were made to look at aerial wood straw mulching, straw mulching, contour log felling, straw waddle placement, tree plantings, reseeding, and flash flood impacted areas.

Tour partners included the U.S. Forest Service and Colorado State Forest Service staffs.

See more photos on page 22.

The Fort Morgan Field Office assisted young local producer Travis Lee this year with his alternate cropping alternative.

After initial soils analysis performed by soil scientists **Andy Steinert** and **Mike Moore**, numerous conservation practices and BMPs were implemented with the help of the field office staff **Josh Saunders, Rangeland Management Specialist; C.W. Scott, District Conservationist; Ron Neher,**

Resource Conservationist; Gary Barkey, Soil Conservationist; and Mike Lee, Soil Conservation Technician.

Soil erosion was addressed with a synthetic mulch system, and no-till strategy. Soil quality/health was addressed, and a strict nutrient management plan was followed, with limited commercial fertilizer being utilized, resulting in improved water quality in the South Platte basin.

A holistic pest management program was also implemented with the help of the local field office staff, resulting in fewer non-target species being impacted, and no adverse air quality events were registered.

Irrigation water management was achieved through careful soil monitoring, and the implementation of a trickle irrigation system.

The equivalent yield of 43 tons per acre was achieved, and all will be donated to willing recipients after the Halloween season.



On September 17th the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Deer Trail, and East Adams and West Arapahoe conservation districts hosted a Birding and Bird Habitat Workshop at Barr Lake State Park in Brighton, Colorado.

There were 15 attendees, consisting of small acreage landowners and county and federal natural resources agency personnel.

The workshop was a half day event and included bird identification and banding talk where attendees got to see live birds in the hand.

There was a talk on backyard birding habitat and a talk on the importance of pollinator conservation and how it overlaps bird conservation.



Several workshops were held this summer out of the Simla Field Office sponsored by their Conservation Districts including a Leafy Spurge workshop, an Energy Workshop, and two Community Ag Workshops on Corraling a Foreign Disease and Feeding Cattle in Drought Conditions.

Brighton Field Office participated in the Adams County and Southeast Weld County Fairs to promote outreach in the community to both traditional and non-traditional customers and to increase awareness in services that both the Conservation Districts and NRCS field offices have available.

Brighton Field Office also held a Weed Workshop in September for small acreage landowners sponsored by the Southeast Weld Conservation District.

Sixth grade students from schools in Burlington, Stratton, and Bethune got to experience the benefits of windbreaks for themselves when they toured the countryside on a windy day in October.

continued on page 21

Area 2 News, continued from page 20

Burlington Field Office NRCS personnel and the Burlington Conservation District (BCD) conducted the tour as part of the National Association of Conservation Districts' annual Sixth Grade Poster Contest.

Students learned about the attributes of common trees and shrubs planted in eastern Colorado and about different applications for windbreaks.

Students also got to pick their own apples and grapes, thanks to the generosity of landowner Dan Grasser.

Tom Satterly, Burlington Middle School Principal, said, *"It is great to have this kind of involvement that provides students with hands on learning experiences."*

Special thanks to NRCS Soil Conservationist, **Kyle Franz**, for challenging the students to keep learning and for keeping them engaged on the bus!



This summer, ranchers from Kit Carson County attended a series of workshops for Ranch Management put on by the Savory Institute for Holistic Management.

Thanks to a grant from the Risk Management Agency and sponsorship from the Burlington Conservation District, all five sessions were offered at no cost to the participants.

Participants in the work sessions created financial plans and grazing plans for their operations, and discussed

ways to increase their rangeland production and profitability.

The group traveled to several ranches to evaluate grazing management on native rangeland and grazing management on expired CRP.

They looked at places where blow-outs had been reclaimed and areas where degraded range had been improved through rotational grazing.

The group also discussed ways that livestock can be used to improve soil health, increase plant diversity and improve nutrient cycles on their land.

The Savory Participants made new friends over the summer and enjoyed a celebratory BBQ to wrap things up, thanks to the generosity of the Savory Institute and Mike Livingston.



NOTICE TO HISPANIC AND/OR WOMEN FARMERS OR RANCHERS

If you are a woman or Hispanic farmer and believe you were improperly denied farm loan benefits by USDA between 1981 and 2000. You may be eligible for compensation.

To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: www.farmerclaims.gov



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Franktown recently hired a part-time employee, Dennis

Smart. Dennis was born and raised on a wheat farm in Washington State about forty miles south of Spokane. Dennis served two years in the U.S. Army and he also worked as a Civil Engineer Technician for most of his life. **Welcome Dennis!**

Rapid Carbon Assessment, continued from page 15

which would not have occurred without the cooperation of many people.

Not only was each soil survey team a hero, but there were many other people involved behind the scenes who helped us attain our goal. The private landowners who granted us access were mostly amenable to the project and many were very helpful and interested (well, some were not...).

Accessing the large amount of public lands in MO-6/Colorado required the assistance and cooperation of several agencies, including the BLM, USFS, BOR, NPS, The Nature Conservancy, Colorado State Land Trust, Colorado State Parks, several county boards, and numerous Wilderness Study Areas.

