

Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service Employee Newsletter

75
Years

A Legacy of Conservation

Helping People Help the Land

Denver Federal Center, Building 56, Room 2604, Denver, CO 80225-0426

Ph: 720-544-2863

Fax: 720-544-2965

Highlights

by
Kindra Brandner
Acting
State Conservationist



Webster defines leadership as “the act or an instance of leading” and opportunity “a good chance for advancement or progress.” From December 20 to the 30th, I had the Leadership opportunity to be the acting State Conservationist. The duties were similar to a district conservationist: your goal at the end of the day was to make sure items were running smoothly and deadlines had been met.

Filling in for Allen for two weeks was a good insight as to the possibilities for advancement that are open for all NRCS employees. The agency is a puzzle where everyone is their own piece and contributes their own expertise to provide technical service, outreach, education, and partnerships to millions of people worldwide. The puzzle is put together when at the end of the year we meet our goals and conservation is on the ground.

The best part of my acting duties was demonstrating to me that I could survive when placed outside of my comfort zone. It helped me build the confidence I needed to go full speed ahead into the Emerging Leadership Program and set high expectations of myself to continue to be a part of the NRCS team.

I formed a better appreciation of my co-workers that our job is a team effort, and that when we work together, great things are accomplished!

My advice to you is to try new opportunities as they arise. Experience makes us stronger and there are always lessons to be learned. NRCS is a much respected agency, and as a team, we made that possible!

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NRCS in Colorado: Achieving its Mission and Witnessing its Vision

by Petra Barnes Walker, Public Affairs Officer, Denver, CO

2010 marked the 75th year the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been “helping people help the land.” Although the USDA agency throughout its 75 years has undergone a few changes, including its name, the basic principle of the organization has remained the same. NRCS is and has always been the lead federal agency that helps America’s farmers and ranchers improve the condition of natural resources (soil, water, air, plants and animals) by encouraging the implementation of sound conservation practices onto the land. And, although the mission has not changed, the way the agency goes about it and who it collaborates with to realize its vision has expanded.

“The way in which today’s NRCS works is diverse and multifaceted,” says Allen Green, NRCS State Conservationist, Denver, CO. *“We are dealing with more complicated issues like energy, organics, carbon sequestration, water consumption, urban encroachment onto prime production agricultural lands, as well as determining the most appropriate way to meet the needs of a new customer base, the small acreage landowner. Property owners with less than 40 acres are our fastest-growing customer, because many have little to no experience in how to properly manage natural resources. And these are just a few of the ever-changing issues the agricultural landscape must address. As a result, the agency that has historically spoken for the land must keep up and I’m very happy to say that NRCS does an exceptional job.”*

In order to continually meet the needs of managing the natural resources and to exceed the expectations of its customers, NRCS incorporated a number of innovative initiatives and

Within the last 75 years, the positive impact the agency has had on America’s rural landscapes is undeniable.

activities within the last few years, specifically with the passing of the 2008 Farm Bill. Within the past few years, NRCS has partnered with numerous entities and organizations to leverage and combine efforts in reaching common natural resource goals. The agency has also introduced a number of initiatives to help address some of the most emerging natural resource issues.

“Not only is partnering one of the most significant changes in how NRCS goes about doing business, it’s also one of the most important and most valuable,” Green goes on to say. *“NRCS in Colorado maintains its traditional partnerships with key organizations like local conservation districts and Colorado’s Department of Agriculture, but in recent years we have developed and expanded critical alliances with partners like the Colorado State University Cooperative (CSU) Extension Service. We expanded our relationship with CSU to help address the needs of Colorado’s small acreage landowners. We also established an exceptional partnership with the Division of Wildlife, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory and Pheasants Forever. This collaboration has allowed for a significant increase in technical assistance to landowners interested in the improvement of wildlife habitat in a more timely fashion.”* NRCS in Colorado also works very closely with the Farm Bureau, Cattleman’s Association, the US Forest Service, Land Trusts organizations, organic and other specialist growers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Nature Conservancy, and many others.

Special initiatives have also been on the rise within the NRCS organization. Recently NRCS in Colorado introduced an initiative to improve agricultural energy conservation and efficiency, as well as the organic, lesser prairie chicken, sage grouse, and air quality initiatives. NRCS utilizes these proposals because they provide for increased collaboration, innovation, and rapid, flexible, and targeted assistance to landowners.

“As a result of areas of emphasis, NRCS has been able to specify certain wildlife habitat improvements; as well as offer financial assistance to Colorado organic producers and aspiring organic producers; help agricultural producers in Colorado transition to more energy-efficient operations; provide an opportunity for producers to install conservation practices that directly benefit the water quality and water quantity issues in the Ogallala aquifer, as well as implement cost-effective and innovative practices that reduce harmful 8-hour surface ozone (the primary component of smog),” states Dawn Jackson, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, Denver, CO.

In 2010 NRCS in Colorado provided more than \$5 million in financial assistance to special initiatives impacting more than 75,000 acres of production on agricultural lands.

In addition to some of the more nontraditional opportunities NRCS offered to help landowners achieve their natural resource goals, 2010 brought traditional opportunities as well. The agency’s technical and financial assistance programs continue to be one of the most critical components in helping the agency achieve its goals. The Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA) is the

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backbone of the agency. CTA is the agency's program that provides landowners access to our expertise, knowledge, skills, abilities, and technology.

"There are a number of landowners, groups, and entities, who want to work with NRCS, yet don't need any financial assistance," Green further states. "Through CTA landowners can get assistance to maintain and improve private lands and their management, implement better land management technologies, protect and improve water quality and quantity, maintain and improve wildlife and fish habitat, enhance recreational opportunities on their land, maintain and improve the aesthetic character of private land, explore opportunities to diversify agricultural operations, and develop and apply sustainable agricultural systems. Assistance may be in the form of resource assessment, practice design, resource monitoring, or follow-up of installed practices."

Although the CTA program does not include financial or cost-share assistance, clients may develop conservation plans, which may serve as a blueprint for those interested in participating in USDA financial assistance programs. CTA planning can also serve as a door to financial assistance and conservation programs provided by other federal, state, and local programs.

For those who choose to take advantage of NRCS financial assistance and cost-share opportunities to help reach natural resource goals, there are numerous programs available. A very popular one in Colorado is the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) which, through payments, recognizes those land stewards who are currently making a

"Resources must be managed properly to maintain the quality of life we all enjoy."



positive impact on natural resources as a result of existing conservation practices, and encourages those land stewards to improve and increase their conservation performance. In 2010, NRCS in Colorado enrolled some 470 landowners into the CSP program, providing \$11.8 million in payments for increased levels of conservation efforts, totaling 1.3 million acres.

"It's not surprising that so many landowners qualify and express interest in enrolling into the CSP program. The condition of Colorado's rural landscape is very important to them," Jackson further states. "One of the most recognizable factors of the state is the quality of outdoor activities. Resources must be managed properly to maintain the quality of life we all enjoy. This is why wildlife is so very important to many Coloradans. That resource must also be managed and managed well. As a result, the conservation and improvement of wildlife habitat is critical. In 2010, NRCS provided more than \$530,000 in cost-share assistance through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program."

Through WHIP, NRCS assists landowners implement management practices as well as install various structures like fences, water developments, and wells.

"These are all conservation practices that help wildlife, and they all support the enhancement of their habitat in different ways,"

says Eugene Backhaus, NRCS State Resource Conservationist. *"For example, landowners install fences to help manage the timing and duration of grazing on pastures. This helps wildlife and livestock by improving the quality and health of range and pasture vegetation because fencing helps restrict the area in which grazing can occur, allowing for areas not being grazed to rest and produce better food."*

Other conservation programs managed and administered by Colorado's NRCS include the

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), which provides assistance to purchase development rights to keep productive farmland in use; the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) that helps protect, restore, and enhance grasslands; and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) which offers cost-shared assistance to landowners to help address significant natural resource problems. Utilizing each of these programs, within 2010, NRCS provided some \$37 million in assistance to Colorado landowners on over 650,000 acres.

