

Rocky Mountain Conservation Times



USDA Service Center • 248 Dozier Ave. • Canon City, CO 81212

APRIL 2022

Fremont Conservation District (FCD) will be hosting their Annual Landowners Banquet on April 22, 2022 at the Abbey Events Center beginning at 6 p.m. Entrees include your choice of a beef, chicken or shrimp dish, salad, and dessert, tickets are \$25.00. More information can be found at our website, www.fremontcd.org.

FCD will also be scheduling their Local Work Group Meeting at their April meeting—watch for details on our website.

Congratulations to Zane Donley, 5th grade student at Mountain View Core Knowledge School, for his winning poster on “Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities.” Zane won 2nd in the State at the Colorado Association of Conservation District’s Annual Meeting in November 2021!!! Way to go, Zane!!!

Welcome to Teller-Park Conservation District and the Woodland Park Service Center to our twice-yearly newsletter!! All of the offices in Resource Team 9 are now open, including the Canon City Field Office, the Salida Field Office, the Silvercliff Field Office and the Woodland Park Field Office. Contact information can be found on the back page of the newsletter.

FREMONT CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 315-3417

Meeting Time:

7:00 p.m. 1st Wednesday of each month, USDA Service Center, Canon City

GARY RATKOVICH, President
TOM LINZA, Vice Pres.
TONY TELCK, Sec/Treasurer
RICH GREEN, Supervisor
JOHN DANIELS, Supervisor
BART ADAMS, Alternate Supervisor
DEBBIE MITCHELL, District Manager
MIA CORY, Outreach Technician
Vacant, District Conservation Technician
www.fremontcd.org / also on Facebook

CUSTER COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 371-0725

Meeting Time:

2:30 p.m. 2nd Thursday of each month, USDA Service Center, Silver Cliff, CO

ROBERT MILLER, President
SHERON BERRY, Vice Pres.
TRENT STAFFORD, Sec / Treasurer
DOROTHY NEPA, Supervisor
VACANT, Supervisor
VACANT, District Manager / ROBERT MILLER, Acting District Manager
custercountycd@gmail.com
www.custercountyconservationdistrict.org

TELLER—PARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

719-472-3671

Meeting Time:

10 a.m. 2nd Tuesday of each month, USDA Service Center, Woodland Park (by Zoom at this time)

LAURIE GLAUTH, President
JOHN VANCE, Vice President
REBECCA PRUITT, Sec / Treasurer
WENDY DILLENSCHNEIDER, Supervisor
GREG LIVERMAN, Supervisor
MARISA NEUZIL, District Manager
www.tellerparkcd.org / also on Facebook

LAKE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 486-0537

Meeting Time:

6:00 p.m. 3rd Tuesday of each month, at the Lake County Courthouse

MARY SMITH, President
PADRIC SMITH, Vice Pres.
EDWARD SHOBER, Sec/Treasurer
ROBERT HOCKETT, Supervisor
MARY SCHROEDER, Supervisor
DAN TRUJILLO, Supervisor
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UPPER ARKANSAS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 626-3182

Meeting Time:

6:00 p.m. 1st Monday of each month, U.S. Forest Service Building, Salida

upperarkansascd@gmail.com
Also on Facebook

USDA EMPLOYEES

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Canon City Service Center:

Greg Langer, District Conservationist
Josh Tashiro, Rangeland Mgt. Specialist
Victoria “Dixie” Crowe, Rangeland Mgt. Specialist
Kari Moore, Soil Conservationist
Rob Fontaine, Civil Engineering Tech
Vacant, Program Support Specialist
Kara Harders, Regional Specialist, Small Acreage Mgmt
Kimberly Diller, Affiliate Rangeland Mgmt Specialist
Kaitlyn Nafziger, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist

Silver Cliff Service Center:

Beth Fortman, Soil Conservationist
Arthur Ellege, Soil Conservation Technician
Carol Kuisle-Franta, Program Support Specialist

Salida Service Center:

Joni Burr, Resource Conservationist

Woodland Park Service Center:

Chris Smith, Soil Conservationist
Joslyn Martin, Soil Conservationist

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Megan Colletti, County Executive Director

