



# Colorado League

Colorado Resource Conservation and Development Councils

## Colorado League Annual Meeting

May 8th & 9th—Alamosa Colorado

The Colorado League Annual Meeting was held in beautiful Alamosa, Colorado at the Comfort Inn.

The meeting included individual RC&D highlights. An representative from each RC&D council gave a synopsis of some of the accomplishments of the past year.



Gary Butterworth—The El Pomar Foundation addressing the group.

“Emerging Trends in Fundraising” was presented by Gary Butterworth-The El Pomar Foundation & Bob Sharp-The Robert B. Sharp Company. They offered great information education on some of the greatest fundraising challenges, cultivating corporate and individual donors, partnership and collaborations for maximum impact, impassioned leadership, realism, and the relevance and impact in the community. Every aspect that they related was packed with valuable information that had something everyone could use.

An additional bonus at this years Annual Meeting was the opportunity to tour the Ernie New Farm.

Attendees were taken by the Alamosa Bus Company to the Farm where they were able to



walk around and view the solar panels that were powering a center pivot irrigation system. Participants also toured the San Luis Valley Solar Farm and were able to view different prototypes of solar panel designs.



Left: Ernie New Farm Solar Panel.

Right: Colorado League, Vice President Bob Frye leading the meeting.



Bob Fry, Co. League Vice Chairman, **San Juan RC&D** board member, did a wonderful job leading the business meeting where a newly updated version of the by-laws were adopted.

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## Colorado League Annual Meeting *Continued from front page*



*Above: Dr. Robert Sharp - President, Robert B. Sharp Company*

Bob Sharp is recognized as one of the nation's leading fundraising professionals and has more than 25 years of national consulting experience in capital campaigns, annual funds, endowment campaigns, board and leadership development, and strategic planning. He has counseled hundreds of nonprofit organizations, helping them raise significant funding for a wide variety of purposes. Bob is a frequent guest speaker at both the local and national levels and was honored as "Fundraising Professional of the Year" by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. He also teaches courses in fundraising for the El Pomar Foundation's nationally recognized Fellowship Program, where he addresses 21st century challenges in philanthropy. A graduate of Rutgers University, Bob holds a Masters from Indiana University and a Doctorate in adult learning from the University of Wyoming. Bob and his wife live in Denver, Colorado.



*Above: Gary Butterworth - Vice President, El Pomar Foundation*

Gary Butterworth is a Vice President at El Pomar Foundation. Mr Butterworth directs El Pomar's Fellowship Program, a post-undergraduate leadership development program. In addition, he serves as a Grants Officer and Senior Staff representative to the San Luis Valley Regional Council. Mr Butterworth joined the staff of El Pomar Foundation in 1998 and is a board member of the Colorado Springs Youth Sports, Inc., the Colorado Springs World Arena, the Boys and Girls Club of the Pikes Peak Region, and the Air Force Academy Foundation.

Mr. Butterworth earned his undergraduate degree in Sociology with a focus in Political Science from Yale University. More recently, he received his MBA from the Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver.

**Our thanks to everyone who made this year's  
Annual Meeting such a great success!  
We look forward to another excellent meeting next year!**

## Two New Coordinators to our Colorado League Team!



Above: Paul Van Rysin –Coordinator, Painted Sky RC&D

**P**aul was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin and attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he earned a degree in Philosophy. After working a number of years as a Conservation Corps Crew Leader for the State as a Horticulture Educator for Extension, assisting with native plant restoration in the University Arboretum, and starting a small landscaping business specializing in native plant restoration, he returned to UW-Madison for a Master's degree in Land Resource Management.

