

Colorado Water Conservation Board
"Protecting Irrigated Agricultural Lands and Water Rights for Agricultural Production"
Mancos Valley Resources, Grant Recipient
WSRA Grant Report
June 29, 2012

This Grant Report summarizes the work completed under the Water Supply Reserve Account Grant approved for funding in November 2010 and granted a notice to proceed in July 2010. The grant received a one-year extension through June 2012. The grant funding was provided to create a program, or an achievable plan for the creation of a program, which will assist non-profit organizations and local communities in the Southwestern Colorado Basin in conserving irrigated agricultural lands as working agricultural lands (referred to in this Grant Report as the "Project").

Project Background

The stated Objectives of the Grant are:

1. Research existing barriers to conservation of working agricultural lands and solutions to overcoming such barriers.
2. Create a stakeholders group consisting of Southwestern Colorado Basin Roundtable members, farmers, ranchers, and land trusts that will help identify a program to protect irrigated agricultural lands and will assume responsibility for implementing the program in the future.
3. Identify a program, or an achievable plan for the creation of a program, that will result in protecting irrigated agricultural lands for agricultural production in southwestern Colorado and potential funding sources for such program.

A fundamental corollary of the Grant Objectives is to incorporate a method or methods to help new farmers and ranchers access productive irrigated agricultural lands, because protecting agricultural lands for continued production must consider both current needs and future needs.

The Tasks identified by the Grant as necessary to achievement of the Objectives are:

Task #1 - Research the barriers standing in the way of ensuring working lands remain in agricultural production as well as the urgency of the problem of the loss of irrigated working lands from production. Agricultural landowners' needs are researched with respect to conservation of working lands, since no program can succeed without their participation and support. Such research is accomplished through interviews with organizations, such as local land trusts that work to conserve agricultural lands in Southwestern Colorado, as well as interviews with farmers, ranchers and other community members working on agricultural issues.

Task #2 - Research solutions to protecting irrigated agricultural lands and assuring they remain in working agriculture from other parts of the country, including those solutions proposed by land trusts, other nonprofit community organizations and state agencies. This research was important because it may not be necessary to create an entirely new program in southwest

Colorado – research may indicate a program or programs that could be adapted to Colorado’s needs and implemented in the State. Such research was accomplished through Internet and personal interview research on agricultural protection activities around the country, focusing on those that assure lands remain in working agriculture.

Task #3 - Identify and recruit individuals and organizations to join a stakeholders’ group that is willing and able to help craft and implement the program, or the achievable plan for a program (see Task 4), to protect working irrigated agricultural lands.

Task #4 - Working with the stakeholders’ group (see Task 3) identify a program, or an achievable plan for the creation of a program, that will result in protecting irrigated agricultural lands for agricultural production in southwestern Colorado and potential funding sources for such program. Because the funding implications of a program may be difficult to assess, the program may be a pilot program that demonstrates that the expected results can be achieved, which will then serve as a model for a permanent program to protect irrigated agricultural lands.

Task #1 Results

The grant application listed a number of organizations and individuals who would be contacted in order to understand the barriers to ensuring working agricultural lands remain in agricultural use. The final list of people and organizations contacted for Task #1 are on the attached List of Interviewees, Appendix A.

Support for the goals of the Grant Project appears to be significant. According to the Family Farm Alliance (whose mission is to “defend irrigated agriculture”), public support for agricultural water users appears to be strong in Colorado. The Alliance analyzed a survey released in June 2006 by Colorado State University and found it demonstrates strong support for agriculture by average citizens of Colorado. For example, agriculture was seen as the most important economic sector in Colorado, beating out tourism and recreation, high tech industries, and mining and petroleum. Nearly all respondents (96.8%) felt that maintaining agricultural water and land in agricultural production was "very" or "moderately" important.

Interviews conducted for this Project reveal that people cite many reasons for their support for local agriculture, including:

- A desire for healthy and tasty food
- Food security – knowing that food will be available in local communities even in the event of emergencies
- Concerns about relying upon other countries to supply America’s food, as America currently relies upon other countries for the majority of its oil
- Support for agriculture’s economic and cultural benefits: county fairs, farmer’s markets, maintaining businesses that serve agriculture (big animal veterinarians, farm implement dealers)
- Support for the benefits agricultural lands provide in addition to the food and fiber they produce – open space, wildlife habitat, scenic views and community buffers.

The urgency of the problem of the loss of irrigated agricultural lands is not in dispute, according to everyone interviewed for this Project and the most current data available. Between 1999 and 2006 the United States lost 98,000 farms and 23 million acres of farmland, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Colorado loses private agricultural land at the rate of about 30,000 acres per year, or 82 acres per day, according to the latest federal data. Colorado's population, about 5.1 million, is expected to top 8 million by 2035, and population on the Western Slope is predicted to double within the next 40 years. The state has lost about 13 percent of its agricultural land since 1980, with farming and ranching acres decreasing to 31.3 million acres, from 36 million, according to Tom Vesey, a Colorado-based statistician for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Statistics Service. (The figures do not include federal land managed by agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service.) Since 2000, Colorado land used for farming and ranching has decreased by 300,000 acres, Vesey said.¹

“Agriculture uses approximately 80% of all water in the state and is, in general, associated with very senior water rights because its use was first (before cities). Although some think that transfers from agriculture to Colorado’s growing cities seem to make sense, there are significant equity and scale issues. Large water transfers from agriculture threaten the existence of small towns – take away enough farmers and the entire economic fabric of a community can unravel. Agriculture is a proud part of our history, and many people now believe that locally grown food is a desirable goal....While there may be some opportunities for agricultural water use conservation, the truth is that wasteful agricultural water uses is rare; what appears to be wasteful use actually runs to the stream as return flows.”²

Over the next twenty years about 70% of the nation’s private farm and ranchland will change hands, and up to 25% of farmers and ranchers will retire. Two-thirds of the nation’s farm and ranch asset wealth is held in real estate; farm real estate values more than doubled from 2002–2008. Cost, competition and availability of land (and often housing) are major challenges for most beginning farmers. Fewer entrants acquire farms from family members and more entrants come from non-farm backgrounds. Studies show that over two-thirds of retiring farmers do not have identified successors and nearly 90% of farm owners neither have an exit strategy nor knew how to develop one.³

The U.S. has less farmland today than in the past. In the past 25 years, we have lost 171 million acres, following the loss of 73 million acres in the previous 25 years (US Census Bureau 2003; USDA Economic Research Service 2009). This accounts for a 20% reduction in farmland due to development, homes, roads, and forests in just the past 50 years. In addition, we also have 36.7 million acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) (USDA Farm Service Agency 2007). Therefore, there are 281 million fewer farmland acres for new farmers to farm today than were available in 1960⁴.

¹ The Denver Post, 12/9/10, “Colorado Open Space Agency Scoops Up More Land for Preservation”

² From “Water in the Rockies – a 21st Century Zero-sum Game” by Brad Udall, director of the NOAA funded Western Water Assessment, Univ. of Colorado.

³ FarmLASTS Research Report, 2010, <http://www.uvm.edu/farmlasts/>

⁴ Ibid.

