

Shavano Conservation District

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings from Shavano Conservation District:

The 2020 message began with the COVID pandemic and its effects on District operations. Sadly, the pandemic continued in 2021 and limited our ability to meet in person and to use our office in the federal building. Nonetheless, our Board of Supervisors and staff maintained our regularly scheduled meetings and our normal business and field operations.

The District successfully completed its merger with San Miguel Conservation District expanding our services and support to landowners, producers, and school students in the West End of Montrose County and San Miguel County. Shavano extends its appreciation to Carl McKinney, former president of San Miguel Conservation District, San Miguel County Commissioners for their support and CSCB staff for election assistance and guidance.

Continuing our role as leaders in the statewide soil health movement, the District was selected for participation in the S.T.A. R. Plus program. This enabled Shavano to enroll 5 producers throughout our service area to receive funding and technical support for implementing science-based soil health improvement practices.

Our highly successful Annual Meeting was attended by 85 local landowners and producers including several state and county elected officials. Also, during the meeting, we conducted our annual Local Work Group Session. Participants identified the top three natural resource concerns in the area.

Irrespective of the pandemic, Shavano was able to continue our outreach and educational programs throughout the year.

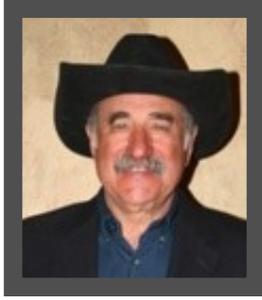
For full descriptions of our 2021 projects and activities, please read the full report.

The Board of Supervisors and Staff of Shavano Conservation District wish each of our constituents and partners a healthy, productive, and prosperous New Year!

Sincerely,

Ken Lipton, President

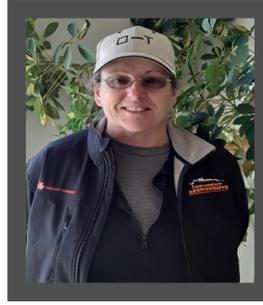
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Ken Lipton, *President*



Lanny Denham, *Vice President*



Roxi Stewart, *Treasurer*



Eddie Atencio, *Supervisor*



Shelly Malish, *Supervisor*



Jack Brungardt, *Supervisor*



Steve Hale, *Supervisor*



Carl McKinney, *Supervisor*

Our Board has been very active in the conservation efforts of this community. The Board members attend leadership training, are active participants in the Colorado Association of Conservation District (CACD) meetings, have received leadership awards two years in a row, including recognition from CSCB as the number one district in the state twice. Ken Lipton serves as an elected representative of the Gunnison -Dolores Watershed on the Colorado State Conservation Board and is the CSCB's representative on the Colorado Coalition for Healthy Soils.

STAFF



Front left: Jerry Allen, *Irrigation Water Manager*; Penny Bishop, *District Manager*; Mendy Stewart, *Education/ Outreach Coordinator*; The District employs two district funded positions one grant funded position.

