

Rocky Mountain Conservation Times

USDA Service Center • 248 Dozier Ave. • Canon City, CO 81212
(719) 315-3417



MAY 2021

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/Treas.
RICH GREEN, Member
JOHN DANIELS, Member
BART ADAMS, Alternate Member
DEBBIE MITCHELL, District Manager
MIA CORY, Farm Bill Tech
MELANIE SCAVARDA, Outreach Tech
www.fremontcd.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/Treas.
ROBERT HOCKETT, Member
MARY SCHROEDER, Member
DAN TRUJILLO, Member
JOAN DAWSON, District Manager

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 / Treas
DOROTHY NEPA, Member
VACANT, Member
VACANT, District Manager / ROBERT MILLER, Acting District Manager
custercountycd@gmail.com
www.custercountyconservationdistrict.org

UPPER ARKANSAS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

(719) 626-3169

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
Kari Moore, Soil Conservationist
Rob Fontaine, Civil Engineering Tech
Cheryl Lawson, 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

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

Megan Colletti, County Executive Director
Linda Myers, Program Technician

County FSA Committee

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

FSA Direct Extension

719-315-3416

FIELD OFFICES UPDATES

In mid-March 2020, our offices closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Governor Polis' orders for businesses to temporarily shutdown to help stop the spread of this virus. During this time, the staff of the USDA Service Centers continued to serve the landowners in their respective counties via email, telephone, site visits and meeting outside the offices. The USDA Service Centers are following the plans for re-opening that the Federal Government has put in place. At this time, our offices are partially staffed and continue to serve the landowners via email, telephone, site visits and meeting with landowners outside the office. We are not open to the public except by appointment only, masks are required. To schedule an appointment with your Field Office personnel, please use the following telephone numbers:

Canon City Field Office: NRCS and Fremont Conservation District; 719-315-3417; (serving Fremont County)

Farm Service Agency; 719-315-3416
(serving Fremont, Custer, Chaffee, Lake, and other Counties)

Silver Cliff Field Office: NRCS; 719-783-2481 (serving Custer County)

Salida Field Office: NRCS; 719-626-3169 (serving Chaffee and Lake Counties)

As we all look forward to returning to "normal", we at the local Field Offices want to thank our landowners for their patience and understanding throughout this difficult time across our Country and world. We hope you all stay safe and healthy as we all do our part!!

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.

Conservation Planning in Colorado

Overview

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a resource for helping farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners reach their land use and conservation goals. With the NRCS advice, landowners select the best combination of conservation practices to meet natural resource needs and individual management goals.

NRCS staff work one-on-one with landowners to develop a conservation plan and the service is Free to the landowner.

Planning is critical to the success of almost any endeavor. Developing and implementing a conservation plan can identify and provide focus to activities that will reap desired results. A conservation plan can only increase the efficiency and effectiveness of natural resource conservation efforts.

A conservation plan is the starting point for managing and achieving landowner natural resource goals on a farm or ranch, while maintaining productivity and improving the long-term sustainability of their property and it's the first step in moving forward with NRCS financial assistance.

Developing Your Plan

Plans 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.

To find your local NRCS field office and make your appointment today, please visit www.farmers.gov and select contact us. Conservation plans are valuable management tools.

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.

The StrikeForce Initiative is designed to better serve persistent poverty communities and socially disadvantaged farmers through the coordination of activities among USDA agencies and the use of Community Based Organizations.

Conservation Client Gateway is an NRCS website that provides secure access to conservation plans, practice implementation schedules, financial applications and contracts, documents and payment information. Conservation Client Gateway is a voluntary program and an option to long distance travel to your local field office. For step-by-step instructions on getting started, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway>, or, call 970-372-4200 for additional assistance

CSU EXTENSION SMALL ACREAGE MANAGEMENT

Annual Weeds

By Kara Harders CSU/NRCS SAM Specialist

Many annual weeds are up and growing! The climate differences across Colorado cause weeds to germinate or resume growing at different times in the spring, in some areas these weeds may already be blooming and trying to reproduce while in others they may just be starting to sprout. The way to beat annual weeds is to prevent them from reproducing and this is the easiest time of year to do it!