Though the number of young farmers is increasing, the average age of farmers nationwide continues to creep toward 60, according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture. That census, administered by the Department of Agriculture, found that farmers over 55 own more than half of the country's farmland.

In response to an aging farming population, the 2008 Farm Bill included a program for new farmers and ranchers. In 2010, the USDA distributed \$18 million to educate young growers across the country. Tom Vilsack, the Secretary of Agriculture, said he hoped some beginning farmers would graduate to midsize and large farms as older farmers retired. "I think there needs to be more work in this area," he said. "It's great to invest \$18 million to reach out to several thousand to get them interested, but the need here is pretty significant. We need to be even more creative than we've been to create strategies so that young people can access operations of all sizes."

The problem, the young farmers say, is access to land and money to buy equipment. Many new to farming also struggle with the basics. But finding mentors has been difficult. There is a knowledge gap that has been referred to as "the lost generation" — people their parents' age may farm but do not know how to grow food. The grandparent generation is no longer around to teach them.⁵

Thus, based upon abundant national and Colorado data, preserving productive irrigated lands is necessary to protect and enhance local food security and the concept must consider how to connect new farmers and ranchers with productive agricultural lands in order to assure continued local food production.

In order to accomplish the first objective of the Grant, Jane Ellen Hamilton and Marie Layton interviewed a broad group of Southwestern Colorado ranchers, farmers, land trust professionals and other interested parties. They identified the following factors as the most cited reasons that irrigated agricultural lands do not remain in active agriculture in our area:

- Economics – it is very difficult to earn a living solely from agriculture
- Lack of children or other parties who wish to continue producing agricultural products on irrigated lands
- Inability of local land trusts to require conserved agricultural lands to remain in production
- Lack of access to good, affordable agricultural lands
- Lack of experience (and knowledge) of agricultural practices held by new farmers/ranchers
- Lack of knowledge on how to prepare business plans, market agricultural products, etc. held by new farmers/ranchers
- Lack of capital for large agricultural purchases (equipment, additional land)
- Aging farmers/ranchers sell water rights to municipalities
- Anti-agriculture government regulation

⁵ *New York Times* story "New Generation of Farmers Emerges in Oregon" 3/5/11.

Although these issues are common across America, the Rocky Mountain region appears to be doing little to address these concerns while organizations in the Northeastern and West Coast parts of the country are working hard to maintain active agriculture in their regions. Leaders in this field include organizations in Maine, Vermont, New York, Oregon and California. Some of the ideas developed elsewhere in the U.S. may prove successful in SW Colorado, while others are not likely to be as successful here, given our differing views of government regulation and private property rights.

Nonprofit, community oriented conservation land trusts work across Southwest Colorado to conserve the area's special lands, including open space, wildlife habitat and agricultural lands. The conservation easements that willing agricultural landowners place upon their lands by working with land trusts who hold such easements are written to keep these lands available for agriculture by prohibiting uses that are inconsistent with productive agricultural use of such lands. Common prohibitions found in agricultural conservation easements include:

- prohibiting the transfer of water rights necessary for agricultural production
- prohibiting, or strictly limiting, subdivision and development
- prohibiting mining or oil and gas development on the surface of the land

The land trusts contacted for this Project to date have not experienced much conversion of lands subject to agricultural conservation easements to "estate lands" or "hobby farms or ranches." The explanation for this is likely due to the fact that most conservation easements in the State of Colorado are no more than 20 years old (and most are quite a bit younger than that) and therefore the original grantors of the conservation easements in most cases continue to own the lands. Conversion of conserved agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses is more likely to occur as successor owners acquire title to these conserved agricultural lands.

Although every land trust contacted for this Project expressed a desire to try to ensure that working agricultural lands remain in agricultural production, they were clear about some of the reasons their respective organizations do not require landowners to keep their land in production through the conservation easements they accept and agree to monitor and enforce in perpetuity. Some of the reasons include:

1. An unwillingness to try to compel a landowner to engage in a potentially unprofitable use of the land;
2. Lack of capacity (technical knowledge and financial/personnel resources) at land trusts to monitor and enforce affirmative obligation to farm or ranch conserved land;
3. Uncertainty about the future of agriculture in Colorado and the United States;
4. Concern that providing equity to a private landowner (through below-cost sales of land or other methods) might violate the charitable purposes limits of federal tax laws governing nonprofit organizations;
5. Potential unenforceability of affirmative obligations in conservation easements to engage in agriculture or lack of authority under state conservation easement enabling statute to include affirmative obligations in conservation easements; and
6. Negative reaction of landowners and their community to attempts to force land to remain in agricultural production.

Land trusts in Southwest Colorado question whether it is appropriate, or even possible, to use conservation easements to compel a landowner to use his or her land in a particular way, such as productive agriculture. On the other hand, land trusts are very interested in pursuing the concept of trying to keep working lands in production, but are not certain how such a result can be accomplished.

Task #2 Report

The losses of productive agricultural lands to other uses and the difficulty new farmers/ranchers have in finding affordable agricultural land is not unique to Colorado. Several attempts are underway to attempt to address this issue, primarily in the Northeastern part of the country, although some land trusts on the West Coast have also started to address this subject. Some of these attempts might be controversial, if not actively opposed, by Colorado agricultural landowners and Colorado land trusts, but other ideas may have some applicability to Colorado.

A summary of some of these ideas includes:

1. Land trusts develop easement restrictions specifically intended to compel, or at least strongly encourage, continued agricultural use of lands conserved with agricultural conservation easements;
2. Land trusts and other nonprofit community organizations acquire agricultural lands and then enter into long-term leases or re-sell them at their agricultural value to landowners who qualify under the respective organization's definition of a "qualified" farmer or rancher;
3. Using the Community Land Trust model (which differs from a conservation land trust), nonprofits acquire title to productive agricultural land, sell the improvements (and the right to build equity from the improvements) to a qualified farmer/rancher while entering into a long-term lease of the land to such farmer/rancher;
4. Land trusts and other nonprofit community organizations are developing programs to assist farmers/ranchers to earn a living in agriculture with the stated goal of assuring productive agricultural lands remain in production; some of these programs include:
 - assistance in developing business and marketing plans
 - assistance in developing farm or ranch land succession plans
 - assistance in securing state and/or federal grants or loans to develop an agricultural operation
 - mentoring programs for new farmers/ranchers
 - acquiring facilities necessary for the profitable operation of farms or ranches which facilities are available to multiple agricultural producers, such as mobile livestock processing facilities, common warehouses for washing and storing vegetable crops, or community farm stands
 - education and outreach to non-agricultural members of communities to build support for local agricultural operations

- creating land-link programs to match retiring agricultural landowners (or landowners who do not themselves engage in agriculture) with new farmers or ranchers (or agricultural producers seeking to expand their operations) either for long-term lease arrangements or acquisition of agricultural land.

A number of organizations, and at least one state, have started programs to try to address this issue, some of which are summarized below:

State of Massachusetts - The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program is a voluntary program which is intended to offer a non-development alternative to farmers and other owners of "prime" and "state important" agricultural land who are faced with a decision regarding the future use and disposition of their farms. Towards this end, the program offers to pay farmers the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of their farmland in exchange for an APR, a permanent restriction (represented by a conservation easement) which precludes any use of the property that will have a negative impact on its agricultural viability. These permanent restrictions often contain an option for the State to purchase the fee interest in the land, valued at its agricultural value, if the landowner proposes to sell his/her land to a non-farmer.