He began working as a Federal employee in 2000 when he was hired by Wisconsin Rural Development to serve a large region in northern Wisconsin as a Community Resource Development Specialist. When that position was eliminated he jumped to NRCS as an RC&D Coordinator serving fifteen counties in northern Michigan. Due to the long, grey winters he searched out opportunities for warmer climates and ended up in American Samoa where he served as the Coordinator from 2005 - 2008. While there he helped advance the American Samoa RC&D Council, the local Soil & Water Conservation District, & local government & nonprofit partners, with several successful projects utilizing over \$600,000 in Federal grant awards. "I am

very excited & honored to be offered another challenge in Colorado, as RC&D Coordinator for **Painted Sky RC&D Council**", Paul declares. "I look forward to continuing my record of success, & to meeting & working with board members & partners. As always, that's the best part of being an RC&D Coordina-

Right: Kristi Gay - Coordinator,  
East Central Colorado RC&D



**G**reetings from East Central Colorado RC&D! There is a new face at the USDA Service Center in Hugo, Colorado. Kristi Gay has accepted the position of Coordinator. Kristi is married to Garth and they have three children, Megan –17, Katie –15, and Cody –13. Her family live on a farm north of Burlington in Kit Carson County. Kristi was raised in Denver, Colorado but her parents were both born in eastern Colorado where pleasant memories to visit family on the farm cultivated a love of the rural lifestyle.

Kristi has worked for USDA since 1983 beginning as a student trainee-soil conservationist in the Haxtun Field Office with the Soil Conservation Service (now NRCS) in Phillips County, and transferring to the Burlington Field Office in Kit Carson County as a range conservationist after graduating from Colorado State University in 1984. Prior to arriving in Hugo, Kristi served as the District Conservationist for USDA-NRCS in the Flagler Office for the last 17 years.

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Says Kristi, “ I love living and working in a rural area. **East Central RC&D** presents a new and different challenge for me and it’s already been quite interesting to meet so many new people across my RC&D area. I’ve enjoyed being invited to help with projects that will benefit youth and are important to the people who live in those communities. I also feel very fortunate to have retained two conservation projects related to bio energy that I worked on from their beginning. I can still get to the field and work with landowners to continue what we started. Of course, it’s no secret that I enjoy activities with Earth Team volunteers, these projects allow that connection to continue. If you have the opportunity, stop by their respective offices or call them up and welcome them to the Colorado League.

We all look forward to the great things that they are going to accomplish!

### Southeast Colorado RC&D Sponsor Project in Renewable Energy, Watersheds, and Economic Development Projects

*Southeast RC&D - Coordinator, Tim Macklin*

**The Southeast Colorado Resource Conservation and Development** Council is busy with many projects so far in 2008.

The Council is pleased to announce that they are the recipients of an Advancing Colorado’s Renewable Energy (ACRE) implementation grant from the Colorado Department of Agriculture. **Southeast Colorado RC&D** is offering up to 25 percent cost-share to successful applicants who will install wind turbines for on-farm use in the Eastern Plains of Colorado. This grant is a pilot project to demonstrate the applicability of small wind for agricultural uses. Cooperating partners for this project include Baca County Conservation District, Southeast Colorado RC&D, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union (RMFU), and iCAST (International Center for Appropriate and Sustainable Technology).

Also, the RC&D is announcing June 3 that it is the grant recipient and sponsor of a state USDA Rural Development Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) to fund a feasibility study for strawboard building materials that potentially will create new business utilizing wheat straw from local producers.

In addition, the RC&D is in its second year of development and testing for farm-based ethanol, working with Professional Ethanol, a newly formed local company.

**Southeast Colorado RC&D** has also just completed the Lower Arkansas Valley Watershed Plan funded by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided extensive technical support of this project with assistance from Allen Dix, Rapid Watershed Assessments; Lorenz Sutherland, for his vast knowledge and

technical writing skills; Charlie Pannebaker for design and HUC map layout and development; and all of those at the area and state offices for countless hours of work. This is a great resource for the area to utilize when securing future funding for watershed projects.