OFFICE

102 Par Place, Suite 4
Montrose, CO 81401

(970)964-3584

www.shavanocd.org

MONTHLY MEETINGS

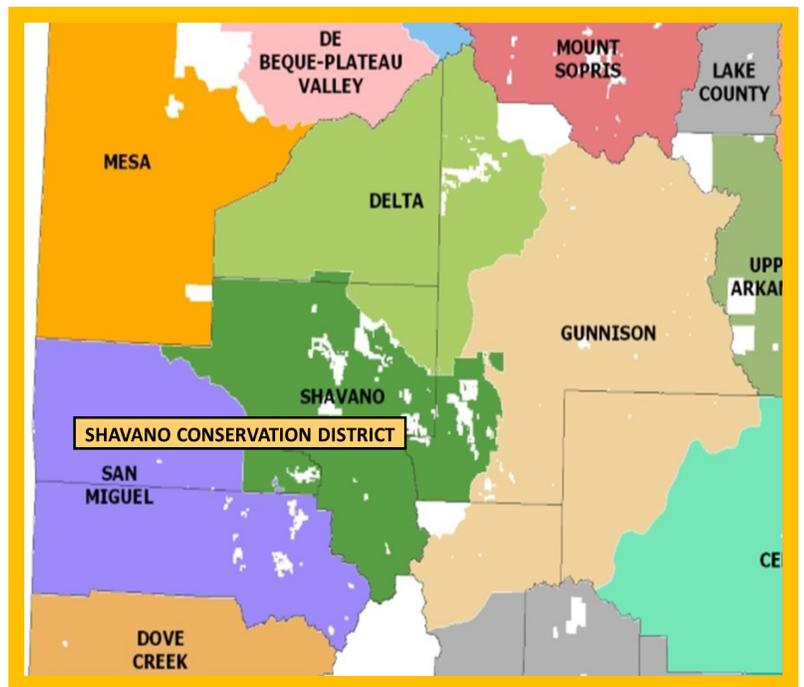
1st Tuesday of each month

District Established

October 21, 1941

District Priorities

Water Quality/Quantity
Soil Health
Weed Management



The municipalities and communities within the boundaries of the merged District are Colona, Cimarron, Montrose, Norwood, Naturita, Olathe, Ouray, Paradox, Ridgway, Redvale & Telluride.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) 2020 TOTALS

31 CONTRACTS OBLIGATED	\$3,450,086.93
108 CONTRACTS PAID OUT	\$1,689,349.78
2021 SALT SAVINGS/TON	2198.70 TONS

MISSION STATEMENT

Through a board of local farmers and ranchers, the Shavano Conservation District serves as the grassroots leadership to the Natural Resource Conservation Service in the protection and conservation of our natural resources.

FINANCIALS

The Shavano Conservation District utilize grants and cooperative agreements to fund our activities along with the District's reserves.

Cash on hand January 1, 2021	\$ 271,118.96
Revenue	
Grants	\$ 101,281.38
Building Rents	\$ 51,818.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 53,014.76
Total Revenue	\$ 206,114.14
Total Cash and Revenue	\$ 477,233.10
Expenses	
Technical Assistance	\$ 76,078.84
Administration	\$ 84,411.14
Building Maintenance	\$ 5,828.25
Indirect Costs	\$ 4,037.04
Dam Maintenance	\$ 955.00
Total Expenses	\$171,310.27
Ending Balance (Cash on hand December 31 2020)	\$305,922.83

*Emergency Reserves account for \$9,177.68 of the cash on hand .

OURAY COUNTY 2020 AG TAX REVENUE

Ag Land	\$ 27,608.71
Ag Residences	\$ 70,318.53
Ag Out Buildings	\$ 18,320.85
Total	\$ 116,248.09

6.19% of Total County Tax Revenue

MONTROSE COUNTY 2021 AG TAX REVENUE

Ag Land	\$ 1,324,429.28
Ag Residences	\$ 1,222,560.27
Ag Out Buildings	\$ 662,123.56
Total	\$ 3,209,113.00

6.92% of Total County Tax Revenue

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY 2021 AG TAX REVENUE

Ag Land	\$4,676,870.00
Ag Residences	\$4,329,170.00
Ag Other	\$ 1,750.00
Total	\$9,110,360.00

Information Unavailable from San Miguel County % of Total County Tax Revenue

S.T.A.R. PILOT PROGRAM

(SAVING TOMORROW'S AGRICULTURE RESOURCES)

For over 2 years, Shavano Conservation District (SCD) has been a leader in a grassroots, broad-based and statewide movement named the Colorado Coalition for Healthy Soils (CCHS). The Coalition decided to adopt and adapt to Colorado the successful S.T.A.R. soil health program developed by Conservation Districts in Illinois. The program is strictly voluntary. SCD has been chosen to participate in the pilot program and a local producer has volunteered to enroll in the pilot.

This system assigned points for each cropping, tillage, nutrient application and soil conservation activity used on individual fields. The practices selected and the point values assigned were determined by a group of soil scientists, researchers and producers that were involved in research. A Science Advisory Committee recommended practices, based on soil testing, that contributed to achieving healthy soils goals. The total points awarded were used in a scale to determine a rating of 1 to 5 Stars for each individual field. Producers earning stars will receive a plaque indicating the number of stars awarded.