Peconic Land Trust – Working with willing landowners, the land trust places a conservation easement on agricultural land that includes a preemptive right to purchase the fee interest in the land under certain circumstances. This preemptive right causes the value of the restricted farmland to be lowered to its “agricultural value” due to the following:

1. Subsequent sales of the restricted farmland are limited to family members of the owner or other farmers at a price consistent with comparable sales exclusively to farmers;
2. The Trust is the purchaser of last resort if the owner is unable to find a farmer to purchase the restricted farmland;
3. The Trust is required to review all prospective sales to ensure that the guidelines of the preemptive right are fulfilled.

In some cases, the land trust accepts an easement that further reduces the value of the restricted farmland given these additional restrictions:

1. At least 60% of the farmland must be in food production;
2. Up to 40% of the farmland can be in non-food crops (greenhouses, vineyards);
3. Equestrian use of the property is prohibited;
4. If the farmland is fallow for two years, it must be kept available for agricultural use and managed subject to a Natural Resource Conservation Plan.

Vermont Housing and Conservation Board Farm Viability Program - The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board is an independent, state-supported funding agency providing grants, loans and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations, municipalities and state agencies for the development of perpetually affordable housing and for the conservation of important agricultural land, recreational land, natural areas and historic properties in Vermont. VHCB created a Farm Viability Enhancement Program which offers business planning and technical assistance services

to Vermont farmers as part of a statewide effort to improve the economic viability of Vermont agriculture and to keep productive lands in active agriculture. Once a farmer completes the Program, s/he is eligible for grants toward capital expenses or further technical assistance for implementing a business plan.

Maine Farmland Trust – The Trust uses several tools to try to keep Maine’s agricultural lands in production, including purchases of agricultural conservation easements that contain a right of first refusal to buy the fee interest in land at its agricultural value if the landowner wishes to sell the land to a non-farmer and a farm viability program that helps farmers develop business plans, market their agricultural products and plan for succession. Another tool used by MFT is called a Buy/Protect/Sell program through which the land trust buys productive agricultural land, places an agricultural conservation easement on the land and then re-sells the land to a qualified farmer at the land’s agricultural value, retaining an option to purchase if the landowner takes the land out of production or intends to sell the land to a non-farmer. MFT also has a land-link program that matches farmers wishing to sell their land with farmers who wish to buy land and landowners who wish to lease their land with farmers seeking access to agricultural land for rent. MFT created a documentary containing profiles of 8 Maine farmers called “Meet Your Farmer” which it uses as both an education tool and a fundraising tool to fund its Buy/Protect/Sell program.⁶ The land trust states that the film has been very successful in raising awareness of the importance of retaining productive agricultural lands in working agriculture and in raising funds for its agricultural land conservation programs.

Equity Trust, Inc. – a small nonprofit organization that created a program called Preserving Farms for Farmers. The Program's Goals are stated as follows:

- To encourage exploration of alternative approaches to the ownership of land;
- To help local land trusts and others to preserve the affordability of farms for farmers;
- To help local groups increase community access to locally produced food.

Equity Trust’s affordable farm tenure work since 1995 has involved two approaches to ownership – one using long-term ground leases, with farmers owning the improvements; the other using conservation easements containing options to purchase for agricultural value triggered by either a farmer’s wish to sell the land or failure by the farmer to earn more than 50% of his/her adjusted gross income from farm activities for a certain number of consecutive years. The organization has a DVD and Manual (“Preserving Farms for Farmers”) for sale detailing its programs and it also has all Community Land Trust materials developed by the Institute for Community Economics available for sale.

Vermont Land Trust – has a program called Farmland Access. The goal of the Farmland Access Program is to provide farmers with opportunities to purchase or lease affordable farmland so that they can start up or expand agricultural businesses. VLT uses several approaches in its Farmland Access Program, including:

- Purchasing farms and re-selling them;

⁶ www.meetyourfarmer.org

- Connecting people with farms as they come on the market (land-link program);
- Purchasing conservation easements to make farms affordable – VLT uses the purchase of conservation easements to help lower the cost of the land that a farmer faces when purchasing a farm. The land trust seeks funding for the easements from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, foundations, and community members;
- Exercising rights reserved in VLT conservation easements to ensure land continues to be owned by farmers - provisions written into many of VLT's agricultural conservation easements include the right of first refusal or the right to purchase a farm if a potential buyer is a non-farmer. When VLT exercises this option, the land is re-sold at agricultural value to farmers with solid business plans;
- Expanding farm-leasing opportunities;
- Providing technical assistance - in conjunction with some of the approaches outlined above, VLT helps farm seekers secure business planning services through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board Farm Viability Program, and assists in securing appraisal work necessary for land purchases. The land trust also works with farm lenders to evaluate opportunities, help facilitate farmland transactions, and assist farm seekers through the process of purchasing a farm.

Community Land Trusts - One possible program for assuring land remains in productive agriculture is using the Community Land Trust (which differs from a conservation land trust) model of land ownership. In this scenario, a Community Land Trust (CLT) acquires a piece of productive agricultural land and then sells the improvements, coupled with a long-term ground lease, to a qualified farmer/rancher. The farmer or rancher can mortgage his/her ownership interest in the improvements (which include buildings and perennial crops such as orchards) in order to borrow funds for his/her agricultural operations, and the farmer or rancher can build equity by adding to or upgrading the value of the improvements. The farmer or rancher may only sell his/her interest to another farmer or rancher deemed qualified by the CLT. In order to keep the price of land affordable for the CLT, a CLT often tries to sell a conservation easement on the land to a conservation land trust. In some cases, a single CLT-owned parcel of agricultural land can be used to support more than one working agricultural enterprise.

Food Shed Forum – the Forum is envisioned as a gathering of diverse stakeholders interested in strengthening the local food system in the Southwest Basin assembled by and moderated by the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union. RMFU represents family farmers and ranchers in Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico, and is dedicated to sustaining rural communities, to wise stewardship and use of natural resources, and to protection of a safe, secure food supply. RMFU supports its goals through education and legislation, as well as by encouraging the cooperative model for mutual economic benefit. A Food Shed Forum is envisioned as a gathering in which mutual understanding and collaboration occurs; a primary goal is to explore the capacity (challenges and opportunities) of a region's local food system. In locations where there are a number of existing and emergent programs and ideas related to supporting and encouraging local agricultural production such as exists in SW Colorado, a Food Shed Forum would work to bring all of these ideas and citizens together in order to coordinate activities when possible, seek efficiencies by combining resources, learn about the different collaborative efforts and agree upon future steps to seek the common goal of sustaining and encouraging continued local agricultural production.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Restrictions – Some land trusts outside of Colorado are testing new types of conservation easement restrictions in an attempt to not only keep productive agricultural lands available for agriculture but also to try to keep such lands in production. It may be possible to encourage SW Colorado land trusts to adopt some of these agricultural-related restrictions. Some examples of these types of restrictions include:

- strictly limiting the location of future home sites on conserved lands to discourage conversion of working agricultural lands into “estate lands” or “hobby farms/ranches”
- limiting the size of future homes on conserved lands to discourage conversion of working agricultural lands into “estate lands” or “hobby farms/ranches”
- provisions that state that each time that the agricultural land on the conserved land lies fallow for more than two successive years, the landowner is compelled to cooperate with the land trust to maintain the fallow land in an open condition (meaning without trees and brush) and in active agricultural use and to permit access to the fallow land by the land trust and its contractors to crop, mow, or brush-hog the land
- a right of first refusal to buy the land at its agricultural value if the landowner wants to sell to a non-agricultural landowner and/or an option to buy the land at its agricultural value if the landowner does not earn at least 50% of his/her income from agricultural activities (as reported on the landowners Schedule F of his/her income tax return) for three consecutive years.

