



WINTER 2021  
VOLUME 24  
ISSUE 4

# Shavano District

# Winter News

SERVING MONTROSE, GUNNISON, OURAY, AND SAN MIGUEL COUNTIES

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## Western Colorado Soil Health Events

The Western Colorado Soil Health Committee has been meeting monthly now for 8 years, planning several activities each year that provide education and outreach to both the ag and non-ag community.

These activities include the annual Soil Health Conference, Soil Health tours and field days, and exchanging information about the basics of soil health practices to anyone interested. There are numerous farmers in the Tri-County area that have experimented for the last 20 or more years doing practices such as cover crops and minimum tillage to take advantage of cost savings in fuel, along with building organic matter and resilience to drought and insects, and to provide a source of grazing for cattle during those periods of very high hay costs. The Soil Health Committee seeks to get farmer-to-farmer exchange of practices that have worked and those that have not worked with the goal of keeping more of the farmers and ranchers in business during these times of tight margins, decreasing water supplies, and increasing real estate prices/land rental.

The fall Cover Crop Tour was held November 10th on four farms in the Spring Creek and Olathe areas. Agoro Carbon Alliance and the Soil Health Committee sponsored a bus and snacks for 52 attendees. Steve Woodis, former biologist and Wildlife Planner for the Montrose NRCS narrated the stops at John Harold's farm on Spring Creek (farmed by Jordan Frigetto), David Harold's organic farm west of Olathe, Robert Contreras sweet corn field near Olathe, and a cover crop with surge irrigation south of Olathe owned by Charles Greenacre. Many positive comments about the practices and plants involved were noted. The practices of cover crops varied from field to field and crop to crop. They involved using both no-till drills and broadcast seed by Producers COOP for seeding the covers after sweet corn, inter-seeding in corn, and rejuvenating a pasture that had a real problem with foxtail grass weed, using surge irrigation to keep the water-loving weed at bay along with the triticale-dominated 6 way cover crop to break up the hard pan and increase drainage while providing competition for the foxtail.



**FEBRUARY 26, 2022**

**7:30am-5:00pm**

NEW LOCATION

**Montrose Pavilion**

1800 E Pavilion Pl, Montrose, CO 81401



**Marlon Winger**  
USDA—NRCS  
Regional Soil Health Specialist



**Dale Strickler**  
Green Cover Seed  
Agronomist

Early Registration (until Feb. 11)	\$40
Virtual Conference	\$40
In-Person Conference Registration (after Feb. 11)	\$50
College Student Rate (with Valid ID)	\$20

<http://www.westerncoloradosoilhealth.org/>

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## Cultivating Farmers and Ranchers That Thrive

Valley Food Partnership has started taking applications for a new project, in partnership with Holistic Management International and Food Systems-Colorado State University, focused on providing new farmers and ranchers with holistic management classes, water conservation lessons with the Shavano Conservation District, soil health training, mentorship and internship opportunities with local experienced farmers, and support finding land access.

The Cultivating Farmers and Ranchers that Thrive (CFRT) Program is committed to helping Hispanic, low-income, veterans, and specialty crop producers find a place in agriculture. These populations oftentimes find it hard to break into the business and we are committed to help remove barriers of entry.

If you are interested in learning more about the CFRT Program please contact the Program Manager at [cally@valleyfoodpartnership.org](mailto:cally@valleyfoodpartnership.org). You can apply through the link on our website:

<https://www.valleyfoodpartnership.org/cultivating-farmers-and-ranchers-that-thrive>

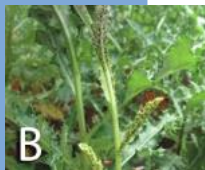
You can also learn more about Valley Food Partnership at [www.valleyfoodpartnership.org](http://www.valleyfoodpartnership.org).



Gall Wasp on Russian Knapweed

## Watershed Teams Up to Fight Thistle/Knapweed

This spring the Gunnison-Dolores Watershed will be partnering with the Palisade Insectary to set-up experimental plots to control Canada Thistle and Russian Knapweed. The Palisade Insectary develops and distributes safe and effective biological controls for non-native weed and insect pests. The Director of the Insectary is very excited about this project and working with conservation districts within the Gunnison-Dolores Watershed, which include Delta CD, Shavano CD, and Gunnison CD. Ken Lipton, President of the Shavano CD, feels there is a big potential for the program and states, “I feel this will be a pilot program that can spread to Districts around the state.” The watershed association will be meeting with the Insectary the first or second week in January to begin planning experimental plots and their locations. The Insectary will set-up the experiments and provide field personnel to monitor the studies.



