



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Nevada

2010 Annual Report of Accomplishments



Sustaining Agriculture and Local Communities by Implementing the 2008 Farm Bill

Working Together to Protect Wildlife and Improve the Land

Two central Nevada ranchers are restoring sage-grouse habitat on public land, thanks to technical and financial assistance through the NRCS Sage-Grouse Initiative (SGI). The project is part of the Nevada Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategy. Within the next 5 years, pinyon and juniper trees will be removed from approximately 570 acres of key sage-grouse habitat on the east and west sides of the Desatoya Mountains. The trees hinder sage-grouse movement from spring to summer range. Removing the trees will provide a connection between the seasonal habitats. Planned work is a cooperative effort between two privately owned and operated cattle ranches, the Bureau of Land Management, and the NRCS.

The rancher on the east side of the mountains has restored sage-grouse habitat on 150 acres of private land over the last eight years. Land treated includes degraded riparian areas and upland rangeland. Funding available through the EQIP SGI is providing an opportunity to expand pinyon and juniper treatment to adjacent public land which is an important part of the rancher's ongoing effort to restore important wildlife habitat and sustain an economically viable cattle operation. Restoration efforts are the product of a close working relationship between the rancher, Nevada Department of Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Division of Forestry, and NRCS.

The rancher on the west side of the mountains will remove pinyon and juniper trees that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) identified for treatment several years ago. The BLM has begun treatment on some of the identified acres. Now with EQIP funding, the rancher is able to continue the work the BLM started. ↪

Conserving Water and Increasing Productivity

Art Villalobos installed a new, high-efficiency irrigation system on his farm in northern Humboldt County that is increasing his crop production and saving water. His previous gated pipe irrigation system was about 60 percent efficient. The new pivot irrigation system is about 90 percent efficient, saving approximately 250 acre feet of water.

Villalobos also likes the fact that he doesn't have to manually adjust the irrigation system. "It's all done electronically, which frees me up to work on other things," he said.

Villalobos worked with the NRCS office in Winnemucca to install the new system. Engineering Technician Bill Pellersels evaluated the old irrigation system and made recommendations on how Villalobos could save water and energy by installing the new system. NRCS provided cost-share assistance under the 2008 Farm Bill.

Villalobos, along with his father and brothers, grows alfalfa hay on several properties in Humboldt County. This is the second high efficiency irrigation system they have installed and he plans to install more. ↪





Tribal Farmer Raises Native Seed High Tunnels Help Local Citizens

A farmer in Douglas County is really pleased with the results from the high tunnel he installed, thanks to financial assistance under the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program. He installed the high tunnel, or “hoop house”, in the summer of 2010 to ward off the first frost the area typically receives in mid-September. The high tunnel was very effective and extended the growing season to mid-November, enabling the farmer to harvest vegetables for additional weeks. In addition, the farmer improved the soil with compost and did not use any commercial fertilizers or pesticides.

The 2011 growing season will be even more impressive since the high tunnel will be used in the spring and fall. The landowner gave much of the extra produce to his employees and to a local food bank, extending the benefits to the community of the Carson Valley.

Five more high tunnels funded by AMA are scheduled to be installed in 2011. These will further benefit the communities in Douglas and Washoe Counties by providing fresh locally grown food. ↪

A pilot project to grow native riparian grasses on existing agricultural land is having terrific results. High Desert Resource Conservation and Development, Inc. partnered with Harter Farms, a grower on the Ft. Mojave Indian Reservation near Needles, Calif. A five-acre field was planted with 25,000 plugs of alkali sacaton in April 2010, and the first crop of seed was harvested in November.

The first shipment of seed material was cleaned, producing 101 pounds of seed. The seed will be used by the Bureau of Land Management to restore land on the Virgin River following salt cedar removal. Harter Farms will begin growing a second grass species, alkali scratchgrass, during the spring of 2011.

High Desert is looking for new growers in the Mojave Desert of Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah to participate in a pilot project. Call Teri Knight, RC&D Coordinator, at (702) 262-9047 x 108 if you’re interested. ↪



Creating Healthy Communities

For the second year, the Great Basin Plant Materials Center in Fallon has planted a People’s Garden as part of the national USDA program. This year, the People’s Garden featured a “Three Sisters” system of corn, beans, and squash planted together in the way of the Native Americans in the Southwest.

The People’s Garden provides a way to teach vegetable production and offers a place for members of the community to gain hands-on experience in gardening. Eric Eldredge, GBPMC Manager, also conducted demonstrations of furrow and drip microirrigation systems.

All vegetables produced in the People’s Garden are donated to charitable organizations. Pictured on the left are Gary Pope-Sears, the Pastor of Epworth United Methodist Church in Fallon, accepting a donation of produce from the People’s Garden for the Daily Bread Kitchen from Jennifer Hesselgesser, NRCS, and Jessie Eckert, Lahontan/Stillwater Conservation District. ↪

Nevada NRCS Conservation Financial Assistance

During Fiscal Year 2010 (Oct. 1, 2009 - Sept. 30, 2010)

FARM BILL PROGRAM	COST SHARE OBLIGATED	NUMBER OF CONTRACTS	ACRES TREATED
Agricultural Management Assistance	\$789,156	20	1,113
Conservation Stewardship Program	\$300,124	17	23,829
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	\$7,546,093	101	85,410
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	\$5,292,500	5	
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	\$798,987	10	3,812
Totals	\$14,726,860	153	114,164

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