

**Colorado State Technical Committee Meeting**  
**Holiday Inn Denver West Village – Colorado Room**  
**Golden, Colorado**

**September 27, 2006**

**Allen Green**, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) opened the meeting and extended a welcome to all in attendance. He asked those present to introduce themselves and indicate what partnership they are representing. Allen introduced Tim Carney as the new Assistant Conservationist for Programs, NRCS. Allen indicated that Tim is replacing Dennis Alexander who took the position of State Conservationist in New Mexico.

Allen Green called on **Dollie Gonzales**, Resource Conservationist for Programs, NRCS, to give a report on Invasive Species. She reported that Invasive Species funding under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in FY 2006 in the amount of \$1,000,000 is available for projects, and newly emerging weed species from the “A” and “B” List were targeted. She stated that not all species from the “A” and “B” Lists were eligible for funding.

**Eligible Species - 2006**

**List A:**

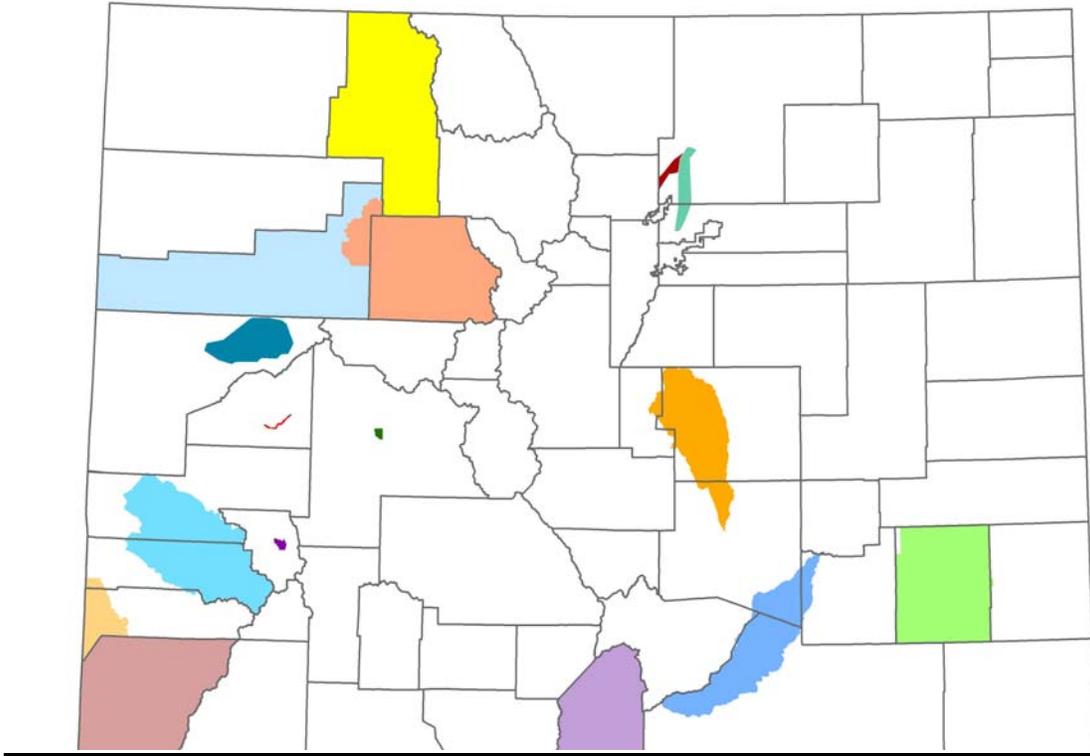
- Meadow knapweed
- Mediterranean sage
- Orange hawkweed
- Purple loosestrife
- Yellow starthistle

**List B:**

- Absinth wormwood
- Black henbane
- Chinese clematis
- Diffuse knapweed
- Oxeye daisy
- Plumeless thistle
- Salt cedar
- Spotted knapweed
- Yellow toadflax

- Projects were encouraged that had multiple sponsors
- Call for Proposals were accepted from organizations, units of government, or other groups with ongoing weed management on invasive plant species initiatives
- NRCS developed a cost list specific to the control of these invasive species
- Projects were required to have an Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM)  
Sixteen proposals were received requesting \$1,186,237. Fourteen projects were funded for a total of \$976,237. Planned Treatment will cover 3,296 acres.

## FY2006 Invasive Species Funded Projects



Name	Number of Applications Received	Funding Originally Allocated	Number of Approved Applications	Funding Actually Used
Bent County	10	136,800	10	193,072
Carbon Creek Weed Mgmt	5	18,775	5	76,650
Costilla County	12	120,000	7	13,796
Dolores/Dove Creek	22	113,750	19	123,914
Eagle County	6	25,000	2	5,623
Fountain Creek	3	17,000	2	1,300
North Fork	6	50,000	6	43,180
Ouray Co. Meadow Knapweed	3	41,652	3	27,486
Plateau Creek	8	100,000	5	43,638
Routt County	14	47760	14	32091
San Miguel County Multiple Species	3	35,000	3	18,375
South Platte/St. Vrain	2	100,000	2	2,579
South Side CD	2	120,500	1	30,389
Tackling Tamarisk on the Purgatorie	3	50,000	3	50,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>\$976,237</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>\$662,093</b>

## Targeted Species

- **Bent County** – Tamarisk, Russian Olive
- **Carbon Creek** – Absinth wormwood, Yellow toadflax, Oxeye daisy
- **Costilla County** – Black Henbane, Yellow toadflax, Chinese clematis
- **Dolores/Dove Creek** – Tamarisk, Russian olive
- **Eagle County** – Purple loosestrife, Yellow starthistle, Absinth wormwood, Black Henbane, Diffuse knapweed, Oxeye daisy, Plumeless thistle, Tamarisk, Spotted knapweed, Yellow toadflax
- **Fountain Creek** – Diffuse knapweed, Yellow toadflax, Tamarisk
- **North Fork** – Yellow toadflax, Oxeye daisy, Tamarisk, Russian olive
- **Ouray County** – Spotted knapweed, Meadow knapweed
- **Plateau Creek** – Tamarisk, Oxeye daisy, Dalmation toadflax
- **Routt County** – Meadow & Diffuse knapweed, Orange hawkweed, Purple loosestrife, Absinth wormwood, Black Henbane, Oxeye daisy, Tamarisk, Russian olive, Spotted knapweed, Yellow toadflax
- **San Miguel County** – Oxeye daisy, Spotted knapweed, Yellow toadflax
- **South Platte/St. Vrain** – Purple loosestrife, Chinese clematis, Diffuse knapweed, Tamarisk, Spotted knapweed, Yellow toadflax
- **South Side CD** – Plumeless thistle, Tamarisk, Spotted knapweed
- **Tackling Tamarisk on the Purgatorie** – Tamarisk, Russian olive

## Control Method

- Chemical - aerial spraying, ground spraying, spot spaying
- Biological
- Mechanical – root plow, chaining, hydroaxe rotary mower, hand cutting

## Practices

- Fence – prescribed grazing
- Seed & seeding
- Mulching
- Well & watering facility (livestock distribution)
- Earth work

## Invasive Plant Program Education Campaign

In an ongoing effort to eradicate and control noxious weeds, or invasive plant species, in Colorado, the **Looks Can Kill** education campaign was developed this year. It is designed to provide our employees and the public specific information about invasive plant species which have been targeted for suppression and control using Environmental Quality Incentives Program state funds. Sample Fact Sheet:

**NRCS** **LOOKS CAN KILL!**

**Black Henbane**  
(*Hyoscyamus niger*)

NRCS has introduced a new program under the 2006 Colorado EISIP Invasive Plant Program to address this particular weed.

**Features:**

- Native of Europe
- Member of the Nightshade family
- Grows 1 - 3 feet tall
- Leaves are up to 8 inches long and 6 inches wide, shallowly lobed, and heavy, foul scented
- Flowers are brownish-yellow with a purple center and purple veins
- Common weed of pastures, fencerows, roadsides, and waste areas
- Seeds may live for ten years in the soil
- Contains hyoscyamine and other alkaloids which can cause livestock poisoning
- Considered a narcotic and poisonous plant to humans

**How YOU Can Help**

- Learn to identify invasive plant species in your area.
- Report sightings of invasive species to your local county or land management agency.
- Do not pick wildflowers or plants. They may be invasive species and picking them can spread their seeds.
- Check local seed lists before you buy plants for your garden or yard.
- Clean all camping gear, clothing, and shoes before leaving an area to avoid inadvertently taking seeds along with you to the next campsite.
- Always stay on designated trails when camping or hiking, avoiding weed infested areas.
- Drive only on established roads or trails away from weed infested areas.

For more information on the identification and control of noxious weeds contact your local NRCS and Conservation District Office.

Photos and text information gathered from various resources. USDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Click here for link to the [Looks Can Kill](#) series

Click here for link to the NRCS Webpage [www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/)

Allen then called on **Cindy Lair**, Colorado State Conservation Board Manager, Colorado Department of Agriculture and **Eric Lane**, State Weed Coordinator, Colorado Department of Agriculture, for a report on the State Strategies and Coordination Results activities of the Colorado Department of Agriculture's participation in the process to allocate EQIP funds for invasive plant control. It is suggested that a longer process to prepare/submit applications and sign up eligible landowners would facilitate a greater number of applications, improved quality and content of the proposals, and increased participation and sign-up. This past year's efforts were quite rushed and it meant applicants really had to scramble to submit an application and then scramble again to sign-up landowners in a very limited period of time.

One important emphasis of the program is to develop partnerships among conservation districts and county weed management programs. In some places these partnerships are already well developed. However, in many places these partnerships are quite weak. A longer application period would allow conservation districts and county weed supervisors more time to develop joint projects and talk to landowners about their needs and participation.

Species in 2006 included several List A species as well as a number of List B noxious weeds. Rather than open up the application process to any and all noxious weeds, NRCS and the Colorado Department of Agriculture felt it was important to limit the focus of the program and funding to a select number of species for which we had already identified management priorities and ensure that the funding helps to make a clear difference in noxious weed populations. Therefore, we had a clear list of species and management priorities last year. If funding is allocated for 2007, we recommend continuing to make funding available for this select group of noxious weeds but to also broaden the list to include several species that are significant statewide problems as well as some that are specific agronomic concerns in communities like the Arkansas Valley, lower South Platte, and Grand Valley.

Some of the challenges we face is communication. We need to partnership with conservation districts and the county weed associations. The invasive species grant obtained through the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) by the Colorado Department of Agriculture was successful in obtaining \$300,000 (initial request was for \$500,000) from the National GLCI competitive grants process this summer to focus resources on identifying and eliminating specific noxious weed species on the eastern plains of Colorado that are not yet prevalent there. Species such as Dalmatian toadflax and the knapweeds are relatively rare on the eastern plains but are beginning to appear with more and more frequency. The GLCI funding is dedicated to addressing this situation. We feel that this might provide an opportunity to target EQIP resources as well so that funding from each program can leverage greater weed management gains on the plains. We need to know what was slowing down the process, and how we can better improve our approach.

**Eric Lane** reported that there was not enough time to process the application and we did not receive many applications. Need to work on the quality and work with the partnerships. There is a need to bring together the conservation districts and the county weed programs. Communication is very important in preparing the applications. There was \$900,000 available and \$600,000 was used. One-third did not materials due to the short sign up time. We need to target specific species and set priorities.