County FSA Committee

Lee Rooks, Chairman
Lance Tyler, Vice Chairman
Mannie Colon
Webb Smith
Theresa Springer

FSA Direct Telephone Number
719-744-5468

**ALL SERVICE CENTERS
ARE NOW OPEN—SEE
CONTACT INFORMATION
ON BACK PAGE**

USDA Announces Inaugural Federal Advisory Committee on Urban Agriculture

Press Release No. 0032.22 Contact: USDA Press Email: press@usda.gov

WASHINGTON, February 1, 2022—Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack selected 12 members to serve on the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) inaugural Secretary’s Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture to provide input on policy development and to help identify barriers to urban agriculture as USDA works to promote urban farming and the economic opportunities it provides in cities across the country.

The new Secretary’s Advisory Committee is part of the USDA’s efforts to support urban agriculture, creating a network for feedback. Urban agriculture plays an important role in producing fresh, healthy food in areas where grocery stores are scarce, and also provides jobs and beautifies neighborhoods.

“Urban agriculture has been growing in impact and importance, and we are taking bold actions to build a support structure,” said Vilsack. “I look forward to learning how we can better serve urban agricultural producers, which will complement our efforts focusing on equity, local food systems, access to safe and nutritional food and new ways to address climate change.”

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, was the architect of the Urban Agriculture Act of 2016. The Act laid the groundwork for historic investments to address the needs of urban farmers in the 2018 Farm Bill, including the Secretary’s Advisory Committee.

“With every new urban farm, rooftop garden, and indoor crop, urban agriculture is helping create jobs, increase green space, and feed friends and neighbors,” said Senator Stabenow. “Michigan has long been a leader in urban agriculture. I’m so glad Jerry and others will be able to lend their expertise and wealth of experience to help grow this important sector. This is a historic opportunity to have their voices heard and shape urban agriculture for the future.”

Secretary’s Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture

The Committee is made up of agricultural producers, and representatives from the areas of higher education or extension programs, non-profits, business and economic development, supply chains and financing.

Members include: **Jerry Ann Hebron**, Michigan, Urban Producer; **Bobby Wilson**, Georgia, Urban Producer; **Viraj Puri**, New York, Innovative Producer; **Kaben Smallwood**, Oklahoma, Innovative Producer; **Sally Brown**, Washington, Higher Education; **John Erwin**, Maryland, Higher Education; **Carl Wallace**, Ohio, Non-Profit Representative; **John Lebeaux**, Massachusetts, Business and Economic Development Representative; **Zachari Curtis**, Washington D.C., Supply Chain Experience; **Allison Paap**, California, Financing Entity Representative; **Tara Chadwick**, Florida, Related Experience; and, **Angela Mason**, Illinois, Related Experience.

USDA and the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production peer reviewed more than 300 nominees, and Vilsack made the final selections. Selections ensured geographic, racial and gender diversity and a broad range of agricultural experience. The new members will serve terms of one to three years.

The first meeting of this inaugural committee, which will be open to the public, will take place in late February. More details will be available in the *Federal Register* and at farmers.gov/urban and the new Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture website at www.usda.gov/partnerships/advisory-committee-urban-ag-innovative-production.

USDA and Urban Agriculture

The advisory committee and county committees are part of a broad USDA investment in urban agriculture. Other efforts include:

- Grants that target areas of food access, education, business and start-up costs for new farmers, and development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production.
- Cooperative agreements that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans.
- Investing \$260,000 for risk management training and crop insurance education for historically underserved and urban producers through partnerships between USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) and the University of Maryland, University of Connecticut, and Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems.
- Providing technical and financial assistance through conservation programs offered by USDA’s Natural

NRCS NEWS

NRCS PROGRAMS

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat.

Conservation Planning First are plans that are developed by technical experts, using state of the art technology and help landowners assess and inventory their resources and make decisions to enable them to reach their land-use, natural resource and often times bottom line goals through increased productivity of farms, ranches and forestlands.