NRCS is the federal agency that works with private landowners and strives to reach its vision of productive lands and a healthy environment by helping people help the land. Within the last 75 years, the positive impact the agency has had on America's rural landscapes is undeniable. These strides have only been possible through its partnership with local conservation districts and other key conservation partners. NRCS in Colorado looks forward to serving and speaking for the land for another 75 years.

USDA UNDER SECRETARY HARRIS SHERMAN TOURS THE SAN LUIS VALLEY

By Rod Clark, Area Civil Engineer and Asian American/ Pacific Islander
Special Emphasis Program Manager, Alamosa, CO



Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment Harris Sherman visited the Alamosa Field Office on October 19, 2010. The Under Secretary toured NRCS project sites in Conejos County dealing with the San Luis Valley Acequia program and the Conejos River, Manassa Land & Irrigation Company's North Branch Diversion project.

The tour began at Alamosa, traveling to Los Sauces in Conejos County, and visiting the Los Sauces concrete diversion structure site designed by NRCS. John Mestas and Tom Martinez, landowners, were the speakers and gave a presentation on the history of this project and how the project had helped the community. This project was funded under the EQIP outreach effort's Acequia program. The Acequia program is structured to target landowners who have been historically underserved and to help them compete for EQIP cost share dollars. The Los Sauces serves a traditional acequia (a historical community ditch system managed by tradition, local precedent, and community needs) that serves 36 landowners on 4,263 acres in the Los Sauces area.

The next presentation, at the Conejos River and North Branch Diversion, was given by Jack Gilleland, president of the Manassa Land and Irrigation ditch group. The company's 250 shareholders irrigate 24,850 acres. Jack discussed the use of the NRCS-designed diversion and how several water users were benefited by the project. The Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable assisted with the funding of the project along with NRCS EQIP funds. Additional items of discussion, led by Mike Gibson of the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project were the importance of combining NRCS EQIP cost-share and technical assistance with other local and state sources of funding to make projects viable.

Under Secretary Harris Sherman was pleased with the tour and gained knowledge of NRCS conservation activities in the San Luis Valley.

One to Grow On



We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day.

~ Edith Lovejoy Pierce

One resolution I have made and try always to keep is this: To rise above the little things.

~ John Burroughs

May all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions.

~ Joey Adams

Resolve to make at least one person happy every day, and then in ten years you may have made three thousand, six hundred and fifty persons happy, or brightened a small town by your contribution to the fund of general enjoyment.

~ Sydney Smith

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

On the first of January let every man gird himself once more, with his face to the front, and take no interest in the things that were and are past.

~ Henry Ward Beecher

A new year is unfolding – like a blossom with petals curled tightly concealing the beauty within.

~ Anonymous

The History of Black History Month

by Karen Mandujano, Soil Conservationist/Colorado BEPM, Brighton, CO

Black History Month is a remembrance of important people and events in the history of the African Diaspora (a dispersion of a people, language, or culture that was formerly concentrated in one place). Since 1976, it is celebrated annually in the United States of America and Canada in February and the United Kingdom in the month of October. In the U.S., Black History Month is also referred to as African American History Month.

Americans have recognized black history annually since 1926, first as "Negro History Week" and later as "Black History Month." What you might not know is that black history had barely begun to be studied-or even documented-when the tradition originated. Although blacks have been in America at least as far back as colonial times, it was not until the 20th century that they gained a respectable presence in the history books.

We owe the celebration of Black History Month, and more importantly, the study of black history, to Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Born to parents who were former slaves, he spent his childhood working in the Kentucky coal mines and enrolled in high school at age twenty. He graduated within two years and later went on to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard. The scholar was disturbed to find in his studies that history books largely ignored the black American population-and when blacks did figure into the picture, it was generally in ways that reflected the inferior social position they were assigned at the time.

Woodson, always one to act on his ambitions, decided to take on the challenge of writing black Americans

into the nation's history. He established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now called the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History) in 1915, and a year later founded the widely respected Journal of Negro History. In 1926, he launched Negro History Week as an initiative to bring national attention to the contributions of black people throughout American history as well as to educate Blacks about their cultural background, and instill in them a sense of pride in their race.

Woodson chose the second week of February for Negro History Week because it marks the birthdays of two men who greatly influenced the black American population, Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. However, February has much more than Douglass and Lincoln to show for its significance in black American history. For example:

February 23, 1868: W. E. B. DuBois, important civil rights leader and co-founder of the NAACP, was born.

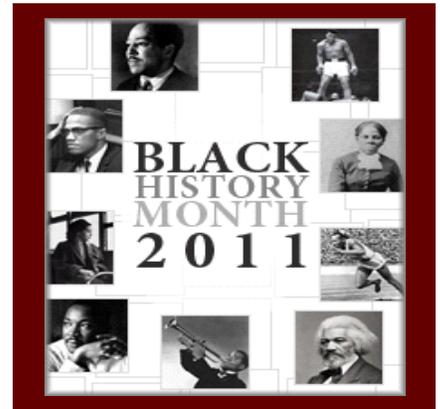
February 3, 1870: The 15th Amendment was passed, granting blacks the right to vote.

February 25, 1870: The first black U.S. senator, Hiram R. Revels (1822-1901), took his oath of office.

February 12, 1909: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded by a group of concerned black and white citizens in New York City.

February 1, 1960: In what would become a civil-rights movement milestone, a group of black Greensboro, N.C., college students began a sit-in at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter.

February 21, 1965: Malcolm X, the militant leader who promoted Black Nationalism, was shot to death by three Black Muslims.



I, Too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed--

I, too, am America.

~By Langston Hughes
1902-1967

Colorado Black History Month Events

February 1-28, 2011

CSU--Fort Collins

- Feb. 1 CSU Black History Month Opening Celebration: Slam Poetry Night
- Feb 2 The Langston Hughes Project
- Feb 3 Meet CSU Black Faculty and Staff reception and Success Talk
- Feb 8 Real Talk: MLK vs. Malcom X
- Feb 15 Real Talk: The Lebron Complex
- Feb 16 Women in Music
- Feb 18 Theatrical showcase: "10 Perfect: A Lynching Survivor's Story"
- Feb 21 Closing Keynote speaker: Free Wright, former Host of BET's *106th and Park*.
- Feb 22 Real Talk: The Values of a Black Community
- Take a Trip Through Time: Black Poetry Through the Years
- Feb 23 OMENALA African Drumming
- Feb 24 Lynn Manning, former Bling Judo Champion, actor, and poet
Pillow Talk Book Club presents: Maya Angelou's "Letters to My Daughters"
- Feb 27 Closing Ceremony, Part 1.
- Feb 28 Closing Ceremony, Part 2: Intikana One Man Hip Hop Show

CSU--Pueblo

- Feb 10 "Re-thinking Diversity" series and the "History of Madi Gras"; Distinguished Speaker series. Danny Glover, "The Intersection of Art and Activism"
- Feb 16 President Joseph Garcia, "What 's Black, Who's Black and Who Decides."
- Feb 17 Re-Thinking Diversity series and Underground Railroad, 'Coded Spirituals.'
Distinguished Speaker series. Nontombi Naomi Tutu, "Truth and Reconciliation; Healing the Wounds of Racism."
- Feb 22 LaNeece Williams, "21st Century Discrimination: MicroInequities."
- Feb 24 Re-thinking Diversity series: "Miners, Military, Mercantile and More: Afro-Latino Culture in Latin America."

Colorado Springs--Old Colorado City Branch

- Feb 8 Family Fun Night: Celebrate Black History Month with Drummer Bob Hall
- Feb 19 Celebrate Black History with Song and Stories

Denver--Metropolitan State College of Denver

- Feb 21-24 27th Annual Black World Conference

Also check your local TV or cable listings for programs celebrating February as Black History Month.