Through GLCI, the emphasis is moving to the eastern plains, we also need to get funding through the GLCI and set a goal to have the funding go further.

Comments: is this a one-time project, what assurance that it will continue?

Response: the target/impact is for long-term, controls built in for better management for long-term control.

In 2007 GLCI will fund the Invasive Species program grants. We will evaluate the results next year, additional funding would be subsequent to the results of the evaluation. Ag producers and forest managers with land are also eligible and considered Ag producers. Information and details on Invasive Species can be found on the NRCS webpage and on the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). NRCS is committed to having a longer sign up period next year, we will have all of the application formats in place. Keep in mind that you can put your plan together anytime prior to the announcement and be ready for the next sign up.

Allen Green called on **Lewis Frank**, State Executive director, Farm Services Agency (FSA) for an update on the FSA Program. He reported that there are 35,000 acres under Agreement for Republican River CREP. He reported that 25,000-27,000 acres were offered in Phillips, Yuma, and Kit Carson counties. The CRP general Signup Number 33: (SU 33) was completed in June 2006. The re-enrollment for the 2007 and 2008 contracts are completed as well. FSA is now working on the 2007-2010 that will be completed in December 29 2006. FSA received 801 CRP offers/contracts, 582 were accepted. These contracts will cover 83, 565.2 acres of cropland that will go into effect October 1, 2006. Presently FSA has 2.6 million acres in CRP.

Processing of 2007 REX contracts will be completed by September 29. Processing of the 2008-2010 contracts are to be completed by December 29, 2006. He reported that FSA has completed 60-70% of the compliance checks.

He reported 23 counties were approved for Emergency Haying and Grazing under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The counties approved for Emergency Haying include Adams, Arapahoe, Baca, Bent, Cheyenne, Crowley, Elbert, El Paso, Kiowa, Kit Carson, Las Animas, Lincoln, Logan, Moffat (they have been approved for grazing only to September) Morgan, Otero, Phillips, Rowers, Pueblo, Sedwick, Washington Weld and Yuma. He noted that all counties listed above were granted extensions for Emergency Grazing only until November 10, 2006. All counties in Colorado are within the 150 miles expanded area for eligible livestock producers in approved counties only to utilize CRP for Haying and Grazing. He reported that the FSA has to CREPS plans. 35,000 acres in the Republican River and 27,000 acres have been offered. This will include 1,000- 1,500 wildlife habitat acres.

Several counties were issued the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) funding for drought emergency measures to include water hauling.

Comment: are the funds continuous; it is the same as cost share?

Response: Funding is not available at the same time on the same acres. FSA will continue on the same plan.

Comment: we need more lead time on the grazing; more time would be helpful.

Response: We cannot determine or allocate that time from our State office. We sent a request to Washington, DC requesting more time. You need to work with your congressmen to get the changes you are looking for.

Mr. Green stated that the CREP program is very successful and has gone smoothly thanks to the FSA. He stated that he envisions there will continue to be a demand for EQIP funding. Counties are being capped out under other options, the landowners want to continue under this funding. In 2007, EQIP, we are asking for \$1.3 million per district funding. Getting information to our producers is very important. NRCS pledges their support to the EQIP program. We have been seeing interesting ground and surface water.

Stan Murphy, Republican River Watershed, stated that in 2005 there were 30 contracts, with 3,000 acres for 3 years; 1,000 acres for 5 years and 1,000 acres in permanent contracts. In 2006 there were 55 contract, with 3,200 to 7,000 acres and 5,300 were in permanent retirement.

The Ogallala Aquifer is a non renewable resource. We are taking out more water than nature is putting back in. We are currently taking six to seven gallons out as opposed to the one gallon being replenished. He sees people leaving the CREP and coming back to the EQIP, nearly 27,000 applied for this funding.

Comment: Maybe the caps should be opened up. If you open the caps, you would have more participation in the program.

Response: You need to use the process of contacting your congress representatives. Elections are the only ones who can help raise the cap. There are no other avenues available. Keep in mind that as acres are rolled out, there is opportunity for more available acres. 95% of the contracts stay in place; 5% are released back into the county.

Comment: Looks like we are taking from one program to give to another program. Keeping CREP acres separate from other acres opens new opportunities.

Comment: this depends on the Farm Bill, we are trying to be pro active.

Allen called on **Tim Carney**, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, NRCS, for a presentation on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Tim reported that the 2006 Program Summary by Watersheds EQIP Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. He reported that the national priorities include the following: water quality - reduction of nonpoint source pollutants and water quality, reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptability high rates on agricultural land, promotion of at-risk species habitat recovery, and the reduction of emissions.

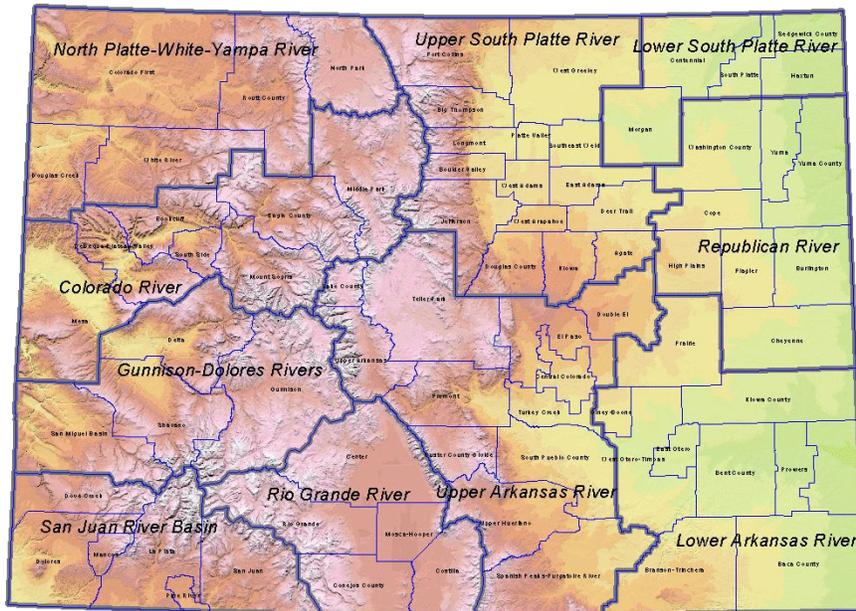
He explained that the state conservationist, with the advice of the State Technical Committee, will identify State priority natural resource concerns that incorporate national priorities and measures and identify which of the available conservation practices should be encouraged with recommended funding levels. State allocation and management include nature and extend of natural resource concerns at the state and local level. The availability of existing programs to leverage and activities related to the priority natural resource concern and the degree of difficulty that producers face in complying with environmental laws. While this proposal explicitly recognizes national priorities and measures, NRCS will continue to rely on locally led conservation as an important cornerstone of EQIP. Using a locally led process ensures consideration of the wide variability between and within states regarding resource issues, solutions, and limitations.

Implementation will be through Colorado's Watershed Basins; they are normalized to conservation district watershed boundaries for administration of the program. This allows raking producers with similar issues / agricultural systems.

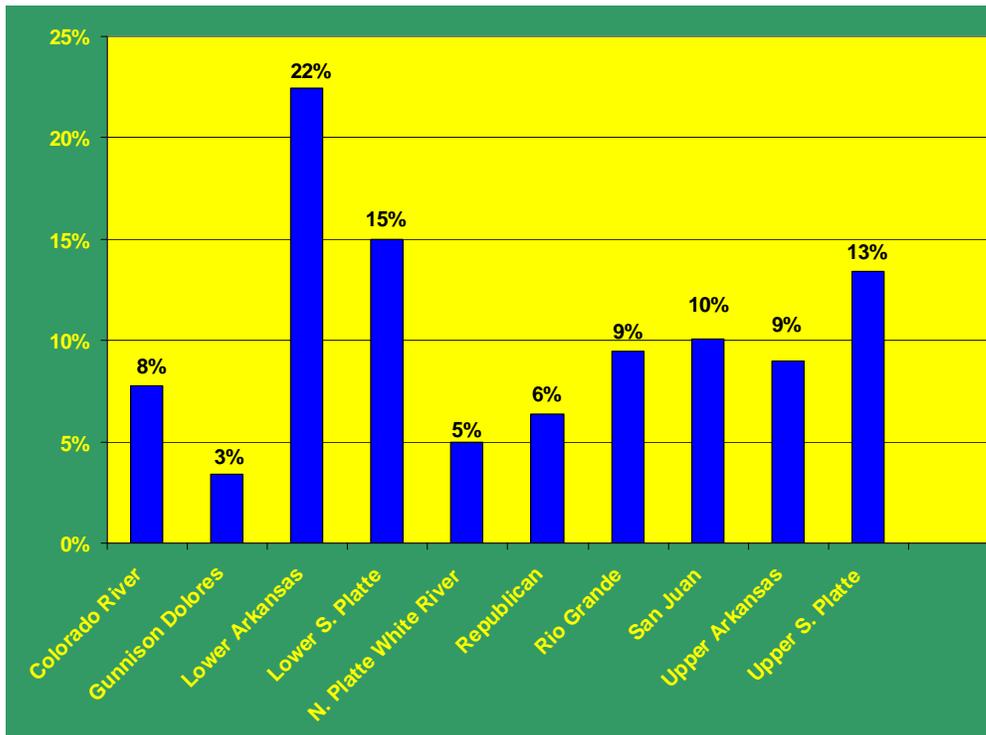
Each watershed is allocated a percentage of the EQIP funds. EQIP funding to each watershed is based on resource needs and workgroup input including:

- Cropland Acres eroding above R
- Water Quality/Quantity – Irrigated Acres
- Grazing Lands – Grazing Land Acres
- NPS Reduction – Number of Animal Feeding Operations/Confined Animal Feeding Operations
- Wildlife – percent of Private Working Lands
- 2006 EQIP Funds allocated to watershed

## Colorado's Ten Watersheds



## FUNDS ALLOCATED TO EACH WATERSHED BASED ON PERCENT OF THE RESOURCES



## Summary

**FY-2005-2006 EQIP and SWWC Funding by Watershed**

<b>Watershed</b>	<b>EQIP FY 2005</b>	<b>EQIP FY 2006</b>	<b>GSWC FY 2005</b>	<b>GSWC FY 2006</b>
Colorado River	2,367,559	2,676,123		
Gunnison/Dolores	4,727,252	4,812,161		
Lower Arkansas	4,542,164	4,325,554	1,129,687	1,080,776
Lower South Platte	2,821,989	2,907,999	708,385	373,327
North Platte / White / Yampa	620,593	955,581		
Republican	2,269,223	1,474,562	875,499	2,121,830
Rio Grande	1,737,164	1,717,497	614,354	221,495
San Juan	4,050,722	4,263,762		
Upper Arkansas	1,659,096	1,718,923		
Upper South Platte	2,079,456	2,673,141		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26,875,218</b>	<b>27,525,303</b>	<b>3,327,925</b>	<b>3,797,428</b>

