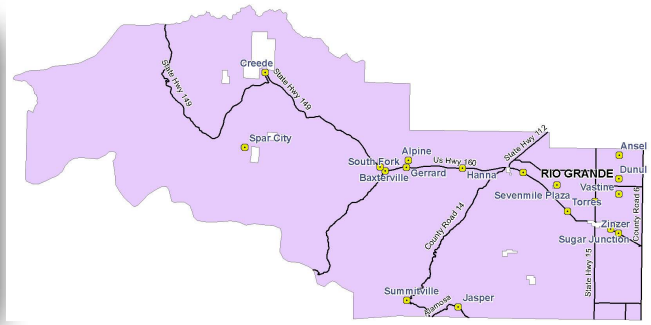
Rio Grande Conservation District



Rio Grande Conservation District Office

USDA Service Center
0881 N. HWY 285
Monte Vista, CO 81144
719-852-5114 x306

Monthly Meetings

Second Thursday of each month at 7 PM (spring, summer, fall) and 1 PM (winter)

Mission Statement

To promote soil and water conservation practices that allow sustainable use of natural resources. This will be accomplished through public information and eduction, technical assistance and recommendations, implementing new technology, and supporting natural resource inventories and studies.

Addressing Local Concerns

Districts generate funding through local, state, and federal sources. Local citizens elect the District board to identify and address local natural resource issues. The board involves locals and experts to help develop strategic plans. The district holds open monthly meetings, publications, events, presentations to communicate with district partners and residents about district services, good conservation practices and financial/technical services.

This conservation district serves its landowners as they participate in:

Matching Noxious Weed Grant and initiating a bio char and bio-oil project. The soil in the San Luis Valley is deteriorating in quality and wind erosion continues to be a problem. Water quantity is a local concern. Air quality and dependence on fossil fuels are world problems.

During 2009 the district pursued funding for a bio char/bio-oil project. This covered several areas of concern: soil quality, air quality, crop productivity, erosion, and renewable energy sources. The District planned on building a bio char (terra preta soils) plant for local producers to exchange or purchase the soil amendment to improve San Luis Valley soils. The bonus was that the actual production of bio char from excess straw and wood is a carbon sequestration process. In addition, the production would provide bio oil for further refinement.

Fostering Sound Range Management

Ensuring sound range management for future generations is important to conserve natural resources and improve production as well as enhance wildlife habitat.

This conservation district serves its landowners as they participate in:

The district continues to educate ranchers on sound range management practices.

Preventing Soil Erosion

Preventing erosion preserves soil producitivity long term for agriculture, production, and other uses on rural lands. It also provides improved stream flows, decreases sedimentation, and improves overall water quality. Some common practices that help producers prevent soil erosion and build soil quality include no till, minimum tillage and cover cropping.

This conservation district serves its landowners as they participate in:

Producers adding biochar to the soils would reduce erosion by changing the consistency and soil absorbency of water.

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Protecting Water Quality and Quantity

The District provides assistance to managers, landowners, and residents with conservation practices and management tools to protect near stream areas. In addition, they work together on reducing the movement of chemicals and nutrients to streams in sedimentation or runoff. These efforts help stabilize streambanks and protect water bodies from impacts.

This conservation district serves its landowners as they participate in:

Along with ongoing interest and activity in water quantity public discussions, the biochar project would reduce the need for chemicals being added to the soil and potential runoff.

Preventing the Spread of Noxious Weeds

Conservation Districts implement measures to reduce the spread of invasive populations and help implement weed control projects.

The district has completed the following:

The Matching Noxious Weed Grant addressed up to 1,800 acres of hoary cress, perennial pepper weed, yellow toadflax and black henbane. 2009 was the second year of this grant, with a 400 acre increase in participation in the program.

Major economy:

Agriculture

Points of Interest:

Head waters of the Rio Grande River, Continental Divide

The Conservation District was established

1946

Land Ownership:

Land ownership within the District is:
US Forest Service - 861,706 acres;
Bureau of Land Management - 54,742 acres;
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - 12, 948 acres;
Private land - 269,087 acres;
Colorado Division of Wildlife - 2,191 acres;
State School Lands - 9,400 acres;
Cities, Towns & Subdivisions - 4,880 acres.

Land Use:

Land uses within the District:
Forested land - 602,052 acres;
Rangeland - 348,622 acres; Pasture & Hayland - 134,077 acres;
Irrigated Cropland - 110,184 acres;
Other land, Wildlife, etc. - 20,019 acres