In addition, a number of land trusts are entering into long-term ground leases on land they own in fee to farmer/ranchers, which leases require agricultural production on the property (Peninsula Open Space Trust, Peconic Land Trust, and Vermont Land Trust). The Peconic Land Trust, the Wyoming Stockgrowers Agricultural Land Trust and the Columbia Land Conservancy have all been approached by retiring farmers who do not have heirs who wish to farm their land and who expressed interest in donating their land to the land trust on the condition the land trust ensure the lands remain in farming or ranching. The land trusts believe such donated lands could be leased at agriculture-friendly rates due to the fact that no funds were expended in acquiring the lands.

Land-link Programs - Some land trusts are starting community land-link programs that actively seek to connect farmers/ranchers seeking land for agricultural production with landowners who have land that is suitable for agriculture, but not actively farmed or who are interested in selling their land. The Maine Farmland Trust operates one of the most successful land-link programs in the U.S. and the Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC) in the Hudson River Valley of New York recently started an innovative program in its service area. (See Report Task #4 for additional information on land-link programs).

Colorado has at least two local land-link programs: one started by the Sustainability Alliance of Southwest Colorado⁷ and one started by Colorado Local Sustainability whose program is called Land Share Colorado⁸. Both of these programs use a simple format of posting land available and the names of those seeking land on a website, with little to no further assistance in linking farmers/ranchers with suitable agricultural land. According to rancher Reeves Brown, a member

⁷ www.sustainableswcolorado.org

⁸ www.landshareco.org

of the board of the Lower Arkansas River Conservation District, the District is starting a land link program itself, connecting older farmers and ranchers in the District with young farmers/ranchers who need access to affordable land. Using state tax credits generated by the donation of a conservation easement on the agricultural land, the District has seen the value of the land reduced to an affordable level for a new farmer/rancher, and has already completed one successful match.

Agricultural Tax Incentives - One idea that seems to be growing in popularity in parts of the country is the creation of “agricultural enterprise zones” – areas in a county designated as prime agricultural land where landowners who keep their land in agricultural production receive tax credits as incentives to continue agricultural production. Landowners must usually commit to keeping their land in production for a certain minimum amount of time (commonly 15 years or more) in order to be eligible for such tax incentives and this commitment is made by entering into agreements with the municipality. Tax credits usually range from \$5 – 10 per acre. The goal is to preserve large, contiguous areas of working agricultural land from development that breaks up productive fields and to promote development of agricultural businesses in the zones. Making sure land is available for farming and ranching could prompt farmers and ranchers to invest more in their operations and possibly expand.

Slow Money Initiative – Slow Money's mission is to build local and national networks, and develop new financial products and services, dedicated to:

- investing in small food enterprises and local food systems;
- connecting investors to their local economies; and,
- building the nurture capital industry (a sort of hedge fund for sustainable initiatives).

Slow Money's goal is to have 1 million people invest 1% of their assets in local food systems by the year 2020. According to the Slow Money web site⁹: “the 2,000 members and 12,000 supporters of Slow Money have already catalyzed millions of dollars of investment in the entrepreneurs who are rebuilding our economy and reshaping a world where healthy enterprises, communities, and ecosystems are just as important as financial returns. In 2010, donations to Slow Money were matched 12 to 1, as \$300,000 in donations generated \$4 million of investment in small food enterprises.”

Central to Slow Money's mission is the building of regional stakeholder networks - consisting of food entrepreneurs, nonprofit leaders, farmers, and investors committed to financing local food systems. Slow Money sponsors Slow Money Institutes which bring together 50 to 100 of these individuals in a region to assess strategies for investing in local food systems in their communities. Slow Money has held Institutes in Vermont, Northern California, Northwest Washington, the Greater Hudson Valley of New York, and the Midwest. In addition, Slow Money retained the California Environmental Associates to make sustainable agriculture maps of three regions: Vermont, New Orleans, and Wisconsin.

Social Finance Organizations - link farmers with socially motivated investors who will purchase the farmland farmers need and lease it to them on long-term, renewable leases with an option to

⁹ www.slowmoney.org

buy. The landowners may donate or sell a conservation easement on the land to prevent non-farm development. Farmers may get a low lease rate for first 3-4 years at market agricultural rates followed by a rent adjustment (crop share and other payment terms may be negotiable). Typically the lease includes an option to buy at the land's fair market value. A conservation plan may be required of tenant farmers. Social finance organization services are generally available to new farmers (with 5 years experience), existing farmers entering new markets or needing new land, or existing farmers leasing land who want to work into purchase option. One such social finance organization has been started in Wisconsin – New Spirit Ventures.¹⁰

Agricultural Resource Information Center – in some areas of the country, a central location for information critical to the future of agriculture is contained on a web site or housed at a municipality or local college. The information is kept up to date and includes information about such critical issues as: grant funding (both private and governmental), governmental programs available to agricultural landowners (Conservation Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, etc.), information about land conservation, farm succession planning guides, sample farmland leases, information for young farmers/ranchers, links to education sites and programs related to agriculture, and other vital information.

Farm Incubation Center – based on the Intervale Center in Burlington, VT. The Intervale Center owns 350 acres of productive agricultural land and uses the land to provide a place for beginning farms to start, matches beginning farmers with existing farmers at the Center as mentors, provides access to shared resources such as greenhouses, irrigation equipment, coolers, vegetable washing stations, commercial kitchen, farm implements, and storage facilities, and provides training in all aspects of running a farm business. The Center operates a retail store for local farmers and a Community Supported Agriculture business supported by several of its small farmers.

A variation on this idea is the Taos County Economic Development Corporation (New Mexico) which for the last nineteen years has been concerned primarily with community food security, land tenure and preservation of water rights. TCEDC works with many partners to accomplish its goals and its programs include: training in food production, providing a mobile livestock slaughter unit and a facility for meat processing (Hang & Age, Cut & Wrap Facility), a community garden project, a shared greenhouse, education in business planning and financial management, increasing access to local farmers to risk management and business management tools to sustain and increase their farm incomes, and a program that connects local growers with local food processors and produce buyers as well as educating youth about local farms and food.