Numerous USDA (NRCS and FSA) and district personnel assisted in identifying and/or contacting landowners and without their help, we'd still be out there sampling.

In addition, the support teams at the Denver State Office and the RaCA team at the NSSC have been a huge help in providing guidance, equipment, and the multitude of resources to complete this enormous task. This truly has been a team effort and thank you to all who participated.

NRCS - Longmont Field Office

Four Mile Fire Tour

The Four Mile Fire Tour, put on by the Natural Resources Conservation Service Longmont Field Office in September was for the local chapters of the Society of American Foresters.

NRCS partnered with the U.S. Forest Service and the Colorado State Forest Service to show tourists aerial wood straw mulching, straw mulching, contour log felling, straw waddle placement, tree plantings, reseeding, and flash flood impacted areas. The tour took place in Boulder County. *Refer back to summary on page 20.*



Area 2 Awards Ceremony

These photos are only a few of the many photos taken at Area 2's Awards Ceremony. NRCS State Conservationist (STC) Phyllis Ann Philipps presented the awards. Please visit cogreeley2C001\shared\260_20_Area2_Photos\260 Awards Photos\Area 2 Awards_Nov 9, 2011 to see all photos. *Congratulations Area 2 employees!*



Daniel Palic and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Bernice Dyer and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Deborah Rigo and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Al White and Sammie Molinaro



Todd Boldt and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Andy Pizskin and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



Renee Koch and STC Phyllis Ann Philipps



STC Phyllis Ann Philipps and Lana Armon



Donna Goodsell, Dan Moreno, Roy Hall, and Kevin Bartels



Dollie Gonzales, Lana Pearson, and Sherri Brandt

Area Three

Over 75 people attended a workshop at the Lamar Community College hosted by Prowers Conservation District August 18, 2011.



Speakers Brian Blesdoe, Meteorologist for KKTV; Roy Roath, Range Specialist; and Chuck Hanagan, FSA CED from Rocky Ford, discussed the drought.

Producers were warned about the length of the drought, directed in techniques to save their grass, and educated on programs available from the government to carry them through until moisture returns.

Guests were served homemade cookies and ice water. Feedback showed the workshop was very successful with Tri-State holding their own workshop based on what they learned at the drought workshop.

The workshop was attended by people as far away as Rocky Ford, Springfield, and Garden City, Kansas. Many lingered after the meeting was over to talk about what they had learned and to thank the District for such a timely workshop.

Several banks attended and said they sure appreciated the district being sensitive to the needs of their clients and the huge challenge to the rural areas facing the drought.

Sponsors for the workshop include the following: National Farmers

Union Insurance Companies, Brase Insurance Agency, Prowers County Farm Bureau, Community State Bank, PJ Wilson Insurance, Wal-Mart, Safeway, and Tristate and CACD.

Applewood Seed Company and Pawnee Butte Seed Inc. provided catalogs and flyers.

On October 7, 2011, sixth grade students from Lamar and Alta Vista visited Jane and John Stulp's farm to learn about dry-land farming.

The students saw a terrace, and learned about contour farming, conservation tillage, and the price the farmer actually got from a loaf of bread.

The next stop was with Tony Haas from Farm Bureau. Tony showed the students the dangers involved with power take offs, grain bins, the life expectancy of helmets, and the proper way to go down a steep slope in a tractor.

The most impressive part of the tour is the teddy bear that gets wrapped around the power take-off.

They will remember that forever, and we appreciate Farm Bureau for caring enough to make this farm

safety trailer available for organizations to educate kids and adults about the hazards of working around farm equipment.

Last but not least was a visit with Pheasants Forever Biologist Nathan Schmitz. He explained to students the difference between a native species and an invader.

The invader displaces the native species and creates a problem. He then discussed habitats: the fact that animals need shelter, food, and water. He talked about a variety of wildlife in southeast Colorado and the opportunities that we have to benefit them.

Local birder and photographer Janeal Thompson and Jane Stulp talked about the many species of birds they have seen and how to attract birds (with the most important consideration being water).

Students received handouts from the District on trees, a juice from Burger King and Daylight Donuts.

Each student will receive a juniper seedling for participating in the contest. Way to go 6th graders!!!!

A big thank you to District Manager Carla Warman for all her hard work that made this tour possible.



John Knapp, Area 3 Area Conservationist, inspects where a wildfire (background) went around an area managed with a prescribed burn in the early 2000s (foreground). Note the good vegetative cover on the prescribed burn area. The wildfire was moving primarily by jumping from tree crown to tree crown.

Area Four

The NRCS Dove Creek Field Office (DCFO) recently provided assistance to the Monticello/Dove Creek Gunnison's Sage Grouse Local Work Group (LWG) as they implement plans aimed at improving habitat for grouse in Dolores Co., Colorado and San Juan Co., Utah.

The DCFO conducted two field tours, one on May 24th, 2011 and another on October 26th, 2011 for about 18 people during each half day field tour. Those in attendance included local landowners, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, US Fish and & Wildlife Service, Utah NRCS State Biologist, conservation district supervisors and Utah NRCS field staff.