**North Platte-White-Yampa FY-2006 EQIP Funding Allocations**

<b>Original Allocation</b>	<b>\$863,216</b>		<b>Actual Allocation</b>	<b>\$955,581</b>
	Original Dollars Allocated to each issue	Number of Allocations Received	Number of Applications Approved	Dollars Approved
Water Quality/Quantity	302,126	15	11	334,660
Grazing Land	258,965	30	23	460,700
Wildlife	129,482	0	0	0
Riparian	86,322	3	3	87,457
Forestland	43,161	1	1	42,625
Water Quality/Waste Management	43,160	1	0	0
Routt County Invasive	0	14	10	30,139
<b>Totals</b>	<b>863,216</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>955,581</b>

**Colorado River FY 2006 EQIP Funding Allocations**

Original Allocation(*regular EQIP does not include salinity)	*1,028,502		Actual Allocation	*1,551,692
	Original Dollars Allocated to each issue	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved	Final Dollars Approved
Water Quality/Quantity	664,676	67	29	1,338,943
Grazing Land	181,275	12	9	162,475
Wildlife	60,425	1	1	7,681
Riparian	60,425	0	0	0
Water Quality/Waste Management	181,276	2	1	7,050
Forestry	60,425	2	2	22,000
Plateau Creek Invasive	0	8	3	7,920
Eagle County Invasive	0	6	2	5,623
South Side CD Invasive	0	2	0	0
Salinity (G. Jctn.)	744,750	18	18	320,806
Salinity Wildlife	0	6	5	133,158
Salinity Silt	500,000	10	9	371,469
Salinity AIT	0	23	18	298,998
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,453,252</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>2,676,123</b>

**Gunnison/Dolores FY 2006 EQIP Funding Allocations**

Original Allocation(*regular EQIP does not include salinity)	*863,216		Actual Allocation	*573,093
	Original Dollars Allocated to each issue	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved	Dollars Approved
Water Quality/Quantity	431,608	12	9	160,913
Grazing Land	129,482	10	8	276,914
Water Quality/Waste Management	129,482	0	0	0
Wildlife	86,322	1	1	3,700
Riparian	43,161	0	0	0
Forestry	43,161	0	0	0
Carbon Creek Invasive	0	5	5	76,650
North Fork Invasive	0	6	4	27,430
Ouray Co. Meadow Invasive	0	3	3	27,486
Salinity Delta	1,600,000	49	27	798,550
Salinity Montrose	1,600,000	70	48	1,421,971
Salinity Wildlife	0	21	8	78,594
Salinity AIT	0	36	20	1,939,953
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,063,216</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>4,812,161</b>

**San Juan FY 2006 EQIP Funding Allocations**

Original Allocation(*does not include Salinity )	*1,381,146		Actual Allocation	*1,932,805
	Original Dollars Allocated to each issue	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved	Dollars Approved
Water Quality/Quantity	483,401	64	51	991,796
Grazing Land	207,172	11	10	43,755
Soil Erosion	207,172	10	10	218,065
Forestry	207,171	14	12	101,440
Wildlife	138,115	8	5	42,492
Riparian	138,115	2	2	189,975
Southern Ute	100,000	1	1	24,082
Ute Mountain Ute	100,000	2	2	207,280
Salinity – McElmo	1,000,000	32	25	681,519
Salinity – Mancos	1,000,000	26	26	1,594,284
Salinity – Wildlife	0	4	4	55,156
Dolores/Dove Creek Invasive	0	22	17	95,543
San Miguel Invasive	0	3	3	18,375
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,581,146</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>4,263,762</b>

**Upper South Platte FY 2006 EQIP Funding Allocations**

Original Allocation	2,244,362		Actual Allocation	2,673,141
	Original Dollars Allocated to each issue	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved	Dollars Approved
Water Quality/Quantity	628,421	84	49	1,669,950
Soil Erosion	471,316	22	19	278,272
Grazing	628,422	31	26	527,689
Water Quality/Waste Management	201,993	3	0	0
Wildlife	112,218	3	0	0
Forestry	201,992	14	14	194,151
CNMP	0	1	1	500
South Platte/St. Vrain Invasive	0	2	2	2,579
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,244,362</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>2,673,141</b>

**Lower South Platte FY 2006 EQIP Funding Allocations**

Original Allocation(*regular EQIP does not include GSWC)	*2,071,719		Actual Allocation	*2,908,327
	Original Dollars Allocated to each issue	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved	Dollars Approved
Water Quality/Quantity	725,102	76	43	1,800,115
Grazing Land	517,930	44	23	572,699
Soil Erosion	414,343	39	24	471,231
Water Quality/Animal Waste	207,172	0	0	0
Wildlife	103,586	7	0	0
Forestry	103,586	20	17	63,952
GSWC	150,000	4	4	175,357
GSWC-Outside Hi Plains	200,000	15	2	197,970
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,241,719</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>3,281,324</b>

**Republican FY 2006 EQIP Funding Allocations**

Original Allocation(*regular EQIP does not include GSWC)	*2,444,362		Actual Allocation	*1,082,061
	Original Dollars Allocated to each issue	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved	Dollars Approved
Water Quality/Quantity	673,309	28	5	392,503
Soil Erosion	336,654	34	27	677,911
Grazing Land	673,309	37	19	222,577
Water Quality/Animal Waste	336,654	4	3	136,909
Wildlife	112,218	6	5	18,961
Forestry	112,218	20	14	25,701
GSWC	1,400,000	86	44	2,121,830
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,644,362</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>3,596,392</b>

**Upper Arkansas FY 2006 EQIP Funding Allocations**

Original Allocation	1,553,789		Actual Allocation	1,718,924
	Original Dollars Allocated to each issue	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved	Dollars Approved
Water Quality/Quantity	543,826	75	52	953,305
Soil Erosion	233,068	12	9	80,148
Grazing	543,826	52	25	495,462
Forestry	77,690	4	3	60,790
Water Quality/Waste Management	77,690	2	1	3,135
Wildlife	77,690	8	6	124,783
Fountain Creek Invasive	0	3	2	1,300
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,553,789</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>1,718,923</b>

**Lower Arkansas FY 2006 EQIP Funding Allocations**

Original Allocation(*regular EQIP does not include GSWC)	*3,280,221		Actual Allocation	*4,325,554
	Original Dollars Allocated to each issue	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved	Dollars Approved
Water Quality/Quantity	574,038	86	56	1,626,336
Water Quality-AIT	574,039	11	6	346,277
Grazing Land	1,312,088	110	46	1,375,226
Soil Erosion	328,022	52	36	569,753
Water Quality/Animal Waste	262,418	2	0	0
Wildlife	229,616	14	10	164,477
Bent County Invasive	0	10	9	192,985
Tackling Tamarisk Invasive	0	3	3	50,000
CNMP	0	1	1	500
GSWC	1,000,000	36	20	1,080,776
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,280,221</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>5,406,330</b>

#### Rio Grande FY 2006 EQIP Funding Allocations

Original Allocation(*regular EQIP does not include GSWC)	*1,553,788		Actual Allocation	*1,712,274
	Original Dollars Allocated to each issue	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved	Dollars Approved
Water Quality/Quantity	699,205	75	52	1,004,374
Acequais	77,689	40	33	231,866
Soil Erosion	155,379	5	2	10,270
Grazing Land	233,068	27	21	298,099
Wildlife	233,069	18	9	161,131
Water Quality/Waste Management	77,689	0	0	0
Forestry	77,689	0	0	0
GSWC	461,433	33	26	221,495
Costilla County Invasive	0	12	6	11,756
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,015,221</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>1,938,991</b>

#### Local Work Groups

Local Work Groups (LWG) convened to identify local resource needs and make program recommendations to Watershed Work Group

#### EQIP Planning at the Watershed Level

Each local watershed group (LWG) identified the Resource Issues that they desire to have included in the EQIP program.

The Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) compiled the local workgroup data by watershed. Some watershed workgroups met individually as well.

- Watershed Work Group (WWG) Selected Resource Concerns Recommendations for Watershed used in EQIP

- Local Work Group Recommendations Considered
- NRCS Technical Team will Develop Ranking Criteria for *each* resource concern to be used watershed-wide to select EQIP applicants

## **Watershed Work Group Recommendations**

### **Cost-Share Incentive Basis**

- Cost-share rates for most structural practices will be set at no more than 50 percent cost-share except in the case of Limited Resource Producers and Beginning Farmers which will be established by the State Conservationist
- Setting cost-share rates and incentive payments that compare the environmental benefits with the economic return to the producer

### **Noxious Weeds**

- State wide support for continuing the Noxious Weed program of \$1 Million or more dollars.
- Request for more notice of applications
- Request for expansion into List B species

### **Energy**

- Strong support by workgroups for energy conservation through giving credit to all applications that have an energy conservation component.
- Strong support for cost-share on crop conversion practices to energy producing

Tim Carney called on **Callie Hendrickson**, Executive Director, Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD), to give a report on the 2007 Watershed Work Group Recommendations.

### **North Platte-White-Yampa Watershed (EQIP)**

Priority Resource Concerns and the percent of funds recommended for each:

- Water Quality/Quantity – 35%
- Rangeland – 30%
- Wildlife – 10%
- Riparian – 10%
- Forest – 10%

Proposed Cost-Share Rates: Same as last year

Proposed Cost-Share Caps: Same as last year

### **Colorado River Watershed (EQIP)**

Priority Resource Concerns and the percent of funds recommended for each:

- Water Quality/Quantity – 55%
- Animal Waste – 13%
- Range/Hay/Pasture – 15%
- Wildlife – 5%
- Riparian – 5%
- Forestry – 5%
- Soil Erosion – 2%

Proposed Cost-Share Rate: Same as last year except: 75% - Animal Waste and 75% - All Wildlife Practices

Proposed Caps: Same as Last year

### **Gunnison/Dolores Watershed (EQIP)**

Priority Resource Concerns and the percent of funds recommended for each:

- Water Management – 40%
- Rangeland – 30%
- Waste Management – 5%
- Wildlife – 5%
- Riparian – 15%
- Forest – 5%

Proposed Cost-Share Rate: Same as last year

Proposed Cost-Share Cap: Same as last year

### **San Juan River Basin Watershed (EQIP)**

Priority Resource Concerns and the percent of funds recommended for each:

- Water Quality/Quantity– 35%
- Soil Erosion – 15%
- Grazing/Grasslands – 5%
- Forest Management – 10%
- Wildlife – 5%
- Riparian – 5%
- Weeds – 10%
- Energy – 15%

Proposed Cost-Share Rate: Same as last year

Proposed Cost-Share Cap: Same as last year

### **Upper South Platte Watershed (EQIP)**

Priority Resource Concerns and the percent of funds recommended for each:

- Water Quality/Quantity – 30%
- Soil Erosion on Cropland – 21%
- Grazing Land – 30%
- Animal Waste – 5%
- Wildlife – 4%
- Forestry – 10%

Proposed Cost-Share Rate: Same as last year with the exception of wildlife: Support the ECBTC recommendations on wildlife practices

Proposed Cost-Share Caps: Same as last year

### **Lower South Platte Watershed (EQIP)**

Priority Resource Concerns and the percent of funds recommended for each:

- Water Quality/Quantity – 35%
- Soil Erosion – 20%
- Rangeland and Grassland – 25%
- Animal Waste – 10%
- Wildlife – 5%
- Agro-Forestry (windbreaks/shelter belts) – 5%