Local or virtual Food Hub – a Food Hub connects buyers and sellers of local agricultural products and is generally defined as “a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products.” A Food Hub can be completely contained on-line (see the website www.ecotrust.org/foodhub for information on their six state successful virtual food hub) where a web site contains an on-line directory and market place that links commercial and institutional buyers with agricultural producers. The virtual food hub makes it possible for large institutional

¹⁰ www.newspiritventures.org

purchasers to secure products from several suppliers to fill its needs. Alternatively, a food hub can be located in a physical facility such as La Montanita in New Mexico.

The USDA Know Your Farmer Know Your Food (KYF2) program recently issued a study about food hubs. The analysis concluded: “food hubs are a great alternative for smaller producers to gather together and make more of an impact. Not only that, but the hubs can provide other benefits for farmers (business support, pre-season planning), consumers (access to healthy food) and the surrounding communities (new jobs). Overall, food hubs seem to be a viable option to connect consumers with producers – and with support from the USDA and its KYF2 program, the concept has the potential to spread around the country.” As implied, funding is available from the USDA to create regional food hubs.

The foregoing is a summary of some of the unique ideas other communities have embraced to keep farm and ranch land in production – none of which appear (except for small-scale land link programs) to currently be in use in Southwest Colorado. These ideas were presented to the stakeholders group as Task #3 of the Project.

Task #3 Report

Each person interviewed for this Project was invited to be a stakeholder and a number of them accepted the invitation (see the list of stakeholders attached as Appendix B). The stakeholders met in Cortez, Colorado on May 24, 2011 to discuss the results of Tasks #1 and 2 and to determine which programs would be most likely to achieve the results contemplated by the Grant Project. The stakeholders unanimously agreed to pursue holding a Food Shed Forum in Cortez in October or November 2011 in conjunction with the Rocky Mountain Farmer’s Union in order to bring together the diverse interests pursuing multiple programs which either match the Project or would contribute to it as well as to marshal support for a common program that all could work together to achieve. The stakeholders also requested additional information concerning a SW regional land-link program and a buy/protect/sell program based on the Maine Farmland Trust model. The stakeholders asked that research be conducted into the costs of these programs, the sources of funding for the programs and the programs’ ability to become self-sustaining without the need for continued financial subsidies.

Task #4 Report

Following the stakeholders meeting, the Maine Farmland Trust, the Columbia Land Conservancy and David Lynch (who is starting a Chaffee County, Colorado land-link program) were contacted and asked for the information requested by the stakeholders.

Land-link and Buy/Protect/Sell Programs

Columbia Land Conservancy - The Columbia Land Conservancy’s mission includes preservation of agricultural lands and it holds conservation easements on several thousand acres of productive lands in Columbia County. Its staff and board of directors, however, felt the need to expand its work on agricultural land preservation into actually working to connect farmers with productive land. CLC did not conduct a feasibility study to determine if there was a need in its community

for a land-link program; rather, discussions with the local farm bureau and Natural Resource Conservation Service convinced them of the need.

Although CLC's land-link program has only been in operation since January 2010, it has already completed more than a dozen matches and had approximately six more in process as of June 20, 2011. The program currently focuses solely on matching landowners with available agricultural land to those seeking long-term leases of land, although it is considering entering the area of matching buyers and sellers of agricultural land. CLC states that after the program became fully functional, the annual cost of running the program (including out-of-pocket costs and dedicated senior staff time) is approximately \$10,000 per year. Start-up costs included the cost of developing a database, developing both landowner and land seeker questionnaires and checklists, locating sample agricultural leases for distribution, designing and printing brochures and holding a series of workshops at which landowners and those seeking land were invited to inquire about the program. These workshops included not only CLC personnel, but also agricultural law experts, accountants familiar with agricultural economic issues, Farm Bureau employees and other specialists in the field. CLC continues to hold an occasional workshop and by using free meeting space and volunteer advisors, it keeps the cost of these workshops to CLC very low (essentially the cost of advertising and refreshments).

CLC recruited a pool of volunteer farmers who meet with landowners interested in the program to evaluate their land and explain how a land-link long term lease would work. They also work with new farmers as informal mentors, answering questions and directing them to experts who can advise them more fully. CLC has a staff person dedicated to the program that designs and schedules the workshops, answers questions from landowners and land seekers, maintains the land-link database and assists with conflict resolution when problems arise between landowners and tenants. This staff member works approximately 10 hours per week on the program, now that it is established (although she expended a great deal more time setting up the program).

CLC does not charge farmers or those looking for farmland for its workshops or listings on its database. It funds the program through its own land trust operational budget as a small part of its yearly budget. The land trust was recently contacted by a foundation who offered financial support for the program after reading about it in a local newspaper and the land trust believes this foundation will provide a significant part of its land-link program funding for the foreseeable future.

Maine Farmland Trust – MFT was unable to spend the time to answer the stakeholders' questions about its land-link and buy/protect/sell programs in detail in June 2011, but provided brief responses to the questions submitted to the organization.

MFT did not conduct a feasibility study to determine if a land-link program was needed in Maine. Rather, the program was developed during the time where there were several very active similar programs in places such as Vermont. According to MFT's Lands Projects director Nina Young "Anyone in agricultural circles knew and knows that a program linking farmland seekers to landowners who want/need to get off their land was needed to put the two parties together. Maine has the second oldest landowner population in the country, with many of those landowners being farmland owners. The statistics are coming true—many farms are undergoing

generation transfer and in order to keep those farms active, land-link was important as a program.”

With respect to its buy/protect/sell program, Nina stated “The land-link program naturally led to the development of the Buy/Protect/Sell program. Farms would come available, and if some group or individual didn't purchase them at the time, the farms would go out of farm use at the least, or be developed at the worst. We did feasibility studies as to the need, cost, and legality and how it related to our mission when we started BPS. The two programs work hand-in-hand. We will sometimes purchase a farm that is enrolled in our land-link program. And whenever we are considering a farm for purchase, we cull our land-link database to see if there are qualified potential buyers for that farm once we buy it and put an easement on it.”

With respect to the cost of the land-link and BPS programs, Nina replied as follows: “I really cannot answer this question. Our budgets do not give me these numbers easily. Staff is so busy with closings right now, I cannot ask them to work on this. I'm sorry.”

With respect to the staff needed to run their statewide land-link program, MFT stated that the organization's program has one half-time person dedicated to it. Also three of the lands staff members spend up to 10 or 15% of their time doing some work related to the program. When asked about staffing for its buy/protect/sell program, Nina replied “MFT has four lands staff people that work on donated and purchased easements and BPS deals. I would say that most of my time is devoted to BPS deals, and that maybe half of one of the other staff member's times is BPS deals, 20% of the other staff member's time is for BPS deals, and 30% of the lands assistant's time ends up being on BPS deals.”

When asked about the cost of running the land-link program and the source of its funding, MFT responded that land-link is funded as part of MFT's annual budget, which they raise through donations, membership and actual sale of farmland (which generates only a small amount of revenue). When asked if the land-link program could be self-sustaining, MFT replied “As with all our programs, these programs are part of our annual fundraising to fund the budget for MFT overall. Overall, both our land-link and buy/protect/sell programs make all our programs more successful, and we consider that part of doing business to fulfill our mission, and therefore part of our fundraising efforts. Of course, some donors may contribute money to MFT and request it go toward a specific program such as land-link and BPS.”