Each tour visited Gunnison's Sage Grouse habitat improvement projects in Dolores County. Field office staff reviewed various land preparation methods, species selection beneficial to grouse brood rearing and winter habitat, seeding rates, planting techniques and post-emergent weed control efforts. Successful and not so successful projects were visited and a thorough discussion of the factors that contributed to these results was covered.

Of particular interest to each group were our efforts to establish sagebrush stands on lands within the county that were cleared of the brush for crop and pasture but that could once again provide critical habitat for grouse in the future. Sagebrush plantings began in the fall of 2009 and have continued each year since, using different rates and under differing conditions. Field tours of these projects provided valuable information to the LWG as they develop and implement projects plans within the area.

Allen Maez, Natural Resources Conservation Service Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Liaison, and State Conservationist *Phyllis Ann Philipps* recently attended the Chief Jack House Congressional Ceremony at the Tribal Council Chambers in Towaoc, CO.



Allen Maez and Phyllis Ann Philipps.



Congressman Scott Tipton with royalty Jr. Miss Ute Mountain Talia Whyte.

The Ignacio, Durango, and Alamosa Area 4 Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices teamed with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe's Wildlife Division to enhance a section of the La Plata River southwest of Durango.

The Tribe identified a tribal assignment with a 1.2 mile stretch of the La Plata River that serves as roundtail chub habitat that could be enhanced.

The roundtail chub is a fish native to the Colorado River drainage, and is currently listed as a species of concern by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

A Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program contract was approved and

construction commenced this spring.

In-stream rock structures were installed to create deeper pools and woody structure added to the pools in the form of logs and brush to provide greatly improved chub habitat. Eroding streambanks were stabilized with bank sloping, rock protection and revegetation.

NRCS Tribal Liaison Ed McCaw worked with Ben Zimmerman, SUIT Fisheries Biologist, and the tribal assignee to plan and install the project.

Additional work remains to install cross fencing to protect the riparian area from excessive livestock grazing.

The Pagosa Springs Field Office, in conjunction with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), participated in a meeting to assist local Forestry Consultants earlier this summer.

Forest Management practitioners and leaders in the local American Tree Farm System program were also available to provide a forest landowner perspective.

The purpose of the meeting, organized by Dan Wand of the CSFS, was to inform forestry consultants about the various programs and resources available to them and to foster their assistance with private landowners.

Jerry Archuleta, District Conservationist, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the financial assistance programs available to private landowners through the NRCS and the application process that landowners need to follow in order to apply for assistance.

Attendees were also provided information about the role of Conservation Districts in conserving natural resources and the strong partnership between the Conservation Districts and the NRCS.

Prairie CD Wind Turbine Tour

The Prairie Conservation District hosted a Wind Turbine Tour and Luncheon. Approximately 38 individuals attended the tour, ten of which were students from Genoa-Hugo School.

Phil Brink, with Brink Inc. and Delta Wind Energy, provided the crowd with a presentation and a few fun facts about the Wind Turbine that was installed at the Poss Farm.

The Wind Turbine was installed on the farm to help with the energy for water tanks and heaters for live-stock, electricity for out-buildings, and the energy supply for the farm house.

Many hours of planning took place before the final installation of the turbine last October. Today the crowd was able to see the turbine in full action, with wind speeds around 40 miles per hour. Mr. Brink and Mr. Poss allowed the guests to go inside of the converter shed to see the meter and data for energy that the turbine was producing.

Afterwards the crowd gathered for a chili lunch. Brian Johnson, District Conservationist, Hugo Field Office, provided guests with information about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and how it was used to assist with the installation of the wind turbine on the Poss Farm.

Ray Singmaster, with Mountain View Electric Association, provided information to the guests about some other grants and incentives that Mountain View Electric assisted with to make the project a success.

CRP Discussions Held in Springfield

Recently a producer-led meeting showcased the strengths and the flexibility of NRCS agency to deliver timely technical assistance to help farmers address their resource concerns.

This meeting was initiated when a small group of concerned farmers expressed their concerns about seeding current and former Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands.

In spite of the overwhelming workload of nearly 1,000 contract offers for CRP, the Springfield Field Office was quick to listen to what the producers had to say and then Joel Moffett, District Conservationist, contacted our new State Resource Conservationist Eugene Backhaus for further assistance.

Gene wasted no time in setting up a meeting where local and area producers could come to make their case for using an air seeder to establish and enhance CRP acres in southeast Colorado.

Local producers from Prowers County included Jeremy Stulp and Prowers County Conservation District Board member Steve Shelton.

The representatives from Baca County included local farmer Charles Hume and Baca County Conservation Board President Miles Swanson.

We were also joined by James McGuire with American Implement, who was instrumental in assisting us with the technical capabilities of the various air seeders available in the commercial marketplace.

The discussion was an informal roundtable-style format with each of

the local producers contributing their thoughts and ideas to the process.

Both the Springfield Field Office staff, along with Gene Backhaus and Ted Lucero from the Colorado NRCS State Office, listened and moderated the conversation.