Now, to be clear, I did not simply say “killing the weeds in the goal”. This is because the annual weeds that are coming up this year are not the same plant that was there last year or the one that will be there next year. These plants sprout, grow, reproduce, and die all on their own. So, killing the weeds after they have already gone to seed, without collecting and throwing the seeds away, will do nothing in the grand scheme of things.

Weed Early: If you can pull or otherwise root up the weeds when they are very small (less than 3 inches, and no sign of seed heads) they will likely die without reproducing (win!). If you don't mind the look of little weed bodies all over, you can even leave them on the ground. No bagging for you! Herbicides are also an effective choice at this point (always read the label on herbicides! The Label is the Law).

Weed Often: Sometimes with cold and warm weeks and spring rains we will have “flushes” of new weeds coming up. So, take a walk around your yard or property fairly frequently, it's good for your health and lets you keep on top of what is sprouting up!

Kari Moore – Soil Conservationist, Canon City

Hello! My name is Kari Moore and I am the newly hired Soil Conservationist for the Canon City office. I am pleased to have finally joined the USDA-NRCS in a permanent position. I feel fortunate to have gained the Soil Conservationist position within the same team that I enjoy working with, and that allows me to still provide support to the many producers that I have formed valued working relationships through the past several years. I have worked for NRCS as a contracted employee for the past 13 years as a Program Support Specialist for the Woodland Park field office servicing Park, Teller, and El Paso counties. My primary responsibility was contract management and assisting landowners through Farm Bill programs. I enjoy working with landowners, who recognize the value of their land, and want to learn how to improve and protect the natural resources they have.

I was born in Florida, raised in Colorado, and have resided in Colorado for over 35 years. I ventured back to Florida for my first year of college to study Marine Biology, but then transferred to Arizona State University where I earned my Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Resources. I eventually found my way back to Colorado where I started a family, raised two amazing boys, and owned and operated several small businesses, while working part-time for NRCS. Outside of work, I love to explore this beautiful state while backpacking, camping, fishing, and boating. I also enjoy traveling, exploring music, reading, and cooking.

I am grateful for the knowledge and experience I have gained through the many years working with NRCS employees, partners, and landowners. I look forward to broadening my knowledge in many other areas of conservation in this new position, to assist our producers and preserve our natural resources

For field assistance, please contact me at 719-471-3669..

FREMONT CONSERVATION DISTRICT PROJECTS AND OUTREACH UPDATE

By Debbie Mitchell, District Manager

The Fremont Conservation District (FCD) would like to update the landowners within our District boundaries of the projects that we have completed last year and the projects and outreach that we are working on for this year continuing through 2021.

In 2019, FCD received a matching grant from the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) in the amount of \$23,750 to restore the Dinkle Ditch in the Hayden Pass area that was destroyed by flooding on July 24, 2018. Hayden Pass, located in the Coaldale area, had three large events that occurred in that watershed. The first event was a wildfire that began on July 8, 2016, which burned approximately 16,000 acres and affected the Hayden and Cottonwood creek watersheds. There was a flooding event on July 13, 2017, which created post-fire flooding and debris flows which negatively impacted the watersheds and Dinkle Ditch. On July 24, 2018, there was another devastating flooding event which additionally damaged the Dinkle Ditch and Big Cottonwood Creek. Thirteen landowners along the ditch were impacted by not being able to use their irrigation water or wells efficiently. This flooding event and erosion had negative impacts on water quality by introducing heavy loads of sediments into Hayden and Cottonwood creeks as well as Dinkle Ditch. The CSCB matching grant funds (based on the July 24, 2018 event) were used to restore the Dinkle Ditch by installing 1826 feet of 8" PVC plastic pipe and 137 feet of 12" ADS HD pipe; one steel inlet structure for the 8" pipe; assisting with labor and material costs for a 14 foot steel diversion structure for the creek; stabilizing the stream bank along Cottonwood Creek and Dinkle Ditch; and, resetting a water measuring device that survived the flood. Fourteen volunteers also assisted on the CSCB grant project for a total of 641.75 hours for a total in-kind dollar amount of \$16,319.70. Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Engineer Technician Rob Fontaine surveyed and planned the installation of all irrigation pipe and structures.