Also on June 3 the RC&D Council will announce that it has received funding from USDA Rural Development to start up a new business - using camera and cleaning equipment to perform maintenance and repair for local drainage districts and individual producers. This business developed out of a previous project sponsored by Council and funded by the Colorado Water Conservation Board to do a feasibility study for the local drainage districts locating and mapping tile drains in the Lower Arkansas Watershed. The area office will keep maps and study results for local use on future projects.

Other council-supported projects include the Crowley County reseeded of approximately 2000 acres. The County received NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program exigency funds. The West Otero Timpas Conservation District, the County led by Matt Heimerich, Crowley county Commissioner, Council board member and past council chair, the Rocky Ford NRCS field office and the RC&D partnered on this. A final project is the Prowers County Pavilion project. Diane Pool, RC&D board member and Secretary/Treasurer is managing this project for Prowers County and the fair board.

Summer in southeast Colorado will be a busy one, with these projects and more. Watch for future articles, as the council is working on a new web page and marketing plans for **SEC RC&D**.

## San Juan RC&D Receives National Recognition

*San Juan RC&D - Coordinator, Doug Ramsey*

**The San Juan Resource Conservation and Development** was recently recognized with the Department of the Interior’s Cooperative Conservation Award for the significant improvements in water quality and aquatic habitat in the Animas River watershed. This award was one of 21 Awards presented by Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne to groups who achieved excellence in conservation through collaboration and partnerships.

For over ten years, the **San Juan RC&D** has worked with the Animas River Stakeholders Group (ARSG) in their efforts to clean-up heavy metal contamination from the 100 years of hard rock mining in the San Juan Mountain near Silverton, Colorado. Through cooperation and collaboration, this volunteer group of concerned citizens, mine companies, landowners and government agencies slowly formed and began to dissolve the distrust that existed between these diverse participants. It was soon realized that everyone shared the same values as to the health of the local economy and Animas River allowing a strong collaboration to develop. Since their beginning in 1994, the **San Juan RC&D** has served as the fiscal agent for the ARSG, applying for grants, administering contracts and hiring a Watershed Coordinator for the reclamation work that needed to be done. While the **San Juan RC&D** took care of the fiscal management, the Animas River Stakeholders Group could concentrate on “putting conservation on the ground”.

During this time over \$35 million for remediation

activities and more than \$3 million of in-kind volunteer support have been completed by the Animas River Stakeholders, local mining companies along with state and federal agencies. With these resources, they have been able to complete over 50 clean-up projects and make a significant improvement to the water quality of the Animas River. Some areas that just a few years ago were some of the most deteriorated stream segments in Colorado now are showing improvement with increases in aquatic life and the return of fish life.

The **San Juan RC&D** is proud that they were able to assist the Animas River Stakeholders Group in improving the Animas River Watershed and share in the Cooperative Conservation Award with the other partners of the Animas River Stakeholders Group.



Above: Cindy Dvergsten, Council Member proudly displays the Award for their work with the Animas River Stakeholders Group mine waste cleanup in the upper Animas River Watershed.

## THE RIVER TRAILERS

*Sangre de Cristo RC&D – Coordinator, Jane Wustrow*

**The Sangre de Cristo RC&D** Council constructed and maintains two River and Riparian Study Centers, more commonly known as “the river trailers”. The trailers were constructed to educate the public on the workings and benefits of rivers, wetlands and riparian areas. The river models illustrate erosion and sediment transport, functions of healthy riparian areas such as mitigating flood waters, the connection between wetlands and ground water, and the influence of human activities and development on river systems.



Photos used with the permission of NRCS.



The trailers are used extensively by Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management and conservation district personnel at county fairs, the Colorado State Fair, schools and water festivals within the Arkansas River Basin.

The trailers were constructed with technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and financial assistance from the Bureau of Reclamation.

