

# East Central Colorado RC & D, Inc.



**2010  
Annual Report**

318 East 5th Street, P.O. Box 157, Hugo, Colorado 80821  
(719) 743-2408 Ext 112 email - info@eastcentralrcd.org  
www.eastcentralrcd.org

RC & D...MAKING THINGS HAPPEN!

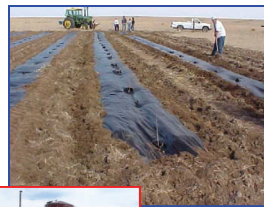
## Conservation Districts Continue to Address Local Conservation Issues... 2011 Final Year for Conservation Matching Grants, if Severance Tax Provision Allowed to Expire RC&D grant writing assistance for 2009, 2010, reaches \$480,000 impact with local match.

In June, seven conservation districts were assisted with competitive 2011 matching grants applications, the average request is for \$30,000 per district. Matching grants funds are administered through the Colorado Department of Agriculture-COLORADO STATE CONSERVATION BOARD. Districts will receive notice of funding awards by November. Cost-share funding for conservation practices on agricultural land in 2011 (and beyond) is in jeopardy of being cut or trimmed when the severance tax provision, where the dollars are budgeted from, 'sunset' or expires. The Colo-

rado legislature would need to reauthorize use of severance tax dollars to make these funds accessible for cost-shared conservation practices. Landowners must match the funds with a minimum of 50% in kind and cash. Most conservation districts in the ECCRCD area exceed the 50% match requirement by nearly a 2:1 margin. Final accomplishments for 2010 conservation district matching grants projects are still in progress and scheduled for completion by November 2010.



**For reference;** the High Plains/Prairie Conservation Districts 2009 cost-share program received 13 applications and successfully funded 2 living snow fences, 3 windbreaks, 2 livestock pipelines, 2 tanks, and 2 solar livestock pumping systems for an economic impact over \$50,000.



The Flagler Conservation District 2009 cost-share program successfully funded 43 cost-share applications installing 37 flow meters, 2 livestock pipelines, 1 windbreak, 1 wildlife habitat, 1 solar panel and 1 tank. The local economic impact of this grant was over \$50,000.

USDA-NRCS staff in each field office assists conservation districts to certify that conservation practices meet standards and specifications.

## Regional Community Energy Coordinator Project Funded for East Central



Jill Ball, CEC

The **East Central Colorado RC & D council (ECCRCD)** applied for a \$120,000 opportunity through the Colorado Governors Energy Office (GEO) to create a **Community Energy Coordinator (CEC)** position to service a four county region that includes Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson, and Lincoln counties. Partner contributions for office space and utilities are utilized in Hugo, Colorado. The ECCRCD council provided start up administrative assistance costs. The GEO and ECCRCD will provide CEC services in the East Central Colorado region until September 2012.

The project idea was initiated in **February 2009**, when the ECCRCD council hosted the first of two renewable energy strategy sessions for local county, municipal, and community leaders. Wind energy development had become a viable economic opportunity but without planned growth, zoning issues and associated energy development activities around rural communities seemed daunting. This core group supported the concept to apply for the CEC funding mechanism made available in **October 2009** using United States Department of Energy funding. The ECCRCD council was awarded the grant in **December 2009** serving as the interim steering committee. Following completion of the hiring process, the advisory board met in **June 2010** to begin a public strategic planning process to implement local actions suggested from public input. Jill was available at each county fair in August providing explanation about energy rebates available through the GEO. Initial public input meetings, "Brainstorming Energy" sessions were conducted in each county in September. Follow up public meetings may be conducted in each county by November to discuss results. A Conservation Innovation Grant is being applied for to provide further outreach efforts in each county. Jill will target youth and seniors for this particular strategy. Supporting funds would expand outreach efforts.

