

Colorado State Conservation Board 2008 Matching Grants Project:
San Luis Valley Conservation District Association: Conservation Education Program

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

The five conservation districts that make up the San Luis Valley Conservation District Association have a strong commitment to conservation education and maintain a Conservation Education Specialist position. **This enables implementation of an award-winning interactive conservation education program that particularly targets schools.** Through hands-on learning the students address science topics using local natural resource conservation examples. The Education Specialist is currently working with teachers in a pioneering effort to get her **conservation teaching modules accredited as part of the K-12 state schools curriculum.** She also organizes, or is part of, **numerous education events throughout the San Luis Valley** for youth, agricultural producers, legislators and the general public.

What was achieved?

- **1,486 students** and teachers participated in **planning and field testing proposed future schools curriculum conservation modules** designed by the Education Specialist.
- **912 students** participated in **Rio Grande aquifer study** to learn about ground water systems
- **125 students** participated in Project Learning - **applying problem solving techniques to real-world problems through long-term conservation projects.**
- **58 students** participated in Beaver Creek Youth Camp - **a week-long youth conservation activity camp**
- **312 kids** participated in **"Water Fest"** to engage them in water issues through enlightening hands-on activities related to water use and conservation.
- Education Specialist key part of Colorado Association of Conservation Districts one week **"Teachers Workshop"** - in 2008 centered on water conservation and the Colorado Content Standards for schools and was attended by **30 teachers** - **several returning form previous years.**
- Using 2008 and 2009 data, **pilot study will evaluate participating student tests scores** - teachers believe test scores will likely improve through participation in the interactive outdoor learning environment of the Education Program.
- **Other conservation related activities involving thousands of participants** included producer education at agricultural conference, watershed education through River Trailer demonstrations, wetland tours, tree planting, legislative educational tour, poster competition, education of public at Crane Festival.
- **Future plans to expand** watershed education, teacher training and school field excursion activities.



Winter and summer kids have fun getting out and about to learn about science through local real-world natural resource conservation examples.