

Local Work Group Meeting

Shavano Conservation District



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Locally Lead Conservation

I consider the soil conservation districts movement one of the most important developments in the whole history of agriculture. —
Hugh Hammond Bennett



Local Work Group Meeting Purpose

- Collect feedback from conservation partners and producers for local priorities, information, and concerns for NRCS financial and technical assistance administration and implementation.
 - Adjust priority resource concerns,
 - Change allocation distributions,
 - Create new fund pools for priority/ specialized projects,
 - Request changes in payment schedules,
 - Inform technical decisions and state level implementation requirements,
 - Identify barriers in local and state level program participation,
 - Adopt/identify new technologies and practices that have proven successful locally,
 - Collect local success stories,
 - Understanding training needs for producers, partners, and staff

Discussion points to consider

- Land use in the county.
- Type of agricultural products produced in the county.
- Current weather trends in country (drought, snowpack, runoff, water storage reports).
- What Resource Concerns are in the county and which ones are important to the producers in the county?
 - Resource Concern Categories include soil, water, air, plant, animal (domestic/wildlife), energy
 - Possible new projects to address Resource Concerns.
- Is there any new practices/ enhancements NRCS should consider cost sharing?
 - Which ones work well in your area? Which ones do not work well in your area?
- Are there new technologies NRCS should consider using/ cost sharing?
- What are the barriers to participation in NRCS programs in your area?
- What can NRCS improve upon?

What is your Locally Lead Project?



Information gathered from FY22 LWG showed strong interest in locally lead conservation projects to be completed within conservation districts.



For FY23 NRCS developed Locally Lead fund pools in EQIP across all 21 Resource Team areas



Information was used from the past year's local LWG meeting to develop ranking questions and criteria in the area the conservation district serves



Help NRCS improve upon this effort: What is your locally lead conservation project, area of interest, resource concerns to be treated, and what conservation practices are needed.

Local Work Groups

CONCERN #1 – Water Quality and Quantity: Inefficient irrigation systems, salinity/selenium loading, drought resiliency, inadequate supply structures

TREATMENT #1 - More efficient irrigation systems, efficiency control, use of gated pipe and surge valves, sediment reduction, higher technology/automation of systems, soil moisture monitoring/ IWM, system optimization (on and off farm).

CONCERN #2 – Soil Health: Organic matter depletion, concentration of salts & sediments in soils, soil compaction.

TREATMENT #2 – Cover crops, no-till, soil enrichment/process, grazing management.

LIMITATIONS IDENTIFIED: Lack of education/outreach and awareness; political and social issues; participation limitations; cost of implementation/cost benefit ratio; prohibitive cost sharing; incentives rates and electricity rates; mistrust of government; timeline limitations (cultural surveys, applications, funding timelines, wait lists).

New Technologies: Virtual fencing, bioreactors, solar and hydro power

Concern #1

Water Quality and Quantity

NRCS Practices Certified and Installed in 2022

- 38,476 feet of Underground Irrigation Pipe
- 17 Irrigation Structures



Concern #1

Water Quality and Quantity

NRCS Practices Certified and Installed in 2022



- **116 feet of Gated Pipe**
- **226 acres of Installed Irrigation Systems**
- **559 acres of Irrigation Water Management**
- **4540 acres of Wildlife Habitat Improvement**
- **38,476 feet of Underground Irrigation Pipe**



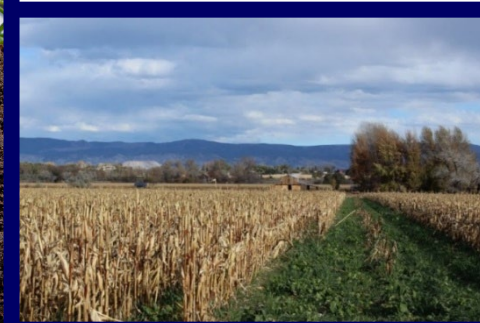
Concern #2

Soil Health

In 2022



- 25 landowners planted cover crops.
- More than 1,000 acres were planted in cover crops; more than 550 acres in multi-species seed mixes.
- 15 producers practiced minimum till using 4 different methods.
- 17 soil samples were taken for testing and each landowner provided with results and recommendations.



Concern #2

Soil Health

BENEFITS OF COVER CROPS:

- Better tilth
- Higher organic matter
- Improved soil biology
- Increased moisture holding and capacity
- Increased nutrient holding
- Reduced erosion
- Better infiltration

BENEFITS OF MINIMUM TILL:

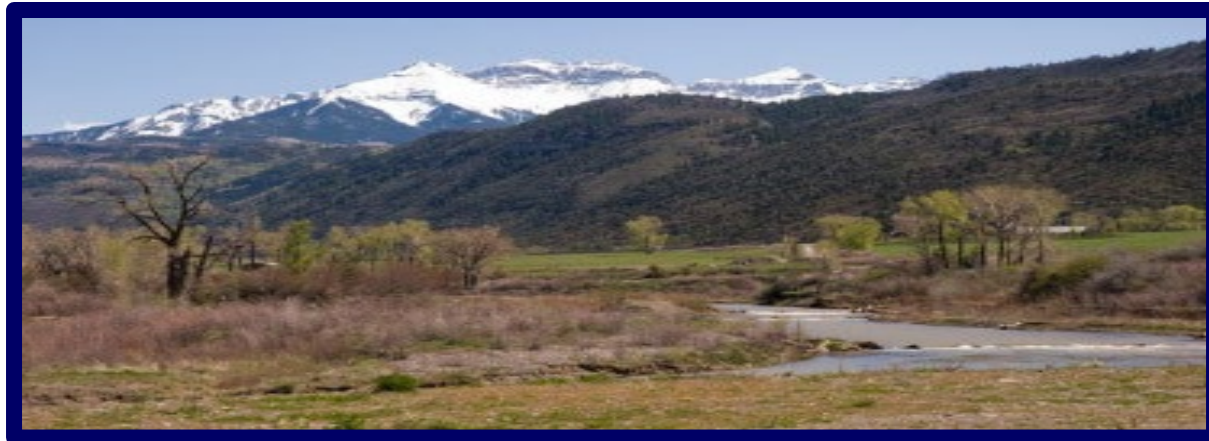
- Soil surface covered in residue
 - Decreases erosion
 - Increases soil organic matter
 - Increases water infiltration
 - Alters surface energy balance
- Reduced operations costs
- Improved soil tilth
- Better Infiltration



Salinity Control Program

NRCS Contracts Completed in 2022

- 61 contracts were completed.
- 33 new contracts written.
- 51,693 acres were affected.
- 1,218 tons of salt were kept from entering waterways.
- \$1,869,908 in cost-share dollars were injected into this Valley's economy.



Thank you for your
feedback and
assistance in building
FY24 program
delivery and
administration



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