The results of this meeting was one of the best examples of how effective a group of concerned farmers can be when they are all working towards the same goal.

The consensus of the group was that an interim standard could be developed that would allow for an air seeder to be used to establish seeding on CRP lands throughout Colorado.

At the end of the meeting, the group took a short ride to the north end of town where Charles Hume and James McGuire were able to provide a great hands-on tour of the equipment and to answer any questions.

The NRCS thanked the local producers for their time and hospitality and then finalized a summary draft to be submitted to the Colorado State Office on Monday morning.

A special thanks goes out to Gene, Ted, and everyone that helped to make this meeting a true Colorado NRCS success story.



Student Leadership Development Program

By Deborah Clairmont, NRCS CO Soil Conservationist & 1994 Tribal Scholar Alumni, Area 4

During the week of August 1, 2011, students from around the country, the 1994 USDA Land-Grant Program Tribal Scholars & Alumni, USDA Public Services Scholars, and the USDA Junior Agricultural Ambassadors met in Washington, DC at the Department of Agriculture's National Headquarters to discuss and further develop individual skills around leadership.

During the Program, participants benefited from the expertise of a Leadership Skills Team of three influential figures in the leadership development arena, specifically with Latino/Hispanic populations: Dr. Mario Rivas, Dr. Jose Leyba, and Dean Thomas Brown.

Dr. Mario Rivas, a PhD recipient in Counseling from the University of Minnesota, is an experienced lecturer, presenter, and consultant in the areas of personal development, methods of leadership, and organizational effectiveness with 20+ years experience.

Dr. Rivas currently teaches Psychology at Merritt College in Oakland, California and is always seeking av-

enues where he can share his experiences and teaching to help individuals develop their leadership capability.

Dr. Jose Leyba, a PhD recipient in Educational Administration and Supervision from Arizona State University, has served a variety of different roles in public education from teaching English, Social Studies, and Math in junior high school, to Interim President of the Los Angeles Mission College over the course of his 30+ year's experience.

Throughout all his professional experiences, Dr. Leyba has always had a keen way of empower students/people to build their capacity and becoming great leaders in their respective fields.

Thomas Brown is a lifelong educator with a record of success in creating academic and student affairs programs that promote increased satisfaction, achievement, and retention.

Mr. Brown is known for his ability to communicate effectively with diverse constituencies that comprise educational institutions, organizations, and

communities over the course of his 25+ year's experience. He continues to consult with organizations in order to develop and implement programs to enhance the engagement and success for Hispanic/Latino students.

The Leadership Skills Team referenced two books over the course of the Program to inspire students throughout discussions: 'Leadership Challenge; Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership' (Kouzes & Posner), and 'The Four Agreements' (Ruiz).

After the Program, Dr. Leyba commented, *"Every endeavor we undertake to improve ourselves and the skills of others can only be successful if we apply the concepts of teamwork."*

The recent Leadership Development Program surpassed its goals due to the support and hard work of USDA Leadership and staff. In addition, participants' positive attitude, dedication, honesty, and commitment exemplify the characteristics of great leaders..."

At the conclusion of the summit, many students were inspired and commented on how much they enjoyed the program and will use the skills they have learned in the future.

As a USDA 1994 Land Program/NRCS Tribal Scholar Alumni, I found the Program and concepts of leadership development inspiring and beneficial to everyone.

Understanding diversity in the workplace and the importance of teamwork are platforms to bring about confidence and necessary skills for people to feel confident in developing themselves further to become a leader in their work with USDA and NRCS.



USDA/1994 Tribal Scholars and Staff

A Lesson in Native American Culture

by Levi Montoya, District Conservationist
Trinidad NRCS Field Office, Area 4

Levi Montoya, District Conservationist from the Trinidad NRCS Field Office provided outreach, education, and information activities during the month of November in recognition of Native American History Month.

This was in recognition of Native American Heritage and Cultural Awareness. Levi gave five presentations to eight different Head Start classes.

The students ages ranged from 4-5 year olds. He spoke with approximately 80 children and 15 adults, including teachers, helpers, and parents.

The topic was on Native American beliefs, specifically on instruments such as the drum, flute, and rattles. Levi felt that when speaking to such a young audience, he needed to capture



Levi Montoya, District Conservationist, Trinidad Field Office, sings songs and teaches children about his Native American Heritage.

their attention, and music is the way to teach lessons regardless of age.

He sang songs on the drum and played the flute and rattle, telling the kids that music and dance is fun and bring happiness, which is the most important thing in a natives life.

The songs he sang with the kids included a New (Sacred) Day Song that taught the students to “Stay into Today” not yesterday, not tomorrow, but today, and to be happy today.

He had the students stand with their arms extended, legs spread, and heads high. He told them that each person was a 5-pointed star, and to count them with him, two legs, two arms, and one head. The kids counted along, and saw that they all shined regardless of who they were and that it didn’t matter what color their skin, hair, or eyes were.

Levi also included them in a “Round Dance,” where they held hands and danced in the circle. It showed the kids that a circle has no end or beginning, and together they formed a circle, which made them one.

