

Colorado State Conservation Board 2007 Matching Grants Project:
San Luis Valley Conservation District Association: Conservation Education Program

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

The Conservation Education Program provides conservation awareness and training for students, teachers and the public throughout the San Luis Valley.

The Education Specialist is developing a statewide conservation curriculum for students K-12 using sound natural resource conservation principles and decision making to build an understanding of scientific concepts. Activities are tied to assessable Colorado State Standards, are cross curricular to employ a variety of skills in all subjects, and are real-world based. The curriculum is being well-received in its current development stage and will bring Colorado natural resource issues into the classroom for the future citizens and decision makers of our state.

What was achieved?

Over 16,000 educational contacts with youth, teachers, landowners and the general public took place in 2007 through a wide range of conservation-centered activities and programs. Some examples are:

- 912 students used a ground water model to understand **ground water systems** and then analyzed data from the Rio Grande River to study aquifer depletion and predict needs.
- 17 students supported in working experientially on long-term projects **solving real-world natural resource problems** with the education specialist and in-the-field mentors. This provided students with the opportunity to make experiential based career and educational choices.
- 7319 children and 677 adults exposed to the mobile River Trailer, which demonstrates **river system behavior** and presents opportunity for discussing the water cycle and **positive and negative impacts to water systems** by weather and human activity.
- 450 students learned about **conservation planning and community service** through the planting of 1,200 trees throughout the San Luis Valley.
- 1632 students and teachers participated in school visits that included planning and field testing of the new conservation curriculum being developed by the Education Specialist.
- **Water Fest** - Water Fest on the Rio has become an annual Conservation District sponsored event in the San Luis Valley to enlighten and **engage children in water concepts and uses**. This event provides hands-on activities in 20 minute intervals; each with a specific learning goal in mind.
200 kids, 50 teachers, 30 presenters, 40 volunteers and 112 community members participated



Students learn dynamically from the River Trailer about the water cycle, how rivers behave and how human behavior affects water supply and quality.