



# Shavano Conservation District

## 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings from Shavano Conservation District,

Continuing our long-range goal to help producers and landowners improve soil health, Shavano has expanded the S T A R Plus program to more producers within the District. With the expert assistance of our District Conservation Technician, Jerry Allen, several producers have received state funding to initiate or continue practices that will improve soil conditions over the long term. Shavano is proud to be recognized as a state-wide leader in the soil health movement.

Our merger with San Miguel Conservation District has been successful as we have been able to serve producers in that area as well as extend our educational programs at schools and outreach at County events.

Once again, our Annual Meeting had high attendance and we were able to conduct a Local Work Group session that helps establish our priorities for the year. These priorities are submitted to our local NRCS office for guidance in their Natural Resource Programs for the coming year.

Our work in encouraging best management practices for irrigation, soil improvements and cover crops continues to gain momentum and importance as the prolonged drought continues and is not expected to improve. During the year we sponsored several farm tours led by experts and several producers who are leaders in soil health, cover crops and irrigation. Our Soil Health Conference with nationally known presenters from academia as well as leading local producers was well attended.

As the year ended, Jerry Allen, one of our most reliable, experienced, and productive staff members retired. While Jerry's absence will be missed, the Board of Supervisors wish Jerry a happy, healthy, and well-earned retirement.

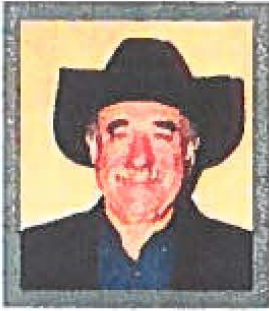
After 16 years of service to Shavano, I have resigned from the Board of Supervisors due to personal circumstances. I have had the pleasure and satisfaction of working with my fellow supervisors and expert staff in assuring that Shavano will continue to provide excellent service to our constituents for another 81 years. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Penny Bishop, Mendy Stewart, and Jerry Allen for their support and friendship over the years. I sincerely thank Supervisors Lanny Denham, Roxi Stewart, Eddie Atencio, Shelly Malish, Steve Hale, and Carl McKinney for their service, guidance, friendship, and wisdom and support these many years. Steve Hale will be the next President of the Board. I know Shavano will be in good hands and I wish Steve and the Board of Supervisors every success.

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*

## 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 served 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. Carl McKinney serves as President of the Gunnison-Dolores Watershed.