Chaffee County Land-link

David Lynch is starting a land-link program in Chaffee County, but he is really more focused on taking the program statewide in Colorado. He did not perform a feasibility study to determine if the program was necessary in the County and David said his research indicates that no developers of a land-link program have ever performed such a feasibility study. He said the need for the program was “self-evident,” and he has developed a strategic plan for the program. He believes the demand for the program in Chaffee County is not sufficient to ultimately justify limiting the program to simply Chaffee County, and believes it will need to expand to serve the immediate region to be successful. Ultimately, David wants to incorporate beginning farmer training programs into any land-link program he gets started.

David estimates it will cost \$60,000 annually to run the Chaffee County land-link program (with about one-half this amount dedicated to the staff costs of one full time employee) and he estimates it will cost \$250,000 annually to run a statewide program, including staffing costs. He received \$5,000 from Chaffee County to initiate the program, and plans to raise the additional funds from conservation districts, adjacent counties and the Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union foundation. In addition, RMFU is seeking USDA funding for a statewide land-link program. The Chaffee County program charges both landowners and land seekers for access to the program: \$25 for landowners and \$50 for prospective tenants. He does not believe the program will ever be self-sustaining either locally or statewide.

David attended a land-link training offered by the California land-link program and recommends it highly. He ultimately attended the SW Food Shed Forum to speak about his knowledge of land-link programs, their funding, and the effort to create a statewide program.

Summary – there is apparently unanimous agreement between organizations currently running land-link programs, those considering starting one and research performed on similar programs around the country (such as the FarmLASTS Research Report of 2010) that such a program must have dedicated staff or it will not be successful. As is evident from the numbers set forth above, it is difficult to ascertain precisely what the cost of running a land-link program will be, but start-up costs will clearly be higher than operational costs, and the smaller the region served by the program, the less staff needed to run the program. The expertise needed for such a staff person includes: some basic conflict resolution skills, basic knowledge about local agriculture and landowner/tenant concerns, public outreach and speaking skills, computer skills necessary to manage a database, a basic working knowledge of agricultural conservation easements and land trust operations, and some basic knowledge about farmland leases. The Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union expressed interest in hosting a statewide land-link program, and thus it may be assumed RMFU will help sustain the level of funding needed to start and run the program.

With respect to a buy/protect/sell program, it is likely to require a far greater amount of annual funding and a higher level of expertise in its staff. The BPS program needs access to sufficient capital to buy agricultural land, negotiate and complete the placement of an agricultural conservation easement on the land (including provision of a suitable amount of stewardship funding to the land trust holding the easement), and complete a sale of the land. It appears that such purchase and re-sale always involves a loss – because the land is usually bought at its fair market value and is always sold at its agricultural value. MFT stated in the past that it worked with community foundations in Maine who were willing to grant money for a purchase and only receive a portion of their grants returned upon subsequent re-sale. In addition to the funding needed for the purchase of agricultural land, a BPS program would need to hire highly skilled staff. The expertise need for such staff includes: real estate acquisition, negotiation and disposition experience, a degree of knowledge about how to evaluate land to determine if it is suitable for agriculture, a working knowledge of conservation easements and land trusts and the ability to work with a diverse group of buyers, sellers, attorneys, appraisers, etc.

Funding for a BPS program may be difficult to secure, given the high cost of land in Colorado. There may be community foundations, however, such as the Telluride Foundation, which have

indicated an interest in preserving local agriculture and may be willing to invest in a BPS program. It may be possible to leverage money from the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund to accomplish a BPS program's goals. GOCO makes grants each year to land trusts who acquire conservation easements on agricultural lands of statewide significance, and since the placement of a conservation easement on land lowers its value, this may help make some BPS programs affordable. The limiting factor is that GOCO only has a small amount of money available to grant each year relative to the demand for its funds, so competition for such funds is high.

The Trust for Public Land is working with David Lynch in Chaffee County to purchase either agricultural conservation easements on land suitable for continued production or to purchase the land in fee, but such discussions are in the preliminary stages. Marie spoke with TPL's state director, Tim Wohlgenant, about the Colorado TPL's efforts with respect to conserving working farms and ranches (Tim's background includes serving on the Board of Directors of the Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust) and found that he is interested in further work in protecting Colorado's productive agricultural lands. In discussions with Marie, Tim expressed interest in remaining informed about progress in preserving irrigated agricultural lands in Southwest Colorado and discussing a possible future role for TPL to play in agricultural land conservation in the area.

Food Shed Forum

Staff at the Colorado Water Conservation Board confirmed that approximately \$2,500 of the Project grant funding could be used to help produce a Food Shed Forum in the Southwest Basin. Together with the existing pledge of \$2,500 from the Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union towards the Forum, and the offer of one of its staff members, Dan Hobbs, to facilitate the meeting at no charge, funding for the Forum only needed approximately \$3,000 more in order to hold the Forum. RMFU identified a meeting planner in Montrose, Colorado, who was engaged to stage the Forum, and this Project's Stakeholders group comprised most of the Steering Committee for the Forum.

Following a series of Steering Committee meetings in August and September 2011, a date and location for the Food Shed Forum was chosen and a group of local residents, including members of the Southwest Basin Roundtable, farmers and ranchers, were identified for invitations to the Forum. The Steering Committee chose to limit attendance at the Forum to invitees rather than opening the Forum to the public in order to secure the best chance that concrete action would result from the Forum.

The Southwest Food and Farmland Forum was held in Cortez on November 12, 2011 with approximately 60 people in attendance. Funding for the Forum came from this Project, the RMFU, the Walton Family Foundation, the Environmental Defense Fund, LiveWell Montezuma, CSU Extension-La Plata County, CSU Extension-Montezuma County, Montezuma Economic Development, and NewFarms. At the Forum a series of panelists discussed issues related to: 1) the preservation of irrigated agricultural lands in Southwestern Colorado, 2) the education and support of new and existing farmers and ranchers, 3) issues related to marketing and economical success for area agricultural producers and 4) food nutrition and security. Four self-selected break-out groups discussed these topics during the afternoon of the Forum and generated ideas to

be pursued after the Forum to achieve results in the four categories. (See the attached Forum Report for a full account of the Forum proceedings).

A follow up to the SW Food and Farmland Forum was held in Cortez on March 8, 2012, to revisit the four issues discussed at the Forum, discuss ways of moving forward with each issue and to forge deeper connections and relationships within the basin. JoDee Powers of LiveWell Montezuma chaired the meeting, which began with participants discussing initiatives and progress in the basin's counties. Some of the exciting programs moving forward in the region include a regional Community Land Trust, which will enable the purchase and permanent protection of working farms and ranches; LandLink, which will connect experienced and beginning farmers; "School to Farm", which connects students with farmers and has created a regional garden; Durango School District's innovative "Farm to School" program to purchase local food for school meals; and various beginning farmer education programs.

The "Big Ask", a proposal that came out of the food nutrition and security portion of the Forum, is being replaced with "Eat Healthy, Eat Local" which is an initiative design to obtain commitments from restaurants to provide at least two meals that meet the "healthy" requirements of the program and contain at least one local ingredient. By emphasizing nutrition and supporting local agricultural producers, the initiative accomplishes goals identified at the Forum.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to continue with county hubs centered around food that is produced locally that plug into a larger regional effort. The group felt that each county in the region can create a Food and Farm Council to assist in local food production efforts while connecting with a regional group to share ideas and resources. (See notes from the March 8th meeting attached as Appendix C).