An NRCS conservation plan includes: 1. Operator/landowner objectives, 2. Aerial photographs or a diagram of the fields, 3. Soils map and soil descriptions, 4. Resources inventory data which can include forage or crop production potential or potential livestock carry capacity, 5. List of treatment decisions, 6. Location and schedule for applying conservation practices and systems, and 7. Plan of operation and maintenance of conservation practices and systems.

Farmers.gov is the website committed to delivering USDA services to America's farmers and ranchers while taking safety measures in response to the pandemic. Some USDA offices are beginning to reopen to limited visitors by appointment only. Service Center staff also continue to work with agricultural producers via phone, email, and other digital tools. Learn more at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

USDA Announces Inaugural Federal Advisory Committee on Urban Agriculture, continued from page 2

Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

- Organizing 11 Farm Service Agency (FSA) urban and suburban county committees. FSA will organize additional committees.

The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production was established through the 2018 Farm Bill. It is led by NRCS and works in partnership with numerous USDA agencies that support urban agriculture. Its mission is to encourage and promote urban, indoor, and other emerging agricultural practices, including community composting and food waste reduction. More information is available at farmers.gov/urban and the new Federal Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture website at www.usda.gov/partnerships/advisory-committee-urban-ag-innovative-production. Additional resources that may be of interest to urban agriculture entities include grants from USDA's [Agriculture Marketing Service](#) and [National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) as well as [FSA loans](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit usda.gov.

TELLER-PARK CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Teller-Park Conservation District (TPCD) has been assisting landowners with their natural resource concerns in both Park and Teller Counties since 1942. We are based out of Woodland Park, CO and share our office with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. We look forward to serving our clients in-person as all offices open up to the public once again.

TPCD offers a variety of native and climatized seed mixtures for sale as well as a perennial wildflower mix. All of our seed is guaranteed noxious weed-free, and the brochure can be found on our website. We offer a variety of stabilization and forage seed options. In addition to our grass seed sales, TPCD manages the county weed programs for both Park and Teller. This year we are able to offer cost-share on herbicide purchases as well as contracted weed-spraying. Customers can receive 50% off up to \$400. Please contact the office at 719-472-3671 for more information or to get on the 2022 schedule. Funding is limited and will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis.

As a conservation district, we strive to work cooperatively with agencies in the pursuit of facilitating information and education. TPCD sponsors Weed and Wildflower walks, HOA informational presentations, gardening workshops, Homesteading Series, and Conservation Education in the local schools. We are working with the Town of Fairplay in order to suppress and contain Scentless Chamomile through annual weed pulls and look forward to expanding this program in the future. We are proud sponsors of the State Champion Woodland Park Envirothon Team. The district coordinates the NRCS Local Work Group meeting in June. This year, in addition to asking about landowner resource concerns, we will provide presentations on Conservation Easements with Palmer Land Trust, Colorado Cattleman's Land Trust as well as NRCS. Our fall annual meeting will address some common water concerns in the Pikes Peak region. The information will be posted on our website and Facebook Page closer to the dates.

Our district is uniquely qualified to address issues related to the urban/rural interface. Our district has dealt with the aftermath of wildfire, floods and even tornados. We know how important it is to have healthy forests, range and watersheds and work with landowners in order to make this a reality. Teller-Park Conservation District is here to help.

Noxious Weed Management in Fremont County

Fremont County is home to a variety of beautiful native plants and animals. Every native plant or animal is kept in check by its own natural enemies. When a plant is taken out of its native surroundings and placed where it has no natural enemies, it is then free to reproduce across the new area. Just imagine if sharks could survive when introduced into our lakes. Luckily they can't and don't, but many weeds do.

Either through human manipulation or accidental introduction, our native plant communities are being threatened by these alien invaders. Noxious weeds are dangerous invaders because they can outcompete native plants for water, soil, sunlight or nutrients. In addition to taking resources from the native plant populations, noxious weeds also have the potential to pose a threat to wildlife, humans and agriculture and can even elevate the negative effects of a fire and/or flood disaster. Unfortunately these scenarios are occurring in our County and many others.