### Inside this issue:

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS	<b>1</b>
COMMUNITY ENERGY COORDINATOR	<b>1</b>
TRI COUNTY BIOFUELS	<b>2</b>
WHAT'S NEW?	<b>2</b>
ENERGY AUDITS	<b>2</b>
PRESIDENTS MESSAGE	<b>2</b>

## What's New?

Rural communities thrive when interested individuals, organizations, and local units of government come together to pool resources on local projects that impact where we all live. Current opportunities that are under development as possible sponsored projects are:

- Grants to rural fire departments and sewer project
- Historic preservation grants
- 'Main Street' Energy Efficiency Planning



## ECCRCDC Receives Energy Audit Equipment Grant

The ECCRCDC Council recently received word that a \$10,000 competitive grant from the Governors Energy Office was received to purchase energy audit equipment such as a blower door assembly, CO2 detector, combustion analyzer, and infrared camera, etc. Jill Ball, Community Energy Coordinator is a certified building analyst through the Building Performance Institute. Jill will provide neutral source information about energy efficiency solutions for home and small business. Watch for information about how residents and small businesses might obtain a low cost energy audit through ECCRCDC.

## Volunteer RC & D Council.... New Administrative Assistant Hired-

### Current members of the ECCRCDC

#### Executive Council are....

*Richard Sears, President— El Paso*  
*Nancy Bogenhagen, Vice Pres- Cheyenne*  
*Doris King, Secretary/Treasurer— K.C.*  
*Henry Schuler, Elbert*  
*Jerry Allen, Elbert*  
*Ted Lyons, Lincoln*  
*Michael Gaskins, Lincoln*  
*Darby Livingston, Cheyenne*  
*Vacant, El Paso\*\**  
*Vacant, Kit Carson\*\**  
*\*\*Interested volunteers from, El Paso, and Kit Carson counties are encouraged to contact the ECC RC&D office for more information.*



Shayla Morgan started as the new Administrative Assistant for ECC RC&D in August. So far she has been able to learn most of her responsibilities to serve the council to her best abilities. Shayla is excited to be a part of an organization who's focus is helping local communities, and looks forward to being involved and watching the organization grow.



## TRI COUNTY BIOFUELS PLANTING TIP SHEET TO BE AVAILABLE SOON -

Tri County Biofuels is a project that was originally funded through a Conservation Innovation Grant from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in July 2007. Eight growers in Kit Carson, Lincoln, and Washington counties were interested in a 'grow your own biodiesel' project. Camelina and Canola are the crops chosen to determine the ease, feasibility, and economic value of growing these biodiesel crops in this part of the Colorado Eastern Plains. The first crop of 'winter' camelina was planted in September 2007. Due to high wheat and corn prices, planting participation has been downsized to those producers who are willing to provide acres to the project. Forty acres of canola were planted in September 2008 and baled for livestock feed in July 2009 and 2010 by Washington County grower Steve Diamond. Cameron Whittiker joined the project in April 2009 planting 11 acres of Canola that was harvested this summer. Future plans for the study remain for limited irrigation acres and grower production on a larger scale.



Due to reduced participation, the council has entered into an agreement with CSU Golden Plains Agronomist, Ron Meyer, to utilize research applicable to the high plains area to document what is known about growing biofuels crops in the region.

A fact sheet will be produced with site prep, nutrient needs, and planting guidelines at the conclusion of the project.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT-

This has been a busy year of change and growth. Our operations tempo has increased from quarterly to monthly meetings, as well as, teleconferences and special project meetings. We have increased our outreach efforts to the ECC communities with an ongoing goal to contact and coordinate with local ECC municipalities and civic organizations. The council is aggressively pursuing grant opportunities in support of our community needs. We successfully competed for and received a 2 year grant for a Community Energy Coordinator from the Governors Energy Office, as well as, a grant to purchase equipment to conduct energy audits. Financial information is available on the website or upon request.

There have been personnel transitions. We bid farewell to council members Jimmy Brewer, Candace Payne, Penny McPherson, and Mr. Ben Orrel and welcome new council members Michael Gaskins and Darby Livingston. Thank you to the volunteers who currently serve the council. Our thanks to Mrs. Verna Miller who has retired 'again' to travel and spend more time with her family. A hearty 'welcome' to Mrs. Shayla D. Morgan as administrative assistant. Our USDA NRCS coordinator, Kristi Gay, deserves recognition for her efforts to invigorate the ECC RC&D, assisting the council to be an effective organization. Finally, I wish to extend a special thank you to our loyal RC & D sponsors for your continued support.

*Richard S. Sears*