Proposed Cost-Share Rate: Same as last year with the following exceptions: Support Eastern Colorado Biologist Technical Committee (ECBTC) recommendation on wildlife and the request for windbreaks to be paid by linear foot

Proposed Cost-Share Caps: Same as last year

### **Republican River Watershed (EQIP)**

Priority Resource Concerns and the percent of funds recommended for each:

- Water Quality/Quantity – 25%
- Soil Erosion – 25%
- Rangeland and Grassland – 30%
- Animal Waste – 10%
- Wildlife – 5%
- Agro-Forestry – 5%

Proposed Cost-Share Rate: Same as last year with the following exceptions: 75% - Agro Forestry, support ECBTC recommendations for wildlife, request to expand noxious weed program to B List

Proposed Cost-Share Caps: Same as last year

### **Upper Arkansas Watershed (EQIP)**

Priority Resource Concerns and the percent of funds recommended for each:

- Water Quality/Quantity – 35%
- Soil Erosion – 11%
- Rangeland and Grazing – 38%
- Forest Land – 8%
- Wildlife and Endangered Species – 5%
- Waste Management – 3%

Proposed Cost-Share Rate: Same as last year with the following exception: support ECBTC recommendations for wildlife

Proposed Cost-Share Caps: Continue same as last year

### **Lower Arkansas Watershed (EQIP)**

Priority Resource Concerns and the percent of funds recommended for each:

- Water Quality/Quantity – 35%
- Soil Erosion – 14%
- Rangeland and Grazing Land – 40%
- Animal Waste – 4%
- Wildlife – 7%
- Forestry – to be included under Soil Erosion

Proposed Cost-Share Rate: Same as last year with following exception: Support ECBTC recommendations

Proposed Cost-Share Caps: Same as last year

### **Rio Grande Watershed (EQIP)**

Priority Resource Concerns and the percent of funds recommended for each:

- Water Quality/Quantity– 40%
- Soil Management – 10%
- Rangeland – 20%
- Riparian & Wetlands (wildlife) – 2%
- Forestland – 3%
- Waste Management – 5%
- Acequias – 10%
- Wildlife – 10%

Proposed Cost-Share Rate: Same as last year. Note: the Watershed wants to encourage minimal till practices

Proposed Cost-Share Caps: Same as last year

Comment: What are average prices are based on?

Response: Eligible Cost Share Practice List. This is a change to Average cost incentive, and will require less administration staff time. Average prices will be based on individual office spaces, watersheds, based on actual cost historically; or three bids if there is not a historical background. You will know up front what funding you will be receiving. With this system, there will be less contract modifications. This is a national directive.

Callie commented that this change will benefit everyone. There are challenges in EQIP. She indicated that too much time is spent behind the desk putting together the price lists. The NRCS staff's time can be better used in the field.

Tim indicated that exceptions can be made for certain circumstances; on a case by case determination.

Allen Green indicated he would like to receive input from the committee and to also receive your comments concerning the Cost Share Practice List.

#### **EQIP – Eligible Cost Share Practice List**

- List of practices available state-wide
- District Conservationists develop cost list for practices utilized locally
- To date, have asked Local Work Groups and Watershed Work Groups to recommend ranking emphasis (practices that should be encouraged in rankings) and cost share rates for issues/practices

#### **Ground and Surface Water Conservation (GSWC) – Eligible Cost Share Practice List**

- List has included irrigation related practices that are applicable to GSWC
- Watershed Work Groups recommend ranking emphasis and cost share rates and caps for issues/practices

#### **Actions Being Implemented In Rio Grande Watershed**

- Ranking for EQIP & GSWC will emphasize reduced consumptive use
- Require documentation of water rights before cost share assistance provided
- Do not cost share any change in irrigation water source without a net savings of water

#### **Actions to Consider, Rio Grande Watershed Only**

1. With GSWC funding, only cost share reduced consumptive use – Do not cost share any irrigation system improvements
2. With EQIP funding, continue cost sharing irrigation system improvements with ranking emphasis on reduced consumptive use – Reduce cost share rate for center pivot sprinklers to 25% (In between 1% & 50%)
3. With GSWC funding, only cost share reduced consumptive use – Do not cost share any irrigation system improvements
4. With EQIP funding, continue cost sharing irrigation system improvements with ranking emphasis on reduced consumptive use – Reduce cost share rate for center pivot sprinklers to 25% (In between 1% & 50%)
5. Establish GSWC incentive to convert irrigated land to dryland farming/ranching wildlife habitat
6. Temporary Conversion - \$50/acre for 3 years - \$150 per acre total
7. Extended Conversion - \$90/acre for 3 years - \$270/acre total
8. Permanent Conversion - \$150/acre for 3 years - \$450/acre total (requires decommissioning of well)

With GSWC funding, only cost share reduced consumptive use – do not cost share any irrigation system improvements. With EQIP funding, continue cost sharing irrigation system improvements with ranking emphasis on reduced consumptive use – reduce cost share rate for center pivot sprinklers to 25% (In between 1% & 50%).

- Establish GSWC incentive to convert irrigated land to dryland farming/ranching wildlife habitat
- Temporary Conversion - \$50/acre for 3 years - \$150 per acre total
- Extended Conversion - \$90/acre for 3 years - \$270/acre total
- Permanent Conversion - \$150/acre for 3 years - \$450/acre total (requires decommissioning of well)

#### **The Ground and Surface Water Conservation (GSWC) Proposal**

- Implement as proposed?
- Implement State-wide?
- If demand is there – Allocate entire GSWC budget to these practices?

#### **Ground and Surface Water Conservation Funding**

- 2006 Funding - \$3.7 Million
- Funds Initially earmarked to High Plains Aquifer - NOW made available state-wide

#### **The Ground and Surface Water Conservation (GSWC) Program**

*Provides Cost-Share & Incentive Payments for practices that:*

- 1) Improve Irrigation Systems
- 2) Enhance Irrigation Efficiencies
- 3) Convert to Dryland Farming or production of less water-intensive crops
- 4) Increase ground water recharge/water banking

*Provides Cost-Share & Incentive Payments for practices that:*

- 1) Improve Irrigation Systems
- 2) Enhance Irrigation Efficiencies
- 3) Convert to Dryland Farming or production of less water-intensive crops
- 4) Increase ground water recharge/water banking
  - Propose that we establish incentive practice for reduced consumptive use
  - Payment to be based on Acre Inches of Water Saved

#### **Colorado River Salinity Control**

- FY 2006 Earmark - \$7.8 Million
- Can only be used in the Colorado River Basin where NRCS can document that the practices being installed will reduce salt loading
- Currently, NRCS funding matched by Salinity Forum – Federal funding does not exceed 50% of the total cost-share to install practices – Federal rate shown at 76% to reduce paperwork for local staff

Program policy requires that we cost share the most cost-effective practices to correct the resource problems. In many cases, producers chose to adopt a more expensive practice and cover the additional expense. Practice or cost/acre caps establish the “Not to Exceed” rate.

Tim stated to the group that the Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to **“Helping People Help the Land.”**

#### **GSWC – 2006 Land Use Conversion Recommendations**

Questions/Comments:

Comment: it was stated that many send in their recommendations and did not have individual workgroups. The Lower Arkansas Watershed highly recommends to first meet individually then with the partners. This gives the watershed the opportunity to be prepared to present the needs of the issues they may have.

The Rio Grande Watershed would like to see a strong encouragement for minimum-till practices.

**Questions/Comments:**

Allen called on **Dollie Gonzales** for a report on the Conservation Security Program (CSP).

**CSP Completes the Conservation Portfolio with:**

- Technical assistance
- EQIP, WHIP – fix natural resource problems
- FRPP and GRP – protect land from conversion
- WRP and CRP – remediation and retirement

**Conservation Security Program**

- Voluntary program authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill
- Rewards producers applying and documenting high levels of conservation and management
- Ability to earn payments by adding and/or expanding conservation activities
- CSP touches all agricultural production sectors from livestock operations to cropland, orchards and vineyards
- Voluntary program authorized by the 2002 Farm Bill
- Rewards producers applying and documenting high levels of conservation and management
- Ability to earn payments by adding and/or expanding conservation activities
- CSP touches all agricultural production sectors from livestock operations to cropland, orchards and vineyards.

**CSP Provides Environmental Benefits**

By taking a “snapshot” at the beginning of the contract we obtain a baseline look at the natural resources and the producer’s management of:

- Soil organic matter (carbon)
- Nutrients
- Pesticides
- Other resource concerns

**CSP: Is a Three-Tiered Program**

**Tier I** Meet minimum treatment criteria for soil and water quality on part of your operation

**Tier II** Meet minimum treatment criteria for soil and water quality on all of your operation  
*(Plus: Agree to address one other resource concern)*

**Tier III** Meet minimum treatment criteria for all natural resource concerns on all of your Operation

<u>TIER I</u>	<u>TIER II</u>	<u>TIER III</u>
\$20,000	\$35,000	\$45,000
Annual	Annual	Annual
Cap	Cap	Cap
5 year contracts	5-10 year contracts	5-10 year contracts

**Minimum Level of Treatment Soil & Water Quality Minimum Level of Treatment Soil & Water Quality**

**Cropland**

- Soil Quality
  - Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) is positive – result soil condition & soil erosion
- Water Quality
  - Addresses the risk that nutrients, pesticides, sediment and salinity

## Four Payment Components

- 1) An stewardship component for the benchmark (existing) conservation treatment
- 2) An annual component for maintaining existing conservation practices
- 3) A one-time new practice component for additional practices
- 4) An enhancement component for exceptional conservation effort

## Enhancements

- Soil Management
- Nutrient Management
- Pest Management
- Irrigation Management
- Grazing Management
- Habitat Management
- Air Resource Mgmt
- Energy Management
- 

## Enhancement Examples

Pest Mgmt. Enhancement	All cropland fields meet USDA organic farming requirements
Pest Mgmt. Enhancement	Scouting Noxious Weeds and Recording with GPS
Pest Mgmt. Enhancement	Improve Irrigation Water Management to reduce offsite pesticide losses
Pest Mgmt. Enhancement	Reduced pesticide application: low rates, spot treatment, banding, etc.
Pest Mgmt. Enhancement	Utilize a combination of biological <u>and</u> either cultural or mechanical control methods
Pest Mgmt. Enhancement	Develop refuge habitat for beneficial insects; use pheromone traps; etc.
Pest Mgmt. Enhancement	Targeted treatment of Colorado "List B" Noxious Weeds

## FY 2006 Funding

- 143 contracts awarded
- \$2,126,451 total payments
- 290,952 acres
- Fully Funded to A-3 category/subcategory
- Prorated Funding at 65% - A-4 to B-1 category/subcategory
- Colorado – 17 contracts @ 100% funding
- 124 contracts @ prorated funding

## Enrollment Categories

- Applicants prioritized based on historical environmental performance, and willingness to undertake additional conservation activities
- Applications placed in highest category for which they qualify
- Categories to be funded in priority order until CSP appropriation is exhausted

**Colorado Funding**

**FY 2005**

- 10 Watersheds funded (plus 3 w/other states)
- 140 contracts awarded
- \$2,123,233 total payments
- 283,746 acres
- Lowest category funded C1

