

Colorado State Conservation Board 2009 Matching Grants Project:  
San Juan Conservation District: Conservation Helping oHand

**What natural resource problem(s) did the project address?**

San Juan Conservation District is located in Archuleta County in south western Colorado. For three years they have implemented "Conservation Helping Hand" - a program that teams landowner educational workshops and cost-share opportunities for natural resource issues. The district is experiencing rapid population growth with many new landowners whose knowledge of natural resource management is limited. Workshops in 2009 showcased exemplary land stewardship and addressed weed treatment methods. Cost-share practices implemented followed previous years educational themes such as range management, irrigation efficiency and forest health.

**What was achieved?**

- District board member John Taylor opened his ranch for two workshops - each attended by 15 landowners
  - Weed control and Biological Alternatives: presented by Dan Bean of the Colorado Department of Agriculture Insectary and involved viewing weed plots on the ranch where different weed control methods are being used.
  - Centennial Ranch Designation - John Taylor explained the significance of Centennial designation and presented information on conservation measures that have helped make his ranch sustainable.
- One landowner installed gated pipe for water use efficiency gains from 35/40% to 60%
- Two landowners installed practices to allow rotational grazing on 102 acres of rangeland to improve range health - increasing plant diversity by 40% and residue after grazing from nothing to 400lbs/acre. Riparian vegetation also improved a long 1 mile of Stollsteimer Creek.
- Two landowners installed diversion structures to increase irrigation system efficiency by 15% and reduce sediment/erosion in the creek.
- Two landowners thinned 7 acres of forest for improved wildlife habitat and decreased wildfire risks.
- Two landowners performed land smoothing and reseeding for improved irrigation efficiency and vegetation growth on 74 acres



*Two ways the San Juan Conservation District helped improve the efficiency of landowner irrigation systems. On the left, a ditch diversion - on the right, gated pipe installation.*