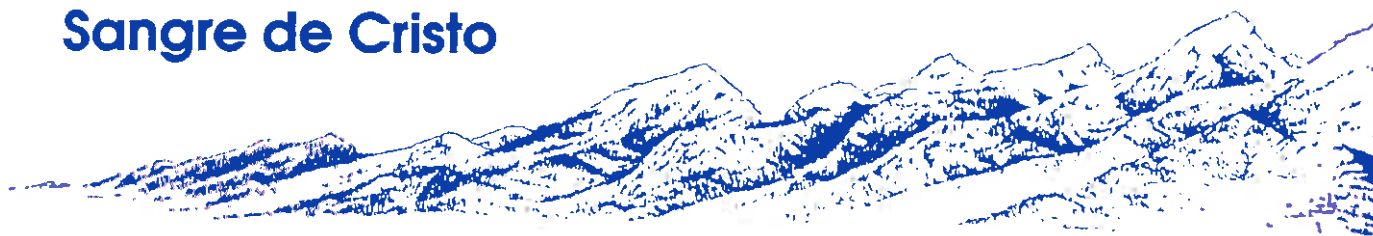


Sangre de Cristo



RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.

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Visit our website at: sangredecristorcd.org

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR VISION

Harmony and prosperity, and a fulfilling life for our citizens, with the environment and natural resources conserved for future generations

OUR MISSION

The Sangre de Cristo RC&D Council, through strong partnerships, will carry out a results oriented, locally directed program to encourage and improve the economic and social well-being of individuals and communities, and will promote responsible use and enhancement of our natural resources in south central Colorado



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Staff

Jane Wustrow, RC&D Coord.
Kathy Trujillo, Secretary

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Town of Aguilar
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City of Leadville
City of Buena Vista
City of Salida
Town of Poncha Springs
Town of Branson

Sangre de Cristo and Colorado Councils Host Western Regional RC&D Conference

The Sangre de Cristo RC&D Council partnered with Colorado's other seven RC&D Councils, under the auspices of the Colorado League of RC&D Councils, to host the 2007 Western RC&D Association Conference in January in Colorado Springs. The 2007 theme, *Revitalizing the Old West*, consisted of an informative 3-day conference that provided tools and strategies to create workable solutions to local issues. The conference provided a mix of expertise that addressed energy issues, community and economic development, land management, non-profit management and water issues. The Western RC&D Association consists of over 80 RC&D Councils in the western United States.



Biofuel Briquette Feasibility Study Results Are In

The RC&D Council concluded its feasibility study to evaluate the technical and financial feasibility of producing an engineered fuel briquette out of waste products generated by coal burning furnaces and forest management. The results are favorable! Partners in the project were USDA Rural Development, Aquila, and Fremont Economic Development Corporation. The International Center for Appropriate and Sustainable Technology completed the study. Additional funding has been applied for to complete an analysis of a manufacturing facility to create the briquettes. The engineered fuel briquette, using the two waste streams (fly ash and woody biomass waste), will reduce the problems associated with burning raw wood waste, improve energy efficiency, reduce waste to the landfill and create a business opportunity for an enterprising entrepreneur.

Geographic Information System (GIS) Initiative

Recognizing the benefits of expanding the use of GIS technology, the Council is supporting an initiative to enhance the use of GIS technology within the RC&D Area. Survey responses from 67 local government officials and staff members from the eight-county service area indicate widespread interest in GIS development at the local level and widespread support for some type of a regional GIS function. While interest is high and demand for data is strong from state, federal and private entities, there is a lack of dedicated GIS funding and qualified practitioners at the local level. With the survey results as a guide, a steering committee is developing a feasible, cost-effective course of action to bring the benefits of GIS to all counties within the RC&D service area. In addition, the Sangre de Cristo GIS User's Group meets quarterly to network on the local uses of GIS. The project is a partnership with the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments.



A Decade of Cooperative Weed Management in the Upper Arkansas River Basin

In the West, the patchwork of land ownership between federal, state, municipal and private land requires cooperation if weed management is to be carried out on a watershed basis. In 1998, the Sangre de Cristo Resource Conservation and Development Council sponsored a planning meeting to initiate coordinated weed management in the upper Arkansas River basin. From this meeting developed the Upper Arkansas Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), a group of federal, state, and local partners who have worked together across jurisdictional boundaries for almost a decade to manage invasive weeds on a watershed basis.

Each of the partners contributes funding, technical assistance, and equipment per their particular budget to help implement a comprehensive weed management program. Partners also collaborate on training and workshops, share and coordinate resources, and work toward common goals. Through building local, state and federal partnerships, the Upper Arkansas CWMA is able to leverage resources and be more effective in their weed management efforts. A coordinated approach has helped this group of like-minded individuals to set common goals, acquire funding and carry out tested and proven weed management on a watershed basis.