**FY 2006**

- 1 Watershed funded
- 143 contracts awarded
- \$2,126,451 total payments
- 290,952 acres
- Lowest category funded B1

**Colorado Totals**

- 11 Watersheds funded
- 283 Contracts
- \$4,249,684 annual payments
- 574,698 acres

**Colorado Funding**

**FY 2005**

- 10 Watersheds funded (plus 3 w/other states)
- 140 contracts awarded
- \$2,123,233 total payments
- 283,746 acres
- Lowest category funded C1

**FY 2006**

- 1 Watershed funded
- 143 contracts awarded
- \$2,126,451 total payments
- 290,952 acres
- Lowest category funded B1

**Funding - Colorado**

	<u>Tier I</u>	<u>Tier II</u>	<u>Tier III</u>
A	14	90	123
B	21	17	15
C	0	2	0
D	0	0	0
E	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>138</b>

**Proposed Enhancements FY2007**

- **Drainage Water Management** – may be necessary for salinity areas
- **Plant Management** – Improve plant management by establishing or maintaining native, culturally significant plants in field borders, vegetative barriers, contour buffer strips, waterways, shelterbelts, windbreaks riparian forest and herbaceous buffers
- **Plant Management** – Improve plant health and vigor by establishing or maintaining nectar production plant corridors in field borders , vegetative barriers, contour buffer strips, waterways, shelterbelts, windbreaks riparian forest and herbaceous buffers
- **Plant Management** – Improve plant management by implementing sustainable harvest techniques in cropped woodland and marshes that allow for natural regeneration of the desired species.
- **Plant Management** - Improve plant health and vigor by selective thinning of cropped woodland and marshes to remove undesirable species and/or sustain the growth of the desired species according to a management plan.
- **Plant Management** - Improve plant health and vigor by utilizing intercropping to increase biodiversity and minimize the number and intensity of pest and disease outbreaks.
- Others???

Question: Can you maintain equity from one year to another?

Response: There have been changes in the category placement, there is more Federal land and less private land. The first year the program was not understood. The second year they were more informed to prepare their requests and we have more participation.

Allen called on **Shane Briggs**, Regional Agricultural Advisor, Farm Bill/PCL/CHIP Coordinator, Colorado Division of Wildlife, for an Update on the Colorado Division of Wildlife activities.

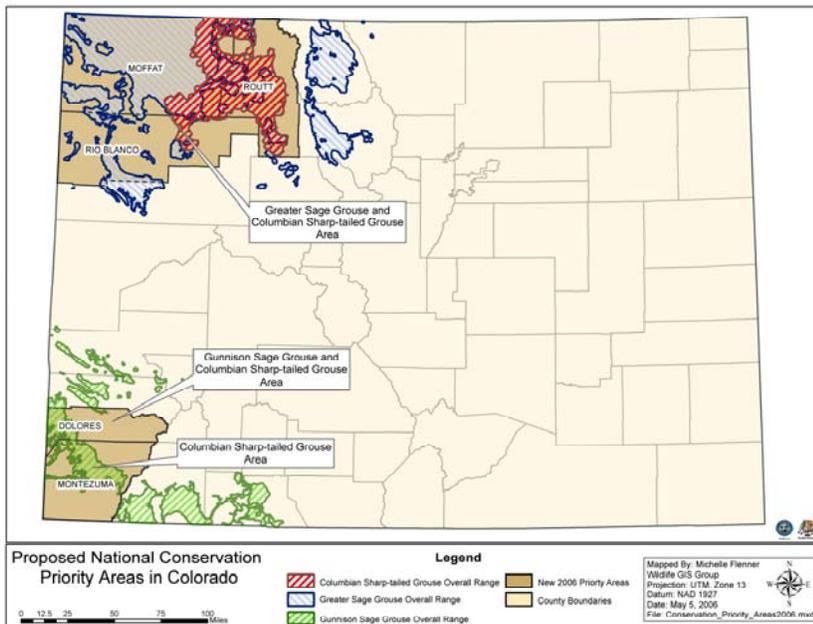
## Topics

- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) 2007 Farm Bill Policy Statements
- CRP Conservation Priority Areas
- Private Lands Biologist Program Update
- EQIP Wildlife Recommendations

## AFWA 2007 Farm Bill Priority Concerns and Recommendations

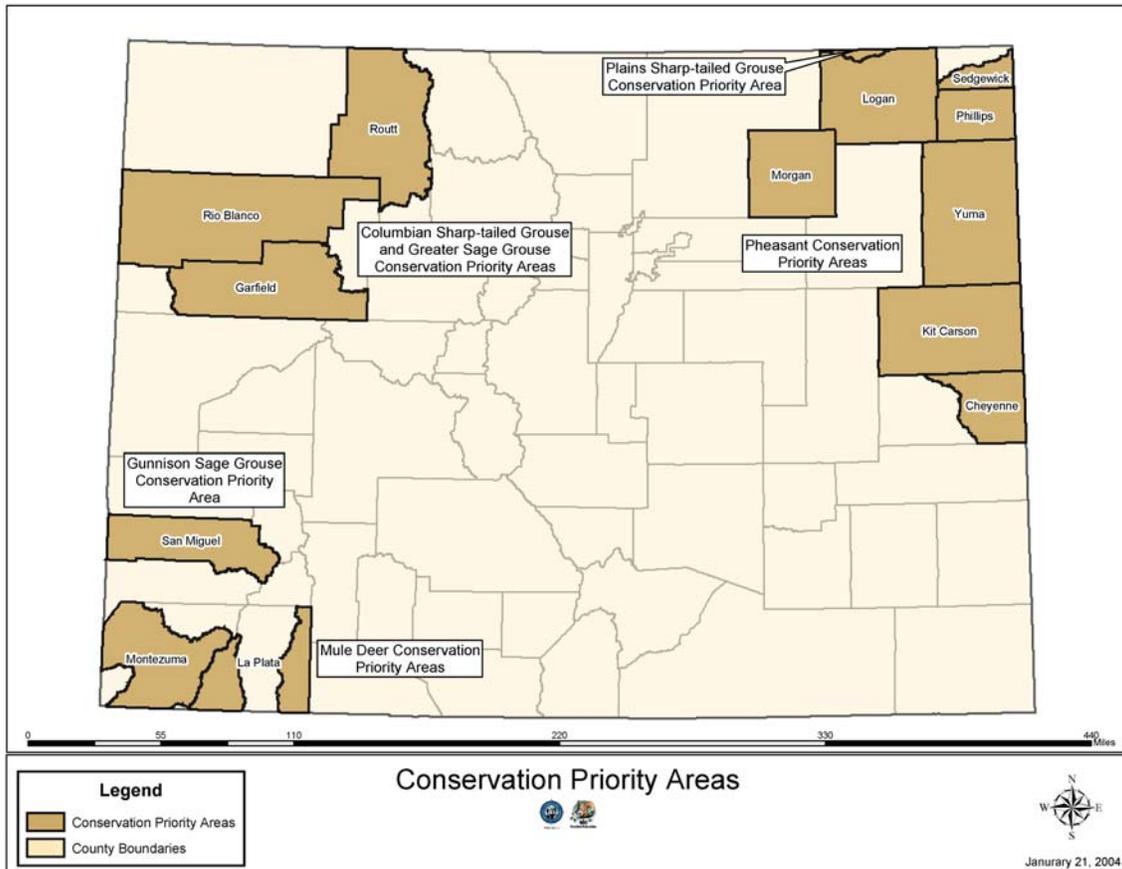
- Fish and wildlife should be co-equal priorities with soil and water for all conservation programs.
- USDA programs should not inadvertently promote conversion or loss of habitats.
- Technical Assistance funding should be increased for all conservation programs.
- Establish Habitat Technical Teams in all states.
- Maintain or increase funding for all conservation programs.
- Support new energy initiatives that are in balance with existing conservation program goals.
- Conservation program priorities should be established at the appropriate level to address conservation priorities of the state or region.
- Funding should be made available for monitoring conservation program benefits.

## Proposed Nation Conservation



## Priority Areas (CPA) for Grouse

## Existing State CPA's



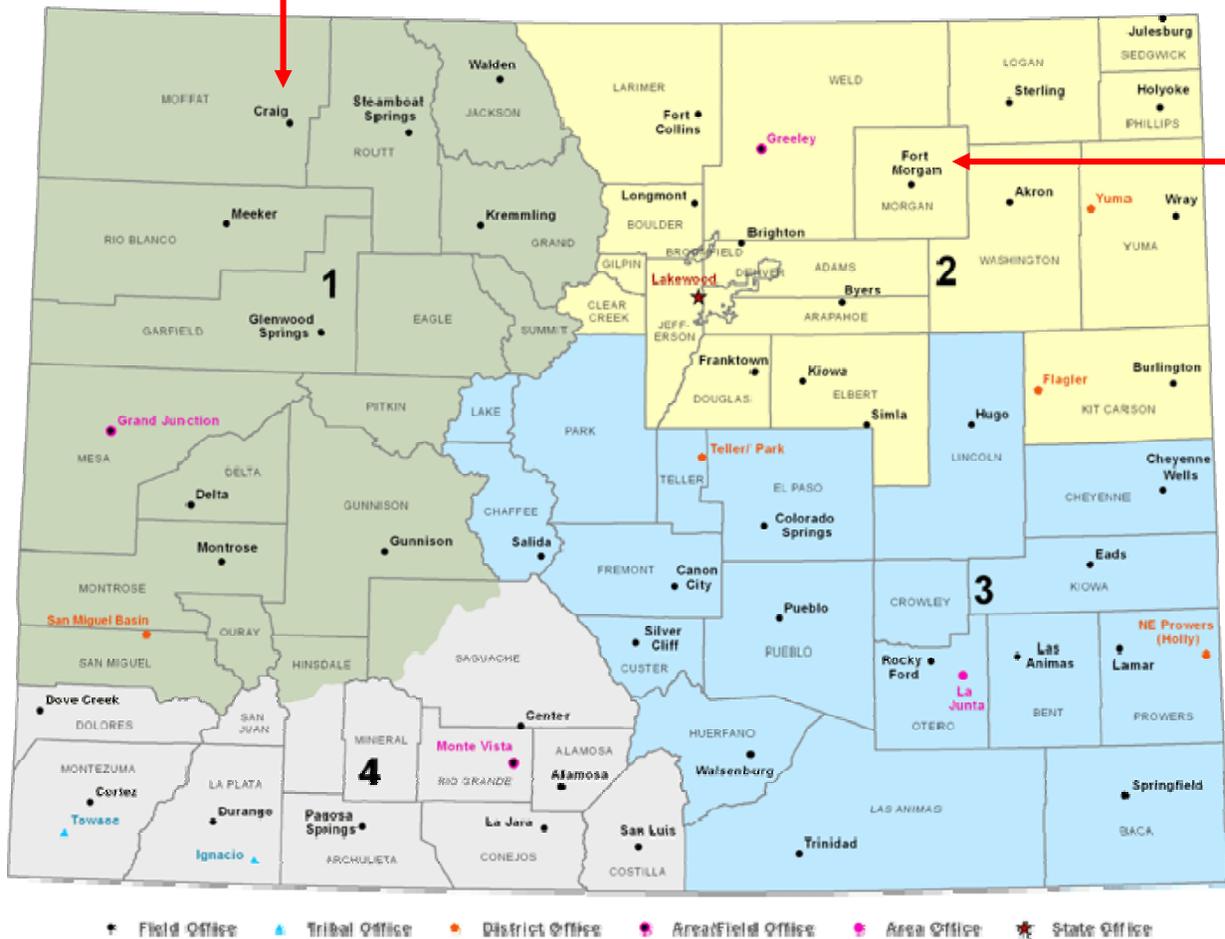
## Private Lands Wildlife Biologist (PLWB) Program Updates

**Sponsors: Colorado Division of Wildlife, NRCS, Colorado Watershed Network**

### PLWB Staff

- **Patty Moore** (Pueblo) has 13 years of experience working with NRCS and private landowners in Virginia, and has worked on wildlife issues here in Colorado for the past two years. She holds and MS in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from South Dakota State University.
- **Noe Marymor** (Craig), three years NRCS experience in Nebraska working in a similar partner program. She also has significant sage grouse experience, and holds a BS in wildlife biology from CSU.
- **Existing biologists:**
  - Chanda Garcia (Monte Vista) has been with the program since its inception.
  - Matt Reddy (Fort Morgan) has been with the program for a year.