The two ideas related to preserving irrigated agricultural lands that emerged at the Forum (a land-link program and a community land trust program) were also discussed at the March 8th meeting. Following that meeting, Marie held a series of talks with RMFU and David Lynch (who is helping create the Chaffee County land-link program) regarding progress in starting the Chaffee County land-link and statewide land-link programs as well as how a Southwest Colorado land-link program could learn from these efforts and integrate with them to the extent advisable or necessary to ensure the success of the program. A proposal for funding a state-wide land-link program is scheduled to be presented to the RMFU Board of Directors and Foundation in 2012, and if approved, such funding would be available in 2013. A non-profit organization operated by Project Stakeholder Committee members Cathy Kennedy and Bob Bragg (the Southwest Farm Resource Center) was identified as a possible location for a land-link program. In order to encourage the creation of a land-link program in Southwest Colorado, it was proposed during these talks that one-half of the funds not necessary for the Forum and thus left over in the Forum account (approximately \$1,500), be used to pay Cathy and Bob's expenses to travel to Salida and meet with the Chaffee County land-link creators (and RMFU representatives) to help train Cathy and Bob in the steps necessary to start a land-link program.

Jenny Russell held meetings with governmental entities, nonprofits, land trusts and funding entities to initiate discussion about raising money for a community land trust and to find a location at which such CLT could be located. The remaining unused Forum funds

(approximately \$1,500) will be used to develop grant proposals to raise seed money for a CLT in the Southwest Basin area. A local governmental entity has indicated that it can offer \$5,000 in seed money for the CLT, and a regional land trust expressed interest in housing the CLT or exploring other ways to help make the CLT successful in the Southwest Basin area.

Conclusion

The goal of this Project was to identify a program, or an achievable plan for the creation of a program, that will result in protecting irrigated agricultural lands for agricultural production in southwestern Colorado and potential funding sources for such program. This goal was achieved, as discussed above. Continuing efforts to create and fund a regional land-link program and Community Land Trust will, when combined, contribute significantly to efforts to protect irrigated agricultural lands in the Southwest Basin and to make affordable agricultural land available to the next generation of farmers and ranchers. The success of this Project helps the Southwest Basin and the Colorado Water Conservation Board achieve their goals of water conservation and thus the Project represents a successful use of public funds and the collaboration of a wide variety of parties interested in the continuation of agricultural production in the Southwest Basin of Colorado.

Appendix A

Project Interviewees

Land Conservation Organizations

Linda Luther - San Miguel County Open Space Program
 Chris West - Executive Director, Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust
 Peter Mueller - Director Northern San Juan Office, The Nature Conservancy
 Pat Willits - Executive Director, The Trust for Land Restoration
 Kathy Roser - Executive Director, La Plata Open Space Conservancy
 Penny Holmes - Southwest Land Alliance
 Tony Colyer-Pendas - Director of Conservation Programs, Columbia Land Conservancy (NY)
 Marissa Codey - Senior Project Manager, Columbia Land Conservancy (NY)
 Nina Young - Lands Projects Manager Maine Farmland Trust
 Alex Wylie - Director of Agriculture Vermont Land Trust
 Stephen Searl - Peconic Land Trust (NY)
 Gary Hickcox - Executive Director, San Miguel Conservation Foundation
 Michael Whiting - Southwest Land Alliance
 Sydney Macy - The Conservation Fund
 Dave Nichols - Montezuma Land Conservancy
 Jennifer Dempsey - American Farmland Trust
 Lake Fork Conservancy (declined to participate)
 Amy Beattie - Colorado Water Trust
 Zach Smith - CWT
 William Bernage - TNC

Additional Contacts

Jay Fetcher - rancher, Founder Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust, Northwest Colorado Director Senator Mark Udall
 Jerry Cosgrove - dairy farmer, Former Northeastern Director American Farmland Trust, Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets - New York State
 Judy Anderson - Community Consultants – advisor on agricultural land protection and climate change impacts on agriculture
 Reeves Brown - rancher, member of Board of Lower Arkansas River Conservation District
 Lynne Sherrod - rancher, former executive director Colorado Cattlemen's Agricultural Land Trust, Western Policy Director Land Trust Alliance
 Becca Gill - Colorado Cattlemen's Association
 Nathan Morehouse - rancher, Pagosa Springs
 Daniel Fernandez - CSU Extension, SW Basin Roundtable liaison
 Jerry McCaw - rancher, former ag. representative to SW Basin Roundtable (until 9/2010)
 Jim Dyer - sheep rancher, Durango, Sustainability Alliance of SW Colo.
 Phil Lane - rancher, Arboles
 John Taylor - rancher, Pagosa Springs, member of SW Basin Roundtable
 David Graf - CDOW, former liaison to SW Basin Roundtable
 Paul Jones - CDOW, works on leasing state land to farmers/ranchers
 Phil Craig - rancher, Florida Mesa (Durango)

Jim Siscoe - rancher, former SW Basin Roundtable member
Bill Stevenson - Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union
Dan Hobbs - RMFU
Ken Haynes - Colorado Provisions, working on connecting SW Co. producers/consumers
Bob Bragg - agriculture radio presenter, agriculture teacher
Mary Lou Smith - CSU Colorado Water Institute
Jim Boyd - NRCS
Cathy Kennedy - Mancos Valley Resources
Kris Holstrom - New Community Coalition Executive Director
Kay James – rancher, James Ranch
Rosie Carter – farmer, Stone Free Farm
Judy Garrigues - district manager, Dolores Conservation District

Appendix B

Project Stakeholders

Jenny Russell is a water attorney in Telluride, Colorado and is a member of the SW Basin Roundtable. Jenny is one of the grant applicants.

Cathy Kennedy of Mancos Valley Resources is one of the grant applicants and her husband, Gary, is a member of the SW Basin Roundtable.

Kay James is one of the owners of James Ranch near Durango. James Ranch is a high altitude ranch raising beef cattle, milk cows, chickens, organic vegetable and flowers, and spruce trees. Five of her children live and work the land. The Ranch produces and sells dairy, cheese, eggs, sausages, vegetables, flowers and more. They also run a farm store selling food grown or produced on the ranch which has received great response and support from the community.

Dave Nichols was the Executive Director of Montezuma Land Conservancy. He is now the Director of Land Protection, completing land protection projects, working with conservation easements, mainly agricultural easements to try to keep Cortez area free from overdevelopment.

Jim Dyer is active in the Sustainability Alliance of Southwest Colorado. He raises sheep and produces wool and is involved in production of local foods, Farm for Schools, Beginning Farmer, and more.

Wade Wilson has a family farm near Yellow Jacket and a long term interest in local food production and the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union. He placed a conservation easement on his land.

Dan Hobbs is a cooperative specialist with the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union. He also operates a 30 acre irrigated organic seed and vegetable farm in Pueblo County.

Bob Bragg works in agriculture through Pueblo Community College Young Farmers. He grew up in agriculture.