## 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

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Montrose, CO 81401

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## MONTHLY MEETINGS

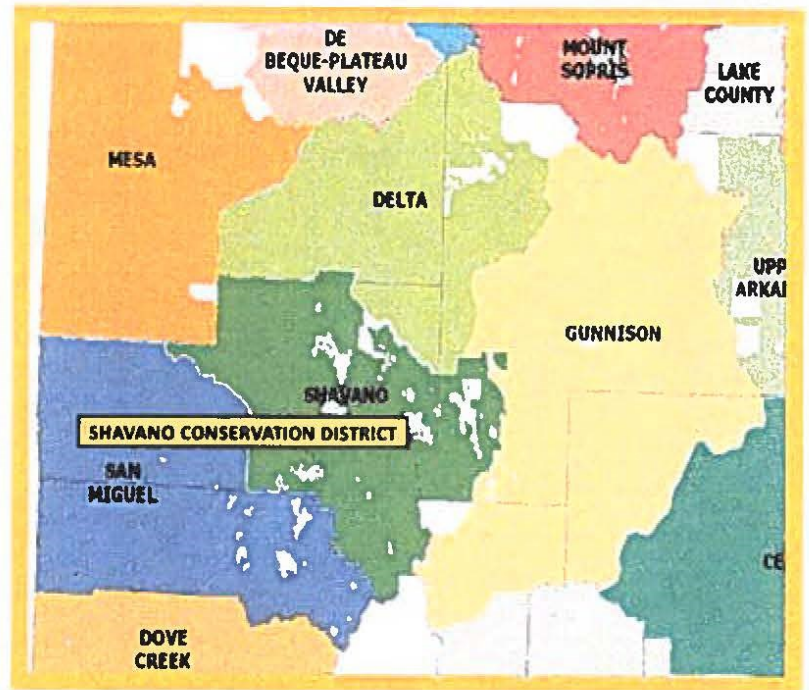
2nd Tuesday of each month

## 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) 2022 TOTALS

33 CONTRACTS OBLIGATED	\$1,770,848
61 CONTRACTS PAID OUT	\$1,869,908
2022 SALT SAVINGS/TON	1,218 TONS

## MISSION STATEMENT

Directed by a volunteer Board of Supervisors who are forward looking agricultural producers and conservation-minded leaders, the Shavano Conservation District serves the community by providing expertise, funding, and education to protect and conserve natural resources in the present and the future.



# 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, 2022	\$ 305,922.83
Revenue	
Grants	\$ 136,167.38
Building Rents	\$ 57,634.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 34,370.26
Soil Health Conference	\$ 13,438.80
Total Revenue	\$ 241,610.44
Total Cash and Revenue	\$ 547,533.27
Expenses	
Technical Assistance	\$ 105,763.00
Administration	\$ 64,891.50
Building Maint. & Util.	\$ 14,587.35
Indirect Costs	\$ 20,225.47
Dam Maintenance	\$ 1,466.29
Education & Outreach	\$ 4,418.26
Soil Health Conference	\$ 5,012.42
Total Expenses	\$ 216,364.29
Ending Bal. Dec. 31, 2022	\$ 331,168.98

\*Emergency Reserves account for \$9,935.07 of the cash on hand .

## OURAY COUNTY 2022 AG TAX REVENUE

Ag Land	\$ 25,197.92
Ag Residences	\$ 72,572.26
Ag Out Buildings	\$ 16,843.02
Total	\$ 114,613.21

6.11% of Total County Tax Revenue

## MONTROSE COUNTY 2022AG TAX REVENUE

Ag Land	\$ 1,220,511.48
Ag Residences	\$ 1,248,012.06
Ag Out Buildings	\$ 626,303.94
Total	\$ 3,094,877.48

6.55% of Total County Tax Revenue

## SAN MIGUEL COUNTY 2022 AG TAX REVENUE

Ag Land	\$ 51,462.91
Ag Residences	\$ 45,982.61
Ag Other	\$ 48,415.46
Total	\$145,860.98

1.28% of Total County Tax Revenue



## S.T.A.R. PLUS PROGRAM

### (SAVING TOMORROW'S AGRICULTURE RESOURCES)

In 2022, 17 conservation districts participated in the STAR Plus program. Our district had 5 producers that participated and practices they implemented ranged from no-till, organic nutrients through livestock manure fertilizer, cover crops, livestock integration, and single & multi specie living mulch. The participating producers received a 50% matching contribution for their soil health practices at \$75/acre up to \$5,000.00 and they will also receive a 1 to 5 STAR Rating. The STAR Plus program also provided the STAR Plus producers equipment grants to help implement soil health practices on their chosen field.

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

STAR Plus provides financial and technical assistance to producers as they implement new soil health practices on one field over three years and consider adopting them across their operation. The STAR program uses the STAR Rating system, an innovative yet simple framework that allows farmers and ranchers to evaluate their current production system, identify areas for improvement, document their progress, and share their successes. The program assigns points for management activities on an annual basis and scores are converted to a 1 to 5 STAR Rating, with 5 STARs indicating the most ambitious commitment to a suite of practices proven to improve soil health, water quality and water availability.

Several of our STAR fields were showcased during our Soil Health Tour that was held in November, 2022. Rick Strait, New Mexico Soil Scientist with NRCS demonstrated how minimum till/no-till fields created better water infiltration and allowed for better root growth.