In one class, the students pulled out their homemade drums and shared their songs with Levi. In another class the students shared their “Good Morning Song.” Levi explained that sharing should always be done, everyday, no matter who it is with.

At the end of the week, the Las Animas County Head Start had a Thanksgiving Celebration and Dinner with the parents of all the children and other family members.

Levi was asked to participate as a special guest and explain what he shared with the students. Spanish interpreters were provided for Spanish-speaking parents so that they also could understand what was discussed.

Everyone participated in the round dance, which included 50 adults, along with the students and teachers.

Levi closed the presentation with the Happiness Song on the drum, and everyone yelled “Happiness!”

Overall, the activities were a success, and showed everyone the healing powers of happiness.



Parents, teachers, and students participate in the Native American “Round Dance.”

CRP Mid-Contract Management Field Tour

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

A Mid-contract Management (MCM) field tour was conducted September 15, 2011 in Holyoke, Colorado, for personnel from the NRCS, the Farm Services Agency (FSA), Pheasants Forever (PF), Conservation Districts and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW).

Attendees traveled from Denver, Franktown, Cheyenne, WY, and from district and field offices across north-eastern Colorado to see first-hand the positive results of MCM on wildlife habitat.

Jerry Miller, Farm Bill Habitat Biologist NRCS/CPW/PF, gave a presentation describing the mid-contract management treatment options available to landowners that will meet the requirements of the 2-CRP handbook.

The Handbook clearly states that MCM “is designed to ensure plant diversity and wildlife benefits, while ensuring protection of the soil and water resources. Management activities are site specific and are used to enhance the wildlife benefits for the site.”

“Now is the opportune time for agency staff to assist landowners in improving the quality of wildlife

habitat on CRP acres. By recommending the most beneficial MCM treatment for wildlife, NRCS staff can help landowners fulfill their FSA CRP obligations and create great wildlife habitat,” said Miller.

He added *“With over 20,000 acres of CRP in Phillips and Sedgwick Counties eligible for MCM in 2012, landowners and USDA personnel have an opportunity to partner with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Pheasants Forever and the Mule Deer Foundation to greatly improve the nesting and brood rearing habitat in eastern Colorado.”*

The MCM treatments available include disking, inter-seeding (which usually requires disking site preparation), burning, haying, and grazing. Miller’s presentation showed before and after photographs of the various treatments and listed the positive and negative wildlife habitat impacts that can be expected from each treatment.

The field tour showed the participants the differences in the MCM treatment options and that inter-seeding with a disking site preparation and disking are generally the most effective treatments available to producers to improve habitat for ground nesting birds and other upland wild-

life dependent on grass stands with a healthy forb/legume component.

Trent Verquer, Colorado Parks and Wildlife Grasslands Habitat Coordinator, discussed the habitat requirements of ground nesting birds in Colorado. Verquer stressed the importance of using MCM treatments on CRP acres to reduce the number of grass plants per unit of area which will allow inter-seeded and/or annual flowering forbs to become established.

Verquer stated “Ideal production habitat for upland birds consists of a light to moderate grass stand of tall, vigorous canopy-forming bunch grasses, with an interspersed of forbs and legumes to provide brood habitat. An overlooked, but important component is bare ground under the protective canopy of the grasses and legumes, because at hatching upland birds chicks are very small, and are limited in their ability to travel.”

He added *“Abundant insects are important as chicks eat insects almost exclusively until 6 weeks of age.”*

Having a canopy of overhead concealing cover allows hens and broods

continued on page 30



Jerry Miller explaining disking and inter-seeding treatments in 2010 and 2011. Photo by Joe Crowder.

LeValley Ranch Tour

By Cindy Villa, Management Specialist, Monte Vista Field Office, Area 4, and Lars Santana, Range Management Specialist, Montrose Field Office, Area 1



The Colorado Section of Society for Range Management (COSSRM) presented the LeValley Ranch of Hotchkiss, CO with the Excellence in Rangeland Conservation Award December 1 at the COSSRM 2010 annual meeting in Grand Junction.

Subsequently, the LeValley Ranch was the Section's 2011 summer tour focus, which was hosted by Lars Santana, Rangeland Management Specialist, of the Montrose NRCS Office.

The Excellence in Rangeland Conservation award is given annually to an individual or group. The recipients must demonstrate exceptional skill and knowledge in practicing sound management of rangelands in the State of Colorado.

Founded in 1914 on the Fruitland Mesa near Hotchkiss, the ranch is operated by the third generation of LeValleys - brothers Mark and Hank, together with Mark's wife Robbie and the fourth generation, James, Ryan, and Ross.

The LeValleys run a diversified business. They run a yearling operation with a mixed-aged herd of cows and yearlings on their ranch and BLM allotment.

They have a haying operation in which they harvest one, cut, then graze regrowth in fall and winter using a High Intensity Short Duration cell system. They run an outfit-

ting business which includes hunts for elk, trophy elk, mule deer, and upland game birds; the upland game birds include chukar, pheasant, and Hungarian partridge. They are also a full partner in Homestead Meats, a USDA-inspected processing plant.