19th Annual MLK Unity Training



by Debra L. Pummill, HRO, Denver, CO

The Colorado Federal Executive Board (CFEB) sponsored the annual Martin Luther King Unity training January 20 at the Marriott Denver Tech Center. The day-long event began with the United We Serve Award Ceremony acknowledging this year's recipients throughout the state and a welcome from CFEB Chairperson Al Vincent.

The topic was "The Color of Fear: Unlearning Racism in the Workplace," featuring Lee Mun Wah of Stir Fry Seminars. A lively discussion on the topic of Cultural Competency engaged the audience. Mun Wah encouraged participants to be more aware of social issues, another's cultural history and upbringing. He stressed the significance of learning to correctly pronounce the name of someone from another culture. He also spoke of the need to recognize your own color and the color of those around you. He described the failure to do so as "colorblindness", which is just another form of denial and marginalizing.

Participants then broke into pairs by selecting and befriending someone who "did not look like you." They were directed into conversation that created a safe and trusting environment that facilitated a real openness in discussions. Participants learned to listen to what was being said and to emotionally relate to what was being shared, including acknowledging the words that were not spoken. The soft spoken Lee Mun Wah engaged the audience throughout the day, making this a very enjoyable and enlightening experience.

on the pulse

State Office News

Jonas Feinstein Receives the Two Chiefs' Award

Congratulations are in order for **Jonas Feinstein**,

State Forester for the NRCS in Colorado, as he recently accepted an award that recognizes exemplary employees and projects that to support collaborative conservation and forest stewardship. The award is presented by the US Forest Service (USFS), NRCS, State forestry agencies, and conservation districts.



"Jonas certainly deserves this recognition," states Allen Green, NRCS State Conservationist, Colorado. "He has been vital to Colorado's forestry conservation efforts."

Although Jonas has been employed with NRCS for only a short time, he was making an impression long before his current appointment. He was actually working for as a Forestry Conservation Technician for the Jefferson County Conservation District at the time of his nomination. Jonas was a clear candidate because he grasped and promoted sound forestry practices for forest landowners using the USFS and NRCS programs at the local, state, and national levels.

Comings



Another type of congratulations go out to Jonas Feinstein and his wife Christy birth of their son **Cedar Charles!**

Cedar's starting date was January 10 at 7:15 a.m. We think the tot already shows a strong resemblance to his Dad.

Name: Lisa M. Brashear

Starting Date: 12/5/2010

Title/Responsibilities: *Administrative Secretary*



Previous Job: *Biological Science Technician* – Habitat Restoration, USFWS, Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge

Brief Background History: U.S. Marine Corps (2002–2007) *Marine Liaison/MEDEVAC Coordinator* with Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton and Marine Corps Base; *Aviation Information Systems Technician* with MAG-39, MALS-39, AISD, Camp Pendleton, CA

College Experience: University of Wisconsin-Associate of Arts and Sciences; Oregon State University–B.S. in Natural Resources Management

Pets: 2 dogs – Sandy and Ally

Hobbies/Interests:

Backpacking/Camping, Hiking, Cycling, Rock Climbing, Snowshoeing, Triathlons, Photography, Botany, Anthropology

Anything else you would like for people to know about you: Favorite words of wisdom: "As if you could kill time without injuring eternity." – H. D. Thoreau, "Economy," *Walden*, 1854

Name: Christine Taliga

Job Title: *Plant Materials Specialist*



Starting Date: 01/19/10

Title/Responsibilities: *Plant Materials Specialist.* Coordinate technology transfer between the field, conservation partners, and the Plant Materials Program; conduct training and outreach on seed collection methods, plant id and other plant-related needs.

Previous Job: *RC&D Coordinator*

Brief Background History: Christine began her career with NRCS and Conservation Districts in 1991. She has held positions as *WAE, Conservation Technician, Soil*

on the pulse

State Office News

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Conservationist, and *District Conservationist* in Iowa. She has taught many plant i.d. courses including wetland delineation and winter plant i.d.

Christine and her family also own and operate a small farm in Iowa, which they have been working to restore to native vegetation for seed production.

College Experience: BS in Environmental Science, minor in Botany

Spouse's/Kid's Name: Husband John Burton and 3-year-old Anna Isabelle

Pets: Rosie our boxer mix and two "sad story" cats

Hobbies: Botanizing

Anything else you would like for people to know about you: Raised in southern Germany with the Swiss Alps as a backdrop, Christine is thrilled to be back in mountain country.

Name: **Jerry Reitmeyer**

Starting Date: 11/22/2010



Title/Responsibilities: Contracting Officer

Previous Job: Contract Program Manager, Rural Development, Lakewood, CO

Brief Background History: Born Pittsburgh PA., Upper State NY, Germany, Colorado

College Experience: SUNY (Theatre), University of Denver (Theatre)

Spouse's/Kid's Name: Lynn, Morgan, Dylan

Pets: Wee Jordie of Golden

Hobbies: Travel, Photography, Working Out/Walking, reading

Anything else you would like for people to know about you: I'm very close to retirement, I can almost smell it.



Name: **Debra Pummill (Deb)**

Starting Date: 9/26/10

Title/Responsibilities: *Human Resources Officer*

Previous Job: *HR Specialist*

Brief Background History: Massachusetts native from the South Shore until 2001. Moved to Missouri, then here to Colorado

College Experience: Cape Cod Community College and University of Massachusetts

Spouse's/Kid's Name: Eugene Pummill (spouse) and children Jared Bunker, Frederick Bunker, Jr., and Greg Bunker

Pets: Chatze, the best little Doxie!!

Hobbies: Writing prose, Majong and other games, plants and cooking.

Anything else you would like for people to know about you: Happy to be in



Maggie Page, *Budget Analyst* (left), visited the Pueblo FO as part of an effort by the SO Admin Team to learn more about the Field Offices they serve.

Lee Neve, *MLRA SS Leader*, used the soil coring machine to dig a hole and showed Maggie how he identifies soil characteristics using, among other tools, the color of the soil. **Rich Rhoades**, *DC* (center), and **Patty Knupp**, *Biologist* (not shown), were among the other Pueblo FO employees who showed Maggie the ropes.

on the pulse

Area Office News

Area One



Colorado Big Country's

Executive Director, Kae McDonald, gave a check for over \$1500 to the Job Corps Student Government Association for upgrading the Job Corps Garden Project in Collbran.

Students gathered garden produce for their honored guests, and showed them around the project.

Colorado Big Country staff look forward to seeing next year's garden!

the Talbott Farms' orchard, where the Regulated Deficit Irrigation (RDI) trial was conducted for the past two years. This was followed with a dinner and the district annual meeting.

Topics included:

- * crop health and over-irrigation
- * the deficit irrigation project and moisture measuring devices that were used in the RDI project.
- * irrigating with high pH and high EC water.
- * designing and using micro spray irrigation for increased efficiency.

After dinner there were two short presentations: one concerning partnering with organizations like the Conservation Districts and the desire to continue; and another on the District's Water Seminar, the importance of the Shoshone plant for the river, and Orchard Mesa Canal improvements.

Dr. Patil works closely with many of the tribes throughout India by consulting and helping the tribes to solve their natural resource concerns. He also promotes sustainable agriculture and introduces innovative, affordable conservation practices to India's limited resource producers.

His visit to Franktown came through the Parker Rotary Club, which has provided thousands of dollars in water development to some of the many tribes in India.

Dr. Patil spent a few hours with the Field Office staff by showing them pictures and video of the resource concerns faced by agricultural producers in India. Dr. Patil was also interested in the resource concerns faced by our local producers and how we are able to assist them.

The time spent with Dr. Patil was not only enlightening but also humbling. The level of technology and the few resources that the agricultural community in India has available to them made us realize how lucky we are in the United States and as NRCS employees to be able to assist our agricultural community with the technologies we have.