## PLWB Coverage



### PLWB Contact Information

- Chanda Garcia: (719) 852-4489 x 314 [chanda.garcia@co.usda.gov](mailto:chanda.garcia@co.usda.gov)
- Matt Reddy: (970) 867-8568 x 110 [matt.reddy@co.usda.gov](mailto:matt.reddy@co.usda.gov)
- Noe Marymor: (970) 824-3476 [noe.marymor@co.usda.gov](mailto:noe.marymor@co.usda.gov)
- Patty Moore: (719) 543-8388 x 3 [patty.moore@co.usda.gov](mailto:patty.moore@co.usda.gov)

### PLWB Program Success

- **12,000 acres** restored and/or conserved for wildlife
- Wildlife Management Plans for more than **105,000 acres**.
- Awarded **\$1.6 million** Wetland Reserve Enhancement grant to conserve 1,300 critical acres in the San Luis Valley for Southwest Willow Flycatcher and other species.
- 100% match of Federal TSP dollars.
- **\$260,000** of additional non-NRCS/CDOW match the program.

### NRCS 2005-2010 Strategic Plan

*Mission Goal: Healthy Plant and Animal Communities to provide habitats for diverse and healthy wildlife, aquatic species, and plant communities; protect water quality; and reduce flood damage.*

#### *Objectives:*

*-...apply management techniques that will maintain or improve long-term vegetative conditions on 150 million acres of grazing and forest land.*

**An additional 9 million acres of essential habitat will be improved and managed to benefit at-risk and declining species.**

- Resource managers will create, restore, or enhance 1.5 million acres of wetlands on non-federal lands

**National EQIP Priorities**

- EQIP Manual (515.13b):

“In order to provide direction to the State and local levels for implementing EQIP to achieve the objectives, NRCS has established the following National priorities:

- 1.) Reduction of non-point source pollution, ...
- 2.) Reduction of emissions...
- 3.) Reduction in soil erosion ...
- 4.) Promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation.”**

NRCS has also identified specific measures that can help EQIP achieve its National priorities and statutory requirements more efficiently. These measures include identifying and implementing conservation practices that:

- Increase overall environmental benefits, for example by addressing multiple resource concerns, ensuring more durable environmental benefits, and limiting adverse ancillary impacts.
- Encourage innovation.
- **Comply with the statutory mandate to target nationally, 60 percent of available financial assistance to livestock-related conservation practices.**
- Employ appropriate tools to more comprehensively serve EQIP purposes, such as Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans and Integrated Pest Management Plans.

**Wildlife Conservation Concerns Matching EQIP Program Priorities**

- Shortgrass Prairie Biodiversity
  - Rapid decline of grassland bird populations
  - Other associated species
- Seasonal Wetlands & Playas
  - Critical wildlife habitat
  - Multiple ecological functions and values
- At-risk Grouse Species
  - Habitat loss due to conversion, fragmentation, and management

**2005 EQIP Totals**

<b>Watershed Name</b>	<b>#Applications</b>	<b>#Approved</b>	<b>\$Allocated</b>
Lower Arkansas	442	153	\$4,955,127
wildlife	43 (9.7%)	4 (2.6%)	\$29,601 (.5%)
Lower South Platte	251	117	\$3,042,940
wildlife	8 (3.1%)	6 (5.1%)	\$46,947 (1.5%)
Republican	320	138	\$2,875,995
wildlife	4 (1.2%)	1 (.72%)	\$8,805 (.3%)

**2007 Wildlife EQIP Recommendations**

- *Developed by PLWB, USFWS, CDOW, RMBO, DU biologists.*
- *Submitted through the Locally Led Conservation EQIP Process (30+ Local Working Groups)*
- *Approved by all 5 Eastern Plains Watershed Working Groups.*

## 75% Cost-Share Rates

- Brush Management
- Prescribed Burning
- Water Development
- Obstruction Removal
- Prescribed Grazing
- Range Seeding
- Pest Management
- Fencing
- Use Exclusion

## Incentive Payments

- Seasonal Wetlands & Playas

\$20.00 / acre for wetland acres + \$10.00 / acre for an upland buffer up to a maximum ratio of 4:1

**Special incentive payments for seasonal wetlands will not be distributed in order to create or enhance wetlands dedicated to livestock watering or other agricultural production.**

- Shortgrass Prairie Biodiversity

Producers managing for the following species are eligible for a \$10.00 / acre payment, increasing \$2.00 / acre for each point scored above .5 on the WSM up to a maximum payment of \$20.00/acre.

- *Long-Billed Curlew*
- *Ferruginous Hawk*
- *Burrowing Owl*
- *Mountain Plover*
- *McCown's Longspur*
- *Swift Fox*
- *Cassin's Sparrow*
- *Brewer's Sparrow*
- *Scaled Quail*
- *Chestnut-collared Longspur*
- *Texas Horned Lizard*
- *Massasauga Rattlesnake*

- **At-risk Grouse Species**

Proximity to Active Lek	Incentive Payment Rate
<1 mile	\$ 25.00 / acre
1 – 2 miles	\$ 20.00 / acre
2 – 5 miles	\$ 15.00 / acre
5 – 7 miles	\$ 10.00 / acre
7+ miles	\$ 3.00 / acre

Allen called on **Randy Randall**, Assistant State Conservationist for Operations, NRCS, to give a 2006 Project Summary report on the Conservation Innovation Grants Programs (CIG).

<b>FY 2005 Grant</b>	<b>versus</b>	<b>FY 2006 Grants</b>
\$19,240 - \$75,000		\$25,000 - \$75,000
Totaling: \$727,480		Totaling: \$451,785
18 Applicants		12 Applicants
Funded 12		Funded 7
67% Funding Rate		58% Funding Rate

**2006 National Awardees**

- Larson – The project involves the use of hybrid sorghum that will produce more ethanol, market a more efficient and economical bio-based energy crop, and if proven, will yield more ethanol for the same energy inputs.
- CSU –On-Farm Evaluation and demonstration of Ammonia Reduction Best Management Practices (BMPs) for feedlots and dairies
- CSU – Sustainable cropping systems for transition from full irrigation to limited irrigation and dry land

**2006 Colorado State Awardees**

- Use of solar energy on center pivot irrigation corners. Energy costs could be used to reduce the cost of running the pivots and extra energy sold to rural electric company for extra income. Will be demonstrated on six different farms.
- Use of Hybrid Sorghum that will produce more ethanol. Market a more efficient and economical bio-based energy crop. If proven it will yield more ethanol for the same energy inputs.
- Develop and test ecological state and transitions model. Will involve producer to get first-hand experience of altering management practices. Will help producers and land managers know what the consequences of applying various types of practices.
- Encourage producers to use the Colorado Agricultural Meteorological Network (Co Ag Met). This network supplies daily crop evapotranspiration (ET) rates and disease forecasting. This information is not currently being widely used. Assist in adopting the technology, usefulness, and reliability of this information.
- Demonstrate the benefits associated with using Kura Clover as a perennial cover crop (living mulch) in conjunction with no-till cropping practices in organic and conventional production systems.
- Project will address irrigation technology such as drip irrigation, Irrigation Water Management (flow rate and scheduling) to reduce runoff, deep percolation, and leaching of salts and nitrate and nitrogen fertilizer application rate with injection through drip and application timing to optimize nitrogen use efficiency and minimize leaching of nitrates into the groundwater.
- Project will use a traveling sprinkler in combination with a HYDROGEL/Zeolite blend to improve emergence and stands as well as yield, quality and returns of onions on a sub-surface drip irrigation system.
- Demonstrate the benefits associated with using Kura Clover as a perennial cover crop (living mulch) in conjunction with no-till cropping practices in organic and conventional production systems.
- Project will address irrigation technology such as drip irrigation, Irrigation Water Management (flow rate and scheduling) to reduce runoff, deep percolation, and leaching of salts and nitrate and nitrogen fertilizer application rate with injection through drip and application timing to optimize nitrogen use efficiency and minimize leaching of nitrates into the groundwater.

- Project will use a traveling sprinkler in combination with a HYDROGEL/Zeolite blend to improve emergence and stands as well as yield, quality and returns of onions on a sub-surface drip irrigation system.

### **FY 2007 Cycle**

- Funding Identified for FY 2007
- Grant Application Period – Mid February
- Initial Review Period – Late March
- Review Grants – Early April
- Award Letters Mailed to Grantees – Mid April

Comment. We need to take a closer look at how this will deliver good conservation to the lands. We need to be sure the motives are in the right place. (it was pointed out that most of the proposals are with projects that are currently in place.)

Response: the philosophy is that grants are set up to ensure that funding gets to the entities to get the innovation adopted. We have received a number of grants from CSU, keep in mind that funds cannot be used strictly for research. We are looking at something that has been adopted and has been proven. The quality of the proposals need to be improved. We are reaching out for better publicity of this program and then to provide assistance for those applying for these grants.

Comment: There is a National CIG project partnering with CSU. It encourages conservation districts to have partnership with CSU. There is a great resource of information to be obtained from the CSU.

Comment: It is important to know how the grant project is going to be implemented on the ground.

Response: CIG takes funds from the EQIP (fixed amount), \$500,000. We will continue funding this program. It is important that we have grassroots involvement/partnership. Good partnerships are very important for the success of this program. We have a flexibility that the EQIP does not allow.

Example: funding of energy projects; Conservation Districts can cost share with landowners to see if this works. Then they can go out to find more funding from other sources/entities to supplement the original funding.