The LeValley cattle grazing rotation allows for no more than 15 days of grazing in any one pasture. A second permittee fall grazes with sheep, using the same rotation as the cattle. This grazing strategy is supported by 17 miles of stock water pipeline, eight stock tanks, and nine ponds across their BLM allotment.

Three water guzzlers were also built specifically for sage grouse. By controlling the time and timing of livestock grazing, the ranch supports a variety of cover types and cover heights across the landscape for wildlife, but in particular provides for the various cover needs of the sage grouse.

In fact, all of the LeValley lands meet or exceed the standards of the Colorado Statewide Gunnison Sage Grouse Management Plan.

The LeValleys are deeply involved in many community and state-wide organizations and work in partnership with Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, CO Division of Wildlife, the Delta Conservation District, and the NRCS.

*CRP Mid-Contract
continued from page 29*

to forage on insects while minimizing risk to avian predation. Bare ground under this canopy allows for easy movement of chicks, increasing both their ability to catch insects and to scatter and hide, thus minimizing mammalian predation.

Sod-forming grass stands limit chick movement, while also excluding legumes, thus degrading critically important brood habitat. As a consequence, upland bird production is limited. CRP stands by age 4 to 6 of the contract have either lost or are losing the important bare ground and forb/legume component critical to nesting success and brood survival.

The responses of the stand at right to the inter-seeding with a disking site preparation treatment will create all the characteristics of excellent nesting and brood rearing habitat.

The number of switch grass plants were reduced, which opened the stand so the yellow Indian grass and sand bluestem could again thrive. Openings were created that gave room for the alfalfa to become established, which in turn will attract insects to provide critical food for broods coming off the nest.

Several of the attendees noted that it was good to "get out in the field and see the results of recommended mid-contract management treatments," and, "we can now discuss expectations of MCM treatments with producers."

The MCM tour for agency personnel demonstrated which mid-contract management treatments improve wildlife habitat as required by the 2-CRP Handbook and the value to wildlife of completing mid-contract management in a timely manner.

Value of Prescribed Burning is Evident in the Face of *Wildfire*

by Tim Steffens,
Rangeland Management Specialist
Springfield Field Office, Area 3

The value of prescribed fire as a tool to improve rangeland health and manage fuel loads to mitigate the effects of wildfire were on display at a tour hosted by the Branson-Trinchera Conservation District as part of their annual meeting on September 9.

A devastating wildfire in early June, caused by a lightning strike and fanned by high winds, low humidity and high temperatures blackened around 13,000 acres in eastern Las Animas county, almost 11,000 acres on and around the Bader Ranch.

The Baders have been leaders in the community implementing improved rangeland management practices.

Randy Bader is the current president of the Branson-Trinchera district board, while Kelly is the president of the Kim-Branson Prescribed Burn Association.

They have applied prescribed fire and done considerable mechanical brush control on their ranch which, together with a targeted livestock grazing strategy, has improved forage availability for their livestock and wildlife habitat on the land they manage. These practices also provide defensible areas where the fire was of lower intensity and could be effectively stopped.

Where heavy stands of one-seed juniper remained, the fire “crowned”, burning with a high intensity jumping from tree to tree and in many places sterilizing soils.

Where the prescribed fires had been previously used to manage veg-



An area at the head of a canyon where intense heat from a juniper crown fire increased as a result of the “chimney effect” of the canyon. These events can be remarkably reduced by using prescribed fire to reduce woody canopy.

etation, grasses and forbs resumed growth following timely rains after the fire.

In one area where a small broadcast fire several years ago left the blackened skeletons of trees and healthy bunchgrasses, the crown fire went around without burning the grass.

“It is evident from what we have seen that whether these rangelands will burn or not is a foregone conclusion – they will. The only question is whether we want to determine the time, place, and conditions under which fire occurs,” said Tim Steffens, USDA-NRCS Multi-county Rangeland Management Specialist.

Prescribed fire is the most cost effective and efficient way, in many instances, to manage these areas to achieve resource goals, including prevention of wildfires.

While the timing and extent of the fires was not convenient, the Baders are philosophical about the outcome.

“We wanted those areas to burn and get the junipers cleared eventually. We just weren’t wanting it to happen on such a grand scale and not in the middle of a drought. It will be a challenge to get through the next year or two, but now we have a larger area with more manageable fuel loads for defense that we can use to burn up against for future broadcast burns,” they emphasized.

“We have some seeps and springs where we expect flows to increase as a result of the decreased juniper cover.”

Their plans are to use targeted mechanical juniper control to create further safe defensible areas and to use targeted prescribed burns to increase the proportion of their ranch with improved watershed function, more stable soils, and improved productivity.

Stay tuned for continuing progress and to come see for yourself how these areas change over time at future tours!

CSP: A Landowner's Idea Becomes Reality

by Jenny Stricker, Soil Conservation Technician
Kremmling Field Office, Area 1



Carl Wood and his wife Deb talk about the NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program's On-Farm Pilot Project.

Carl Wood continues a tradition of conservation on his family's ranch in the Williams Fork Valley in Grand County, Colorado, where he and his wife Deb own and operate the Wood Cattle Co.