Area Two



A Field Day was held in conjunction with the Mesa Conservation District Annual Meeting on September 13 at



The Franktown Field Office was privileged to visit with **Dr. B.P. Patil**, Agronomist with the College of Agriculture, Engineering & Technology in Kolhapur, India.

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The Kiowa Conservation

District sponsored a Small Acreage Landowner Seminar on October 30 at the Elbert County Fairgrounds in Kiowa, CO.

47 landowners attended to learn about *Wells, Basic Water Principles, Septic Systems, Water Quality, Wildlife Conflicts, Noxious Weed ID/Control, and Grazing and Pasture Management*. Lunch was provided for all attending the seminar, along with very informative and educational material.

This seminar helped the district to get closer to the goal of reaching landowners by educating them on various conservation concerns in the District and giving them the information and tools to address these issues.

Area Three

The Silver Cliff office and Custer County Conservation District sponsored "The Basics of Water in Custer County" workshop in September. Some of the topics covered included basic weather patterns, ground

and surface water, water flow patterns and distribution, and water quality.

Several Area 3 offices, Conservation Districts (El Paso, Olney Boone, Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River, and Bent), and partners hosted a variety of rangeland, and land management workshops and tours during the fall. Some of the topics included range monitoring, rangeland restoration, grass identification, the importance of moderate to light stocking rates, and livestock forage strategies.

Ben Berlinger, La Junta area office, **Tim Steffens**, Springfield field office, and **Dan Nosal**, Franktown field office and Colorado Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Coordinator, were instructors at many of them.

The Woodland Park office and Teller-Park Conservation District hosted a small acreage management workshop as part of the district's annual meeting. **Jennifer Cook** led two discussions on "Planning for a Sustainable Homestead" as well as "Grazing and Pasture Management."

Tim Macklin, Southeast Colorado RC&D, was one of many speakers at the on-farm seed crushing and biodiesel production plant workshop. Attendees saw a biodiesel production demonstration, learned how farmers can grow and use vegetable oil and biodiesel as fuel in their diesel equipment, and toured a facility on the Chuck Clapper farm near Stratton.

The Canon City Field Office, Fremont Conservation District, and Colorado State University Extension sponsored a workshop that featured Brian Bledsoe, KKTU Channel 11 Chief Meteorologist. Bledsoe spoke about the influence of La Nina and other global weather signals on Colorado's long-range weather patterns.



Allen Green (second from left) participated in the groundbreaking of the Lower Arkansas Water Conservancy District (LAVWCD) Fountain Creek Project to develop an off channel detention basin and wetland in Pueblo.

Representative John Salazar sponsored this \$500K earmark for the district, which is coming through Colorado NRCS.

The Rocky Ford Field Office, West Otero Timpas Conservation District, and Crowley County Commissioners sponsored a revegetation tour last fall. The purpose of the tour was to show Crowley County landowners formerly irrigated land that has been revegetated and to describe the benefits.

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The Upper Arkansas

Watershed Association held a tour as part of its fall meeting. Participants toured the tamarisk work along Fourmile Creek near Canon City. Many partners have provided funds for this work.

At its annual meeting last

October, the Olney-Boone Conservation District (CD) Board recognized **Dave Miller**, NRCS District Conservationist, and **Chuck Hanagan**, FSA county executive director, for providing guidance and support in promoting and implementing conservation activities in the Olney-Boone CD.

During the recent drought and ongoing economic struggle, the service and support provided by both agencies has been very instrumental to the livelihood of the agriculture community and the safeguarding of natural resources in the Arkansas Valley.

The District recognizes the dedication of both Hanagan and Miller and their Rocky Ford staffs, and the importance of their services to the district's cooperators.

Kudos to the four southeastern CO field offices that received the USFWS Wildlife Habitat Partnership Award at a recent Area Meeting. The award winners were recognized for their hard work in improving lesser prairie chickens (LEPC) habitat. **The Eads, Holly, Cheyenne, and Baca Field Offices** have been heavily involved in a number of targeted USDA efforts, including FSA SAFE program, EQIP and WHIP LEPC Initiatives, and CRP enrollment.

These four offices also participated in the NRCS LEPC Initiative in 2010 and enhanced a total of 28,949 acres for LEPC. This was quite an accomplishment having only two weeks to find interested landowners, plan, and get them signed up for EQIP and WHIP! A total of \$365,317 in funds were put on the ground to improve habitat conditions for LEPC.

The Baca, Holly and Eads FOs also are in the midst of the latest CRP sign-up writing conservation plans that provide critical habitat benefits for LEPC. All this in one fiscal year!



In honor of our Native

America Indian Heritage Month, the **Las Animas NRCS FO** visited the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site on November 29 with respect and honor of those who were injured or killed at Sand Creek. National Park Ranger Craig Moore gave a very well-described narration of the events surrounding the November 29, 1864 Sand Creek Massacre. 146 years later to the day, we honored the men, women, and children that suffered and died at Sand Creek, Colorado.

"The Places that knew them in their pride shall know them no more Forever..." E.N.H. Patterson, journalist-traveler, 1859.

Area Four

Larry Kawanabe, IWM Specialist and David Frederick, Cortez FO Soil Con. Tech., Dick White and Eldon Simmons of the Mancos Conservation District Board, and Wendy Ryan from the Colorado Climate Center at CSU installed a weather station in Mancos, CO.

Continued from previous page



The funds for this weather station have come in part by the Mancos Conservation District grant through the Basin Salinity Parallel Program, the CO Agricultural Meteorological Network and the NRCS.

The new weather station will fill a void in weather data for the Mancos Salinity Control Unit. This weather station will assist Irrigation Specialists and producers in the Mancos area with Irrigation Water Management, utilizing state of the art technology such as soil temperature, wind speed and direction, relative humidity, precipitation, solar radiation, and vapor pressure data on their farms and ranches.

Producers will now have available precise hourly and daily crop consumptive use data which will provide an accurate method to schedule their irrigation water use.

Thanks goes out to **Dick White**, Mancos Conservation District Board member, for donating a location for the station; and to **Eldon Simmons**, Mancos Conservation Board President, for overseeing the construction of the enclosure to protect the weather station.

Deborah Clairmont, Soil Conservationist from Cortez, gave a presentation on *“Transitioning to the Federal Workplace as a Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) Intern.”*

Deborah had previously experienced being a SCEP student with the pilot USDA/NRCS Tribal Scholars Program in 2005; graduated from the Salish Kootenai Tribal Community College, Pablo, MT in 2007; and was hired by the Colorado NRCS after graduation for a permanent federal job.



Celebrating 32 years of service, Miles Martin (left, congratulated by John Andrews, SCE) recently retired. He worked in the Las Animas and Monte Vista Field offices during his career, along with providing assistance to other field offices.

With his many years of on-the-job experience coupled with his formal training, including an associates degree in Soil Conservation and a second associates degree in Civil Engineering, Miles brought a great deal of knowledge and experience to the job. He has a great rapport with producers, contractors, and especially his co-workers. Good luck, and we will miss you Miles!



The Alamosa Service

Center celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with an office potluck on September 28. There was great participation from NRCS Area Office, NRCS Field Office, FSA, and RD with fantastic variety of food such as enchiladas, posole, quesadillas, biscochitos, and a lot of other goodies.

During the potluck a video was presented: *La Raza de Colorado La Historia*, which explores history and heritage of Colorado’s Latino culture from the 1500s to the 1940s.



The Levine Family

received the Colorado 2009 Outstanding Forest Steward of the Year award. The Levines have worked extensively with CSFS and the NRCS to develop a conservation master plan that addresses current land uses of hay production, forestry, and ranching while maintaining wildlife habitat, watershed protection, aesthetic and recreational values.

Colorado Celebrates Final Acre Ceremony

by Carla Green Adams, Editor/Multimedia Publications Spec., Denver, CO

We went back to the family farm to celebrate.

Colorado's Soil Survey Program celebrated the completion of the "once-over" of our state with a Final Acre Ceremony held at the Schlagel Family Farm in Longmont, Colorado, on a beautiful late-September day in 2010.

