

Colorado State Conservation Board 2008 Matching Grants Project:  
Prowers Conservation District: Maintaining Healthy Rangeland

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

The extraordinary blizzard in southeastern Colorado during the winter of 2006-7 resulted in large economic losses to ranchers who incurred fuel and feed costs of attending to surviving animals trapped in the snow and also lost animals at the time or later with reduced calving performance. In addition, the blizzard destroyed many miles of fencing. Without fencing, ranchers cannot keep their stock on their own land or manage the grazing pressure of their animals to ensure the rotation of grazing necessary to promote good rangeland health for stock and wildlife. **The Prowers Conservation District offered cost share to repair fencing damaged by the devastating blizzard to help ensure continuation of good range management.** As further protection for the fragile soils of Prowers County, the District offered cost-share for landowners whose Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) enrollment is due to expire to encourage them to maintain the land under vegetation as range rather than plow up for cropping. **Under cropping systems soil erosion risk is much higher.** This cost share was to install fencing or watering points that would allow landowners to manage the grazing pattern of their stock in the most economically and ecologically productive manner. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a federal cost-share program developed principally to encourage farmers to keep cover on fragile soils that are prone to erosion.

**What was achieved?**

- **43,501 feet of fencing installed/repared** to ensure optimum grazing regimes could be implemented
- **3,000 gallon water tank installed** for stock water distribution on CRP expiring land
- **High local need for project** - funding available for only 5 projects but 13 applications
- **Priority given to projects not eligible for federal cost-share**
- **Projects designed by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) technical staff** and progress/completion monitored by District and NRCS staff.



*Fencing is critical to controlling grazing pressure so that rangeland is not invaded by weeds or shrub species that degrade ecological value and range productivity.*



*Recent blizzards in Prowers County have destroyed miles of fencing and cost-share for new fencing has helped reestablish optimum grazing management.*