Rust Fungus on Canadian Thistle

## SCD Awarded 2022 CSCB Matching Grant

In July SCD submitted an application to the Colorado State Conservation Board for a water education grant. Our request for the CSCB Matching Grant was approved! We ranked 3rd out of 30 applications submitted. Shavano Conservation District will receive \$10,092 to be used to educate adults and students on the importance of water conservation and reducing non-point source pollution through events and classroom activities. Anticipated events in 2022 include a fall cover crop tour and the 4th grade Natural Resource Festival.



Fall Cover Crop Tour, Nov. 10, 2021

Under the Colorado Department of Agriculture, the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) is comprised of Conservation District representatives from Colorado’s 10 watersheds and provides guidance to the Department of Agriculture for disbursing state grant funds and direct assistance to the Conservation Districts; develops training tools for long and short term planning, budgeting, and laws pertaining to local governance; and performs as a board of appeals for landowners appealing Conservation District activities. The CSCB also facilitates local conservation programs that improve soil health, water quality, water conservation, wildlife habitat, forest health, plant communities and energy conservation.

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## Cover Crop Corner:

### Western Colorado Soil Health Events



Fall Cover Crop Tour, Nov. 10, 2021

Later in November, 10 members of our committee attended a field day hosted by two farmers and seed dealers in the Grand Valley near Fruita. There were over 100 participants in attendance at this field day. The first stop was at Mark King's 29-acre field that was currently being mob-grazed by 140 yearling calves in 1-acre paddocks. The field previously had been planted with barley, then seeded with a 17-way cover crop in August after barley harvest. The field has not been plowed in 5 years, the rows are maintained by a row cleaner and marker owned and designed by Lowell King.

The group watched as the 3 foot tall cover paddock was moved with hot wires on portable spools and step-in posts. The cattle practically moved themselves to help themselves to the fresh greens. The cattle owner commented that the previous herd of yearlings exceeded two pound per day of gain and had a cost of \$.67 per pound of gain. His goal is 2.5 lbs./day this year. A herd of 80 cows came in behind the calves to finish grazing the cover. After a strip is grazed down for the length of the field, Mark seeds cereal rye at 120 lbs. per acre to establish a winter cover that will provide even more pasture or grass hay the following April before being sprayed with Round-Up and plans to no-till seed with field corn in May 2022. Mark estimates that the previous cover crop reduces his nitrogen application by 1/3 and his phosphorus application entirely. The soil biology activated by the high-fungal seed mix activate and covert phosphorus that has existed in the soil for many years.

The afternoon stop was at Lowell King's farm three miles north of Mark's field. When Lowell bought this field several years back, it had not been farmed for several years and had a high amount of weed seed. Lowell has used continuous crops of corn followed by cereal rye-based covers to rebuild the soil and clean up the weeds. The area NRCS soil scientist, Chuck Peacock, dug a pit at the edge of the field to show the rooting depth, reduced soil compaction, and soil structure improvement in just three years. Lowell also explained how his row cleaner and 14' Esch no-till drill works and ran it in the field for the group to see.

Lowell King has been the catalyst for many of the Grand Valley farmers to try the soil health practices and noted that he has enough feed to graze his 80 cows year-around on his various cover crop fields and now sells his alfalfa and corn, that he previously fed to the cows, for cash crops. Lowell has also been a keynote speaker at our last two Western Colorado Soil Health Conferences and will speak again on this year's agenda, as well as being on a farmer panel.

The 12th annual Western Colorado Soil Health Conference will be held in Montrose on February 26, 2022 at the Montrose Pavilion. Keynote speakers include Dale Strickler and Marlon Winger. Both men are well-known in the mid-west in all phases of cover crops and minimum tillage protocols. Fourteen other local and regional speakers will also speak on many break-out sessions during the day. The Conference is still seeking more sponsors and businesses. We already have exceeded last years' and expect 200 or more participants. It will be offered both in-person and Virtual for 2022. To see the agenda, speakers and topics, as well as to register for the 2022 Conference, visit [westerncoloradosoilhealth.org](http://westerncoloradosoilhealth.org).



Dale Strickler





# Agriculture Conference Focuses on ‘Farming in the New World’

Montrose, CO December 6, 2021

The Western Colorado Food and Farm Forum is the Western Slope’s foremost agriculture conference, with 2022 marking the 10th annual event. The Forum has a rich history of bringing together farmers, ranchers, and agriculture advocates to benefit from networking and agri-business workshops focusing on drought resiliency, innovations in crop, soils, livestock and financial management practices.