Fremont County Weed Management has identified several noxious weed species in our area and continues efforts to restore our natural vegetation through removal of species by way of mechanical, cultural, chemical and biological control methods. We offer Cost Share to land owners in Fremont County, as well as herbicides at whole sale cost, and recommendations for management and control. If you need help managing noxious weed species on your property, please contact the Fremont County Weed Management office for more information and assistance at 719-276-7317 or email brittany.pierce@fremontco.com.

For assistance with noxious weeds, contact Fremont County Weed Management, 719-276-7317, for Fremont and Custer counties. For Chaffee and Lake counties, contact Chaffee County Weed Department, 719-539-3455. For more information on noxious weeds in the State of Colorado, check the Colorado Weed Management Association website at www.cwma.org.

THE BIRD CONSERVANCY OF THE ROCKIES'

By Kaitlyn Nafziger, Private Lands Wildlife Biologist

The Birds are Back in Town

Each year billions of birds migrate from their wintering grounds in Central and South America to their breeding grounds across North America. In Colorado alone about 12 million birds fly over the state each spring. They have thousands of miles to travel, and some species of warblers will cover up to 200 miles a day. While this large movement of birds happens every spring and fall, you may miss it as about 80% of these birds travel largely at night. Birds take advantage of nighttime conditions when winds are often more calm, fewer predators are out and about, and the stars are visible to aid with navigation. But despite their best efforts, migration can still be a stressful time. At night they can easily become disoriented by artificial light which puts them at risk of losing track of their migration route and colliding with buildings. If they do become disoriented by light, they also risk starvation by depleting their limited energy reserves while trying to re-orient themselves. Fortunately, there are a few things we can do to aid them on their long journeys. From mid-March to May, turn off any unnecessary lights, dim any necessary lights if possible, keep the shades/curtains closed at night, and install motion sensors or timers so that lights are only on when necessary.

Once these birds return to their summer homes, they quickly begin to claim their own territories and look for a mate. During the breeding season it's important to reduce disturbance to nesting birds. After making such a dangerous journey, these birds have a limited time frame of decent weather during which to raise chicks and get them ready for their first long distance trip to the wintering grounds. The breeding season for most migratory birds lasts from March 15th till July 15th, and during these times activities such as mowing and haying should be done with caution as nests of grassland birds can be destroyed. For logging operations, no trees should be cut, however already downed trees can be moved and processed. If you do come across a baby bird out of the nest, it's important to leave the bird where you found it and give it plenty of space. Chicks become curious as they grow and will often leave the nest before they can fly to start exploring their environment. It may seem like they've been abandoned, but the diligent parents continue to watch over them and bring them food wherever they go.

Birds play a key role in every ecosystem. They provide services such as seed dispersal and pest control, and they are a key sign of ecosystem health. When something in the ecosystem changes birds are often one of the first species to be impacted, and they can be an easy to see signal of landscape health. By paying attention to the birds and protecting their habitats, we also provide benefits to other wildlife and can even improve our working agricultural landscapes. By following some of the practices listed in this article we can do our best to continue to protect wildlife for future generations to enjoy.

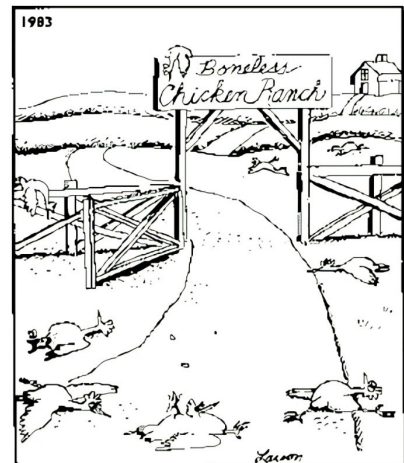
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FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWS

Is the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program Right for You?

Farmers and ranchers rely on crop insurance to protect themselves from disasters and unforeseen events, but not all crops are insurable through the USDA's Risk Management Agency. The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides producers another option to obtain coverage against disaster for these crops. NAP provides financial assistance to producers of non-insured crops impacted by natural disasters that result in lower yields, crop losses, or prevents crop planting.