The walls were decorated with student poster projects about soils, and two tables were dedicated to the display of historic soil survey equipment and books. The Schlagels kindly allowed us to dig a soil pit and, after speeches and snacks, the guests went outside to view and discuss the local soils.

Allen Green, Colorado State Conservationist, spoke to the assorted soil scientists, spouses, guests, and NRCS employees gathered at the farm. He took some time to honor Mr. Bob Schlagel and Mr. Louis Rademacher, two local men who served on the Longmont Conservation District Board of Supervisors and were very active in conservation efforts; sadly, both men passed away in 2009, but the work that mattered so much to them continues.

Allen briefly sketched the history of Colorado's soil survey efforts, which began with a Reconnaissance Soil Survey of the nearby Cache La Poudre Valley back in 1899, and brought us up to the 75th anniversary of NRCS, celebrated this same year. He named and thanked our partners: Colorado State University, the US Forest Service, the Park Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, with particular appreciation given to the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts and the local conservation districts, saying, *"Conservation districts have not only been pivotal in the successful completion of Colorado's initial soil survey but they were also pivotal in the establishments of the agency as without them, the agency may have never been formed. They have been and continue to be one of the most important partners of NRCS as well as one of the country's leading natural resource and conservation advocates."*



The soil pit is in the foreground, the Rocky Mountains in the background.



Mr. Everett "Elmo" Geib receives his "Million-Acre Mapper Award" from Steve Park.



Colorado's soil scientists: old, new, and retired.

Continued on page 14

Continued from previous page

Steve Park, Colorado State Soil Scientist, was very pleased to preside over the completion of the initial soil survey of Colorado. Of all the details involved in planning such an event, his highest priority was to locate and honor the many retired soil scientists who had worked in Colorado's landscapes. Steve's speech focused on acknowledging the massive effort of completing the initial soil survey, the challenges faced by soil scientists, and their accomplishments. He also pointed out that this may be the end of the initial survey, but the beginning of updating soils information by MLRA phase.

Steve told a couple of funny stories from his time as a field soil scientist; like all "dirt-diggers" I've met, his "wildlife encounters" are becoming more dangerous with each narration! After Steve's speech, he distributed some "Million-Acre Mapper" awards to those very hardworking soil scientists who had not been present at our last gathering.

Another guest speaker who honored us with his presence was Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture John Stulp. *"It was a great day,"* Commissioner Stulp later told me. *"I really enjoyed getting out to the farm and celebrating the Final Acre."*

Colorado's U.S. Senators Mark Udall and Michael Bennet sent congratulatory letters, which were read aloud by their representative staff members, Pamela Shaddock and James Thompson.

The Schlagel family has been farming acreage in Longmont for about 100 years, and love being Colorado farmers. Don Graffis, Soil Conservationist in the Longmont Field Office, has been working with the Schlagels for a long time. As Don likes to say, *"It only took 15 years and 15 seconds to ask them if we could hold our Final Acre Ceremony at their place!"*

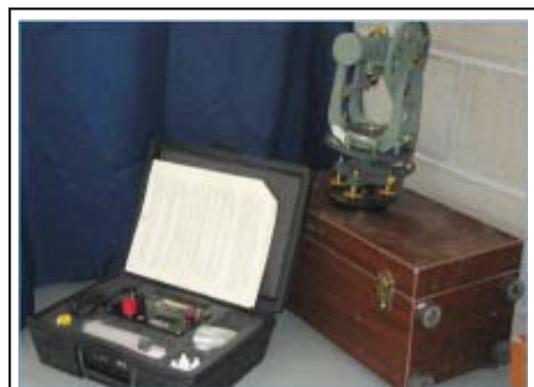
Don's talk, which was held at the edge of the soil pit, included descriptions of how the Longmont Field Office and the Schlagel family have implemented conservation measures at the farm over time, working hand-in-hand on irrigation and other land management issues.



Our hosts, the Schlagel Family.



Back: James Thompson, John Stulp, and Allen Green. Front: Steve Park and Pamela Shaddock.



Some of the "old equipment" display items.

We went back to the family farm to celebrate 110 years of work together, and we enjoyed every minute of it!

Feds, Farmers, Friends Feed Families: The "F5" Food Drive

by Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs Spec., Denver, CO

In Colorado, our NRCS employees met the challenge and delivered! The food drive was held in July and August 2010 to help feed hungry families. A **big thank you** to all of our employees in the Field, Area, and State offices for participating in this effort! Results for the F5 Food Drive in Colorado are as follows:

Office	Pounds Donated	Charity
State Office	350	True Light Church
Akron	81	Akron Foursquare Church
Alamosa	125	Food Bank Network of San Luis Valley
Byers	69	Christian Aid Resources and Emergency Services
Canon City	124 + \$20	Loaves and Fishes Ministries
Craig	30	Local Food Bank
Dove Creek	66	Dove Creek Goodwill
Durango	35	Durango Food Bank
Fort Collins	2,612*	Larimer County Food Bank/Homeless Shelter
Franktown	51	Task Force Food Bank
Grand Junction	60	Catholic Outreach
Greeley	80	Local Food Bank
Hugo	5 + cash	Local Food Bank
Montrose	75	Local Food Bank
Pagosa Springs	65	Catholic Church
Simla	22	Liberty Plains Food Bank
Sterling	40	Caring Ministries
Woodland Park	20	Local Food Bank

*Food collected was a joint effort with other agencies.

Thank you for your donations!!



RANGE WALK

By Aicha Stroud, High Plains & Prairie Conservation District Manager / NRCS WAE, Hugo CO

The Prairie Conservation District (CD), in cooperation with the High Plains CD, East Central Colorado Resource Conservation and Development Council (ECC RC&D) and the NRCS hosted a Range Walk on August 6, 2010. This walk was held on pastureland owned by Keith James, Prairie CD Vice President and was facilitated by Ben Berlinger, NRCS Range Resource Specialist.

28 interested landowner/operators attended and discussed a variety of topics including: rangeland plant identification and their response to grazing, the best strategies for grazing and recovery opportunities, and rangeland monitoring. Ben Berlinger is a wealth of information and covered all the topics with a very informal approach which allowed a comfortable atmosphere for everyone to ask questions.

Following the range walk, Keith James invited everyone back to his headquarters where he and his wife Ardith had prepared a wonderful smoked brisket with beans and chips for all to enjoy. Lunch was wonderful with great conversation and discussion wrapping up the successful afternoon.



Colorado Leadership Development Program Members Visit Washington, DC

by Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs Spec., Denver, CO

Six of the Colorado and Wyoming NRCS Leadership Development Program members visited Washington, D.C. for a week-long training. Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs Spec., Denver; Tiffany Harvey, Dist. Con., Meeker; and Rob Molacek, Ag. Eng., Delta, are Colorado's selections to participate in this program.

Though Colorado and Wyoming administer separate leadership programs, the two states joined together for the trip to D.C. The participants were tasked with developing an agenda for the week. This included securing speakers, meetings with congressional representatives, and a visit to Capitol Hill.

The first business day of the leadership tour began with a briefing from NRCS Chief Dave White and Associate Chief Ginger Murphy. The group was able to hear the Chief's vision for the agency over the next five to ten years and learn about the importance of today's emerging leaders within NRCS.

Throughout the week, key staffers from National Headquarters and representatives from Capitol Hill spoke with the participants about being effective leaders as well as answered any questions the participants had. The week ended with a tour of the Capitol Building and a visit to the House and Senate Gallery. Overall, the group learned valuable skills that will surely be applicable in



From left to right: Katherine Burse-Johnson, PAS, Denver, CO; Casey Sheley, RC., Casper, WY; NRCS Chief Dave White; Brad Holliday, DC, Sheridan, WY; Tiffany Harvey, DC, Meeker, CO; Tim Becket, Area RC, Douglas, WY; and Rob Molacek, Ag. Eng., Delta, CO.

their future business and personal ventures. These skills include strategic thinking, the ability to positively influence people, and developing skills related to partnering, and handling public involvement, congressional, and political issues.