Hannah Gosnell, PH.D., a professor with Oregon State University, will be this year’s keynote speaker. Gosnell’s research focuses on agricultural landscape changes, rural sustainability, land, and water conservation from a social-ecological systems perspective. Most of her projects have taken place on rural, agriculture working landscapes focusing on a belief that collaborative and interdisciplinary solutions to conservation challenges must involve all affected stakeholders to be more durable. Gosnell’s keynote will address, “Coerced Regimes? Irrigated Agriculture in the 21st Century US West.”

Friday morning, Valley Food Partnership together with Libby Christensen, Mitch Bennett and Shawn Gardener will be leading a workshop that will report on and demonstrate the work of their USDA Regional Food Systems Partnership planning grant. The format will be a highly experiential series of role play exercises that will mimic interaction on the digital communications and trading platform being planned with the grant. Participants will practice capacity-building models of collaborative decision

making and action that will be used in the future digital platform. This workshop will give everyone an understanding of the purpose, processes, principles, and value of digitizing our regional food value chain.

Whether you’re a farmer, rancher, or simply interested in better food, Kris Nichols’ talk, “Regenerating Soil with Soil Biology,” will be sure to draw you in. By taking a systems

approach to regenerate soils through soil biology, farmers will increase resilience and profitability by maximizing nutrient and water use efficiencies to regenerate soils. Dive deep into the six principles of soil health and how integrating these practices can help address fertility, pest and disease issues while increasing nutritive quality. Dr. Kris Nichols is a Soil Microbiologist with over 25 years of research experience studying arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi. Kris builds upon a soil health foundation to identify biological methods for agricultural production and tools and practices to reduce pest issues, soil erosion, fossil fuel use, and greenhouse gas emissions.

There’s no easy answer to water concerns in the west.

We’re excited to announce a new kind of water conversation at this year’s Western Colorado Food and Farm Forum. Water experts will be role playing positions on Colorado’s conflicting water priorities in order to generate innovative solutions for our collective future. Speakers will include Andy Mueller (CO River District), Brad Wind (Northern Water), Becky Mitchell (CWCB), Alex Davis (Aurora Water), Paul Bruchez (Rancher), and Sean Cronin



Registration  
foodfarmforum.org



Alpine Bank  
Member FDIC



## WEBINAR: Wildfire Protection Planning & Mitigation, Jan. 6

**T**hursday, January 6, 2022. 11:00 am – Noon.

Presenter: Cindy Williams, Volunteer Coordinator of Envision Chaffee County. Cindy will explain how Chaffee County prioritized its natural resource concerns – including wildfire risks – and utilized planning and modeling to implement cost-effective treatment in the most vulnerable areas.

What you'll learn about:

- Community Wildfire Protection Plan basics
- The planning process, including outreach
- Funding sources utilized
- How wildfire modeling identified areas where forest treatment is most cost-effective
- AND - how Chaffee County is working to protect agricultural land from development



Register at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwkcOuvqDsjG9Pkpt-SyiCJng5R5WrYVOKl>

To prepare your computer or mobile device in advance, download the Zoom App at: <https://zoom.us/download>

Otherwise, you will be prompted to download and install Zoom when you join the meeting.

Contact: [phil@brinkinc.biz](mailto:phil@brinkinc.biz) or [erin@coloradocattle.org](mailto:erin@coloradocattle.org) for assistance.

Sponsored by:

CCA Ag Water NetWORK [www.agwaternetnetwork.org](http://www.agwaternetnetwork.org)



**Cont'd from page 4....**

## Agriculture Conference Focuses on 'Farming in the New World'

(St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District).

Additional presentations will include, Ranching with Wolves, Similarities between the Soil and Gut Microbiomes, Colorado River Basin Challenges, Vegetable Breeding by Environmental Context, Weather Ready Farms and Ranches, Running on All Cylinders (a stress management discussion), Produce Safety Tailgate Training, and Bringing Bees to your Operation. For a complete list of topics visit: [foodfarmforum.org](http://foodfarmforum.org).

Join us Friday at 5:30pm in 2Rascals Brewery (147 N 1st St Montrose, CO) for a Chili Dinner Social Event, being catered by the Montrose High School Catering Team. Friendly faces, great conversations, food and libations. Then help wrap up the forum with a Saturday post conference Happy Hour from 6:30-8:30pm, location and time to be decided.