Over 1,855 acres of the Wood Ranch is high, dry, and rolling country—rangeland whose productivity might reach 1,000 pounds per acre in a good year.

Carl has long worked to improve this productivity using careful grazing management, water developments to distribute livestock impact, and brush beating to thin dense stands of sage. He has also applied his inventor's mind to the problem of productivity.

Many years ago, Carl realized that the native bushes that catch snow along ridgelines might be put to useful service—that these same plants, if grown in windbreaks, could deposit snow into drifts whose moisture, slowly percolating into soil, might coax some added measure of productivity to the land.

Carl waited and figured, but didn't have the resources to test his idea.

Then in 2011, Carl enrolled in the USDA's Conservation Stewardship Program and began an On-Farm Pilot Project coordinated by the NRCS Colorado Plant Materials Program.

The goal of the On-Farm Pilot Project is to showcase activities with proven environmental benefit not widely adopted in local community.

The Wood's On-Farm Pilot Project aims to test the efficacy of native plant materials and other strategies in establishing windbreaks for snow deposition on remote rangeland sites.

This October, the Woods contracted with Victor Mendoza, experienced landscaper based out of Greeley, to

install the windbreaks. In less than a week, working dawn to dusk and through sleet and sunshine, Victor and his crew harvested 124 native serviceberry bushes from the Wood Ranch and transplanted these same bushes into 1,000 feet of windbreak. Bushes ranged in size from 3 to 10 feet high.

Next spring, the Woods will finish planting the second row of the windbreak—Caragana and Rocky Mountain Juniper from the Colorado State Seedling Tree Nursery.

The Woods' commitment to this project shines through—from conception, to planning, to implementation.

Though one might measure success in terms of surviving trees, drifted snow, or added productivity, in some ways the best measure of success is Carl Wood himself. His experience, know-how, and "Get-'er-done" common sense deliver a potent message: Take an interest, take a chance, and try something new.

Approximately 1,000 feet of windbreak was installed on Carl and Deb Wood's ranch. The Conservation Stewardship Program's On-Farm Pilot Project with the coordination of the Colorado Plant Materials Program made this possible.



Approximately 1,000 feet of windbreak was installed on Carl and Deb Wood's ranch. The Conservation Stewardship Program's On-Farm Pilot Project with the coordination of the Colorado Plant Materials Program made this possible.

In Memory of
**Alan “Al” E.
 Amen**

By Alan Price, Retired Soil Scientist

The September 1, 2011 passing of Al Amen marked the loss of a soil scientist with a long and illustrious career and a man who affected the lives of many. He was an imposing man, both in stature and in knowledge.

Al trained many soil scientist, conservationists, engineers, technicians, and even administrators about the importance of soils, how soils are the cornerstone of other natural sciences, and how these sciences are applied to what we do on the land.

Al is remembered for his high level of detail and accuracy in his soil surveys. Soil scientists are often categorized into two groups, lumpers and splitters.

Al was the “ultimate” splitter. His soil maps reflected the details and differences that he saw in the soil landscapes resulting in soil maps being divided and described in great detail. The soil maps he created were works of art that flowed with the landscape.

Al excelled as a photographer of soil profiles (vertical excavations that exposed soil horizons). He preferred using a vintage camera with a 4 x 5 inch negative. This large format camera facilitated creating high resolution, poster-sized prints of soils that he used in numerous informational public presentations at which he promoted the importance of soils.

Excellent examples of his photographic skills can be seen in the Logan County, CO soil survey publication.

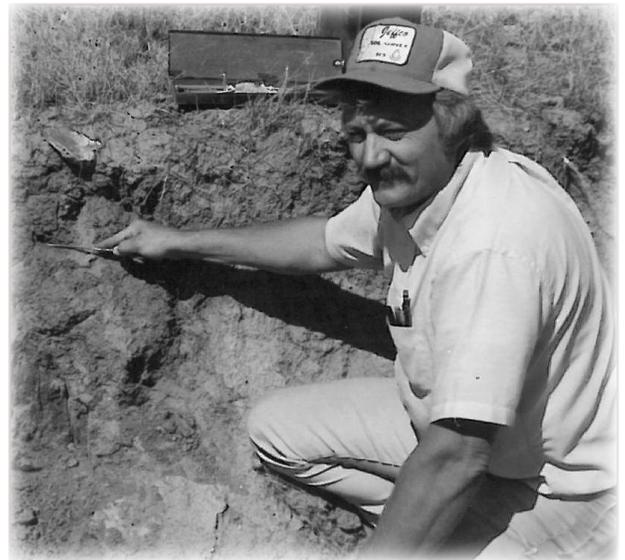
He also created soil monoliths (vertical slices of soil profiles mounted, preserved, and labeled on boards). These monoliths were expertly fashioned and often displayed in various public venues to educate the public.

Al’s passion for soil science was contagious. Those who worked with him either caught that passion or were worn out and moved on. He expected the best from those he trained and worked with. These high expectations resulted in him mentoring many who later became leaders in multiple agencies and the private sector.

He was frequently on the cutting edge on innovation. His ideas came hard and fast and pushed the envelope of the science. He quickly adapted and championed technologies that would pushed the science forward.

