

Colorado State Conservation Board 2008 Matching Grants Project:
San Juan Conservation District: Conservation Helping Hand

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

San Juan Conservation District is located in Archuleta County. Following the success of its educational and cost-share program last year, the District built on the model for 2008. **Water management and rangeland and forest health were still identified as key conservation issues in the District, along with fire risk mitigation.** Small acreage landowners who had little experience or knowledge in natural resource management was also still the growing target education audience. **Two further educational workshops were held followed by opportunities for cost-share assistance for conservation practice and planning implementation.** One workshop addressed irrigation water efficiency and the other forest health and defensible space

What was achieved?

- **April workshop on forest health and fire mitigation** held in conjunction with the Colorado State Forest Service and Colorado Division of Wildlife. **25 landowners attended** and learned about forest health and disease, wildlife habitat, defensible space, emergency preparedness and new county emergency procedures.
- **July workshop on selecting best irrigation system for needs and using most efficiently.** Presenters were the Natural Resource Conservation Service District Conservationist and a local landowner who also conducted tour of his irrigation improvements. **20 landowners attended**
- Two landowners installed **gated pipe irrigation systems** for **20-25% improvement in irrigation efficiency.**
- Two landowners installed **water diversion structures** to improve irrigation efficiency by **15%** and significantly **reduce sediment** entering the creek.
- **Water retention basin** installed to alleviate flooding and **sediment deposition** into lake used for drinking water storage.
- **8 acres of forest thinned** to improve wildlife habitat and provide fire risk mitigation.
- Three landowners installed **cross-fencing** to allow rotational grazing to improve pasture management for stock and wildlife.



In flood irrigated pastures, installation of gated pipe controls water flow and increases water efficiency from 35-40% to 60%.

Water flow in ditches can seriously erode soils (large picture). Installing ditch diversions (insert) greatly curbs erosion to reduce sediment downstream and improve water use efficiency.