We look forward to seeing you in person January 21-22, 2022!

The Valley Food Partnership, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, CSU Extension, ENGAGE, the Valley Organic Growers Association, Coldharbour Institute, and Shavano Conservation District organize the conference collaboratively. Scholarships are available by application to FFA, 4-H, enrolled students, beginning farmers and ranchers through an application process. To register please visit: [foodfarmforum.org](http://foodfarmforum.org) or call Amanda Laban, Event Coordinator at (781) 264-1882.



### Colorado SNOTEL Snow/Precipitation Update Report

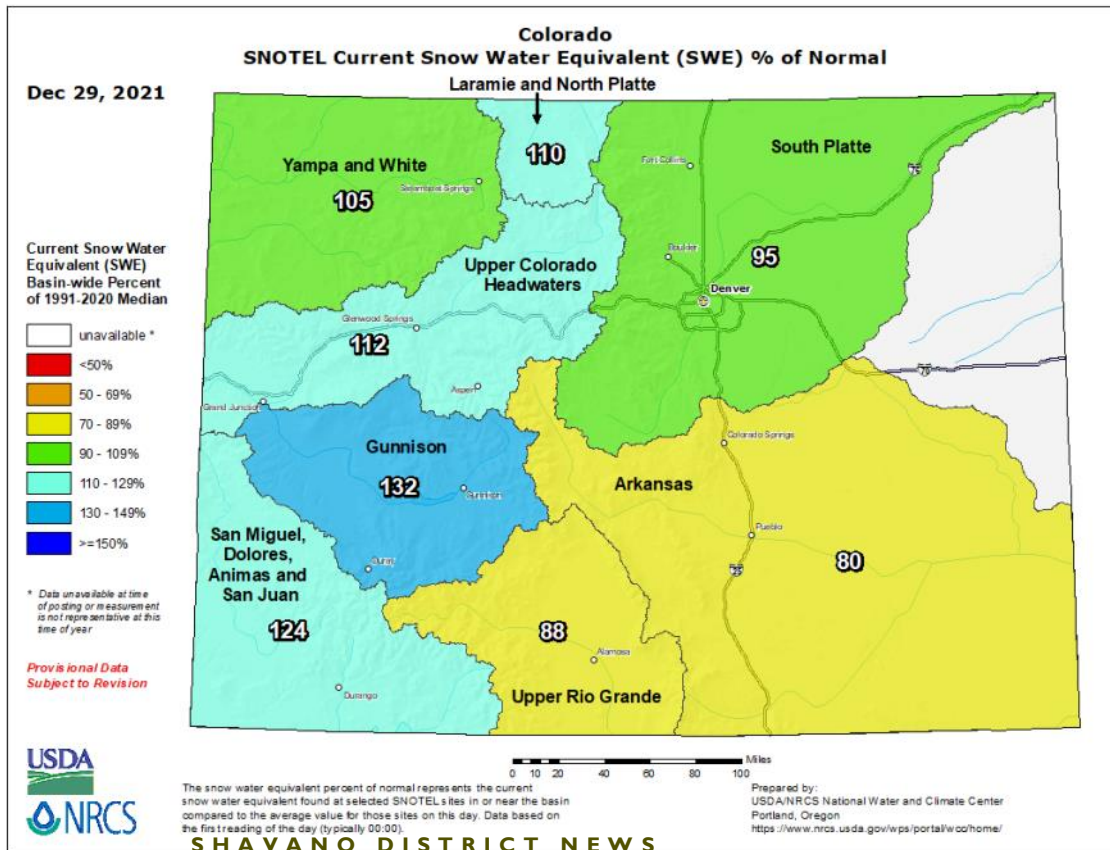
As of MONDAY: DECEMBER 6, 2021

BASIN Data Site Name	ELEV. (Ft)	SNOW WATER EQUIVALENT			TOTAL PRECIPITATION		
		Current	Median	Median %	Current	Average	Avg %
<b>GUNNISON RIVER BASIN</b>							
Butte	10160	7.3	5.2	140	8.2	6.7	122
Cochetopa Pass	10020	.9	1.9	47	2.5	3.4	74
Columbine Pass	9400	10.6	6.0	177	14.0	9.0	156
Idarado	9800	4.7	5.2	90	8.0	8.2	98
Mc Clure Pass	8760	6.7	6.0	112	10.3	9.0	114
Mesa Lakes	10000	9.5	6.2	153	12.5	8.8	142
Overland Res.	9840	6.7	5.0	134	8.7	7.6	114
Park Cone	9600	5.8	4.0	145	6.8	5.3	128
Park Reservoir	9960	17.1	9.4	182	17.9	11.4	157
Porphyry Creek	10760	7.1	6.2	115	8.4	6.2	135
Red Mountain Pass	11200	10.7	9.4	114	12.3	11.2	110
Sargents Mesa	11530	2.5	3.8	66	3.5	5.4	65
Schofield Pass	10700	19.2	12.3	156	20.9	12.5	167
Slumgullion	11560	4.9	6.3	78	5.3	6.6	80
Upper Taylor	10640	7.6	5.3	143	10.8	8.0	135
Wager Gulch	11100	3.0	-M	*	6.0	-M	*
				-----			-----
Basin Index (%)				132			126