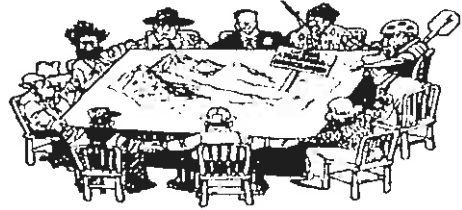


Second River and Riparian Study Center Constructed

The Council completed the construction of a second river and riparian study center (river trailer) with technical assistance from Natural Resources Conservation Service and funding from the Bureau of Reclamation. For better coverage in the basin, the river trailers are housed at the Natural Resources Conservation Service offices in Canon City and La Junta. These popular educational tools for teaching river dynamics to children and adults are in continuous use at county fairs, teacher workshops, schools, and water festivals in every county of the RC&D area and beyond.

Upper Arkansas Watershed Council

The RC&D Council provides support and is the fiscal manager for the Upper Arkansas Watershed Council. The Watershed Council's goals are expressed in its mission statement: "The Upper Arkansas Watershed, as representatives of interested parties, will foster improved communication, collaboration, education and scientific understanding, and will develop strategies and make recommendations to conserve, protect and enhance watershed natural resources for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."



At quarterly meetings, members and guests share their knowledge and expertise on a variety of water and natural resource issues affecting the basin. The Watershed Council contracts with the Greater Arkansas River Nature Association headquartered in Salida to provide administrative services. The Council's Leadership Committee meets on a regular basis to help plan and coordinate Council projects and activities. The Council will play a lead role in planning and implementing the Arkansas River Basin Water Forum to be held in Custer County in the spring of 2008. The watershed council's mission statement, charter, meeting memories, and newsletter can be found on its web site at www.uawc.info.



2007 Arkansas River Basin Water Forum *Water- the Life of the Arkansas River Valley*

RC&D Council Secretary Kathy Trujillo provided administrative support to the 13th Annual Arkansas River Basin Water Forum held April 12-13, 2007 in Rocky Ford. The Forum provides information about water issues and promotes an open dialogue to create a greater understanding of water use and conservation. The Forum featured keynote speaker Colorado Supreme Court Justice Gregory J. Hobbs and the unusual pairing of the State Engineers from both Colorado and Kansas. The Arkansas River Basin Water Forum will be held in Custer County for the first time in the spring of 2008. Additional information can be found on the Forum's website at <http://www.arbwf.org>.

Council Awarded Reclamation's "Commissioner's Water Conservation Award"

Brian Little of the Eastern Colorado Projects office of the Bureau of Reclamation Presented the Sangre de Cristo RC&D Council with Reclamation's "Commissioner's Water Conservation Award" at the Council's 2006 Annual Meeting. Reclamation and the RC&D Council have partnered on several education al projects to promote improved water management. These include an *Irrigation Checkbook* to improve irrigation water management and the construction and continued use of the two River and Riparian Study Centers.



GOAL #1

Retain, improve and wisely manage our water resources.

Objectives

- Develop and improve water storage facilities.
- Develop and improve irrigation systems.
- Develop water and sewer districts where needed.
- Increase the knowledge of both adults and children about ways to conserve water.
- Increase cooperation among water users.



GOAL #2

Coordinated planning of all programs among all levels of government and the private sector.

Objectives

- Support planned growth efforts.
- Balance infrastructure Development with growth.
- Coordinate projects with local government master plans.



GOAL #3

Natural resources maintained or improved to a healthy and productive condition.

Objectives

- All concerned agencies work together to develop standardized guidelines for land stewardship.
- Increase the health of government and private forests through good management practices.
- Improve watershed health through watershed management planning.

GOAL #4

Increased understanding and cooperation among a diverse public.

Objectives

- Promote and support public education to conserve and enhance natural resources.
- Increase diversified membership in RC&D.
- Educate public to have reasonable expectations when living in rural areas.

GOAL #5

Support enhanced and balanced economic development to achieve a diversified economy.

Objectives

- Increase contact with local government and other agencies to coordinate master plans to enhance economic development.
- Support and increase the economic impact of tourism based industry while seeking year-round opportunities.
- Diversify and develop markets for natural resources and alternative industries and products.

GOAL #6

Preservation of historical sites and buildings, and enhanced preservation of Western heritage.

Objectives

- Increase public awareness of this challenge through education.
- Increase funding opportunities for local communities and organizations to enable preservation.



All programs and services of the Sangre de Cristo RC&D Council are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.