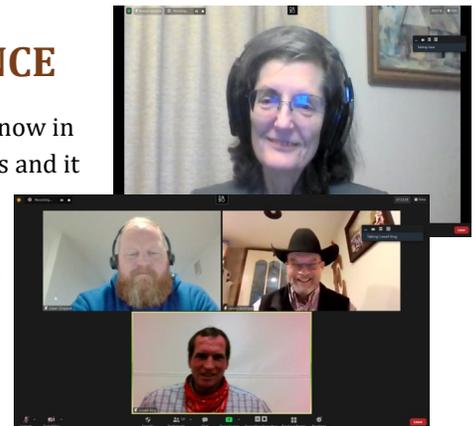
In 2021, the Colorado Department of Agriculture funded a S.T.A.R. pilot program. The purpose of the pilot program was to evaluate, on the ground, the results of the soil health improvements. Four Conservation Districts were selected to implement the pilot program to assure that different soil types and agricultural practices were evaluated. Each District was able to fund one volunteer producer to participate in the pilot over a three-year period. The pilot was successful, and CDA along with the Colorado Coalition for Health Soils was able to find the funding necessary to take the S.T.A.R. program to the next level and funded a S.T.A.R. Plus program that will include 17 conservation districts and up to 100 producers

The potential benefits of using this program include:

- *Decreased nutrient loss
- *Assist in securing conservation cost share funds
- *Reduce crop insurance premiums
- *Provides documentation to support water quality issues
- *Obtain potential market incentives for sustainable practices
- *Demonstrate leadership in promoting sustainable agriculture

WESTERN COLORADO SOIL HEALTH CONFERENCE

SCD co-sponsors, plans and promotes the Western Colorado Soil Health Conference now in its 12th year. The one day conference was virtual this year due to COVID restrictions and it featured national speaker, Dr. Elaine Ingham and local producers to share their expertise and disseminate soil health information and data to the public, which engaged 131 attendees and partners. SCD partners with Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), Colorado River Water Conservation Board (CRWCB), Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB), local sponsors and the Soil Health Steering Committee to help fund this project.



2021 Soil Health Conference

LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETING

Shavano Conservation District hosted a Local Work Group session in June 2021 during our Annual district board meeting to get input from the landowners and conservation partners to help with district planning and to provide specific conservation/natural resource concerns from the landowners to our federal partners, NRCS. We had over 85 local landowners attend and 35 of those landowners provided input to prioritize our District's top concerns, new technologies or practices that NRCS should consider adopting and recommendations for conservation program administration. The District's top natural resource priority concerns were:

1. Water Quantity/Quality
2. Soil Health
3. Irrigation Efficiencies

Noxious weeds/weed management, instream wildlife habitat, excessive bank erosion, rangeland monitoring, & habitat degradation were also a concern from the group as well.



2021 Local Work Group Meeting

GRANT FUNDED POSITION THAT THE DISTRICT MANAGES

CSCB District Conservation Technician (DCT) Grant: CSCB along with Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) supported this program with grant funds for technical assistance to landowners for on-the-ground conservation practices through Farm Bill programs and standard NRCS conservation practices. It also allowed SCD an opportunity for increased District capacity to provide technical support through education, to leverage funds and raise our District's profile in our community. We received funding through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Non-Point Source Grant for the matching funds necessary for this grant. Our DCT provided over 158 visits to new & 2nd year NRCS irrigation contract holders with improved irrigation systems in our local office. He distributed over 31 ball probes to irrigators around the district and made 55 Technical Assistance visits to 51 non-contract producers wanting technical information or advice in irrigating their fields, drainage, cover crop mixes, re-seeding, drip irrigation or sprinkler calibration. These visits represented over 3,000 acres. He was also very active in the Western Colorado Soil Health Conference and the Food and Farm Forum Conference as well as assisting in maintaining our flood retention dams that the District is responsible for.



Field Tour with IWM

MERGER WITH SAN MIGUEL BASIN CONSERVATION DISTRICT

San Miguel Basin Conservation District and Shavano Conservation District joined forces to meet the natural resources conservation needs of landowners within their boundaries in the Delta, Gunnison, Montrose, Ouray, and San Miguel Counties.

In a special election held May 4, 2021, landowners from the two districts voted to consolidate the districts, forming a new district, which will be known as "Shavano Conservation District."

The two districts have historically worked together or on very similar conservation projects and educational programs through the years and understand the need of farmers, ranchers and small acreage owners in the area, all of the supervisors are committed to improving the opportunities and programs available to their constituents through this consolidation.