# Colorado RC&D Councils

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## SOUTHEAST COLORADO

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## PAINTED SKY

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## Colorado League 2008 Board of Directors

### Chairman -

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### Vice-Chairman -

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### Treasurer -

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### Secretary -

vacant

## SOLAR LIGHTS UP THE VALLEY

*San Luis Valley RC&D - Coordinator, Jim Mietz*

The San Luis Valley (SLV) is harnessing free power with solar energy. Solar electric, solar hot water, and solar heat are options for people of the Valley. Don't get it wrong, we are not saying that the technology is free as it is not, just the opposite.

The Colorado Governor's Office accepted two proposals from the partnership of the SLV RC&D Council and the SLV Rural Electric Cooperative (SLV REC). One of the requests was for \$25,000, to be matched dollar for dollar, to place solar electric at Valley residences. The second grant of \$25,000, is to be matched dollar for dollar, is to install solar hot water at residences. All of the installations will be at SLV REC customers' residences.

The technology for solar electric (photovoltaics) is approx. \$9/watt. A typical house requires a 2 to 3 kilowatt system. In the case of solar hot water a 60 gallon tank is typical and the costs vary. A solar heat system for a 1700 sq. ft. house could be in the realm of \$20,000. In this latter example, if the hot water system complements a propane heating system, the payback

could be realized in 7 to 8 years.

All of these technologies are available and our solar coordinator, Maria Valdez, is working closely with REC et al to assist the Valley with solar applications. Maria is assisting Trinidad State Jr. College with developing a solar technician program.

If you have questions about solar possibilities go to our website [www.slv-solar.org](http://www.slv-solar.org).



## COLORADO BIG COUNTRY STAFF CHANGES FROM ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Colorado Big Country RC&D - Coordinator, Wayne Jipsen*



The board of directors for **Colorado Big Country RC&D Council** recently hired Ms. Cindy George as Executive Director. While an administrative assistant had filled council needs in the past, taking care of the daily administrative duties, the board felt that skills sets & executive director could offer would go a long way towards developing the necessary components for a sustainable organization. An ED could also take a bit of the strategic burden off the board, allowing them to focus more on project work.

Cindy has worked for not-for-profits for many years & is very familiar with the complexities of that business sector. She worked as the Administrator for Crossroads Assisted Living Center in Rifle; as the grant writer & volunteer coordinator for the Grand River Hospital District serving western Garfield County; as the Program Coordinator for High Country RSVP (through Colorado Mountain College) serving Garfield County; & is currently the Development Director for Mountain Family Health Centers serving Garfield & Gilpin counties. Earlier in her career, she worked as a Recreation Planner for the U.S. Forest Service on the Meaningful Measures project. Cindy currently serves on the board of directors for Grand River Hospital District & is the project coordinator for a historic restoration project for the Grand Valley Christian Church in Parachute. As a western Colorado native, she is very familiar with issues in the 10-county region **CBC** serves. The **CBC** board feels she has the desire, qualifications & skill sets needed to create a sustainable organization & guide the council to the next level of success.

**Colorado Big Country RC&D Council** looks forward to the experience and skills that Cindy will bring to the organization and is enthusiastic about the future.

# Carbon Sequestration Conference Planned for Colorado's Agriculture and Forestry Sectors

Northeast RC&D – Coordinator, Rich Mullaney (Retired)