Commercially produced crops and agricultural commodities for which crop insurance is not available are generally eligible for NAP. Eligible crops include those grown specifically for food, fiber, livestock consumption, biofuel or biobased products, or be commodities such as value loss crops like Christmas trees and ornamental nursery, honey, maple sap, and many others. Contact your FSA office to see which crops are eligible in your state and county. Eligible causes of loss include drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes, earthquake, flood. These events must occur during the NAP policy coverage period, before or during harvest, and the disaster must directly affect the eligible crop. For guidance on causes of loss not listed, contact your local FSA county office.

Interested producers must apply for coverage using FSA form CCC-471, "Application for Coverage," and pay the applicable service fee at the FSA office where their farm records are maintained. These must be filed by the application closing date. Closing dates vary by crop, so it is important to contact your local FSA office as soon as possible to ensure you don't miss an application closing date. At the time of application, each producer will be provided a copy of the NAP Basic Provisions, which describes how NAP works and all the requirements you must follow to maintain NAP coverage. NAP participants must provide accurate annual reports of their production in non-loss years to ensure their NAP coverage is beneficial to their individual operation.

Producers are required to pay service fees which vary depending on the number of crops and number of counties your operation is located in. The NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per administrative county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties. Premiums also apply when producers elect higher levels of coverage with a maximum premium of \$15,750 per person or legal entity depending on the maximum payment limitation that may apply to the NAP covered producer. The service fee can be waived for beginning, qualifying veteran, and limited resource farmers and rancher., These farmers and ranchers can also receive a 50 percent reduction in the premium.

For more detailed information on NAP, download the NAP Fact Sheet. To get started with NAP, we recommend you contact your local USDA service center.

Linkage Requirements for Payments Received Under WHIP+ and/or QLA

If you received a payment under the Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program+ (WHIP+) or the Quality Loss Adjustment Program (QLA) for crop production and/or quality losses occurring in 2018, 2019, or 2020 crop years, you are required to meet linkage requirements by obtaining federal crop insurance or Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage at the 60/100 level, or higher, for both the 2022 and 2023 crop years.

When applying for WHIP+ or QLA, form FSA-895 (Crop Insurance and/or NAP Coverage Agreement) was submitted acknowledging the requirement to obtain federal crop insurance, if available, or NAP coverage if federal crop insurance is not available. The coverage requirement is applicable to the physical location county of the crop that received WHIP+ and/or QLA benefits.

Producers should not delay contacting their federal crop insurance agent or local county FSA Office to inquire about coverage options, as failure to obtain the applicable coverage by the sales/application closing date will result in the required refund of WHIP+ benefits received on the applicable crop, plus interest. You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by visiting the RMA website.

For more information on documentation requirements, contact your Fremont County USDA Service Center at 719-744-5468 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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The office for assistance to Custer, Chaffee, Fremont, Park and Teller Counties is located in Alamosa, Colorado. Their phone number is 719-589-5661, extension 4. The office for assistance to Lake County is in Delta, Colorado. Their phone number is 970-874-5735, extension 4. There is also a toll free number, 1-800-670-6553, that can be called for assistance.

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Thank you for your assistance!

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**CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARDS**

Each local Conservation District encourages landowners who have an interest in agriculture, conservation, and education and would like to serve on a local board to contact their Conservation District—information on the front of the newsletter. Landowners are also encouraged to participate in meetings and workshops being held by the Conservation Districts. Most of these workshops and meetings are free to attend and loaded with information on conservation practices and concerns.

**No-Till Drill for Rent in Fremont County**

Have you ever been interested in no-till seeding or would like to rent one locally? **Fremont Conservation District** now owns and rents out Great Plains No-Till Drill for anyone interested and within Fremont Conservation District boundaries (Fremont County only). The No-Till Drill offers 3 different seed boxes for different variety of seed mixes and can be calibrated to preference. It can be towed behind most pickup trucks and can operate with a minimum 40 HP tractor. Rental can be a minimum of one day and a maximum of five days. For information on how to rent the No-Till Drill or more about the implement, please call the Fremont Conservation District at 719-315-3417. Call today to reserve your dates!

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326 W. Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington DC, 30250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.