The goal of the LDP is to challenge employees to undertake leadership development; expose employees to all levels of management, aiding them in future career decisions; and to enhance participants' leadership and management skills to effectively compete for positions of greater responsibility. The LDP will be offered every two years.

Educating Students on the Value of Habitat

by Billie Jackson and Susan Hansen, Lamar, FO



John Stulp hosts the tour.

John and Jane Stulp, with the help of their dear friend and naturalist Dave Leatherman, hosted the Prowers Conservation District tour on their dry land farm south of Lamar on October 11th.

The Prowers Conservation District Manager Melissa Turner and the Lamar NRCS District Conservationist Susan Hansen had previously visited the three schools within their district to present the contest rules and introduce Linda Groat, Lamar education specialist for the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Linda discussed "**Conservation Habits = Healthy Habits,**" the theme of the contest.

The tour had 3 different stations. Station One took place at Jane's yard where students learned about the habitat that her homemade pond afforded birds and the food provided by Juniper trees and other plants Jane has planted. Specialist Dave Leatherman led the session and encouraged the children to think like a bird to make them aware of the needs of wildlife for food, shelter and water. Dave, an avid bird watcher who is very familiar with this region, served as the Colorado State Forest entomologist for at least 30 years.

Station Two was manned by Tony Haas and Lamar Community College's Adriana Tucker's collegiate farm bureau class. The demonstration trailer provided by Farm Bureau featured hands on easy to understand examples of hazards that can occur while working on the farm or at a grain elevator. The teddy bear twisting around the power take of is always the favorite of the students. Students learned about helmets and their longevity, about grain elevators and how deceiving the top crust of grain can be and about how to farm on steep slopes.

Station Three was with Colorado Secretary of Agriculture, John Stulp. He taught students about terraces, crop residue, and the economics of farming.

Refreshments were provided by the Prowers Conservation District Board and the Lamar Burger King.



Dave Leatherman directs attention to the birds.

Colorado SWCS and NRCS Hold Workshop on Soil Health

by Michael Collins, Area Conservationist, Alamosa, CO



The Colorado Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) and the Colorado NRCS sponsored two "**Soil Health for Grazing lands and Croplands**" workshops November 2-3, 2010. They were held in Monte Vista and Byers, Colo., and broadcast via ustream.tv.

More than 110 individuals from all over the state attended the two sessions that featured Jay Fuhrer, Bismarck, N.D., NRCS district conservationist, and Kenny Miller, Burleigh County, N.D., Soil Conservation District Grazing Specialist. Fuhrer and Miller are local experts who have built a team of conservationists to

test, promote, and demonstrate the importance of diversity in cropping rotations, the benefits of multi-specie cover crops (called "cover crop cocktail"), in addition to the "how to" in reviving a farm that has been under conventional tillage. The main theme was how to make soils feed themselves and make the land sustainable. They also covered adjusting C:N ratios with different types of cover crops, the benefits of cropping diversity, and sequences. The luncheon presentation concentrated on how to build your team, the soil conservation district and NRCS partnership, and what to do with the team in building soil health.

Interested individuals can still listen to what Fuhrer, Miller, and their team have been doing with soil health for ten years at the webinar site: <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/soil-health>. Further information is also available at www.bcsd.com.

Colorado's Longmont Field Office Wins National Volunteer Award



by Petra Barnes Walker, Public Affairs Officer, Denver, CO

Employees with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office in Longmont are being recognized as being the best in the nation for their creative use of volunteers to meet the conservation mission of their agency. The award, called the NRCS Chief's Field Award, will be presented to staff members of the Longmont Field Office and County Conservation District.

NRCS State Conservationist Allen Green praised the office. *"As the Denver area grows, the field office is expanding its customer base from traditional farm-based landowners to working with urbanites and local environmental groups. Longmont personnel use volunteers, members of what we call Earth Team, to promote conservation practices to this new audience,"* said Green, *"and the Longmont field office uses its Earth Team volunteers to complete some rather amazing projects."*

In 2010, Green said Earth Team volunteers assisted the Longmont Field Office with a number of imaginative programs including setting up an agricultural expo for kids, hosting agricultural officials from Africa, conducting small acreage workshops and helping landowners rehabilitate fire-ravaged forestland.

Volunteers at the Longmont Field Office are managed by NRCS District Conservationist Boyd Byelich and Conservation District Manager Nancy McIntyre. Green says the Lands to Hands program is indicative of the field office's award winning innovation. *"Many of the children in our urban areas have no concept of where their food comes from. They have never been on a farm nor will they likely get a chance to visit one. The Lands to Hands program was a first ever agricultural expo in the Front Range Area to offer a full day of education to local urban school children. Kids were able to have hands-on experience with eggs and bees and they were able to spin wool into thread. They were able to climb into and around tractors and combines to better understand agriculture in a very memorable way. This event was completely volunteer-based and served 400 kids from several elementary schools,"* he said.

The Colorado State Conservationist called the Longmont Field Office a national leader and said their conservation work benefits the environment and all of us.

NRCS provides technical assistance to farmers, ranchers and others to reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters.

Earth Team is the official volunteer arm of NRCS. Nationally, in 2010, Earth Team volunteers donated 641,549 hours of service to NRCS worth \$13.4 million. Since being formed in 1985, over a half-million Earth Team volunteers have donated \$327 million worth of time, in 2010 dollars, to help NRCS with its conservation mission.

Additional information on the Earth Team Volunteer Program is available online at www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/volunteers or by calling (toll-free) 888-526-3227.

Other Earth Team Award Winners

Earth Team Individual & Group Volunteer Award Winner – **JP Pannell**, Durango Field Office

Earth Team Group Volunteer Award Winner – **Elbert County Mentoring Program**, Simla Field Office

Earth Team Partnership Award Winner, NACD/NRCS – **Double EI CD and Agate CD, Simla Field Office**

Earth Team Partnership Award Winner, RC&D/NRCS – **Southeast Colorado RC&D, Lamar**

Earth Team Employee Award Winner – **Michael Daskam, DC**, Holly Field Office.



TECHNO TIPS



....Back It Up

by Paul Weber, Resource Conservationist (Technology), Fort Collins FO

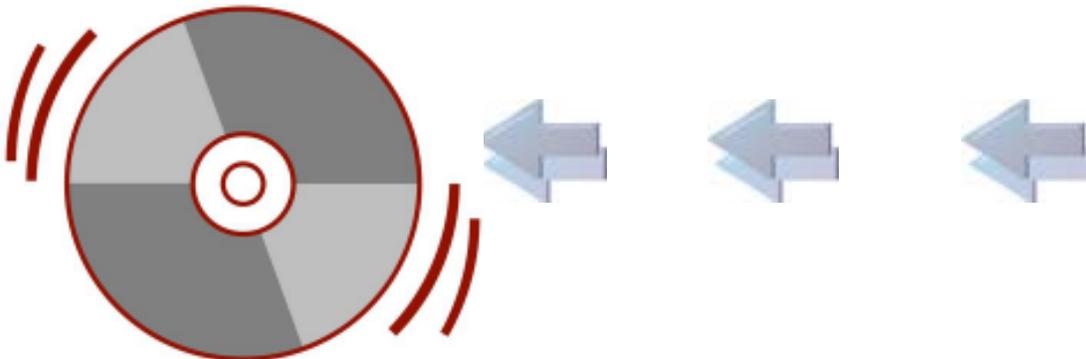
Are you a mobile user with a laptop or tablet? Are you a CAD user with project files stored on your local C: drive? If you are, then you probably have data that needs to be backed up periodically. Mobile users often have electronic files stored on the hard drive so that they have them available wherever they travel. CAD users sometimes store project files on the C: drive for better performance with the software.