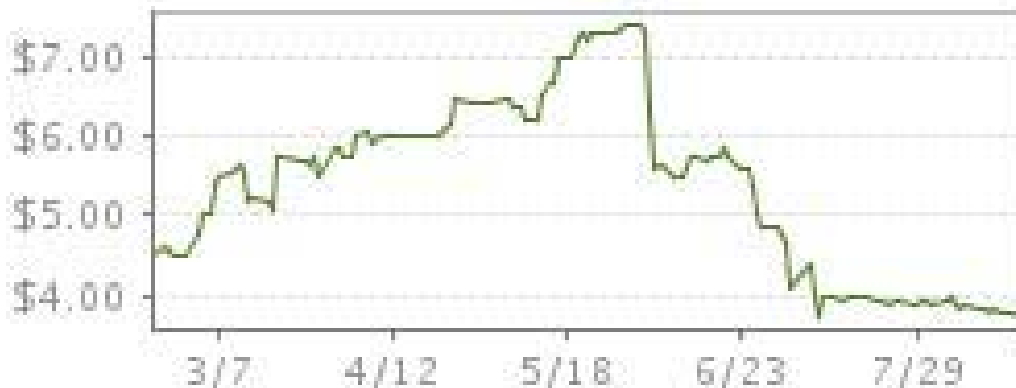
“Carbon Sequestration Unit” or an amount of organic carbon sequestered in the wood or soil that is equivalent to the removal of one metric ton of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere is trading presently over \$6.00 per unit. That is up more than \$4.00 from the November 2007 price. According to Ted Dodge, from National Carbon Offset Coalition “This market is creating a new revenue opportunity for producers with continuously no-tilled fields; newly established grasslands; rangeland; forest that’s been committed to an improvement program; managed reforestation or new plantings on forested land, and on-farm methane digesters.”

Over 100 participants attended a conference titled “Terrestrial (Agriculture and Forestry) Carbon Sequestration Opportunities in Colorado; the Science, the Policy and the Market”. The conference was held on February 29, 2008 in Brighton, Colorado. The agenda for the day began with a scientist from the National Center for Atmospheric Research speaking about the “Science of Climate Change”. The first panel included scientists from the Natural Resources Ecology, the Sampson Group and USDA—Natural Resources Conservation Service discussing “Mitigation of Climate Change through Sequestration”. The panel discussion immediately after lunch consisted of individuals from the federal, state and local levels discussing “The Policy of Terrestrial Carbon Sequestration”. The final panel discussion included an executive from the Chicago Carbon Exchange, and Carbon Credit Aggregators from the National Carbon Offset Coalition and Rocky Mountain Farmers Union talking about the “Existing Voluntary Market”. The final presentation was titled “Turning Farm Practices in Verifiable Greenhouse Gas Offsets for Carbon Market” given by the Nicolas Institute for Environmental Policy Solution, Duke University. Susan Innis from the Colorado Governor’s Energy Office moderated the day’s session and wrapped up the conference.

According to Rich Mullaney, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, “Carbon Sequestration is new to Colorado; this workshop focused on providing information to potential sellers of Carbon Credits. All of the speakers are leaders in the field in this topic and it offered a great opportunity for the up-to-date facts on this very new opportunity.”

To receive more information on Carbon Sequestration contact **Northeast Colorado RC&D** at 970-522-7440 Ext. 4 or Mark Cronquist, Conservation Specialist with the Colorado State Conservation Board, at 970-330-0380 Ext. 212.

| August 20, 2008      | Updated end of day |                                 |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| CCX CFI              | CLOSE              | CHANGE                          |
| CFI 2003             | \$3.75             | \$0.00                          |
| CFI 2008             | \$3.75             | \$0.00                          |
| CFI 2010             | \$3.75             | \$0.00                          |
| CCX CFI Vintage 2008 |                    | (Quoted in mt CO <sub>2</sub> ) |



## East Central Colorado RC&D and Partners Collaborate on Cellulosic Ethanol Study in Kit Carson County

*East Central Colorado RC&D - Coordinator, Kristi Gay*

It wasn't quite "Earth Day" or Earth Team Volunteer week, but on April 23rd and 24th, six months of planning culminated in the completion of the first phase of a cellulosic ethanol study that involved the efforts of several partnerships. An interesting combination of friendship, conservation passion, and sense of purpose came together through the combined cooperation of current Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and former Soil Conservation Service (SCS) employees (as Earth Team Volunteers), US Bureau of Reclamation, local landowners, the Town of Flagler, Flagler Conservation District, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), East Central Colorado RC&D, and Pawnee Buttes Seed, Inc.