In 2018, FCD partnered with Fremont County Head Start on teaching students where their food comes from with a planting project and food tasting of different vegetables and fruits. In 2019, FCD received a matching grant from CSCB in the amount of \$1250 to continue this project with our local preschools. FCD partnered with Fremont County Head Start, Rocky Mountain Children's Discovery Center, SPIN Preschool (Starpoint) and The Ark Child-care. FCD also assisted in planting gardens for the students and staff to enjoy and learn from. In 2020, FCD received another CSCB matching grant in the amount of \$2150 to continue this project with these preschools for improving garden areas and classroom projects. This grant will continue through 2021. FCD has also participated in Family Night at Head Start speaking to the parents on how they can have fresh food no matter where they live. Overall, we have reached out to over 800 students, teachers and family members on where their food comes from!! Education on agriculture and ag products are important to the FCD Board. We are thankful to the preschools and schools that allow us to come in and make these presentations. We look forward to continuing this project into the future with new schools and additional school gardens!!

Fremont Conservation District also partners with NRCS and CSCB in providing a District Conservation Technician who is available to assist landowners with their projects and EQIP applications. This is a grant funded position with NRCS providing 75% support and the District 25% support. Our Technician, Mia Cory, is available for site visits for your projects. Mia assists the NRCS staff in the Canon City, Silver Cliffe, Salida and Woodland Park Field Offices on their site visits and projects, as well as providing technical assistance for the FCD cost share program. Mia is located in the Canon City Field Office.

With the COVID-19 restrictions in place since March 2020, FCD has had all outreach planned for 2020 cancelled! For our Local Work Group meeting that was to be held last April, a survey was mailed out to 801 landowners with 102 being returned. Below are the Resource Concerns for our county based on these returned surveys: number one – Water Quality / Quantity; number two – Soil Health; number three – Livestock and Wildlife; number four – Pasture and Rangeland Health; number five – Forest Health; and, number six – Energy Conservation. If any of these are a concern for your property, please contact our office for assistance and / or information. Thanks to all who participated in the survey!! Continued on page 5

Mia Cory is the District Conservation Technician for the Fremont Conservation District.

Mia has been assisting the NRCS staff with EQIP applications and site visits as well as providing technical assistance for the Fremont Conservation District (FCD) cost share applicants. If there are questions regarding the EQIP Program, FCD Cost Share Program or needing technical assistance, please give Mia a call at 719-315-3419.

**FREMONT CONSERVATION DISTRICT PROJECTS AND OUTREACH
UPDATE**
(continued)

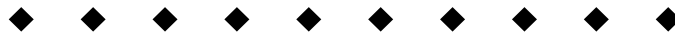
We will be planning our 2021 outreach events accordingly as COVID-19 restrictions are hopefully lifted and venues start to re-open. These events could include: The Fremont County Home and Garden Show; the FCD Annual Banquet, the FCD Local Work Group meeting; Safety Town with Fremont County Head Start; Bloomin' Buddies with Touch of Love Florist; Kids' Day at the Fremont County Fair; the 5th and 6th grades Poster Contest with our local schools; and, workshops with the public or membership groups. As we are able to participate in these events, they will be posted on our website and social media page.

Our information can be found on our website, www.fremontcd.org or our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/fremontcd. Our office is located in the USDA Service Center at 248 Dozier Avenue in Canon City. Our office phone number is 719-315-3417. Our office is not open to the public at this time except by appointment only. We can continue to serve the public by telephone and email as well. We thank you for your patience through this trying year!! it has been our pleasure to serve the landowners of Fremont County for the past 70+ years!!