Most users have their own H: drive on their local server to place all their electronic files. Everyone's H: drive gets backed up on the server. But that is not always the case with files you store on your laptop or workstation's hard drive. There is an automated backup script that can be setup to back your files up, but if you or ITS personnel have not set that up, then a hard drive failure could mean the irretrievable loss of your files.

If you don't know if your local C: drive files are getting backed up, then assume they are not. You can simply copy your data files from your C: drive to your H: drive. Or you can ask ITS to help you setup the backup script to run at a specified time. How often should files be backed up? Ask yourself, how much trouble would it be to re-create the data for a certain number of days or weeks? Generally, once per week is adequate, unless you have a big project in process.

Also, when you change to a new computer, be sure to backup your files. Moving on to a new job? Make sure any official electronic NRCS files are transferred to the server and your supervisor knows where to find them.

Hard drives do fail, and it's often difficult or impossible to retrieve data files from them. Make sure you don't have to re-build months of old work – **make sure your files are backed up!**



NATIONAL RESOURCES INVENTORY IN MONTEZUMA COUNTY AND UTE MOUNTAIN UTE TRIBAL LANDS

by Deborah Clairmont, Soil Conservationist, Cortez, CO

Over a dozen sites were selected in the Cortez area and the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation to be inventoried this year by the NRCS, in cooperation with the Iowa State University Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology. The information surveyed by the team will provide statistical data that support analysis of resource trends on rural and developed. Since 1982, NRI statistics have been collected by randomly selecting sites throughout the U.S. and returning to sites approximately once every six to twenty years to measure the range conditions.

The Cortez and Durango Field Offices sent out letters to landowners requesting permission to access their land. Allen Maez, NRCS Tribal Liaison, contacted the Ute Mountain Ute Resource Department and Paul Evans, Director/Manager for Ute Mountain Ute Farm and Ranch Enterprise for permission to access tribal lands. Maez and Lymon Clayton, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Resource Department, did a site visit and helped with survey while the team was on UMU Tribal Lands. Cynthia Villa, Area Range Management Specialist from the Monte Vista FO; Shaan Bliss, Rangeland Management Specialist from



Paul Evans, Cynthia Villa, Shaan Bliss, & Deborah Clairmont

the Pagosa Springs FO; Deborah Clairmont, Soil Conservationist from the Cortez FO; Ed McCaw, NRCS Tribal Liaison Resource Conservationist for the Southern Ute Reservation in Ignacio; and Elyssa Duran, SCEP student from the Durango FO, made up this year's Area 4 team to conduct the NRI selected survey sites.

The ISU Center selects three Global Positioning System (GPS) points within a section of land. Each point takes approximately five hours to do a complete survey depending on the type of soil, range condition, topography, and accessibility. The team systematically records range plant community

dynamics and invasive plant species, slope, range condition, bare ground, type of litter, type of soil, soil quality and stability, animal impact, soil, water and wind erosion, trend, insects, rodents, wildlife, soil pedon, disturbances, resource concerns, and health of vegetation.

The information gathered provides data to give a clearer picture of the extent and severity of resource problems requiring future management intervention along with showing the current health of our rangelands, grazing and pasturelands.



Costilla Conservation District's GLCI Seminar and Grazing Workshop

by Ray Gekosky, District Conservationist, San Luis, CO

"It saves money, and there's no detrimental effect to my animals, so why not?"

On Thursday July 29th, the Costilla Conservation District held a grazing seminar at the Cielo Vista Ranch (former Taylor Ranch). The seminar was funded through Colorado's Grazing Land Conservation Initiative Committee, with matching funds through the District. Approximately 65 people were in attendance. The seminar was held at the Ranch headquarters, with Kathy Voth of Loveland as the first speaker. Voth is the founder of Livestock for Landscape, LLC., which she founded in 2004 after a seven-year research project with goats.

Kathy's presentation included a power point show with examples of how to train cows to eat local problematic weeds; including Canada thistle, knapweed, willow, leafy spurge, cactus, and many other commonly avoided weeds.

Voth shared the process by which cows learn to eat certain forage and how to change their eating habits. Many of the audience were surprised to learn that cows could be taught to eat seemingly unpalatable

vegetation. Not only did Kathy show this can be done but also at the same time provide as many nutrients as the common forages. A past client of Voth whose testimonial is on her website, says "It saves money, and there's no detrimental effect to my animals, so why not?"

When asked if the cows got sick or hurt eating thistle/prickles, Voth said that she hasn't seen any adverse affects in the six years she has been working on this research. In fact, she has only seen benefits such as less useage of labor, less herbicides, more forage, and healthy cows. According to Voth, "Thistle- eaters gain weight at rates equal to, or better than non-thistle eaters. Kathy Voth can be reached via her website at: www.livestockforlandscapes.com

The second speaker at the seminar was Richard Sparks from the NRCS discussing how to maximize profits. Sparks covered fixed costs, variable costs, and land management activities that reduce expenses.

Lunch was served courtesy of the Costilla Conservation District. Organic Beef steaks were purchased from the Rio Culebra Coop(San Luis), potato salad, rolls, and chairs from Sam's

Covered Wagon(San Luis), pies from Cordy Arellano(local resident), and bread, brownies, coffee cake and tables from Heaven Scent Breads (Jaroso).

The seminar ended in the afternoon with Ben Berlinger and Dan Nosal of the NRCS speaking about grazing techniques and effective land management. The two demonstrated clipping and weighing techniques and how to determine land carrying capacities based on the amount of available forage. Along with some plant identification they showed how to convert the weighed forage samples into lbs/acre and then discussed how to approximate dried forage weights.



Ben Berlinger and Dan Nosal give range instruction.

UTE MOUNTAIN UTE SUMMER YOUTH ACTIVITIES

by Allen Maez, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Liaison, Towaoc, CO

The NRCS Towaoc Field Office provided two presentations to the Ute Mountain Ute Summer Youth Program at Towaoc, CO. Teachers for the Ute Mountain Ute Education Department, Linda Dosh and Tina King, along with Student Interns from Denver Metro, Elizabeth Rowe and Steven Paysinger, provided the young audience (20 to 25 students).



Allen Maez, USDA-NRCS Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Liaison, along with student interns Nakayla Lestina (STEP from Dove Creek HS), Tommy Taylor (SCEP from CSU), and Sam Lyons (Dolores Soil Conservation District), gave the "Rolling River" Trailer Model presentation on July 1st. Allen Maez and Sam Lyons gave the "Ground Water" Model presentation on July 14th.

The "Rolling River" Model is an interactive hands-on presentation that is well received

by all ages. Kids like it because it is like a sand box with water running through it. A river or stream is constructed with the sand-like material with toy animals, trucks, machinery, and houses placed close by to simulate a real river environment. The main emphasis for students is the importance of water, why everything depends on it (plants, animals, and humans), and why we need to protect this natural resource. The power of water in a stream is demonstrated as erosion occurs on meandering streams from the headwaters in the high country (snowmelt) to flooding in the valleys. Watersheds from mountaintops to river bottoms can be demonstrated. The River Trailer can be requested by schools to help with other class activities. Natural Resources, vocabulary, math, environment, and river dynamics can be facilitated with this model.

The "Ground Water" Model is a desk top display that provides a good visual of what happens under our feet related to water. It resembles to the first observer an "Ant Farm." Water is introduced into the model to show how water filters through soil pores. Within the model are examples of soil

layers which is a presentation in itself, but water interacts with soil types differently (sands, loams, silts, and clay) as well as other underground geography.

The presentation to the students showed how livestock wells intercept water in the ground from shallow to deep aquifers (pools of water) and how pollutants can be entered into these water wells from surface spills also able to move through soils. The use of food coloring demonstrates a pollutant very well. This model also very well shows how important water is and how other natural resources (plants, animals, soil and humans) are benefitted but also impacted.

Both of these models mentioned are used locally for natural resource presentations.