-M = Missing data

\* = Data may not provide a valid measure of conditions.

Units = inches for the Current and Normal Snow Water Equivalent and Total Precip. values



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Call  
Mendy Stewart  
at 970-964-3582  
or email to  
mendy.stewart@co.nacdnet.net



# USDA SERVICE CENTER CONTACT INFORMATION

## FARM SERVICE AGENCY

970-249-8407

Direct Phone

**MIKE STEFFEN**, District Director      964-3590  
**NATALIE PARKER**, County Exec. Dir.      964-3589  
**JO TRICE**, Program Technician      964-3572  
**DEBBIE STEWART**, Program Technician      964-3571



### MONTROSE-GUNNISON-OURAY COUNTY COMMITTEE

**BRYAN DISTEL**, Chairperson  
**CHERRI COOPER**, Vice Chairperson  
**ERNE ETCHART**, Regular Member  
**SARAH MCCONNELL**, Regular Member  
**TYLER HANSON**, Regular Member



## HOW TO CONTACT US

**Montrose USDA Service Center**  
 102 Par Place, Montrose, CO 81401  
**PHONE (970) 249-8407**

Phone Extension

Farm Service Agency.....2  
 Natural Resources Conservation Service.....3  
 Shavano Conservation District.....3

## COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE



Web Site: [csfs.colostate.edu](http://csfs.colostate.edu)

### MONTROSE FIELD OFFICE—970-249-9051

*(Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel Counties)*

New Address - 535 S Nevada Ave, Montrose	Phone Extension
<b>JODI RIST</b> , Supervisory Forester jodi.rist@colostate.edu	132
<b>AUSTIN SHELBY</b> , Forester austin.shelby@colostate.edu	133
<b>SCOTT JOHNSON</b> , Forester scott.johnson2@colostate.edu	127
<b>TANYA BANULIS</b> , Forester tanya.banulis@colostate.edu	129
<b>AMARA ROSE</b> , Forest Technician amara.rose@colostate.edu	

### GUNNISON FIELD OFFICE - 970-641-6852

*(Gunnison and Hinsdale Counties)*

106 Maintenance Drive, Gunnison, CO 81230  
**SAM PANKRATZ**, Supervisory Forester  
**MIKE TARRANTINO**, Forester

## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

970-249-8407



Direct Phone

**AMANDA JAMES**, Soil Conservationist      964-3580  
**CARMA EDGELL**, Program Support Specialist      964-3576  
**CASEY HARRISON**, Resource Conservationist      964-3577  
**DESTRY SEILER**, Ag Engineer Project Leader      964-3595  
**JAMISON JEWKES**,  
 Montrose/Gunnison Resource Team Lead      964-3588  
**JEFF LONG**, Ag Engineer Project Leader      964-3586  
**JEREMY OMVIG**, Cultural Resource Specialist      964-3593  
**JERRY ALLEN**, Shavano IWM Specialist      964-3575  
**MARISSA MARKUS**, Soil Conservationist      964-3581  
**NANCY DEANS**, Program Support Assistant      964-3570  
**SARAH ERICKSON**, Soil Conservationist      964-3578



## SHAVANO CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Website: [www.shavano.cd.org](http://www.shavano.cd.org)

Direct Phone

**KEN LIPTON**, President      626-3951  
**LANNY DENHAM**, Vice President      323-5461  
**ROXI STEWART**, Secretary/Treasurer      249-0706  
**EDWARD ATENCIO**      303-898-5855  
**JACK BRUNGARDT**      249-5081  
**SHELLY MCLAUGHLIN-MALISH**      424-4451  
**STEVE HALE**  
**CARL MCKINNEY**  
**PENNY BISHOP**, Manager      964-3584  
**MENDY STEWART**, Education Coordinator      964-3582