*Mike Slack, NRCS soil conservation technician at Flagler, and Wendell Hassell, (SCS retired) calibrate scale used to measure grass seed for drilling tall grasses for cellulosic ethanol study.*

Three sites of replicated plots in Kit Carson County were planted to four different species of tall grasses specifically chosen for their adaptability in a 15 - 16 inch precipitation zone and the soil types that would be found on one acre plots of land owned by the Town of Flagler, Dan Mills, and Doug Klann. The species selected were Cheyenne yellow Indiangrass, Luna pubescent wheatgrass, Kaw big bluestem, and Blackwell switchgrass. It is hoped the study can yield results for at least ten years.

Making ethanol from corn is all over the news, but making ethanol from cellulose and hemicellulose from switchgrass and other grasses may be another viable option. ARS research in Lincoln, Nebraska already indicates promising information that producers might have other options for native prairie grasses currently set aside in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).



*Above: Wendell Hassell, (SCS retired) prepares to drill plots on land owned by Doug Klann located in the Flagler Conservation District.*



*Right: Kristi Gay, ECC RC&D Coordinator, prepares fluffy seed box for big bluestem after yellow Indiangrass is drilled.*

Periodically harvesting tall grasses for ethanol production would reap conservation benefits, such as reduced soil erosion and enhanced carbon storage (Bioenergy Today, ARS). This alternative might prevent highly erodible soils from being plowed for crop production one long term contracts expire. The species selected for the study are common to most of the grass seed mixtures that were planted since 1987 on over 100,000 acres of CRP land located within the Flagler Conservation district located in western Kit Carson County.



*Size of the replicated plots are 120 feet long by 30 feet wide, each species drilled plot size is 30' by 30'.*

## Painted Sky RC&D Council Launches Pilot Renewable Energy Revolving Loan Fund

*Painted Sky RC&D - Coordinator, Paul Van Ryzin*

Increasing energy costs and a stagnating economy are putting pressure on local businesses in rural communities throughout Western Colorado. Revenues are decreasing for manufacturing, retail, and service industries due to slowing growth, while skyrocketing fuel costs increase operating expenses. These two converging trends threaten business viability. **Painted Sky RC&D** Council proposes to assist up to three commercial enterprises to cut operating expenses and stay in business. **Painted Sky** has requested funds from USDA Rural Development for a grant and revolving loan fund, to be made available to eligible businesses within its seven-county service area in west-central Colorado.

**Painted Sky** will provide professional energy audits to qualifying businesses seeking to cut utility costs through renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements. Potential improvements include renewable systems such as solar water or geothermal heating, which are especially cost-effective in Western Colorado. Energy efficiency improvements may include upgrades in lighting fixtures, high efficiency windows and doors, and additional insulation. Qualifying improvements may be partially financed with a low interest loan offered by **Painted Sky**.

This program represents a pilot project leading to what **Painted Sky** board members envision as a long-standing, high-profile program. With the success of this initial effort, evidenced by additional demand for these services from area businesses, **Painted Sky** will expand this model to increase its ability to serve needy businesses. Potential expansion would likely involve utilization of Rural Development's Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) funds, or may include a formal partnership with Delta-Montrose Electric Association, a local power company and USDA-RUS borrower, to utilize Rural Economic Development Loans and Grants (REDLG).

The goal is to achieve what a variety of other non-profits and municipalities have shown to be possible: to help businesses save money on utility costs, and ultimately retain or create jobs, while reducing energy use. Elsewhere, this program model has demonstrated that, even with an additional monthly payment on a loan for energy-related improvements, businesses can realize a net savings derived from significantly lower utility costs. *For more information, contact Paul Van Ryzin, RC&D Coordinator in Delta, Colorado, at 970-874-5735*

## Colorado League Mission Statement

The mission of the Colorado League is to  
provide leadership in the development of RC&D Councils,  
actively participate in rural legislative initiatives & resource management partnership,  
enhance effectiveness of Councils by coordinating their efforts,  
and provide training & other assistance for Colorado's RC&D Councils.