Improving Weed Management in Southwest Colorado Through Interagency Cooperation

by Doug Ramsey, San Juan RC&D Coordinator, Area 4



Working as a team, the San Juan Resource Conservation and Development Council (San Juan RC&D), the San Juan National Forest (San Juan NF) and local counties are getting a handle on invasive weeds in our public forests. Funded by an ARRA agreement, the three agencies began a program this spring to inventory and control invasive weeds that have invaded the San Juan NF.

With funding from the San Juan NF, local counties Archuleta, La Plata, Montezuma, and Dolores have developed programs to inventory and then treat invasive weeds within the forest. Federal funding provided an opportunity for the counties to purchase spraying and GPS equipment, hire and train inventory and treatment crews, and work to upgrade their programs. The San Juan RC&D is providing the GPS training and data management for the program.

The program has provided local jobs by hiring inventory crews that are trained in weed identification and GPS operations by Christian Stoddard and Miles Newby of the San Juan RC&D. These crews spent the summer in the forest locating and recording weed infestations using GPS units. This data is collected and transferred to the San Juan RC&D GPS Technicians for processing. Once the SJRC&D has checked and processed the data, it is available for the local weed spraying crews to use to locate and treat the infestations. The treatment crews also record the location, size, and treatments completed. With accurate GPS data, follow up inventories and treatment can be done in future years providing for minimal herbicide use, and effective management of invasive weeds at reduced costs. The data management by the San Juan RC&D will provide the forest planners and managers a useful tool to help them manage the forest.

With the cooperative efforts of the San Juan RC&D, San Juan NF, and local counties, an effective program has been developed to inventory and treat invasive weeds on our public forests for the next three years.

Thank-you Notes and a First-Place Medal

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

3-10-10

Dear Mr. Borchert
 thank you for the soil.
 I like the soil I think
 your soil is cool I like it
 I will send you a picture of me
 when my project is finished
 Cameron -s.

A young student found award-winning soils information just by contacting one of our soil scientists at the State Office. Cameron Douglas was mentored by Jim Borchert, Soil Data Quality Specialist, and the results were clearly top-notch.

Cameron not only scored the first-place medal at his school's science fair, but he also has excellent manners and wrote two thank-you notes.

We see a bright future for this young man!

Congratulations to Cameron and Jim!



Cultural Resources Searched Out

by Allen Maez, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Liaison, Towaoc, CO



Bill Volf (NRCS Cultural Resource Specialist) explores a field for subsurface cultural resources with NRCS Towaoc Tribal Liaison Allen Maez.

In a preliminary survey Bill Volf observed signs on the surface of a cultivated field that caught his attention. Bill and Allen Maez got permission from the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Resource Department to investigate a bit further.

Bill has equipment that will sense cultural features below the surface and provide an electronic picture of the findings. Bill used the equipment to help satisfy his knowledge of Ancient Puebloan sites. He had a feeling in his cells about the site and hoped the equipment would verify his observations. His observations were the scatter on the surface and a very slight depression. Because the field had been cultivated he was questioning himself. The scatter on the surface was a bit more than “normally” seen in cultivated fields in our southwest corner of the state. Some of the stones had signs of fire contact and there were definitely more stone tools in the small area than usual.

The equipment did verify his first impressions. One of the instruments gave the best results. His first tool, the RM-15 (Resistance Meter) did not give conclusive evidence and Bill was starting to think the scatter was just unusual. His first tool readings were not giving much variation. His second tool though started to give him some hopeful readings.

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Historical Preservation Officer, Terry Knight (a Ute Mountain Ute Tribal member) knew of the equipment survey and came on site also to watch Bill in his methodical use of the equipment. Bill had explained to us that the data collection would not be very exciting and he was right. Bill was taking readings with his electronic equipment every ½ meter on a grid

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Historical Preservation Officer, Terry Knight (a Ute Mountain Ute Tribal member) knew of the equipment survey and came on-site also to watch Bill in his methodical use of the equipment.

within a 20 by 20 meter block. Following completion of the first block, Bill expanded his search to two more blocks (one to the north of the original and one to the east of the original).

Mr. Knight and I left Bill to his work. The data downloaded and prepared showed us an excellent view of what lies beneath. The tools used are an electromagnetic gizmo and a fancy electronic soil probe. Bill can provide more details on them. There is a potential dwelling (pit) and 2 fire pits on the site investigated. We (NRCS) are lucky to have an experienced employee like Bill available to us. Bill covers the West Slope Field Offices of Colorado for NRCS.

No excavation is part of this kind of investigation and nothing will be expected of the Tribe unless they want to do further investigation from the data collected on their own.

The site also allowed for an educational experience for Nakayla Lestina, STEP employee in the Cortez FO on her first day. Allen went out to the site to check out a find by the pipeline installation crew; it was an animal bone that did not cause the project to be stopped (was not a mastodon bone)! The bone was found while the crew placed bedding soil around the pipeline.



Nakayla Lestina, STEP employee, Cortez FO, looks for more bones.

KERBER CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT WINS THREE AWARDS

by Katherine Burse-Johnson, Public Affairs Specialist, Denver, CO

The Kerber Creek Restoration Project and its partners were recently honored with three prestigious awards at the state, regional and national levels. The awards honor the work done to restore the Kerber Creek watershed from historic mining impacts and highlight the collaborative nature of the project's many partnerships.

First, the NRCS's Field Service Center in Center, Colorado (Center FSC), one of the major federal partners of the project, was honored by the Colorado Riparian Association with a 2010 Excellence in Riparian Area Management Award. The NRCS's Center FSC was cited for showing "initiative, dedication, and creative management" in its multi-year collaboration with local landowners, private conservation groups and other government agencies on Kerber Creek. NRCS serves the project as the lead agency for in-stream restoration, providing cost-share, technical expertise and project engineering for bank shaping and rock structure installation through its

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Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. This work is essential to restoring stream health. NRCS has designed and shared the costs of over 170 rock structures and 3,660 linear feet of bank shaping. Both practices are essential to the restoration of a healthy stream.

Second, the Project's Bonanza Stakeholders' Group (BSG), the association of local stakeholders including landowners, private groups and local government agencies, was honored by the Rocky Mountain Region of the U.S. Forest Service as their 2010 Forest and Grassland Health Partner of the Year. The BSG provides access to private land, local leadership and oversight, community outreach, and a strong volunteer base. The USFS award citation makes special note of the over 8400 volunteer hours donated to the Project since 2008- the equivalent of more than two full-time employees added to the project's workforce. The BSG

continues to inspire project partners to work towards restoration of the Kerber Creek watershed.

Finally, the Project and its partner Trout Unlimited (TU) were honored at the national

level. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) named the Project as one of two recipients of the BLM Hardrock Mineral Environmental Award, which highlights environmental stewardship in the AML community. TU is a national organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of America's coldwater fisheries, and acts as the lead fiscal agent for the Project. Under TU's leadership, the Kerber Creek Restoration Project has raised over \$1.2 million since 2008, which has gone to approximately 37 acres of soil restoration, outreach in the community, technical characterization of degraded areas, and the development of a long-term plan to manage the watershed in cooperation with all project partners. All three awards will inspire further restoration of Kerber Creek and more fruitful collaborations with local, state and federal stakeholders.

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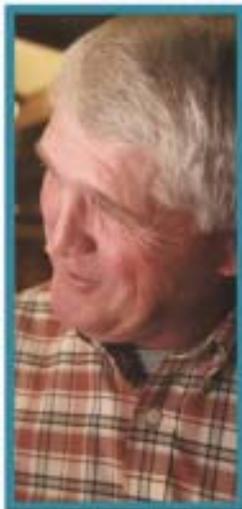
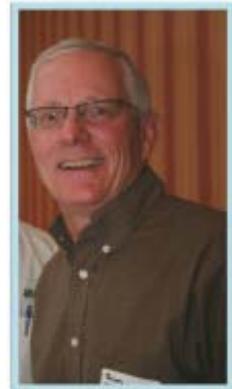
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