Contact Randy Randall at 720-544-2803 or email [randy.randall@co.usda.gov](mailto:randy.randall@co.usda.gov)

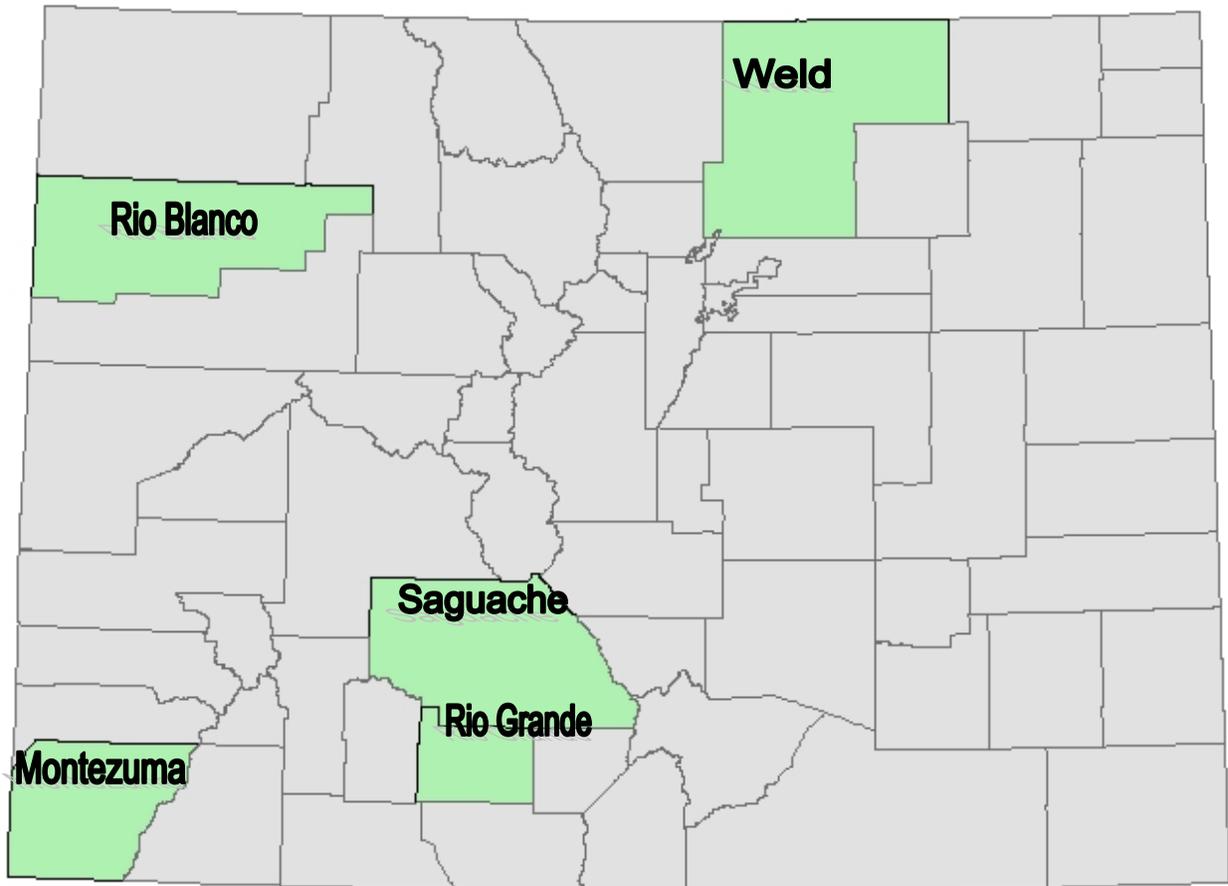
Questions/Comments:

Allen called on **Gary Finstad**, Easements Coordinator, NRCS, for a report on the Farm and Ranch Protection Program (FRPP), the Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP), and the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). He reported that we have six projects in the FRPP program. The program is designed to place conservation easements on the land. We work with many different entities that implement farmland protection. Most projects are being matched with other entities, mainly Great Outdoors Colorado (GoCO).

In the GRP we have received funds for 2005 through 2006. Moffat County is one project. We were not able to fund this project this year because of time constraints and other complications. We hope to get these funds back after the end of the fiscal year.

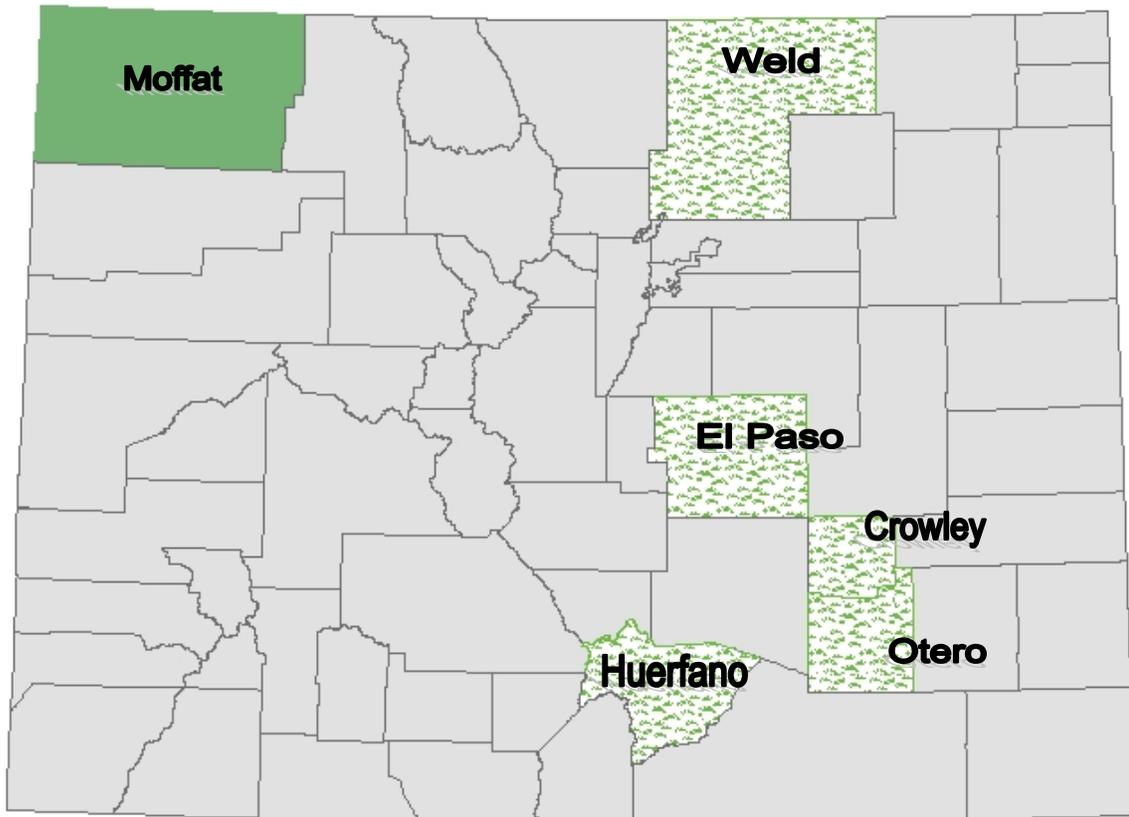
**Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program (FRPP)  
2006 Awards**

Montezuma	Two projects; \$413,695; 300 Ac.
Rio Blanco	\$600K; 715 Acres
Rio Grande	\$400K; 1,080 Ac.
Saguache	\$599,863; 964 Ac.
Weld Watershed	\$231 K; 115 Ac.



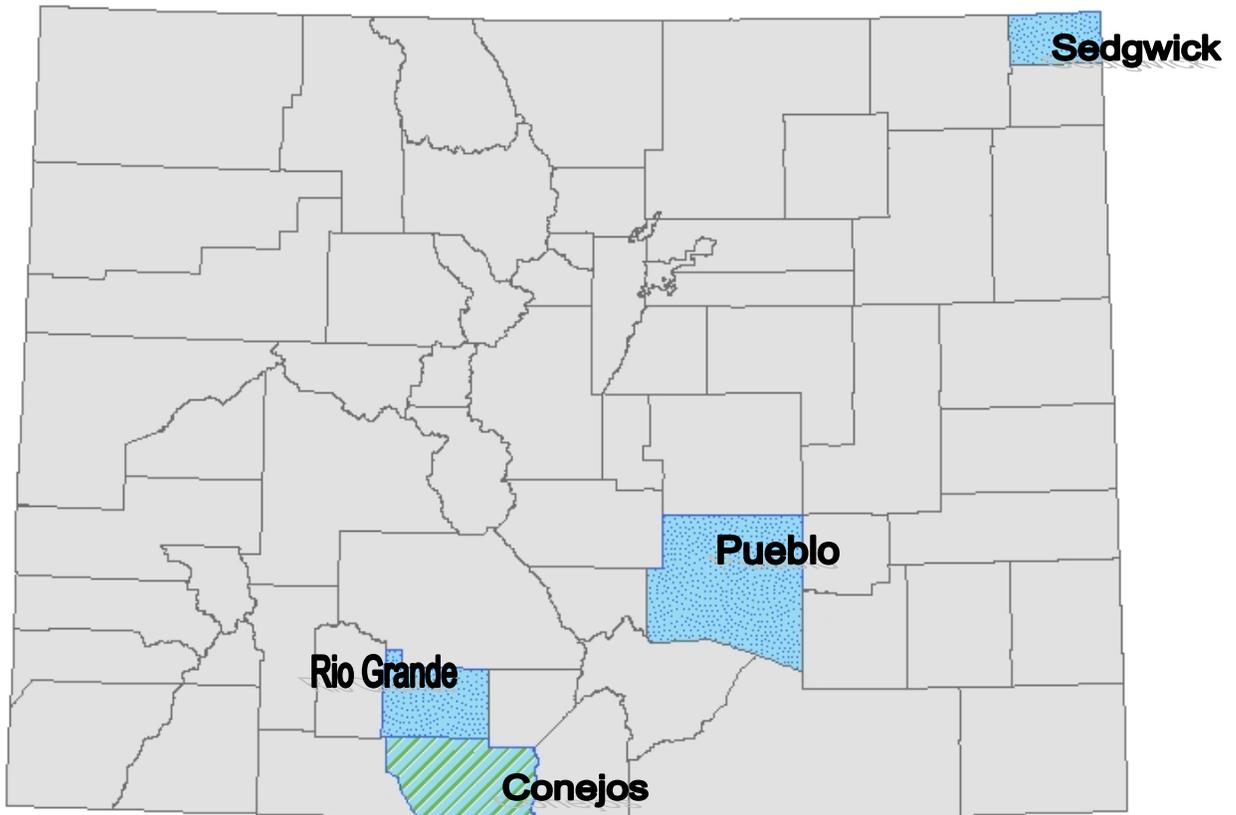
**Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)  
2006 Awards**

Moffat	Two pending easements 5,900 AC; \$1.6M (FY 2005 funding)
Weld	20-year, 2,000 Ac, \$280K
El Paso	10-year, 3,601 Ac; \$324K
Crowley	10-year, 1,311 Ac; \$85K
Otero	20-year, 2,143 Ac; \$279K
Huerfano	15-year, 2,737 Ac; \$267K



**Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)  
2006 Awards**

Conejos	WREP: (1) – 1,300 Ac WRP Bid Pilot: (1) – 61 Ac
Pueblo	(1) – 43 Ac
Rio Grande	(2) – 806
Sedgwick	(3) – 251 Ac



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**2006 WRP Bid Pilot (“Reverse Auction”)**

- Piloted in seven states
- CO – Conejos River Corridor
- Two rounds of bidding (with a cap)
- Producer self-assessment with field verification
- Per acre bid divided by scores >> EBI value
- Two bidders; both accepted (one later withdrew)

## WRP Geographic CAPS

- D R A F T -

Irrigated Cropland: \$2,350 per acre  
Non-irrigated Cropland: \$ 625 per acre  
Range/Pasture (R\*): \$ 550 per acre  
Range/Pasture: \$ 350 per acre  
R\* - "Riparian" (with riparian area benefits)

In the WRP we started with \$2M in funding. We funded eight projects, with six under the regular WRP. In the spring we submitted for funding under the national funds. –the idea is to leverage funding costs. One project was funded for \$13,000 thanks to our local biologist. They are playing an important role in getting funding for projects and getting more conservation on the lands.

