



Colorado Conservator

Colorado Association of Conservation Districts

Mastering Partnerships, Collaboration and Deliverables

By Katlin Miller, District Manager, Middle Park Conservation District

The Middle Park Conservation District (MPCD) includes both Grand and Summit Counties in the high mountain valleys of the Rockies. The Board of Supervisors prides itself on serving its landowners through its acronym: MPCD. In fact, the official tagline of the District is

Motivating landowners to Pursue, Commit, and Deliver on-the-ground conservation practices.

Furthermore, the District has been working diligently over the last few years Mastering Partnerships, Collaborations and Deliverables. The Board of Supervisors understands that the District alone cannot provide all of the conservation-related services required by its constituents. However, by working together with other conservation organizations in the community, we can do much more than we could do on our own.

Like most conservation districts, our partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is longstanding and unwavering. In fact, this year, for the first time ever, MPCD has a District Conservation Technician. Our landowners are very appreciative of the collaborative effort between NRCS and the Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) that has allowed us this opportunity. Nevertheless, NRCS is just one of our many partners. Each of our District's six resource concerns lends itself to a wealth of collaborations. Here we detail just a few our most successful and strongest collaborations.

Under our Noxious Weeds resource concern, the Middle Park Conservation District has partnered with Grand County Division of Natural Resources (DNR) and Summit County Weed Department on various educational

programs and guides. This year, we are working with Grand County DNR on a Noxious Weed Management Cost-Share Program in the Old Park Subdivision near Kremmling. The program is being funded by a Matching Grant from the Colorado Department of Agriculture. We

also worked with Grand County DNR on a new educational publication called Noxious Weed Management Guide of Grand County. We are in the process of partnering with the Middle Park Habitat Partnership Program (HPP) to publish the booklet. A *Noxious Weed Management Guide of Summit County* is also in the works.



It is under our Forests and Wildfire resource concern that some of our strongest collaborations are found. Like many other conservation districts, the District works closely with the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery to provide tree seedlings and perennials at discounted rates to landowners in our service area. Additionally, two years ago, the District joined the Grand County Wildfire Council, a local 501(c)(3) dedicated to wildfire prevention, preparedness and survival. The Wildfire Council, with the assistance of several partner organizations including the Middle Park Conservation District, has successfully completed five Community Chipping Days, a Fuels Reduction Cost-Share Program, and several educational pieces.

The Colorado State Conservation Board (CSCB) is definitely one of our best collaborators. From 2013-2016, CSCB funded the Middle Park Conservation District's Irrigation Cost-Share Program through its Matching Grant Program. During that time, 40 projects were completed in Grand and Summit Counties for a combined total of \$85,245.72 in cost-share funds. We did not receive matching grant funds through CSCB in 2017, but the District has been seeking ways to fund our Irrigation Cost-

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Share Program through another local organization this year. We hope to seal the deal in the next few weeks.

Finally, our Wildlife Conservation efforts focus mostly on wildlife habitat improvements. Through a partnership with the Middle Park Habitat Partnership Program (HPP), we have been able to provide agriculture producers in Grand and Summit Counties with free clover and alfalfa seed for eight consecutive years. The seed helps increase forage quantity and quality for both livestock and wildlife. In most years, the seed is given away in the form of a 50lb sack to approximately 40 different landowners. However, in 2007 and 2014, the Middle Park Conservation District was able to coordinate an Aerial Clover Seeding. In 2014, we put down 11,350 pounds of clover seed on 2,800 acres (364 linear miles). The total project cost \$41,920, but thanks to the contributions of seven different entities and several other donations, we were able to do the seeding free-of-charge on 150 different landowner properties.

To conclude, the Middle Park Conservation District is proud to serve the residents of Grand and Summit Counties through its connections and collaborations with other conservation organizations in the area. After all, Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

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NACD 2017: Healthy Soils Are Full of Life!

Submitted by Gary Thrash

The theme for the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) poster contest this year once again reflects upon the importance of educating children about the essential role soils play in having a healthy environment. The annual NACD and NACD Auxiliary Poster Contest provides students from kindergarten through 12th grade the chance to have their art displayed as part of a national conservation outreach initiative.

Each year, the winning posters reflect NACD's annual Stewardship theme, and highlight the work of conservation districts and their state conservation associations, auxiliaries and agencies to protect and enhance natural resources. The contest starts at the district level; winners advance to the state level, and then to the national level, where they receive recognition at NACD's Annual Meeting.

The poster contest is open to public, private and home-schooled students. The NACD web page has great material available for teachers and conservation

districts to download for free. Crucial to the success of our contest in Colorado is to have committed leadership at the local districts and schools who encourage students in submitting artwork for local competition. Successful posters from local competition are then presented for judging at the Colorado Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting held at the end of November 2017. All poster submissions must be sponsored by your local conservation district. Competition rules are found on the NACD Stewardship and Education web page stewardship-and-education-materials/2017-healthy-soils/.