Ken Haynes leads Colorado Provisions, a new organization seeking to establish a regional distribution hub for local food in the West ends of Montrose and San Miguel counties. He hopes to connect producers with consumers.

Judy Garrigues is the District Manager for the Dolores Conservation District. She believes the main issue is keeping agriculture profitable.

Colleen Trout works for the Telluride Community Coalition and is involved in several initiatives related to local food production and preserving local agriculture.

Marie Layton is an attorney who lives in Pagosa Springs who has a strong interest in preserving local agriculture (Marie works with the principal contractor on this Project)

Jane Ellen Hamilton is land conservation professional with a strong interest and history in working to preserve local agriculture. She served as the primary contractor for the Project in its first year.

Appendix C

March 8, 2012 Food Shed Forum Follow-up Meeting Notes

If you don't have the November Forum Final Report, contact Laura Parker at parker.lauradparker@gmail.com for a copy.

Attendees:

Judy Garrigues (Soil Conservation District), Dan Hobbs (RMFU), Tom Hooten, Greg Kemp, Sarah Syverson, Darlene Marcus, Darrin Parmenter (CSU Extension-La Plata County), Krista Garand, Jim Dyer, Jenny Russell (SW Basin Irrigated Lands Grant Project), Nina Williams (Montezuma Land Conservancy), Kim Lindgren, JoDee Powers (LiveWell Montezuma), Galen Larson

Absent:

Kris Holstrom, Cathy Kennedy, Jane Ellen Hamilton, Mariko Layton, Carol Parker
[Notes taken by Sarah Syverson]

- 1) Review of Forum Final Report
- 2) Darren Parmenter:
 - A. Building Farmers Course offered in La Plata. Beginning Farmers Grant – built curriculum that has gone to 6 different states. Course was for farmers that know how to farm already. Developed marketing/business skills. Has a mentoring program that pays mentors \$2000. Started in Feb/March. Had 15 students in 2011/2012. 35 students the first year - 2010.
 - B. Homegrown Retreat – 140 people attended. Got the community more involved in the Farm to School Program.
 - C. Growing Partners – is going for a \$300,000 USDA grant.
- 3) Jim Dyer:
 - A. Farm to School: Goals – To strengthen and support. Winding down LiveWell support. Extend growing season. Local First Campaign. Climate Friendly Food System. Reduce Fossil Fuel Use
 - B. Food Assessment: 18 months, \$50,000
 - i) 15 surveys – was more of a conversation. Renewed conversation at Homegrown Retreat. Food Access, Food Safety. Need to address hunger in the community
- 4) Montrose County
 - a) Producer Group is forming. RBEG (?) Grant submitted by Valley Food Partnership. 501c3 taken from defunct project in Delta.
 - b) Distribution group of 30
- 5) San Miguel County
 - A. Looking at local distribution system. Mountain Village is looking for more producers for their farmer's market
- 6) Ken Hanes:
 - A. Food Hub – needed to be 250,000 population. JoDee will email this report to the group.
 - B. Kim Lindgren – systems need to be developed locally and then connected. 250,000 sounds arbitrary. That number shouldn't inhibit a new system.
- 7) Montezuma County

A. Colorado Proud: 2010 with Jim Dyer and Sandy (FSD in Cortez). 2011: 5 weeks of fresh local food + Colorado Proud Week. 2600 lbs of local food in 2011.

B. FSDs went to culinary boot camps

C. Food Task Force: been meeting since June 2011. Goal to conduct an assessment of producers and consumers for Montezuma and Dolores Counties, compile results into a report with a strategic plan. Working with City of Cortez, Montezuma county, Dolores county and NRCS and many other community stakeholders. Will create a GIS map.

D. Ag Round Table: Pilot study – interview with producers. Feasibility study for marketing/producer cooperative. The #1 need expressed on the survey was inadequate help. Looking for teachers to teach skills like shearing sheep, running an irrigation system, etc through the Day Labor Center. Want to incorporate by end of the year and launch in 2013.

E. Revisiting the “Big Ask”. Discussion took place about a regional program that included most of the 5 counties to raise awareness about local food and farms. JoDee suggested that the Healthy Lifestyles La Plata program of “Eat Local, Eat Healthy” be adopted instead. It is a complete program, involving local restaurants encouraging them to offer 2 meals that include one local ingredient. ELEH has a logo and standards that can be easily adopted. The Big Ask would require starting from scratch. The group voted to adopt “ELEH” as their regional campaign. JoDee will explore this with Kris Holstrum and Carol Parker.

F. Montezuma School to Farm Project: over 3000 garden classroom hours. Funded through LiveWell and Mancos Conservation District. Two School Gardens, Farm Field Trips, Summer Camps in collaboration with Cortez Recreation Center. Produce from school gardens go to school cafeterias. Employs farmers to teach students about local foods, watershed, and agricultural practices.

8) Land Link

A. Hope that it will be statewide with regional organizations, and old and young farmers together.

9) Community Land Trust Program

A. Will permanently preserve agricultural land.

B. Regional program created to buy irrigated ag. Land that has been previously conserved then sell it or lease it. San Miguel County, Telluride Foundation looking to fund the program. Right now pursuing funding to develop the program.

10) Farmington Regional Food Summit

A. Everett Oldham, from Rural Development in Aztec, NM put on in Jan. Objectives/accomplishments weren’t clear. Ground work needs to be done. Based on the boundaries of the San Juan River Basin. Has distribution building with refrigeration/freezer/refrigerated truck on the Navajo Reservation. He needs Farmer’s Union to apply for funds.

B. Support Everett by suggesting feasibility study for use of and development of facility.

C. Applying for Rural Development Grant

D. Support through education of successes and failures

E. Dan will let him know what he’s hearing from the countryside.

11) Durango Farm To School presented by Krista Garand

A. 2400 lunches a day. Served whole district local foods several times this year. Colorado Proud and Thanksgiving lunch with local roasted veggies.

B. Bid Process: Includes Durango, Ignacio, Bayfield, and Cortez. Mancos dropped out at last minute. Conference in Nov. 2011 educated farmers about bid process. Used Self Assessment for Farmers based on GAP protocols and turned this into a Food Safety Plan. Bid form was forwarded to the CO Dept of Education which forwarded it to the USDA. Form is being used as a template for Colorado. Received 13 bids (10 were from Montezuma County). Requirements for the bids: 1) Food Safety Plan 2) Self Assessment 3) Liability 4) Map of Farm. Important to take the next step with bids: i.e. an organic apple is too expensive but if you cut it up then the cost reduces and you can use the product.

12) Future of the Food Summit:

- A. Collect group from counties and form a Food and Farm Council/Network or Task Force
 - B. Collaborate on some grants. Share information on others.
 - C. Share ideas and updates on programs/projects
 - D. Set date for next Food Summit in July 2012.
 - E. Invite Beth LaShell into group.
 - F. Strategically invite a few people into the group.
 - G. Look into this more at the summer meeting. Include all 5 counties.
 - H. Invite people who have successes to talk about.
 - I. No more than 20 people total.
 - J. Look into Telluride hosting summer meeting, July 9-13 or July 23 – 27.
- Jenny Russell and Kris Holstrom will follow through with a space. If not possible in Telluride, Durango will be second choice.