STAR Producer field using cover crop planting with no-till drill



2022 Soil Health Tour with Rick Strait/NRCS

## WESTERN COLORADO SOIL HEALTH CONFERENCE

SCD co-sponsors, plans and promotes the Western Colorado Soil Health Conference now in its 13th year. The one day conference was offered as hybrid in-person and virtual option this year and it featured national speaker, Dr. David Johnson, molecular biologist with the New Mexico State University on Bioreactors. Other keynote speakers included Dale Strickler, Green Cover Seed agronomist & Marlon Winger, NRCS Soil Scientist. There was a great line-up of presenters this year and a lot of great information was shared on their expertise relating to soil health. This year the conference engaged 103 attendees and partners. SCD partners with Colorado River Water Conservation Board (CRWCB), Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB), local sponsors and the Soil Health Steering Committee to help fund this project.



2022 Soil Health Conference

## LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETING

Shavano Conservation District hosted a Local Work Group session in May 2022 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 NRCS federal partner. 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.



2022 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 land-owners 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 CDA STAR Plus program's on-going capacity support funding for the matching funds necessary for this grant. Our DCT provided 80 visits to new & 2nd year NRCS irrigation contract holders with improved irrigation systems in our local office. He distributed over 10 ball probes to irrigators around the district and made 90 Technical Assistance visits to 80 non-contract producers wanting technical information or advice in irrigating their fields, drainage, cover crop mixes, re-seeding, drip irrigation, soil sampling or sprinkler calibration. These visits represented over 1,000 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

## GD WATERSHED WEED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Shavano Conservation District partnered with the Gunnison-Dolores Watershed on a watershed wide weed management project. Our district focused on Russian Knapweed and Canada Thistle as the weeds that were most prevalent and that our constituent's wanted to address. The district's are working with CDA's Palisade Insectary to set up integrated pest management study to sustainably control weed or insect pests by utilizing cultural, biological, mechanical and chemical methods. This approach reduces reliance on short-term chemical applications and makes landscapes more resilient to invasion long term. The goal is to promote the use of beneficial self-sustaining biological controls to manage the weeds that the district is targeting.

A rust fungus was applied to the Canada Thistle in 2022 on the property owner's sites that participated in this study and establishment checks will happen in 2023 and 2024 to determine if the fungus is helping to control the Canada Thistle.

Russian Knapweed sites were reviewed late summer of 2022 and it was determined that the Palisade Insectary will treat the knapweed with a bio-control consisting of Stem Gall wasps which will be released on the participating landowners properties in the spring of 2023. It was also suggested to utilize mechanical control to mow the site throughout the summer to stunt the plant growth and which will decrease flowering.

Shavano will update the data as received after each growing season.



## 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 **30th Annual 4th Grade Natural Resource Festival** that our education/outreach coordinator organizes and hosts. There are over 503 students that attend this festival held along the Uncompahgre River in Montrose. The festival features 32 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 4 weeks in local elementary school classrooms conducting and supplying materials to elementary students to encourage stewardship of our natural resources. The district conducted 47 presentations and reached 808 students.

**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. These presentations reached 197 students during 10 presentations.

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

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.



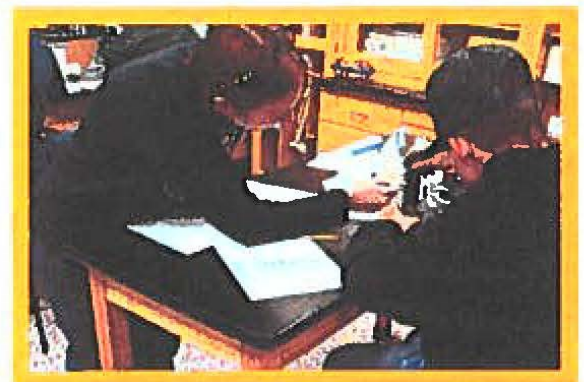
2nd Place CACD Poster Contest Winner-Kiara Gonzales



3rd Place CACD Poster Contest Winner-Justice Kopp  
"Healthy Soil-Healthy Life"



Jo Schroeder accepts SCD Educator of Year



9th Grade Mancos Shale Experiments



# 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 (CWCBC)**  
**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**