The creation of the new conservation district will increase landowners' conservation options in a variety of ways, including: bringing more resources to area-wide conservation problems, improving consistency of programs offered by one conservation district, and increasing the ability to leverage local, state and federal resources for conservation implementation and technical assistance.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

One of the Shavano Conservation District's major objectives is conservation education. We conduct or participate in many activities that promote education on natural resources.

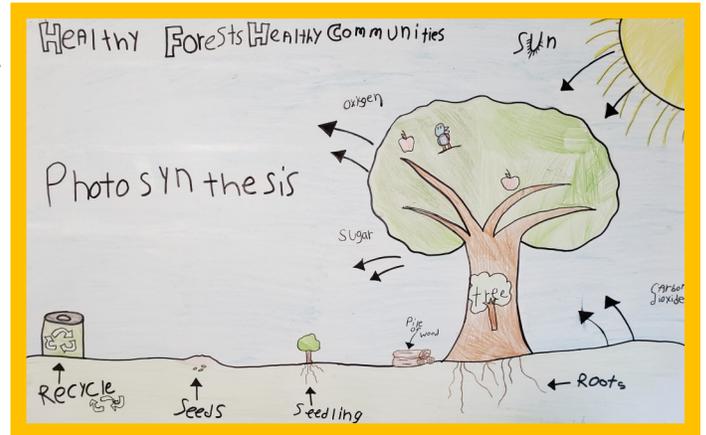
One of the District's major education activities is the **29th Annual 4th Grade Natural Resource Festival** that our education/outreach coordinator organizes and hosts. There are over 400 students that attend this festival held along the Uncompahgre River in Montrose. The festival features stations manned by many different partners and is specifically designed to correlate with local 4th grade curriculum requirements relative to natural resources. We have over 40 volunteers that help with the festival each year.

Stewardship Week-Our education coordinator spends a week in local elementary school classrooms conducting and supplying materials to elementary students to encourage stewardship of our natural resources.

9th Grade Mancos Shale Education- We make presentations to 9th grade Geophysics classroom students which are centered around salinity in the soil of the Uncompahgre Valley and include hands-on experiments to indicate the salt content in the soil.

This year we sponsored/participated in many other activities including the Ridgway River Festival, the Fun on the Uncompahgre River Festival, the 4th Cimarron Ridge Ranch Tour, Adopt-A-Classroom sponsorship, Montrose County Fair, and the Environmental Appreciation Day in Norwood.

Some other activities that we are involved in is the 5th & 6th Grade Conservation Poster Contest which is sponsored by Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD) and the Camp Rocky Scholarship where we provided a scholarship for a student to attend the CACD annual seven-day summer camp offering various hands-on educational conservation based disciplines.



Champion Poster Designed by 5th grader Benjamin Bryson



Nora Hammer accepts CACD



4th Graders visit Cimarron Ridge Ranch

SHAVANO FLOOD CONTROL DAMS

The District operates and maintains three flood prevention dams. These earthen dams were created to protect thousands of acres of farmland and homes in the Uncompahgre Valley from flooding. Maintenance includes, but is not limited to brush control, weed management and rodent control. Chemical treatment for weeds has become increasingly costly as has land leveling to control the erosion brought on by flood events. A number of years ago, Montrose County approved a residential community development that sits within the flood plain of the Roatcap Wash dam. The inclusion of a residential development caused a change in the priority of the dams so that they are now rated at a High Priority indicating that if a major flood event occurs, there is the potential for loss of human life. Shavano must comply with State regulations and the dams are subject to inspection every three years.

Roatcap Wash

Shavano #1



Shavano #2



OUR PARTNERS

Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB)
Colorado River Water Conservation District (CRWCD)
Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA)
Colorado State University, Extension (CSU)
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Conservation Districts within Gunnison-Dolores Watershed
City of Montrose
Bostwick Park Water Conservancy District
Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE)
Valley Food Partnership
Delta Conservation District

Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)
Colorado Association of Conservation Districts (CACD)
Colorado Forest Service (CFS)
National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)
US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association (UVWUA)
Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership (UWP)
Friends of Youth and Nature (FoYaN)
San Miguel Board of County Commissioners
Mancos Conservation District
Gunnison Conservation District
Palisade Insectary