In June, there was a second opportunity to apply for funding, through the WRP bid project. There is a cap of \$0-\$1,250. There will be a self-assessment. The idea is to capture land eligibility (information will need to be submitted to prove eligibility.) After the second round of proposals, we will have the proposals field verified. We have received two bids, and are funding one of the proposals, the other withdrew their proposal. Total funding: #3.7M.

Comments: What are the values, where do you get the values?

Response: We have one geographical cap rate of \$2,350. We get our information from the Colorado Agricultural Statistic Service (CASS). Keep in mind that we do not pay for development on WRP lands. For the easement values we can put any amount up to the cap rate. If the appraised amount is more than the cap, the landowners is advised to recover the difference through IRS tax deductions. We use the current agriculture value.

Comment: can a third party pick up the difference of the cap?

Response: We advise them to consult with an attorney. They can donate the difference and receive the tax credit. We do not get involved in third party actions. Another possibility is to have another entity buy the extra land in the easement to make up the difference of the cap and the appraisal.

Allen asked if cap amounts need to be addressed. Do we need different caps for the various geographic areas? We are guided by the National office of NRCS to have a geographic cap. CASS receives and compiles their information from surveys through the landowners. We use the average figures across the state. Keep in mind that there are maximum figures that we pay and do not pay for development value, we only pay on the agricultural value. It is up to the landowner to receive compensation for the difference from IRS.

If you have any questions or comments, contact Gary Finstad at 720-544-2820 or email at [gary.finstad@co.usda.gov](mailto:gary.finstad@co.usda.gov)

Click here to access the [2007 WRP Project Ranking Tool](#).

**Tim Carney**, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, NRCS gave a report on the **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program including (WHIP)** a 2006 Program Summary, and report on the 2007 Request for Proposals.

Allen called on **John Larson**, Regional Agricultural Advisor, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 8, for an Update on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) Regulations. John explained that the EPA's Strategic Ag Initiative is to provide help to producer's transition from high

risk pesticides in support of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), technical assistance, grant program, outreach; and it builds partnerships and leverage resources.

### **SAI Grant Funds**

- Region 8 SAI funds are part of the Regional Consolidated Funding Process
- National program -- \$1.8 million for grants
- Region 8 -- \$93,000 annually
- Research, education and demo projects

### **Region 8 SAI Grants**

- 18 projects funded, \$650,000 in grants
- Precision agriculture, Northern Plains IPM manual
- FY 06 projects in Colorado
  - onion thrips and IYSV in onions
  - Leafhoppers in tomatoes

### **SAI Toolbox and Database**

- Web-based guidance to assist with grant management & focus project outcomes
- Records SAI grant data for over 100 funded projects
- Measuring program and project results
- [www.aftresearch.org/sai](http://www.aftresearch.org/sai)

### **SAI Transition Index**

- 0 No transition; growers will not or cannot change practices; or early stage research with no implementation
- 1 Growers gather information on reduced-risk practices
- 2 Genesis of transition; growers educated on new techniques and interested in implementation
- 3 Growers actively preparing for IPM adoption
- 4 Initiate risk reduction: elementary IPM and chemical for chemical adoption
- 5 Chemical for chemical substitutions combined with effort to protect water quality or other resource
- 6 Growers attempting reduced risk program but are having problems in implementation or economic viability
- 7 Reduced reliance: growers move toward reduced risk alternatives
- 8 Reduced risk alternative combined with effort to protect water quality or other resource
- 9 Little or no reliance on pesticides: growers use biointensive practices (natural enemies conserved, models to time inputs)
- 10 Sustainable agro-ecological approach: holistic management of soil, air and water

Mr. Larson introduced **Qian K. Zhang**, Regional CAFO Coordinator/Environmental Engineer EPA, to give an update on the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) Regulations. Currently there is a CAFO lawsuit, "*Waterkeeper Alliance, et al. v. EPA*" 2003 (February 28, 2005). He presented the following information regarding this case.

### **Litigants**

- Environmental Petitioners: Waterkeeper Alliance, American Littoral Society, NRDC, Sierra Club
- Industry Petitioners: American Farm Bureau Federation, National Pork Producers Council, National Chicken Council

### **Key Issues**

#### **The Court vacated:**

- The 2003 rule requirement that all CAFOs need permits or to demonstrate no potential to discharge
- Issuance of NPDES permits without permitting authority and public review of NMPs, and incorporation of NMP terms into the permit

**The Court remanded for further explanation:**

- Applicability of Water Quality Standards
- New Source standards for veal, pork & poultry
- Best Conventional Technology (BCT) for pathogens

**Revised Compliance Dates**

- EPA published the mini-rule in the Federal Register in 2/10/06. The mini-rule addresses the extension of two compliance deadlines for CAFOs:
  1. Newly defined CAFOs will have until July 31, 2007 to seek NPDES permit coverage
  2. All CAFOs will have until July 31, 2007 to implement NMPs
- EPA published the Proposed Rule in 6/30/2006 to address the 2<sup>nd</sup> circuit court issues

**Schedule for Rule Revision**

- 60-day public comment period ends August 29, 2006
- 5 public outreach meetings – NC, IA, CO, TX, CA
- Final rule: *Spring 2007*

**For More information**

- CAFO regulations and outreach materials:
  - [www.epa.gov/npdes/caforule](http://www.epa.gov/npdes/caforule)
  - [www.epa.gov/ost/guide/CAFO/](http://www.epa.gov/ost/guide/CAFO/)
- Compliance assistance: [www.epa.gov/agriculture](http://www.epa.gov/agriculture)
- USDA programs: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)
- EPA Office of Wastewater Management: phone:(202) 564-0766

**Allen Green** then reported on **Cost Share of Conservation Practices on Federal Lands.**

He reported there are funds for optional funding on Federal Lands. We try to restrict funding to private lands. Funds can be used to improve grazing lands on public lands. We need you input on guidelines, concepts and philosophy.

Comments:

Treat State lands like private land.

BLM and Forest Service – work with the Federal lands

Need to keep funds focused on private lands

Lands adjacent to public lands – is there anything in place to address using the public lands?

Response: BLM and Forest Service can put funds to public lands. They have this authority.

State Cross-boundaries funds are available.

NRCS provides EQIP on private and public lands at this time. NRCS

**Allen called for comments, questions, or announcements**

**Event:** Ranch Tour and Workshop, at The Apishapa Canyon Ranch.

**Discussion Topics:** Tamarisk Removal, Wildlife Habitat, Cost Share Programs and Range Management

**Date/Time:** Friday, October 6, 10am-4pm

**Where:** Arishapa Canyon Ranch, Whiterock, CO (25 miles South of Fowler)

**RSVP** requested (to guarantee lunch)

**Cost:** FREE – lunch included

**Contact:** Ed Schmal at 719-561-5309 or Seth Gallagher at [seth.gallagher@rmbo.org](mailto:seth.gallagher@rmbo.org)

**Event:** Prairie and Wetlands Focus Area Meeting

**Discussion Topics:** Habitat Projects in SE Colorado; Wildlife habitat Improvement Program (WHIP); Learn Strategies for At-risk Species Conservation Through – EQIP; NAWCA - Wetlands Grants; Watershed Planning and EPA 319 Grants; Watch “Playa Lakes-Reflections of Life on the Plains” DVD John Weir of Oklahoma State University will present: “Prescribed Fire as a management Tool”, “Myths and Misconceptions of Fire” and more...

**Date/Time:** October 26, 10am – 4pm

**Location:**

**Cost:** RSVP by October 24, 2006 (lunch provided)

**Contact:** Seth Gallagher at [seth.gallagher@rmbo.org](mailto:seth.gallagher@rmbo.org) or call 970-482-1707

**Event:** 62<sup>nd</sup> Colorado Association Annual Meeting

**Where:** Hotel Colorado, Glenwood Springs, Colorado

**Date:** November 13-15, 2006

Theme: Colorado’s Heartbeat – Agriculture, Water and Energy

Visit the CACD Webpage for more information regarding the conference; click the following link for more information: [CA CD](#) ; click the following link for an [Agenda](#) , for hotel information click the following link: [Hotel](#)

An invitation was extended for everyone to participate and attend this important conference.

After thanking everyone for their participation and attendance, Allen Green adjourned the meeting.

**Attendees at the Colorado NRCS State Technical Committee Meeting  
September 27, 2006**

Abbott, Dave, Colorado River Watershed  
Anderson, Karma, NRCS  
Bell, Roy, Jefferson Conservation District  
Bornstein, Jacob, Colorado Watershed Network  
Briggs, Shane, Colorado Division of Wildlife  
Burse Johnson, Katherine, NRCS  
Burwell, Jeff, NRCS  
Carney, Tim, NRCS  
Cordova, Bob, NACD/Upper Arkansas River Watershed  
Doty, Dave, NRCS  
Ernst, Harley, Cope CD/Republican River CD  
Finstad, Gary, NRCS  
Frank, Lewis, Farm Service Agency  
Gallagher, Seth, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory  
Garcia, Chanda, NRCS  
Gonzales, Dollie, NRCS  
Green, Allen, NRCS  
Hall, Leroy, NRCS  
Hendrickson, CACD  
Hutchinson, Marcella, EPA, Region 8  
Jessen, Eric, Delta CD/ CACD  
Kettler, Steve, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
King, Pam, Colorado State Conservation Board  
Koch, Jared, Colorado Farm Bureau  
Lair, Cindy, CSCB  
Lane, Eric, Colorado Department of Agriculture  
Larson, John, EPA  
Loutzenhiser, Randy, CACD, Republican River Watershed  
Lucero, Ted, NRCS  
McCloskey, Bruce, Colorado Department of Wildlife  
Miller, Steve, Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Murphy, Stan, Republican River Watershed  
Paulter, Tim, Republican River CD  
Randall, Randy, NRCS  
Rasmussen, Donna, NRCS  
Reddy, Matt, NRCS/Colorado Watershed Group  
Richrath, Scott, Colorado Division of Water Resources  
Riggle, Frank, NRCS  
Roberts, Martha, Environmental Defense  
Schnaderbeck, Rick, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Slobe, Debbie, Playa Lakes Joint Venture  
Smith, Louie, Jefferson CD  
Smith, Nancy, The Nature Conservancy  
Starkebaum, Brian, Huston CD  
Sundstrom, Greg, State Forest Service  
Toombs, Ted, Environmental Defense  
VerCauteran, Tammy, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory  
Warner, Bob, CACD/Upper South Platte Watershed  
Wilson, Cathee, NRCS  
Wright, JD, CACD  
Zhang, Qian, EPA