He was an early adopter of computer technology to improve the speed and accuracy of soil survey reports. After switching from the Soil Conservation Service to the Bureau of Land Management in approximately 1979,

Al coauthored the publication “Soil Landscape Analysis Project (SLAP)



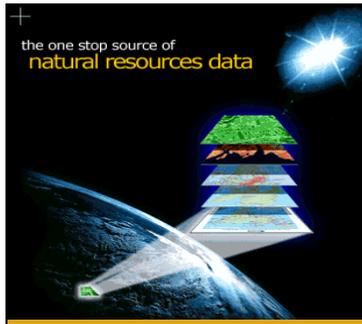
methods in Soil Survey” (1987). This was an early effort to document processes of matching soils to specific geomorphic surfaces.

Early in the development of geographic information systems (GIS) technology, he saw the benefits of GIS in soil survey development and analysis.

One of Al’s favorite pastime activities was fast-pitch softball. Al was an accomplished pitcher who brought fear to the batters that faced him. He had a repertoire of pitches including a devastating fastball that he could control to rise or drop in the strike zone.

He played for a Soil Conservation Service team in a federal league until no one would catch for him due to the pain inflicted when the ball struck the catcher’s mitt.

Perhaps more important than Al’s professional accomplishments was his devotion to friends and family. He loved his wife, children, grandchildren, and many friends. He spoke endearingly of his family and often involved them in his passion for his work. Al will be missed by all who knew him.



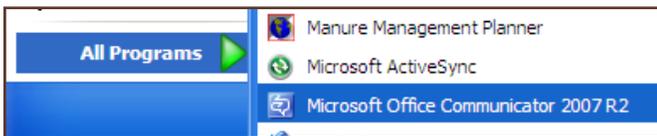
TECHNO TIPS

Using Office Communicator Can Be Effective and Productive

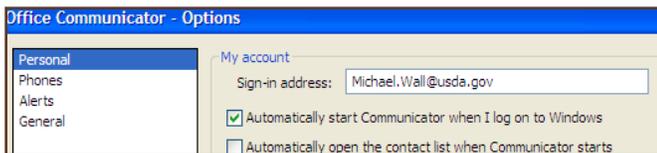
Microsoft Office Communicator is more than just an instant messaging service to keep in touch with your acquaintances. It is a way for NRCS employees and staff to have conferences with one or more peers, share files and views of programs, and even have quick audio and video meetings.

While not intended for large group teleconferences, it can work well for small meetings or communications needs that come up on the spur of the moment. Depending on the speed of your internet connection and components installed on your PC (microphone, speakers, and webcams) it can be an easy immediate solution and is essentially free, using capability you have available now.

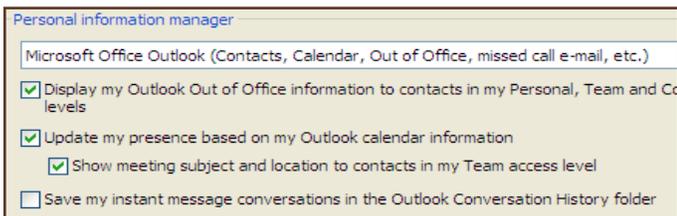
Look for Communicator on your programs menu.



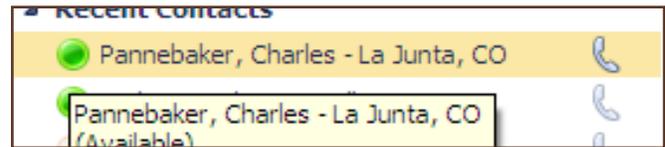
The first time you use Communicator you need to set up your account (per instructions previously sent by ITS) to be your e-mail without the “co” part of the address, i.e. your.name@usda.gov.



When you first set up Communicator, it will populate contacts from Exchange. Several options are available for your account profile.



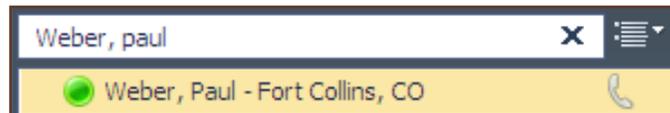
In the Communicator main window you can see the status of contacts.



You can set your own current status by using the drop down selection next to your name in the window heading.

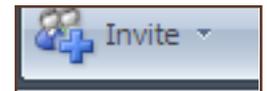


To search for a contact that is not in your list, type their name (last name, first name) in the search string box.



When you locate their Outlook contact, you can right click on their entry and choose to add them to your Contacts.

You can start a message to a contact by double clicking or pressing Enter on your keyboard. You can then type a message in the new “chat” window and press enter to send it.



To add additional people to the conversation, click on the Invite icon and choose additional contacts.



To show something from your computer to the members in the conversation choose the Share icon and choose to Share Desktop.

To add audio conversation, make sure your microphone and speakers are turned on and then choose the Call icon. The other members in the conversation will need to answer the incoming call from you in order to connect to the audio conversation.



You can make a video call, using your webcam if you have one, by choosing the Video call icon.