Fremont Conservation District Upcoming Events

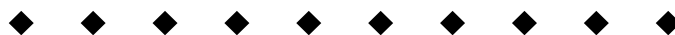
Local Work Group Meeting

The Fremont Conservation District will be having their annual Local Work Group Meeting on June 11, 2021 at Jenkins Farm, 448 K Street, Penrose, CO, beginning at 9:00 a.m. until noon. This meeting will go over the conservation concerns that Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) uses for their programs. Last year, a mail survey was done in place of a local meeting. This year will include Soil Health and Weed Management Presentations along with some other presentations still be worked on. This meeting will be held outdoors and lunch will be included. Please RSVP by June 8, 2021, space limited.



75th Annual Landowner Banquet

The Fremont Conservation District will be having their 75th Annual Landowner Banquet on October 8, 2021 at the Abbey Events Center. More information will be coming late summer / early fall. We look forward to seeing everyone in person!!



Upper Ark Cooperative Weed Management Area Annual Meeting

The Upper Ark Cooperative Weed Management Area will be having their Annual Meeting at the Abbey Events Center on November 10, 2021. More information will be coming late summer / early fall. We look forward to seeing everyone in person!!

COLORADO LAND LINK A PATHWAY TO LAND ACCESS — For more information visit www.GuidestoneColorado.org or, contact David Lynch, Colorado Land Link director, at david@guidestonecolorado.org or by calling 719-966-2237

FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWS

Noninsured Crop Coverage Helps Producers Manage Risks

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) helps you manage risk through coverage for both crop losses and crop planting that was prevented due to natural disasters. The eligible or "noninsured" crops include agricultural commodities not covered by federal crop insurance.

You must be enrolled in the program and have purchased coverage for the eligible crop in the crop year in which the loss incurred to receive program benefits following a qualifying natural disaster.

NAP Buy-Up Coverage Option

NAP offers higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Buy-up levels of NAP coverage are available if the producer can show at least one year of previously successfully growing the crop for which coverage is being requested.

Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the "buy-up" option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production.

NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

Buy-up coverage is not available for crops intended for grazing.

NAP Service Fees

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

NAP Enhancements for Qualified Military Veterans

Qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

Beginning, limited resource and targeted underserved farmers or ranchers remain eligible for a waiver of NAP service fees and premium reduction when they file form CCC-860, "*Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource and Beginning Farmer or Rancher Certification.*"

For NAP application, eligibility and related program information, contact your Fremont County USDA Service Center at 719-315-3416 or visit fsa.usda.gov/nap.

Keeping Livestock Inventory Records

Livestock inventory records are necessary in the event of a natural disaster, so remember to keep them updated.

When disasters strike, the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) can help you if you've suffered excessive livestock death losses and grazing or feed losses due to eligible natural disasters.

To participate in livestock disaster assistance programs, you'll be required to provide verifiable documentation of death losses resulting from an eligible adverse weather event and must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock is apparent. For grazing or feed losses, you must submit a notice of loss to your local FSA office within 30 calendar days of when the loss is apparent and should maintain documentation and receipts.

You should record all pertinent information regarding livestock inventory records including:

Documentation of the number, kind, type, and weight range of livestock
Beginning inventory supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts.

For more information on documentation requirements, contact your Fremont County USDA Service Center at 719-315-3416 or visit fsa.usda.gov.

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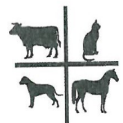
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USDA Rural Development (RD) offers financial and technical assistance to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural America. As the lead Federal agency for rural development needs, RD helps rural communities grow and prosper. Check their website for the variety of programs they offer at www.rd.usda.gov. They have more than 40 loan, grant and technical assistance programs that they offer.

The office for assistance to Custer, Chaffee and Fremont 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!

CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARDS

U.S.D.A Service Center
248 Dozier Ave.
Canon City, CO 81212
(719) 315-3417 Phone

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.

Silver Cliff Field Office
P.O. Box 389
10 Hermit Lane
Silver Cliff, CO 81252
(719) 783-2481 Phone

No-Till Drill for Rent in Fremont County

U.S.D.A Service Center
5575 Cleora Road
Salida, CO 81201
(719) 626-3169 Phone

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. 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 days are a minimum of two days 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.