## WEST REGION WILDFIRE COUNCIL

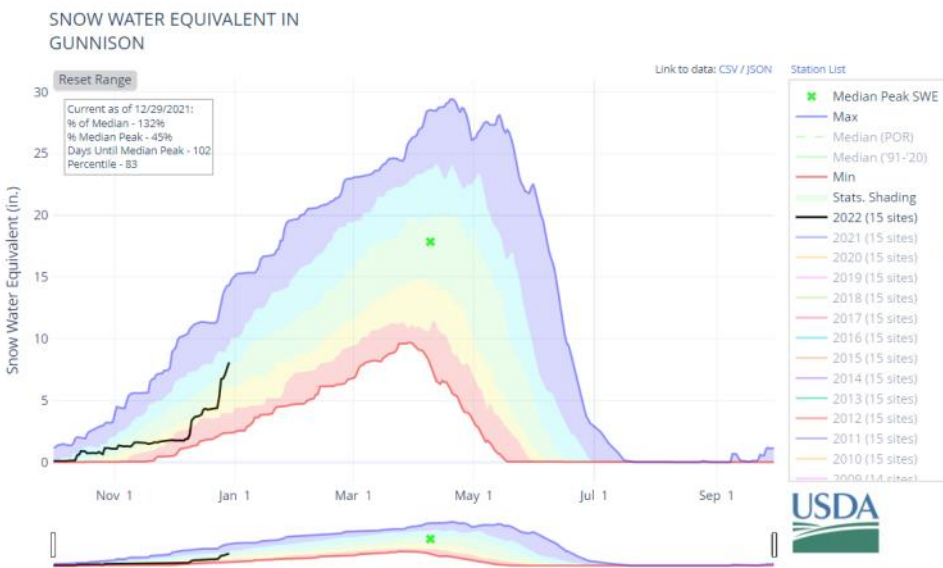
Phone 970-615-7300    [www.cowildfire.org](http://www.cowildfire.org)

**New Address - 510 S Cascade Ave, Montrose**

**LILIA FALK**, Director of Finance & Agreements      Lilia.Falk@COwildfire.org  
**JAMIE GOMEZ**, Executive Director      Jamie.Gomez@COwildfire.org  
**ROB MCCANN**, GIS/IT      Rob..Mccann@cowildfire.org  
**COURTNEY HAYNES**      Courtney.Haynes@COwildfire.org  
 Wildfire Mitigation Specialist - Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray,  
 and San Miguel Counties

# Dates to Remember

December 14, 2021	Shavano CD Board Meeting 6:30pm
December 25, 2021	Christmas Day—Office Closed
January 1, 2022	FSA Newly Elected FSA County Committee Members Take Office
January 1, 2022	New Year's Day—Office Closed
January 11, 2022	Shavano CD Board Meeting 6:30pm
January 17, 2022	Martin Luther King Jr. Day—Office Closed
January 20, 2022	Cultivating Farmers and Ranchers that Thrive (CFRT) Program Kick-Off
Jan 21-22, 2022	Western Colorado Food and Farm Forum, Montrose Pavilion
February 5-6, 2022	CFRT Holistic Management Institute Course
February 8, 2022	Shavano CD Board Meeting 6:30pm
February 21, 2022	President's Day - Office Closed
February 26, 2022	Western Colorado Soil Health Conference, Montrose Pavilion
March 5-6, 2022	CFRT Holistic Management Institute Course
March 8, 2022	Shavano CD Board Meeting 6:30pm
April 2-3, 2022	CFRT Holistic Management Institute Course
April 12, 2022	Shavano CD Board Meeting 6:30pm



## Advertise with the Shavano District News

If you have a business that you would like to advertise in the SCD News, contact Mendy Stewart at 970-964-3582 for more information and rates.



## Cont'd from Pg. 2...SCD Awarded 2022 CSCB Matching Grant

The CSCB Natural Resources Matching Grants Program is open to all Colorado Conservation districts that meet minimum standards as required by state statute and the CSCB, to help Districts implement private lands on-the-ground conservation projects, and educational conservation activities through matching state funds. A few of the other programs around the state that were awarded funds were school garden programs, windbreak and living fence programs, and irrigation water efficiency improvements.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individuals' income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of Discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).

**Reasonable accommodations will be made, upon request, for individuals with disabilities, vision impairment, or hearing impairment to attend or participate in meetings or events sponsored by the Farm Service Agency. If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in one of our meetings/events/functions, please call the FSA county office and we will be happy to make any needed arrangements.**